NAVIGATING THE COALFACE:

RELIGION, STATE, PACIFIC COMMUNITIES
AND FAMILY VIOLENCE
IN NEW ZEALAND

By

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Abstract

This thesis examines how the New Zealand state (e.g. government ministries and departments, government-funded social welfare NGOs, and the justice system) engages with religion as it addresses issues of family violence within Pacific Island communities in New Zealand. In so doing, I trace the contours of an amorphous New Zealand state secularism. Through an analysis of policy documents, I show that religion has been largely occluded in state family violence initiatives. However, through interviews with Pacific Islanders who work at the coalface between the state, Pacific communities, and family violence issues, I show that while they do encounter an implicit and pervasive 'wall of separation' between the secular and the religious, they have also found ways to navigate these boundaries through their own strategies. Such strategies are both inevitable and necessary. Because religion is interwoven with family violence in Pacific communities in nuanced ways, I argue that sidelining or ignoring religion reduces the effectiveness of state interventions. I show that secularism, expressed in relation to family violence in Pacific communities, has further marginalised those communities, and Pacific women especially. Instead, I propose a more pragmatic approach, one which seeks to address Pacific communities more fully on their own terms. If the New Zealand state wants to successfully engage Pacific communities on issues of family violence, and work toward solutions to these issues, it must also collaborate alongside Pacific churches and faith-based actors.

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Introduction

The subject of 'religion' is uniquely fraught in many modern democracies. As Charles Taylor states in the opening of his essay "The Meaning of Secularism", "It is generally agreed that modern democracies have to be 'secular.'"[1] This is to say that much of the political trepidation regarding religion can be assigned to the influence of secularism—a vision of democratic politics that has arisen out of European intellectual thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[2] This secular vision holds that religion can be clearly defined, identified, and separated from the secular public sphere which is comprised of politics, the law, and business. For Ben Schewel and Erin K. Wilson, "The secular, then, is often defined as everything that is not 'religion', everything that may be considered part of the immanent plane of existence, rather than the transcendent."[3] Secularism, as a process of first defining and then of managing religion, is frequently viewed as essential to the democratic project, because a pluralistic society requires some kind of neutral entity to fairly govern over its citizens.[4] The secular state proposes to be that neutral entity. However, the secularisation of modern societies does not mean the state has removed itself from the religious sphere, but instead, it demands the reconfiguration of substantive features of religious life.[5] Saba Mahmood contends that "Secularism's claim to state neutrality toward religion is further challenged by those who argue that in most liberal societies the process of secularization has entailed not so much the elimination of religion from politics or public life but its reformulation in accord with a normative model of religiosity—one that is amenable to the rationality of liberal political rule."[6] For Mahmood, the secular state is not a neutral entity, but rather it is engaged in a transformative project of reshaping or moulding religion, making it compatible with modern democracy.

Using Taylor's framework, I argue that we should not think of secularism as something to describe the relation of the state and religion, but rather, it is a normative assumption that

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[1] Charles Taylor, "The Meaning of Secularism," *The Hedgehog Review* 12, no. 3 (2010): 23.
[2] Benjamin Schewel and Erin K. Wilson, "Introduction," in *Religion and European Society: A Primer*, ed. Benjamin Schewel and Erin K. Wilson (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), 1.
[3] Schewel and Wilson, "Introduction," 3.
[4] Taylor, "The Meaning of Secularism," 23.
[5] Saba Mahmood, "Sexuality and Secularism," in *Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference*, ed. Linell E. Cady and Tracy Fessenden (Columbia University Press, 2013), 47.
[6] Mahmood, "Sexuality and Secularism," 48.

"has to do with the (correct) response of the democratic state to diversity."[7] Democracies seek to manage diversity through disciplining those communities that disrupt or challenge the majority status quo. In New Zealand, the impact of secularism is not felt by the non-religious majority, but instead, its effects are felt most noticeably on a society's minority communities, especially those that are deeply religious. This is to say that secularism, as a normative process, is one that imposes and intervenes most forcibly on minorities.

The question of New Zealand's secularity is primarily a question about the institutions, operations, and governmentality of the New Zealand state. I take the New Zealand state to be secular because of the ways in which it manages religious diversity. As I will show, state policy not only separates religion and the secular, but frequently institutes a binary opposition between the religious and the secular and then imposes this opposition upon religious communities that may see this binary as neither necessary nor based in reality. This binary opposition between the secular and the religious is maintained by an imagined 'wall of separation'. This term is generally closely associated with Thomas Jefferson's usage within the context of American political history and its constitutional separation of church and state. However, my usage is concerned with the New Zealand context. While in New Zealand no constitutional or legal mechanism requires a clear state-religion split, I nevertheless discern significant barriers and obstacles in state engagement with religion which can legitimately be described with 'wall' analogies. There is an implicit but also a remarkably pervasive sense within some parts of the New Zealand state that religion should be treated quite separately from the secular. I use the metaphor of 'wall' as a tool to do two things: 1) draw attention to the sharp differentiation between what state policy defines as secular and religious, and 2) to highlight the discursive maintenance of that opposition. However, this wall only exists in the imaginations of particular state discourses. It is not necessarily shared by religious communities in New Zealand and, therefore, I am particularly interested in how state actors navigate the constraints of this imaginary wall in practice. As my analysis of policy reports and interviews in this thesis will show, the assumption of state secularity—as a barrier to engagement with religion—is widespread within those parts of the state tasked with addressing family violence (FV) issues in New Zealand's Pacific communities, even as the imagined wall is flouted and subverted through actual practices. Therefore, I question the wall's integrity and explore its effectiveness, both at keeping religion and the secular separate and in its capacity to produce the state's intended outcomes.

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[7] Taylor, "The Meaning of Secularism," 25.

In this thesis, I focus on the 'wall of separation' because it is the most apparent expression of secularism when considering state responses to FV in Pacific communities. However, it is not the only expression of secularism we see in New Zealand. State responses to other issues concerning religion have yielded different, more fluid and accommodating engagements with religion. The range of different approaches taken by the New Zealand state toward religion shows that secularity in New Zealand has a distinctly amorphous quality. This is to say that secularism in New Zealand cannot be defined as a secularism which merely institutes sharp boundaries between religion and the secular—where state actors either cannot engage religion or must surreptitiously navigate through and around the 'wall of separation' in order to engage religious communities in effective ways. At specific points in this thesis, I will also show that the New Zealand state *can* be accommodating of religion, highlighting that more meaningful and substantive engagements are possible. In these particular cases, government and faith-based actors take advantage of pragmatic collaborations without the hindrance of an imagined 'wall of separation'.

In this thesis, I analyse New Zealand's secularity by exploring its effects on Pacific communities—a highly-religious minority group. To do so, I examine Pacific churches, government institutions, and (secular) social welfare NGOs as they respond to FV issues in New Zealand's Pacific communities. I investigate the ways in which the New Zealand government and agencies funded by the state (e.g. government-funded social welfare NGOs, government ministries and departments, and the justice system; which collectively I refer to as the 'state') engage Pacific churches on issues of FV, and what this engagement—or lack thereof—indicates about how the New Zealand state engages with religion. The issue of FV is prevalent in the Pacific community and is also something the New Zealand state is deeply concerned with, both in and beyond Pacific communities.[8] The underlying causes of FV include hierarchical traditional gender roles. While religion can be implicated within the legitimation of such hierarchical gender roles, FV is by no means restricted to overtly religious communities. In Pacific communities, the interpretation of gender roles is frequently inflected with religious language and modes of legitimation. Analysing how the secular state engages with Pacific communities on FV issues offers an opportunity to explore one locus of secularism in New Zealand, precisely because the FV issue in Pacific communities is at the boundary between

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[8] I acknowledge, "It is widely considered that there is serious underreporting of all types of violence, therefore accurate profiles of prevalence rates in ethnic minority communities are difficult to establish." Rachel Simon-Kumar, *Ethnic Perspectives on Family Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand*, New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (Auckland: New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2019), 8.

religion and the secular state. I am interested in perspectives from within the New Zealand state as well as the Pacific churches and communities.

I attempt to articulate how secularism in New Zealand works by examining the policies and programmes employed by the state which seek to address the issue of FV in Pacific communities, and also by analysing the experiences of individuals who must navigate the coalface between the state, religion, the Pacific community, and FV. However, to do this, I first explore broader contextual matters related to Pacific Christianity, the definition and prevalence of FV, and Pacific Churches' engagement with FV.

Pacific Christianity

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a large growth of Pacific communities in New Zealand. This growth began in the post-war economic boom of the 1950s when labour demands in New Zealand's secondary industries led to substantial rises in immigration from the Pacific. However, these diaspora Pacific communities in New Zealand have retained much of the social, cultural, and religious ontologies unique to the Pacific. Therefore, to a certain extent, when speaking about the Pacific, we can assume that many of those ontologies are still present in New Zealand's Pacific communities.

The Pacific is marked by great cultural and linguistic diversity. However, one striking continuity across the region is that traditional Pacific culture is closely connected with Christian churches.[9] The Christian missionary enterprise in the Pacific represents one of the most successful in history. Manfred Ernst, who has written extensively on Christianity in the Pacific, states, "In a span of less than 200 years the vast majority of Pacific Islanders became Christians."[10] In 2012, a Pew Forum report titled "The Global Religious Landscape" presented religious demography that illustrates the religiosity of the Pacific among other parts of the globe. This report indicates that 95 percent of Pacific Islanders in Pacific nations identify as Christian.[11] Although the number of New Zealand-based Pacific Islanders who identify as

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[9] Shamima Ali, *Violence Against the Girl Child in the Pacific Islands Region*, United Nations (Florence, IT: UN, 2006), 4.

[10] Manfred Ernst, "Changing Christianity in Oceania: A Regional Overview," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 157, no. 1 (2012): 30, https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.23613.

[11] Conrad Hackett et al., *The Global Religious Landscape: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Major Religious Groups as of 2010* (Pew Research Center, 2012), 45-50. Pew Forum does not present Pacific specific religious statistics, rather it includes Pacific statistics as part of the Asia-Pacific region. As such, the percentage of Pacific Christians living in the Pacific was done by myself, using Pew Forum data. I did so by

Christian is less than that of those living in the Pacific, it is still substantial at 73 percent.[12] However, even for those Pacific Islanders that do not affiliate with Christianity, the church still represents an important social and cultural institution.

As Susan Wurtzburg has described, the Pacific church is a vital cultural and social institution for Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. In one interview, a Tongan woman told Wurtzburg that "in New Zealand, we don't live in families. We usually live by whatever church you belong to. In Tonga, it's either the family or the village [with which] you identify [yourself]." In another interview, a Samoan woman stated, "In New Zealand, your village is actually your church . . . If you . . . meet another Samoan, you work out where they're from through the church. If you go back to the islands, it's, 'What village are you from?'" Additionally, the role of Pacific church ministers in New Zealand is perhaps more significant than it is in the Pacific—as one woman in Wurtzberg's study noted, "from my own experience in Wellington, I know people rely on the church minister to compensate for the absence of the other networks that they would normally have [in Samoa]."[13] Here, the church is clearly understood as playing an important role for Pacific Islanders in New Zealand that goes beyond any narrowly defined 'religious' sphere of operation. Pacific Christianity is linked to ethnonational diasporic identity, community, cultural values, maintaining language traditions, leadership, and informing gender ethics *as well as* being a place for religious worship.

The formation and expression of gender ethics is an important element of FV. FV is strongly gendered, and it is perpetrated disproportionately by men against women.[14] Because churches are important spaces for shaping normative ethics—including gender ethics—how Christianity has been interpreted in the Pacific has meant it is often used to justify particular kinds of hierarchical relationships between men and women.[15] As the prevalence of both

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dividing the total number of Pacific Christians (9,457,574) by the total Pacific population (9,947,400). I, therefore, arrived at 95 percent. The Pacific nations included: Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, American Samoa, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Wallis and Futuna.

[12] "Pacific Peoples in New Zealand: Understanding Who We Are," Ministry of Social Development, 2016, 2019, https://www.pasefikaproud.co.nz/assets/Resources-for-download/PasefikaProudResource-Understanding-who-we-are-infographic.pdf (1-4).

[13] Susan J. Wurtzburg, "The Pacific Island Community in New Zealand: Domestic Violence and Access to Justice," *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 14, no. 3 (2003): 437, https://doi.org/10.1177/0887403403253721.

[14] I consider gender a/symmetry arguments in the section, Analysing Family Violence.

[15] This is important to note because Christian theology should not be read as a synonym for patriarchal oppression as so much early Western (specifically, English and American) feminist thought was inspired by theology. See Jane Anger, *Jane Anger Her Protection for Women: To Defend them Against the Scandalous Reportes of a Late Surfeiting Louer, and all Otherlike Venerians that Complaine so to bee Ouercloyed with Womens Kindnesse*, Early English Books Online, (London: Iones & Orwin, 1589); Rachel Speght, *The Polemics and Poems of Rachel Speght*, ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, Women Writers in English 1350-1850, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible* (Seattle: Coalition Task Force on Women and Religion, 1974; c1895).

Christianity and FV is high in the Pacific community,[16] examining how Christian discourses about gender are linked to practice is crucial for understanding FV in Pacific Christian communities. Feminist theologians such as Joan Filemoni-Tofaeono, Lydia Johnson, and Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, and scholarship by Bronwen Douglas, Margaret Jolly, and Hyaeweol Choi provide incisive critiques of this gendered hierarchy.[17] Given the relation between gender ethics and Christianity in the Pacific, responses to FV in Pacific communities need to engage with gender in ways that address Pacific Christian interpretations of the Bible—specifically, those which subordinate women to men.

Defining Family Violence

In this thesis, I follow the definition of FV provided by the Ministry of Health, which frames FV as an act of (or threat of) physical or sexual violence, and psychological or emotional abuse. It is perpetrated by one family member against another family member and includes child and elder abuse, and intimate partner violence (IPV).[18] This definition of FV is both succinct and broad, and my decision to use it was a pragmatic one informed by early encounters during my fieldwork.

At the outset of this project, I had intended to focus on state engagement with IPV as experienced by Pacific women. However, early interviews showed that the use of this language would likely be a barrier for engaging with Pacific churches—including churches with an existing FV programme.[19] Prior to starting the interview process, I had spoken with some

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[16] "Pacific Peoples in New Zealand: Understanding Family Violence," Ministry of Social Development, 2016, 2019, https://www.pasefikaproud.co.nz/assets/Resources-for-download/PasefikaProudResource-Understanding-family-violence-infographic.pdf (1-4). "Pacific Peoples in New Zealand: Understanding Who We Are," 1.

[17] See, for example, Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, eds., *Divine domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific* (Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 2014); Bronwen Douglas, "Christianity, Tradition, and Everyday Modernity: Towards an Anatomy of Women's Groupings in Melanesia," *Oceania* 74, no. 1-2 (2003), https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1834-4461.2003.tb02833.x; Joan Filemoni-Tofaeono and Lydia Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania* (London: Equinox Pub., 2006); Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, "A Public Theology Response to Domestic Violence in Samoa," *International Journal of Public Theology* 10, no. 1 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-12341428; Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, *Christian Faith and Family Violence: A Report for Samoan communities in New Zealand*, University of Otago (Otago, NZ: University of Otago, 2016).

[18] "Family Violence Definitions," Ministry of Health, accessed 17 March, 2020, https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/family-violence/establishing-violence-intervention-programme-vip/family-violence-definitions.

[19] I primarily use the term 'interviewee' to refer to those individuals that I interviewed to simply indicate that I had interviewed them. Some other terms I considered using were 'informant', which I felt too forcefully indicated some kind of extraction process, and 'participant', which does not imply an extraction of information at all. None

government officials who had worked with Pacific communities on FV issues, and they advised me that the word 'violence' alone may turn some Pacific leaders off talking to me. In recruiting for this project, I suspected this might be the case, as very few faith-based actors agreed to be interviewed. I surmised that because IPV is a more focused definition, a church with a FV programme that defines the issue as one between parent and child may refuse to be interviewed because either they do not perceive IPV to be a problem in their community, or they do not include IPV into the broader definition, FV. This is a curious problem in the Pacific community and one which deserves further research. How this research should be conducted, given the significant resistance to addressing this within Pacific communities, is beyond the scope of this project. In my interviews with faith-based actors, I instead focused on their relationship with the state on FV issues.

My decision to use 'FV', a term with broad intimations, was a practical one made to help facilitate a wide range of interviews. For example, in one interview I conducted with a Pacific church minister, he made repeated references to FV involving interactions between a parent and a child, and he made no reference to FV as an act between intimate partners. I was in somewhat of a dilemma because at that point, I still wanted to focus on IPV despite initially telling the minister that I wanted to specifically research FV—this deceit was an effort to get my foot in the door. At the time, I wanted the minister to express explicitly how he defined FV, however, I also did not want to offend him. During the interview, I considered aborting diplomacy to get a lucid definition out of him, specifically, whether or not he included IPV in his definition of FV, and if he thought IPV was an issue in his congregation, or indeed the wider Pacific community. Hesitant to offend one of the few ministers who had agreed to meet with me, I held my tongue.

In that interview, I vividly remember one moment in particular in which I decided to abandon my focus on IPV for this particular project. The interview was two-hours long, and most of the time I felt as though I was walking on eggshells, not because I felt in anyway intimidated by the minister, he had in fact been very hospitable and generous with his time, but rather because I wanted to have a more direct conversation about how he defined FV without potentially offending him.

Before this moment, the minister had been reminiscing on his studies at Victoria University of Wellington some time ago, and, incidentally, in the same Religious Studies

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of these terms described the role of the individuals I interviewed without issues. Therefore, I decided that 'interviewee' was the best term to use primarily because it was the least problematic.

department of which I was a part. He continued for an extended period, indulging in an account of his superior intellect in comparison to the other students, noting that he had been bored, unchallenged by the course content and unimpressed with the instruction. He gave this homily whilst staring at a framed depiction of Jesus over my left shoulder. My eyebrows arched, eyes squinting slightly, with my index finger resting on my chin, I looked directly at the minister, giving my best impression of an intelligent disposition, just in case he lowered his gaze back at me. I held the pose to disguise my taking a mental break from the sermon to consider how to ask the minister about whether his definition of FV included IPV. Did he see violence between intimate partners as an issue at all among his congregation? If so, how did he engage with this? I anticipated some pushback if I pursued this line of questioning. As I ran through the questions in my mind, the collaborative interview process I had embarked on seemingly broke down into an interrogation. At this moment, I realised my place in that office with the minister. If this was to be a collaborative process, the minister had to be involved, and squeezing definitional details out of him seemed like the fastest way to get kicked out of his office without a signature on my consent form. I concluded then that my focus had to be broader than just IPV. This was a pragmatic move, as the broader FV definition allowed Pacific interviewees a larger space in which to engage with me. In the coming chapters, it becomes clear that both state and NGO services working with Pacific communities on issues of FV employ similar tactics, and in some cases, they do not use the term FV at all.

Analysing Family Violence

While men and women can both perpetrate FV, the research consensus is that men are the primary perpetrators. The Te Rito document produced by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) notes that "perpetrators of the most severe and lethal cases of family violence are predominantly male; victims of the most severe and lethal cases of family violence are predominantly women and children."[20] Other studies also highlight the asymmetry of FV. Russell Dobash and Rebecca Dobash, for example, argue persuasively that FV "is primarily an asymmetrical problem of men's violence to women, and women's violence does not equate to men's in terms of frequency, severity, consequences and the victim's sense of safety and well-

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[20] *Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy*, Ministry of Social Development (Wellington, N.Z: Ministry of Social Development, 2002), 8.

being."[21] In their critique of the research methods gender symmetry advocates use, Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes present statistics that also show men to be the primary perpetrators of FV and women and children as the predominant victims.[22] In 2015, the United Nations Population Fund declared that violence against women and girls was one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world.[23] Globally, it is estimated that 35 percent of women will experience physical or sexual abuse in their lifetime.[24] Therefore, in this thesis, I treat the issue of FV as predominantly perpetrated by men against women and children.

In 2013, a study by the World Health Organisation (WHO) showed that high-income countries tend to have lower rates of FV than those in low- and middle-income countries.[25] Part of what makes the FV situation in New Zealand so shocking is that New Zealand does not follow that trend. According to data from the OECD, in 2019 New Zealand had the third-highest rate of FV prevalence compared with other OECD nations at 35 percent. In the OECD data, New Zealand was only behind the United States (36 percent) and Turkey (38 percent) when measuring the prevalence of FV toward women.[26] New Zealand is well above the average prevalence of FV in high-income countries which is 23.2 percent according to the WHO.[27] New Zealand's prevalence of FV is also high when compared to low- and middle-income countries as shown by Carolina Coll et al.[28] Moreover, in New Zealand, Pacific Islanders are disproportionately represented in FV statistics. In 2016 Pasefika Proud, a MSD initiative aimed at addressing FV in Pacific communities reported that Pacific Islanders were more likely to be victimised by, or perpetrators of, FV than the New Zealand-European majority.[29] In 2017, the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) reported that Police

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[21] R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash, "Women's Violence to Men in Intimate Relationships: Working on a Puzzle," *British Criminology Journal* 44, no. 3 (2004).

[22] Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, "Prevalence and Consequences of Male-to-female and Female-to-male Intimate Partner Violence as Measured by the National Violence Against Women Survey," *Violence Against Women* 6, no. 2 (2000): 151,53,55, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778010022181769.

[23] "Gender-Based Violence," United Nations Populations Fund, 2017, accessed 28 February, 2020, https://www.unfpa.org/gender-based-violence#.

[24] World Health Organisation, *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence*, WHO (Italy, 2013), 9.

[25] Organisation, *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence*, 17.

[26] "Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB) 2019: Violence Against Women," OECD, 2019, accessed 3 February, 2020, https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=95704.

[27] Organisation, *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence*, 17.

[28] Carolina V. N. Coll et al., "Intimate Partner Violence in 46 Low-Income and Middle-Income Countries: An Appraisal of the Most Vulnerable Groups of Women using Uational Health Surveys," *BMJ Global Health* 5, no. 1 (2020): 7-8, https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2019-002208, http://gh.bmj.com/content/5/1/e002208.abstract.

[29] "Pacific Peoples in New Zealand: Understanding Family Violence," 1.

investigations into FV incidents in 2016 had reached record highs.[30] Although the Clearinghouse notes that this does not necessarily indicate an increase in FV incidents, it does demonstrate that FV remains pervasive in New Zealand, and comprehensive strategies and investment are required to address it effectively.[31] To understand FV in New Zealand's Pacific communities beyond its prevalence, I analyse the issue in the Pacific, highlighting FV legislation and the policing of gender in the Pacific to do so.

A 2015 UNICEF report noted that the wider Pacific has some of the worst rates of FV prevalence in the world.[32] While the New Zealand government regards violence against women as a violation of human rights, Fijian legal scholar Joni Madraiwiwi noted in 2003 that many Pacific nations do not.[33] And while many Pacific nations have instituted laws against FV since 2003, Fijian Judge Mere Pulea warns that the law reforms have not significantly changed the factors that support FV. In her address to the Pacific Community in 2016 Pulea states that "Putting in place laws against domestic violence in 11 Pacific Island countries is a major achievement which will have profound impacts on the lives of victims of violence. However, legislation in itself is only part of the solution … There is much more to be done to effectively implement these laws, a challenge that is rivalled only by our underestimation of the difficulty of bringing about attitudinal and systemic changes."[34] Pulea acknowledges that in the Pacific, FV and issues of gender more broadly, are inflected with particular customary and religious nomenclature that may undermine FV legislation. Political scientist Nicole George highlights that when policing gender, Pacific police often draw upon customary and religious vernacular before consulting FV legislation.

George, like Pulea, has argued that FV law reform is only part of a larger response needed to effectively address FV in the Pacific. She explains, "Although there has been a strong

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[30] "NZFVC Data Summaries 2017: Family Violence Reports Reach Record High," New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2017, accessed 3 February, 2020, https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/nzfvc-data-summaries-2017-family-violence-reports-reach-record-high.

[31] NZFVC note that this does not necessarily indicate that FV is trending up in New Zealand, as "New Zealand doesn't collect sufficient, comparable data (for example, from research surveys) regularly enough to know whether family violence is increasing or decreasing. Administrative data (for example, from police, child protection, hospitals, domestic violence services, etc) is often reported annually however this reflects levels of service activity rather than the number of people who experience family violence in any community." "Frequently Asked Question," New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, accessed 3 February, 2020, https://nzfvc.org.nz/frequently-asked-questions.

[32] This study looked specifically at violence against women and children in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. UNICEF, *Harmful Connections: Examining the Relationship between Violence against Women and Violence against Children in the South Pacific*, UNICEF (UNICEF, 2015), 4, https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/political_declarations/east_asia_and_pacific/harmful_connections.pdf.

[33] Joni Madraiwiwi, "Domestic Violence and the Law," *Pacific Journal of Theology II* (2003): 46.

[34] "Ending Family Violence in Pacific: Law is not Enough," The Pacific Community, 2016, accessed 3 February, 2020, https://www.spc.int/updates/news/2016/06/ending-family-violence-in-pacific-law-is-not-enough.

state rhetoric of progressive reform on gender policy in this context [speaking of Fiji], efforts to reform policing have been hamstrung by longstanding customary and religious discourses that emphasize the defense of conjugal norms as foundational to the achievement of order and safety."[35] For George, gendered policing outcomes are produced in environments where "vernacular influences—customary and religious—inflect prevailing idioms of security and order … this scenario has encouraged a practical policing of gender and sexuality that is restrictive for women generally and may expose particular groups of women to direct forms of insecurity and violence."[36] Because of the vernacular dimension of Pacific security, specifically, its use of customary and religious traditions, law reform alone will not be successful against gendered issues as it does not address vernacular forms of security which justify gendered hierarchies. Therefore, because systems of power (including state, community, and familial power) in the Pacific are multi-layered—temporal and sacred—challenges to that power must also incorporate multi-layered approaches if they are to be successful. These customary and religious layers of power can work to subjugate women to men in Pacific contexts. I acknowledge that the vernacular dimensions to Pacific policing is of little consequence in New Zealand, however, given the large Pacific community in New Zealand, I would argue that both Pulea and George demonstrate that in Pacific contexts, including Pacific communities in New Zealand, FV policy alone may be inadequate if it does not address Pacific forms of patriarchy which is inflected with particular religious and customary nomenclature. In the next section, I discuss the function and importance of the church to Pacific communities in New Zealand, and I highlight the work of religious studies scholars and feminist theologians who explore the challenges of Pacific churches engaging with FV.

Pacific Churches and Family Violence

My focus on Pacific churches is multi-faceted in that I attend to questions of theology, hierarchy, community, and gender norms. Pacific churches are often affiliated with particular nationalities, language groups, and cultural communities. They become a surrogate village for migrant Pacific populations in New Zealand to gather together to celebrate not only their

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[35] Nicole George, "Policing 'Conjugal Order': Gender, Hybridity and Vernacular Security in Fiji," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19, no. 1 (2017): Abstract, https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2017.1283248.
[36] George, "Policing 'Conjugal Order': Gender, Hybridity and Vernacular Security in Fiji," Abstract.

Christian faith but their cultural identity as well. Manfred Ernst notes that the relationship between Pacific societies and the churches are so closely intertwined that "churches have had and still have such a great impact on nearly every aspect of life."[37] The Pacific church is a religious tradition that includes a set of institutions, cultural and social practices, ethical norms and obligations, and political imperatives. The interplay of Pacific culture and church means that when it comes to issues like FV in Pacific communities, the church is inevitably involved somehow.

In *Rape Culture, Gender Violence, and Religion*, Caroline Blyth, Emily Colgan, and Katie Edwards highlight "the vital role that Pacific Island churches play in providing education and resources to tackle the causes and prevention of gender violence."[38] Furthermore, anthropological research on FV and religion supports the notion that Christian theology shapes gender ethics.[39] This is because patriarchal interpretations of Christian theologies give meaning to the hegemony of men over women in many Christian societies, providing justifications of FV. Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson argue that the continuity between Christian theology and the ideology of patriarchy is at the core of Pacific church teachings and practices and that Pacific "Christian theology has assumed that a patriarchal worldview is divinely constituted."[40] Ah Siu-Maliko echoes this criticism of Pacific Christianity when she states:

> In reality, the Bible has often been used to justify violence against women and children. Samoan family relationships are strongly influenced by the patriarchal system which dominates the Old Testament…Some of the passages most frequently used to justify male dominance include the following: In the second creation story in Genesis 2: 4b-3:24, it is argued that 'out of man woman was taken' means that women are inferior to men and must submit to their control. Corinthians 11: 2-6 is likewise often cited, and the words 'the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband' have been interpreted literally, ignoring the contextual considerations in first-century Corinth.[41]

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[37] Manfred Ernst, *Globalization and the Re-Shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands.* (Suva, Fiji: Pacific Theological College, 2006), 547.

[38] Caroline Blyth, Emily Colgan, and Katie B. Edwards, "Introduction," in *Rape Culture, Gender Violence, and Religion: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Caroline Blyth, Emily Colgan, and Katie B. Edwards, Religion and Radicalism (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 1.

[39] Chloé Chambraud, "Women's Responses to Domestic Violence in Fiji: An Anthropological Perspective" (Master of Science London School of Economics and Political Science, 2014), 26-29.

[40] Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 71.

[41] Ah Siu-Maliko, *Christian Faith and Family Violence: A Report for Samoan communities in New Zealand*.

Ah Siu-Maliko demonstrates that Bible interpretations in Samoa inform gender hierarchies which in turn support FV. The aforementioned feminist theologians and religious studies scholars highlight the need for Pacific churches to engage with patriarchal interpretations of biblical text. As stated at the beginning of this section, churches are a surrogate village for Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. They are a crucial space for the transmission of Pacific culture and language, and as I will show in the following chapter, churches are where Pacific Islanders learn how to be Pacific Islanders in the diaspora. The entanglements of Christianity and Pacific life are far-reaching, and these entanglements include politics, culture, national identity, and gender ethics. If patriarchal theology contributes to issues of FV in Pacific communities, then Christianity must be included in any discussion regarding solutions to the issue, especially given the importance of the church to Pacific Islanders in New Zealand.

State Engagement with Family Violence

Officially, the New Zealand state is deeply concerned with FV. This is apparent in legislation against FV and also in the wide range of other state initiatives aimed at addressing the issue.[42] State engagement with FV includes multiple institutions within the state, including the justice system, government-funded social welfare agencies, and government ministries.

One FV initiative introduced by MSD, Pasefika Proud, focuses specifically on the Pacific community. However, Pasefika Proud does not specifically or directly engage religion when addressing FV in this community.[43] This occlusion is a hindrance to effective FV responses in Pacific communities because the church plays such an important function as a surrogate village for Pacific Islanders. Therefore, the engagement of the New Zealand state and Pacific churches on issues of FV is a question of New Zealand's secularity—is the state willing to engage religion on issues of FV? And, given the entangled nature of religion and gender ethics, can the state be effective in addressing FV in a highly religious community if it does not?

Learning how the Pacific community in New Zealand understands gender is vital to effective FV responses in that community, especially if Pacific notions of gender are constructed differently from the ideas prevalent within the state. For Women's Refuge chief

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[42] *Official Information Act Request*, Ministry of Social Development (Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Social Development, 2017).

[43] Gemma Malungahu and Vili Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*, Ministry of Social Development (Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, 2016), 1.

executive Ange Jury, gender inequality is at the heart of the issue of FV, thus addressing gender inequality is crucial to any FV response.[44] I draw on these considerations throughout this thesis.

Methodology

In this section, I describe the methods used in undertaking this research project. I include four subsections: *Research Approach*, *Positionality*, *Textual Analysis*, and *Recruitment* which express the processes behind my decisions to research this topic in the manner I have. I explain how information has been collected, analysed, and presented.

Research Approach

In my preliminary reading on secularism in New Zealand, it became apparent that there is no formal constitutional or legislative basis for a secular state. Therefore, the formation of state logic regarding secularism remained opaque. For instance, an analysis of FV policy reports that address Pacific communities revealed a secular approach toward religion, but they make no reference to any formal framework for why secularism is necessary or how it is informed. After this initial research, I concluded that secularism in New Zealand is a political principle that is by and large taken for granted; it seems a natural part of the mainstream political ethos, as such, it does not need the legal or constitutional support that formal documents would accord. This 'secular assumption' is such a given that no consideration is necessary as to whether or not secularism is even effective at managing religious diversity in New Zealand's democratic society. The answer to this problem is crucial for determining the equality of every citizen in New Zealand. In light of this preliminary research, it became clear that a singular focus on policy would be insufficient for exploring how secularism works in New Zealand; instead, I would also need to engage in the subject through interviews with those who navigate the secularity of the state on a quotidian level.

My approach to studying secularism in New Zealand shares much in common with the framework of Actor-Network-Theory as propounded by Bruno Latour.[45] I turn to Latour to better understand approaches to studying the social. Furthermore, he highlights some of the

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[44] Women's Refuge is a shelter for women escaping FV. Anneke Smith, "Gender Inequality 'at the Very Heart' of Family Violence," *NZ Herald*, 24 August 2017, https://www.nzherald.co.nz/hawkes-bay-today/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503462&objectid=11890528.

[45] See, for example, Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies, (Oxford: OUP, 2005).

issues that scholars run into when attempting to study dynamic subjects. In *Reassembling the Social*, Latour argues that:

> …when social scientists add the adjective 'social' to some phenomenon, they designate a stabilized state of affairs…There is nothing wrong with this use of the word as long as it designates what is *already* assembled together, without making any superfluous assumption about the *nature* of what is being assembled. Problems arise, however, when 'social' begins to mean a type of material, as if the adjective was roughly comparable to other terms like 'wooden', 'steely', 'biological', 'economical', 'mental', 'organizational', or 'linguistic'. At that point, the meaning of the word breaks down since it now designates two entirely different things: first, a movement during a process of assembling; and second, a specific type of ingredient that is supposed to differ from other materials.[46]

Latour argues that the social sciences can no longer construe the 'social' as some type of material. Instead, Latour wants to redefine the notion of the social "by going back to its original meaning and making it able to trace connections again."[47] Latour's argument is productive for this study because it offers an alternative to studying the social as a set of (fictitious) fixed subjects. Applied to the present study, analysing secularism in New Zealand should not be construed as a 'stabilised state of affairs', or a material thing because, as stated above, secularism in New Zealand lacks the legal and constitutional basis that might make this assignment possible. Instead, secularism in New Zealand is best studied not as an abstract philosophy but through those who must respond and engage with its practices within social relationships.

Latour defines the social "not as a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing, but…a very peculiar movement of re-associations and reassembling."[48] Explained in another way, the "social does not designate a thing among other things, like a black sheep among other white sheep, but *a type of connection* between things that are not themselves social."[49] Therefore, a fruitful study of secularism in New Zealand will trace the connections or conduits between other things like state ministries, government-funded NGOs, religious institutions, and Pacific communities in New Zealand. Because of the instability of secularism in New Zealand, the interviewees who represent the conduits between state, religion, and the Pacific community, should be considered the protagonists in a situation that I seek to describe

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[46] Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 1.
[47] Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 1.
[48] Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 7.
[49] Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 5.

in order to understand. In effect, I take account of their logics and practices as they navigate the coalface of religion, state, the Pacific community and FV. My interviews with them are essentially the nucleus around which this thesis is constructed—they are in a sense, my theoretical framework. For Latour, such an approach is necessary because,

> …in situations where innovations proliferate, where group boundaries are uncertain, when the range of entities to be taken into account fluctuates…the last thing to do would be to limit in advance the shape, size, heterogeneity, and combination of associations…The duties of the social mutate accordingly: it is no longer enough to limit interviewees to the role of informers offering cases of some well-known types. You have to grant them back the ability to make up their own theories of what the social is made of. Your task is no longer to impose some order, to limit the range of acceptable entities, to teach interviewees what they are…[50]

Viewed in this way, the interviewees represent the guides or experts in this study. These guides navigate the coalface by delineating boundaries, illuminating the 'wall of separation' which I cannot fully perceive unless described to me by them. Their experiences also speak to attempts to 'bridge the divide' between secular and religious spaces, connecting two things that are currently separate. I hope their experiences at the coalface of religion and the secular will highlight the mechanisms and consequences of secularism in New Zealand.

Latour's arguments about the difficulties in studying the social have helped guide my treatment of interview material in this thesis. Increasingly, as my interviews proceeded, I saw my task as being one of creating space for the interviewees to show me how they navigate the question of religion within, or in conversation with, state initiatives that address FV. Over time, I came to rely less and less on pre-written questions and talking points as I felt these served the purpose of keeping the interviewee *on track* and did not sufficiently grant them the ability to control the narration of their experiences.

In the beginning, I left some interviews having felt I learned little new information, and this was not the purpose of this project. I did not want to just confirm my limited knowledge of secularism, but rather, I wanted to learn from those who have had experiences that I have not shared. After some consideration, I decided that the most productive approach to interviews would be to merely introduce myself and the topic of my thesis and then invite the interviewee to speak to the topic in any way they saw relevant. This approach was conversational. The only equipment used in many of the interviews was an audio-recorder and a pen for the interviewee

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[50] Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 11-12.

to sign a consent form. In the end, my line of questioning was not fixed but more dynamic and intuitive, inspired by a genuine interest in their lives, as opposed to my constant analyses of the relevance of the information they were giving me. This led to interviews that varied greatly in content but were rich in description. Interviewees, therefore, narrated their experiences of secularism from their own highly specific vantage point, with only subtle guidance from me, through questions or a theoretical framework that I *perceived* would best tell their story.

Positionality

In almost all of my encounters with interviewees as a part of this research project, the conversations would begin with a discussion about me. This was always initiated by the interviewee, curious as to whom they were conversing with. After a brief introduction in which I would go over my thesis topic, interviewees would usually ask several personal questions. As I answered, some interviewees would listen intently, their eyes exploring my appearance, not my clothes but my skin and my facial features, perhaps searching for clues of my racial heritage. When jake.searell@so&so emailed asking to chat, they may not have expected a brown person given the European name. If the circumstances were different, had I not been in their space because I needed something from them, my reaction would likely have been quite negative. However, given the circumstances what may have seemed rude in another context felt like just part of the interviewing deal. I made sense of their questioning by regarding my liminality in this context, and I understood those questions to be a sort of litmus test. My perception was that the interviewees were considering how comfortable they were with me in their space. They were also calculating what information they were comfortable sharing with me, and whether or not I would take appropriate care of their story. 'Who is Jake?' became an unavoidable starting point to all my conversations. Only the interviewee could choose what information or narratives to share with me—and therefore I cannot know what they might have withheld from me.

It became apparent to me in the early stages of fieldwork that interviewees were careful in exercising their control over the conversation because once they hand over their stories, I then decide on how best to tell those stories to others. Their stories become open to my interpretation. This subjective process is like a 'whisper game' where my retelling of their stories is never a direct transliteration. Effectively, this a collaboration between relative strangers, and I acknowledge that they took a risk with me. I tried to be as genuine as I could in my representation of myself. These were partnerships after all, and I consider trust an essential ingredient to the success of those partnerships.

Given the topic of FV, it is fair to say I expected this 'litmus test' at the beginning of interviews. Specifically, I expected interviewees would question me on my definition of FV. In fact, I expected this to be *the* question in which interviewees would determine whether or not they would trust me with their stories. I use definitions of FV that regard men as the principal perpetrator as I believe those definitions most accurately describe the issue. However, if for instance, I defined the perpetration of FV as gender symmetrical, I imagine many interviews would have been very different, with some interviewees offering up only limited accounts, denying me access to areas of their knowledge under the suspicion that I would misrepresent their views. Surprisingly, the question of FV definitions was only mentioned in a couple of interviews and even then, primarily by non-Pacific Islanders.

My interviews with Pacific Islanders often began with a different line of inquiry: "Where are you from? Are you a Pacific Islander? Oh!? You are, are both of your parents from the Pacific? Where were you born? Your mum's Fijian? Is she indigenous or Indian? Do you speak Fijian? How often do you go back?" Some of the interviewees may have also been interested in my definition of FV, but clearly, this was not foremost on their minds. Instead, the primary issue was identifying me in relation to the Pacific. I took this to mean that, for Pacific interviewees engaged in FV work, questions of gender were secondary to my socio-cultural location. They were most curious as to my ability to understand them, as *Pacific* Islanders. Therefore, the litmus test was not, 'can I trust this *man* with my story?', but rather, 'can I trust this *Palagi*[51] with my story?' Ethnicity, in this case, superseded gender.

For example, one interviewee questioned what constitutes a Pacific Islander, she stated:

> …one of the things I think about is: what is a Pacific Islander? You know, like I always question, what's a Samoan? Because when we meet a 60-year-old, you find that predominantly they've been brought up in the islands, he's more Samoan than anyone. But then we have 30-year old's, 40-year old's that were born in New Zealand, their entire life they've never lived in Samoa, so are they really a Samoan Pacific Islander? So those are the things that I have to factor into how I deal with people. I may be dealing with them as a Samoan, but the fact is, they're actually Palagi in a way, and their worldview is informed quite differently.

Such definitions of what constitutes a Pacific Islander are common within the Pacific and in Pacific communities in New Zealand. In effect, there are degrees of separation between Pacific Islanders that are in some way linked to purity, of culture and of ancestry.

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[51] Similar to the Māori term *Pākehā*, *Palagi* delineates race or ethnicity. Refers to an outsider or non-Pacific person.

For example, it is often implicitly assumed that an indigenous Fijian, born and raised in Fiji, who is fluent in Fijian and familiar with Fijian customs is as Fijian as is possible. Diluting that Fijian-ness can happen in various ways and to varying degrees. For example, my mother, despite being born and raised in Suva, fluent in Fijian and knowledgeable of Fijian customs, her mixed ethnic background—Scottish and Black American as well as Fijian—make her less Fijian than others who have 'purer' ancestry. In another way, an ethnically 'pure' Fijian who was born and raised in the diaspora, does not speak Fijian and is only vaguely familiar with the culture, is also less pure, albeit along cultural lines. Indeed, my claim to Fijian heritage only seems to carry weight—as a bona fide ethnic identity—around New Zealand-Europeans who do not know any better because I am the only 'Fijian' they know. I suspect that my Fijian-ness was often viewed by Pacific interviewees as something more like a Palagi with a decent understanding of Pacific culture. This is to say that, throughout my fieldwork, I may have been viewed by Pacific Islanders as an ally rather than as an 'actual' Fijian.

In the above interviewee's definition of what constitutes a Pacific person, I realise that I fall short of her standard. I cannot say how much her perception of my 'Pacific-ness' altered the interview, nor can I say for certain how much my being male affected the interview. All I can do is work with the material gifted to me. I think it should be noted that I did not resist this impulse by the interviewees, to question who I am, nor did I dread it. Rather, I welcomed it as I did not presume that I was entitled to hear their stories—they had to be given in good faith. If I passed through that liminal space—which I took to be a rite of passage and an essential part of the interview process—the interviewee had to trust that I would retell their story in a manner that resembled their vision of themselves. In my description of their stories, I have attempted to honour those interviewees as best I can. I have tried to ensure that, if the interviewees read my accounts of them in this thesis, they will be able to recognise their voice in the text.

A short note on who I am

I am the son of a Fijian mother who is a devout Catholic, and an atheist Father of New Zealand-European descent, and a career public servant. Despite my Fijian descent, I was not born there, nor am I able to speak the Fijian language, but I am familiar with Fijian and broader Pacific culture. My familiarity with Pacific culture is largely intertwined with my being raised as a Christian in Pacific churches, as the two are closely interwoven. Also, I spent three years living on the Pacific Island of Niue during my childhood and attended a Christian Sunday school during my time there. Although I was raised a Christian, I would currently consider myself to

be non-religious. However, this distinction is in a sense, largely inconsequential. This is because, as aforementioned at various points in this introduction, (my) being a Pacific Islander is in some ways, and to some extent, interwoven with Christianity. And it is an unavoidable dimension to Pacific life.

My assumptions regarding the qualitative research I have undertaken are that I was neither seen as entirely an insider or an outsider, but some combination of the two. I believe that my experiences in the church and the Pacific helped make for respectful, collaborative, and productive interactions with interviewees.

Textual Analysis

Although this project was guided by conversations with interviewees, those interviews are supplemented with further analysis of textual sources. These textual sources are documents that seek to inform state engagement with Pacific communities in New Zealand. These policy documents were acquired from the police, government officials, and ministerial websites. They include government reports and policy statements, some of which were procured during the interview process by way of the interviewees' recommendation. When analysing these textual sources, I was interested in answering two primary questions: do these documents engage with religion? And if so, what does that engagement look like?

Recruitment

To analyse secularism in New Zealand, I recruited informants based on their ability—or my perception of their ability—to speak to two or more of the following themes: FV, Pacific churches or communities, and the secular state. My initial mode of contact was via email. At this early stage, potential informants had been identified based on my knowledge of state and NGO FV initiatives. However, only a small number of informants replied and agreed to have a conversation with me. From those few initial conversations, I relied almost completely on 'snowballing' or networking—asking at the end of every conversation if the informant could put me in contact with any individuals who might be helpful to my project. This approach was fruitful, as I was able to interview 17 people from a range of backgrounds.

As stated in the 'Research Approach' section above, my interview technique granted the interviewees significant space to discuss FV, secularism, and the Pacific community in ways they felt most comfortable with. This resulted in interviews that varied greatly in content, as such, from this initial group of 17, I identified interviewees whose stories were especially pertinent to the topics I wanted to explore in this thesis. My presentation of key interviews is

according to an in-depth case study approach, with each selected interview being discussed in detail to illuminate texture and details particular to that narrative. Where possible, I have included substantial quotes excerpted from the interview transcriptions to represent, as clearly as possible, the interviewees' voice. Although this approach means that some of the interviews are not given the same level of attention in the following chapters, they were nevertheless formative for shaping the questions and issues that I have chosen to focus on.

Chapter Review

One of the ways in which secularism works in New Zealand is as a 'wall of separation' between politics and religion, and in Chapter One 'Mapping Entanglements: Secularism and Religion in Policy Reports' I seek to examine the discursive basis of that wall. This chapter draws extensively on textual analysis of policy documents, to help clarify and establish the context for the interviews that follow in the other chapters. I examine the 'wall of separation' by first asking the question: what kind of secularism operates in New Zealand? In *Varieties of Secularism*, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd identifies two distinct forms of secularism in international relations: laicism, in which religion is imagined as the antagonist and impediment of modern politics, and Judeo-Christian secularism, in which religion is imagined as a starting point for unity and identity in modern politics.[52] However, I argue that secularism in New Zealand is different from both of these. New Zealand's history has furnished New Zealand secularism with a distinctive hue. This is in part shaped by the significant role played by the Treaty of Waitangi and the Treaty Tribunal in establishing the nature of the New Zealand state in relation to minorities. In this case, over the last few decades, the state has performed an accommodationist role concerning indigenous Māori cultural and religious values. I then explore the history of Christianity and secularism in the post-colonial Pacific, noting that this history is relevant in order to better understand the large Pacific minority population living in New Zealand.

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[52] Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "Varieties of Secularism," in *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 23. Hurd's forms of secularism develop upon the following bodies of work, Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Cultural Memory in the Present, (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003); José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Charles Taylor, "Modes of Secularism," in *Secularism and its Critics*, ed. Rajeev Bhargava (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

From this initial starting point, Chapter One proceeds to explore policy reports directed at addressing FV in New Zealand's Pacific communities. In particular, I am interested in how and to what extent the state engages religion in those policy reports because the inclusion or occlusion of religion in policy can help reveal the discursive articulation of secularism in New Zealand. However, if the Treaty of Waitangi and the Treaty Tribunal paved the way for (somewhat) fluid engagements between the state and minority groups, FV policy for Pacific communities tells a different story. That the 'wall of separation' is forcefully imposed. It is this amorphous characteristic of state engagement with religion that makes New Zealand's secularity distinct. These policy reports also illuminate some assumptions of the secular state, such as the particular association of secularity with women's emancipation, and the claim that a peaceful, egalitarian Pacific culture is one that forgoes Christianity and rediscovers Pacific customary traditions. I pull these tacit claims of the state into focus and question their validity.

In Chapter Two 'Bridging the Divide: Pacific Islanders Navigating the Secular', I analyse Pacific narratives about navigating state secularism in New Zealand. In doing so, I examine the integrity of the 'wall of separation' between religion and the state, arguing that the imagined wall is not impenetrable, but rather there are tunnels and hidden passageways that allow for the surreptitious interaction between religion and politics. I foreground interviews with four Pacific Islanders whom all self-identify as Christians and occupy positions in government or NGO spaces as they engage with FV in Pacific communities. I highlight their accounts because they work at the coalface of religion, politics, and the Pacific community.

If Chapter One examines secularism in New Zealand with a theoretical and discursive lens, Chapter Two explores how secularism in New Zealand operates in practice. The accounts of Pacific Islanders at the coalface show that the wall is a permeable one. I note that while many of the interviewees experience the secularity of the New Zealand state as a barrier, obstacle, and hindrance to their engagement with religion, they all nevertheless develop strategies that allow for various forms of encounter. I also examine the intersectionality of religion with Pacific identities focusing specifically on Pacific women. I argue that the occlusion of religion in secular FV initiatives has also resulted in the occlusion of Pacific women from those initiatives further marginalising them.

Both chapters demonstrate that on issues of FV the New Zealand state struggles to engage with Pacific religion and that the costs of this are carried by Pacific communities. In my conclusion, I argue that the 'wall of separation' which exists between religion and the New Zealand state has inhibited effective responses to FV in Pacific communities. Even though secularism fails to completely separate religion and the state in practice, its attempt at

separating the two in policy has made the job of addressing FV in Pacific communities more problematic for state agencies and actors. To show that a different kind of collaboration between the state and religion is possible on issues of FV, I consider the example of how the New Zealand Police approached the Christchurch mosque shootings of 2019. This example serves as a recommendation for a new pragmatic approach to addressing FV issues in Pacific communities. I argue that if the New Zealand state wants to successfully engage the Pacific community on issues of FV, and work toward solutions to this issue, it must also work alongside the Pacific church and faith-based actors.

Mapping Entanglements: Secularism and Religion in Policy Reports

The secularisation thesis has been a topic for debate among scholars for decades, and analysis surrounding the separation of politics and religion are as old as the theory itself.[53] For Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, contemporary international relations define "religion and its separation from politics as the natural starting point for social scientific inquiry."[54] Hurd argues that secularism seeks to either exclude or negotiate the influence of religion from modern spheres of power and authority. But despite the claims of many secularists, religion and politics are entangled with each other in nuanced ways. Secularism has never completely divided the religious from the political and religion is not neatly contained within the private sphere to which it has been frequently assigned. This is because separating the 'religious' from the 'secular' is not simply a separation of clearly marked spheres, but is actually an invention of them. Hurd offers a different starting point to this understanding of secularism: "Secularism is one of the most important organizing principles of modern politics. It is a discursive tradition defined and infused by power."[55] Secularism operates on particular assumptions about the secular and the religious. Furthermore, Hurd argues that secularism is a politically constructed social reality rather than a reflection of social reality. For Hurd, the Western traditions of secularism are consolidated through oppositions to the religious.

For Timothy Fitzgerald, there are two dominant images of religion in Western public discourse. One is benign and gentle, peace-loving, apolitical, non-violent, and not for profit. It is private, separated from the state. The other is violent, irrational, and uncivilised. This second image imagines religion in the form of terrorists, nationalists, and patriarchy which in turn threatens the peace-loving, reasonable, and free secular state. This is religion in the public

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[53] See, for example, Phillip E. Hammond, ed., *The Sacred in a Secular Age: Toward Revision in the Scientific Study of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Steve Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*; Mark Chaves, "Secularization as Declining Religious Authority," *Social Forces* 72, no. 3 (1994), https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/72.3.749; Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Olivier Tschannen, "The Secularization Paradigm: A Systematization," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30, no. 4 (1991), https://doi.org/10.2307/1387276; Max Weber, *The sociology of religion* (London: Methuen, 1965); Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); David Yamane, "Secularization on Trial: In Defense of a Neosecularization Paradigm," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36, no. 1 (1997), https://doi.org/10.2307/1387887.
[54] Hurd, "Varieties of Secularism," 23.
[55] Hurd, "Varieties of Secularism," 23.

sphere.[56] For Fitzgerald, the two images of religion depend on an assumption that 'religion' is essentially different from the non-religious secular. This view sees the religious and the secular, or the private and public spheres, like the immiscible substances oil and water, or like chemicals that are stable when kept separate but dangerously unstable when mixed. Under this reasoning, religion must be kept to the private sphere if it is to exist harmoniously in the modern secular state. "If 'religion' (which is essentially non-political and uninterested in power in this world) mistakenly becomes involved in 'politics' (which is the worldly arena of rational action) then it ceases to be true religion and becomes a dangerous unnatural hybrid."[57] For Fitzgerald, public demonstrations of the secular and the religious are configured or imagined in binary opposition to each other—religion is 'bad' and the secular is 'good'.

Using Hurd and Fitzgerald's arguments as a starting point, I seek to explore the tensions and synergies between the religious and the secular in New Zealand. I map the entanglements between religion and politics in New Zealand and describe how secularism in New Zealand has its own distinct characteristics. I make the argument that New Zealand's colonial past—most significantly the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and the continued promise from the government to uphold the Treaty; and the highly Christian immigrant populations from the Pacific—have contributed to a kind of secularity that can be partly characterised by its accommodation of religion. However, accommodation of religion is not a ubiquitous characteristic of the New Zealand state. Although my primary focus is on state engagements with Pacific community on FV issues, I will show in this chapter and throughout this thesis, that engaging religion differs depending on the state entity doing the engaging, and on the particular issue being engaged with. I then explore state policy reports that respond to FV issues in Pacific communities in New Zealand to show a particular manifestation of secularism, one which delineates sharply between the public and private spheres, occluding meaningful engagements between religion and the secular. In the final sections of this chapter, I critique some tacit assumptions and claims apparent in FV policy for Pacific Islanders. Namely, the association of women's emancipation with secularism, and the call for the revival of Pacific traditionalism as a means to address the FV problem in Pacific communities.

My main argument is that secularism in New Zealand has been ideologically inherited from Europe but re-shaped by a particular discourse with primarily indigenous Māori—but also other ethnic minority groups like Pacific Islanders—where hard divisions between

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[56] Timothy Fitzgerald, "Summary of the Argument," in *Religion and Politics in International Relations: The Modern Myth* (Bloomsbury, 2011), 78.
[57] Fitzgerald, "Summary of the Argument."

religion, politics, and culture do not exist. As a result, there has been a breakdown between state policy on FV and the people that policy has been written for. Moreover, I explore a type of secularity that cannot merely be characterised as either instituting sharp boundaries or enabling fluid engagements between religion and the secular. I will show that in New Zealand both examples are true to some extent. This is to say that secularism in New Zealand has an amorphous quality, wherein some instances, lines are blurred, and in others, the demarcation between religion and politics is reinforced. If secularism implies a 'wall of separation' between the secular and the religious, in this chapter I describe the discursive basis of that wall.

Secularism in Post-Colonial New Zealand

In *Varieties of Secularism* Hurd identifies two distinct forms of secularism: laïcité, in which religion is imagined as the antagonist and impediment of modern politics, and Judeo-Christian secularism, in which religion is imagined as a starting point for unity and identity in modern politics.[58] In describing secularism in New Zealand, I will show that secularism there is neither a version of laïcité nor is it a type of Judeo-Christian secularism (JCS). We also cannot easily place secularism in New Zealand on a spectrum between laïcité and JCS. Despite some similarities with laïcité and JCS, New Zealand's colonial history, large immigrant population from non-Western nations—particularly the Pacific—and its unusually high non-religious population, pull secularism in New Zealand in a different direction. New Zealand's secularism is not static, but rather it is a secularism in transition, imbuing it with a particular amorphous quality.

In *Rethinking Secularisation* José Casanova writes on the American context, "the United States was born as a modern secular state, never knew the established church of the European caesaro-papist absolutist state, and did not need to go through a European process of secular differentiation in order to become a modern secular society."[59] In a similar way, because New Zealand does not share the anticlerical history of France it never developed the strong regulatory distaste for religion that was associated with French politics. In other settler-colonies like the United States, Canada, and Australia, religion was used as a vehicle for which

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[58] Hurd, "Varieties of Secularism," 23. Hurd's forms of secularism develop upon the following bodies of work, Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*; Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*; Taylor, "Modes of Secularism."

[59] José Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization: a Global Comparative Perspective," *Hedgehog Review* 8, no. 1-2 (2006): 12.

ideas of unity and identity could be built. And notably, religion features in their constitutions. However, in New Zealand, religion does not feature in constitutional documents. The New Zealand government never made a formal declaration of its secularity—the separation of church and state and the privatisation of religion has been tacit rather than declarative. One way in which we can analyse the amorphous quality of secularity in New Zealand is by looking at the different ways the New Zealand government has managed diversity, with specific attention on minorities that do not separate religion, politics, and culture in the same way as the secular mainstream.

A significant feature shaping the New Zealand political context is its unique post-colonial history. New Zealand's domestic policies at the end of the 20th century have made significant attempts to rectify past colonial grievances against indigenous Māori.[60] The extent to which New Zealand has done so is unique amongst settler societies. This change, I argue, is a vital starting point for changing mainstream attitudes toward non-European cultures in New Zealand's public sphere. Importantly, these cultures, like those in the Pacific, are interwoven with religion in ways mainstream New Zealand-European culture is not. To understand why the latter part of the 20th century is important for understanding secularism in New Zealand, a brief account of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi is necessary.[61]

According to John Stenhouse, many Māori converted to Christianity in the years prior to the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Those Māori Christians, who had become literate in English through contact with missionaries, "vigorously defended their land and political rights against settler and government incursion."[62] Anglican humanitarians both in Britain and New Zealand also championed Māori rights and welfare.[63] In this increasingly anti-settler political climate, the New Zealand Company, a private company seeking to settle Europeans in New Zealand, knew that the British annexation of New Zealand would mean land purchasing would become more difficult and expensive. In 1839, the first New Zealand Company ship

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[60] *Māori*, indigenous New Zealander.

[61] The Treaty of Waitangi is widely recognised as New Zealand's foundational document. It was signed by many Māori chiefs and the British crown.

[62] According to John Stenhouse, one potential cause for the large scale conversion of Māori was "the intertribal Musket Wars that exploded during the 1820s, decimating many tribes and destroying several, raised hard questions about old ways. During the 1830s, missionary peace-making and condemnation of revenge warfare attracted growing numbers of Māori as ways to a more peaceful, prosperous future. Thousands attended mission stations to learn the *tikanga* (customs and correct behavior) of the God of the Bible and to equip themselves to make the most of modernity." John Stenhouse, "Imperialism, Atheism, and Race: Charles Southwell, Old Corruption, and the Maori," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 4 (2005): 760, https://doi.org/10.1086/431940.

[63] See, for example, Stenhouse, "Imperialism, Atheism, and Race: Charles Southwell, Old Corruption, and the Maori," 761.

landed in Wellington Harbour. Soon after, one Company leader claimed to have purchased millions of acres of land from local chiefs:[64]

> Its hand forced, the Colonial Office instructed William Hobson to draw up a treaty. The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 between the Crown and, eventually, some five hundred Māori chiefs, guaranteed Māori signatories all the rights and privileges of British subjects and entire chieftainship over their lands, forests, fisheries, and other treasured possessions. In return, Māori ceded sovereignty to Britain and were required to sell land to the government, not private companies or individuals.[65]

Over the course of the next 135 years, the Treaty was not honoured and major breaches of trust led to a deep sense of betrayal among many Māori, leading to public protests and activism since the 1960s. The tension between Māori and the state would lead to the creation of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 to address alleged breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi. An amendment in 1985 enabled the Tribunal to address historical breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi.[66] This acknowledgement by the state of historical wrongdoing sought to include Māori in new ways within the public sphere. I take this as a significant impetus for reshaping how the New Zealand government engages with indigenous Māori, as well as other ethnic and minority groups. It served as a mechanism that inspired new forms of government engagement with minorities.

The creation of the Waitangi Tribunal was the result of a larger bicultural movement in New Zealand. For Elizabeth Rata, the rise of biculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s aimed to "bring Māori in from the margins of society… It was intended that Māori culture be recognized as a valued part of New Zealand society and that Māori be full participants in an inclusive national culture."[67] For Rata, the 1985 Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act helped form a new interest in neotraditionalism—the revival of traditional social structures and ways of life. This shift toward accommodating Māori values is at odds with secular modernity:

> Neotraditionalists believe that the 'revived' tribe retains the basic features of a traditional society, particularly its kinship structure and leadership system. The features of the traditional society that serve the ideology are re-created. Individualism is rejected in favour of group belonging, based upon kinship ties. The group's claim to primordial origins in a mythological sacred past are used to

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[64] Stenhouse, "Imperialism, Atheism, and Race: Charles Southwell, Old Corruption, and the Maori."
[65] Stenhouse, "Imperialism, Atheism, and Race: Charles Southwell, Old Corruption, and the Maori."
[66] John Wilson, "Nation and Government: The Origins of Nationhood," (Wellington, NZ: Ministry for Culture and Heritage Te Manatu Taonga, 4 February 2017). https://teara.govt.nz/en/nation-and-government/page-1.
[67] Elizabeth Rata, "Rethinking Biculturalism," *Anthropological Theory* 5, no. 3 (2005): 267-68, https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499605055960.

justify a pervasive spiritual dimension within the social order in contrast to the secular character of modernity. The role of knowledge is to bind members of the group to one another and to this past. This is in contrast to modernity's critical scientific knowledge.[68]

This shift toward greater cultural inclusion of Māori in mainstream New Zealand society opened the door for a discussion of religion in the public sphere. This incorporation of religion as a matter of minority rights has given religion a particular presence in the New Zealand public sphere—one in which it is associated with ethnic minorities.

Commenting on mainstream New Zealand attitudes toward religion, Mike Grimshaw notes the publication of a Statement of Religious Diversity, published by the Department of Ethnic Affairs in 2006. Grimshaw argues this publication is significant as it indicates that religion is "concerned with the activities of non-white minorities. Such a location makes clear that in a culture of indifferent secularity, religion is regarded as an 'ethnic issue' and identity; a 'cultural' activity predominantly undertaken by non-European immigrants, indigenous Māori and Pacific Islanders."[69] In this Statement, the Department of Ethnic Affairs generalises by associating religion with New Zealand's minority communities. This assumption builds on published census data which shows that religious adherence has declined significantly among New Zealand-Europeans.[70] If, as I have argued, the shift toward greater cultural inclusion of Māori in mainstream New Zealand society opened the door for a discussion of religion in the public sphere, then that discussion has resulted in the 'ethnicisation' of religion in New Zealand in order for it to be included in the public sphere. This is to say that for many religious minorities in New Zealand, public displays of religiosity are assigned into a category of culture, not religion. These public displays are not necessarily demonstrations by religious communities themselves, but rather I take them to be state engagements with religion, indicating a shift of religion into the public sphere.

One such example of the New Zealand state accommodating non-mainstream values into the public sphere is the declaration of the Whanganui River, Te Urewera Forest, and Mount Taranaki as legal persons, acknowledging that particular iwi have unique ancestral relationships with these landmarks. In these examples, the New Zealand government has categorised ancestor worship—commonly viewed as a religious practice—as 'culture'. This

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[68] Rata, "Rethinking Biculturalism," 275-76.
[69] Mike Grimshaw, "'My Name was Christian.' C.K. Stead, Religion, Culture and National Identity," *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 32, no. 2 (2010): 61-62.
[70] Census 2013, 2018 census data for this statistic are not available, but as the percentage of non-religious New Zealander's rose in the 2018 census, we can assume that the 2013 statistics are still relevant.

reconfiguration of religion as culture by the government has led to (somewhat) fluid engagements with religion on particular issues. Nevertheless, this is not a ubiquitous characteristic of secularism in New Zealand. As I will show in the section, 'Analysis of Policy Reports on Family Violence in Pacific Communities', secularism still occludes religion within many state policies.

Secularism in the Post-Colonial Pacific

The tensions and synergies between religion and politics in New Zealand on questions of Pacific communities cannot be completely understood without a discussion of Christianity in the Pacific. Over thirty years ago, the missiologist Charles Forman noted that the Pacific is "in all probability, the most solidly Christian part of the world."[71] Other scholars have made similar comments about the Pacific. In discussing Samoa, Manfred Ernst argues "It would be hard to find any other nation in the world where society and the Churches are so closely interwoven, and where the historic mainline Churches have had and still have such a great impact on nearly every aspect of life."[72] The Pacific has accommodated Christianity in ways the rest of the Christian world has not. Matt Tomlinson and Debra McDougall expand on these observations, arguing that the Christian-ness of the Pacific is not only demonstrated in the high adherence to Christianity across the region but that it can also be measured by Christianity's influence on the public sphere.

Tomlinson and McDougall consider Christianity's impact on political life in *Christian Politics in Oceania*:

> Oceanic societies may be characterized as 'solidly Christian' because the political implications of Christianity are often taken for granted: Christianity is the ground and starting point for political action… Across the region, Christianity and politics have redefined each other in ways that make the two categories inseparable at any level of analysis. One can only understand what is Christian in Oceania through understanding what is political, and one can only understand what is political by understanding what is Christian. We do not mean to collapse these categories, but to show how

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[71] Charles W. Forman, *The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century*, American Society of Missiology series; no. 5, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 227.
[72] Ernst, *Globalization and the Re-Shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands.*, 547.

each is irreducibly constitutive of the other. In Oceania, the difference that Christianity makes is always and inevitably political.[73]

For Tomlinson and McDougall, Christianity shapes the contours of politics and vice versa. However, the lack of separation between religion and politics in the Pacific is not for a lack of trying on the behalf of missionaries in the Pacific. "Although many European, white Australian, and Pakeha New Zealander missionaries in the Pacific worked to distinguish the domains of politics and religion, such distinctions were not necessarily salient to converts."[74] This is especially true when imported ideological boundaries between religion and politics did not neatly fit onto pre-existing indigenous categories. These early converts would then engage in their own missionary work, effectively spreading a type of Christianity that lacked a distinction between religion and politics. Indeed, when Hurd, Saba Mahmood, and Joan Wallace Scott claim that the separation of church and state is a distinct quality of modern Christianity, evidently, they were not talking about the Pacific.[75]

We see the entanglements between religion and politics in the Pacific when considering the willingness of Pacific chiefs to convert to Christianity which was, according to Tomlinson and McDougall, deeply political. "Seeing the establishment of colonial administration as a mere prelude to the Christian transformation of their societies … when a group of Fiji's leading chiefs ceded their nation to Queen Victoria in 1874, they declared that they were 'desirous of securing the promotion of civilisation and Christianity'."[76] Christianity was viewed by chiefs as a means to unify particular groups of Pacific peoples and build a common sense of national identity and reinforce their authority. Christianity was part of a larger modernisation project and was embraced in all corners of Pacific society, not just religious spaces. Viewed in this way, Pacific Christianity and its European relatives bear resemblances, however, to see them as culturally synonymous would be a mistake.

One familiar concern expressed by missionaries in the Pacific was that converts had not had a "truly" religious experience, but rather they had come under the influence of the

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[73] Matt Tomlinson and Debra McDougall, "Introduction: Christian Politics in Oceania," in *Christian Politics in Oceania*, ed. Matt Tomlinson and Debra McDougall (Berghahn Books, 2012), 2.

[74] Tomlinson and McDougall, "Introduction: Christian Politics in Oceania," 6.

[75] Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "Rescued by Law? Gender and the Global Politics of Secularism," in *Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference*, ed. Linell E. Cady and Tracy Fessenden (Columbia University Press, 2013); Mahmood, "Sexuality and Secularism."; Joan Wallach Scott, "Secularism and Gender Equality," in *Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference*, ed. Linell E. Cady and Tracy Fessenden (Columbia University Press, 2013).

[76] Tomlinson and McDougall, "Introduction: Christian Politics in Oceania," 5. Tomlinson and McDougall quote Eddie Dean and Stan Ritova, *Rabuka: No Other Way* (Sydney, AU: Doubleday, 1988), 36.

mission for purely social or political reasons.[77] Missionaries were given special permission and protection by the colonial administration because they helped make Pacific Islanders easier to govern. "Whether engaged or aloof, however, missions in the Western Solomon's and throughout Oceania shaped the ways that their adherents engaged first with colonial administrations and later with independent national states."[78] For Pacific Islanders, Christianity was never apolitical.

From the earliest converts in the modern Pacific, Christianity has always occupied a larger space in Pacific Islanders' lives than the religious/private sphere that recent Western democracies, in either laïcité or JCS versions, assigned it. This feature of Pacific Christianity, as occupying the public sphere, is also true of a large number of Pacific Island immigrants to New Zealand, in which the close relationship between Christianity and Pacific culture means that Christianity still plays a major communal, social, and spiritual role for those migrants.[79] Thus far, I have explored a particular history of secularism in post-colonial New Zealand and the post-colonial Pacific. As I have argued, government attempts to address breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi with Māori over the latter part of the 20th century has opened the door for greater engagements with religion. However, as I will show, this greater accommodation of religion in the public sphere is not ubiquitous. In the next section, I explore how the New Zealand state engages with Pacific Christianity by analysing policy reports on FV designed to engage with Pacific Islanders.

Analysis of Policy Reports on Family Violence in Pacific Communities

Because of the enmeshed nature of Christianity in the Pacific, and because of the ongoing occlusion of religion in public spaces in New Zealand, Pacific Islanders living in New Zealand face particular challenges. As discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, FV statistics in New Zealand are some of the highest in the developed world, and Pacific Islanders are over-represented in those statistics. Here, I will explore state policies and programmes in response to FV issues in Pacific Island communities in New Zealand and highlight their entanglements with Christianity. I begin this discussion of state policy reports with a literature review carried

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[77] Tomlinson and McDougall, "Introduction: Christian Politics in Oceania," 5.
[78] Tomlinson and McDougall, "Introduction: Christian Politics in Oceania," 5.
[79] I further explore the interconnected nature of Pacific culture and Christianity in interview in Chapters Two & Three of this thesis.

out by the University of Auckland's Gemma Malungahu and Vili Nosa in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Development's Pasefika Proud Family Violence Prevention Programme.

Malungahu and Nosa identified pre-existing FV programmes that targeted Pacific male perpetrators of FV. The authors noted the lack of FV initiatives that target Pacific men, both globally and nationally.[80] Because of this, the literature review was conducted on initiatives that target 'mainstream' and indigenous male perpetrators. Mainstream initiatives focus on men generally without focusing on males within a specific ethnic group, while indigenous initiatives are targeted at Māori men. Malungahu and Nosa consider four FV initiatives in New Zealand.

The first initiative is the Te Rito Family Violence Prevention Strategy (Te Rito) which was established in 2002:

> Te Rito is an integrated, multifaceted, whole-of-government and community approach to preventing the occurrence and reoccurrence of family and domestic violence. The strategy aims to prevent, reduce and address violence in the family. Te Rito emphasises the need for approaches to family violence to be culturally appropriate and culturally relevant for whānau, iwi, Pacific and other ethnic groups.[81]

Te Rito lists: "Strategies for preventing violence and/or reducing violence in Pacific communities" and enhancing the capacity for Pacific service providers as 'Planned areas for action', although it does not specifically state how it would carry out these plans in Pacific Island communities.[82] In their literature review, over a decade after the introduction of Te Rito, Malungahu and Nosa argued that there were very few FV initiatives that specially target Pacific Island families.[83]

The second initiative, the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse), is a more recent initiative aimed at collating and disseminating information about FV in New Zealand. It is operated by the University of Auckland under contract from the Ministry of Justice. The mission of the Clearinghouse "is to centralise the information on domestic violence that can be accessed by non-governmental organisations and state agencies, and can provide researchers and policymakers with up-to-date information with which to make informed decisions."[84] The Clearinghouse provides a range of studies on Pacific Island families

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[80] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*, 47.
[81] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*, 35.
[82] *Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy*, 16-17.
[83] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*, 35.
[84] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*, 35.

from 2005 to 2014. However, none of these studies focus on the Christian identity of Pacific Islanders or the significance of the church as a surrogate village for Pacific communities in New Zealand.

The third initiative is the Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families (Taskforce) established in 2005 by the Ministry of Social Development. The Taskforce "is a joint initiative that includes government and non-government agencies, Crown entities and the judiciary. It is responsible for advising the family violence ministerial team about improvement strategies for addressing and eliminating family violence in New Zealand."[85] Since 2008, the Taskforce "has also focused on the quality and diversity of approaches to eliminating violence in Māori and Pacific families, with a workforce trained in prevention, early intervention, protection and accountability."[86] The Taskforce has the responsibility of providing initiatives for both Māori and Pacific Islanders. In 2012, three works were developed specifically for Pacific Islanders in New Zealand: seven ethnic-specific Pasefika conceptual frameworks, the Falevitu literature review, and the Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu conceptual frameworks. The frameworks are aimed at increasing ethnic-specific capabilities amongst service providers and community leaders. In 2013, the "Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu: Pasefika Proud Family Violence Research Plan: 2013–2018, was introduced. The research plan prioritises three themes in reducing family violence:

1. Generation of Pasefika knowledge(s) focuses on social and kin relationships, including 'lived examples' and information gathered from service providers and clients.

2. Service delivery includes provider-funder responsibilities and service quality.

3. Workforce development includes the construction, delivery, and evaluation of Pasefika nations training programmes and the creation of databases to identify Pasefika needs and workforce targets."[87]

The Taskforce research plan focuses on culturally specific concepts to address FV in Pacific communities. However, it does not include Christianity under that umbrella.

The fourth initiative, the Family Violence Intervention Guidelines (Guidelines) was established in 2002 by the Ministry of Health. This initiative was established in collaboration

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[85] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*.

[86] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*, 36.

[87] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*.

with health care professionals, Māori, and Pacific Island community leaders. The guidelines provide "integrated child and partner abuse intervention strategies and addressed the majority of efforts that have focused on crisis intervention, such as Women's Refuge."[88] However, like the initiatives listed above, the Guidelines do not engage in an in-depth discussion of the role of the church or Christianity in Pacific communities. Therefore, it does not provide secular service providers like Women's Refuge or Wellington Rape Crisis with guidelines to assist with helping religious women and children.

Malungahu and Nosa conclude that it is not clear if mainstream services provide Pacific-specific services. They highlight "five factors that should be included in any initiative involving Pacific families living in New Zealand:

1. The range of stressors related to migration and adaptation to New Zealand society (e.g. disruption to traditional family structures and support, changes in gender roles, intergenerational conflict, extended family needs)

2. Attitudes, perceptions and belief systems relating to family violence (including cultural and religious influences)

3. Socio-economic factors (e.g. unemployment, low-paid work, overcrowded housing)

4. English language and literacy needs

5. Compounding and contributing factors (e.g. alcohol, drugs and problem gambling)."[89]

Malungahu and Nosa identify religion here as a factor to be included in FV initiatives targeting Pacific communities. However, they do not expand upon this point, giving the impression that religion is not as prominent a factor in the lives of Pacific Islanders as I argue it is.

The authors recognise the Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu framework (Nga Vaka) as a Pacific-specific approach developed to aid policy writers in understanding core Pacific values and principles. While church ministers are noted as having taken part in the development of the Pacific Conceptual Frameworks, there is no substantial discussion of Christianity in the

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[88] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*.
[89] Malungahu and Nosa, *Family Violence Initiatives and Pacific Men: A Literature Review*, 36.

document. Furthermore, most mentions of religion are made with reference to a 'pre-Christian' or pre-colonial Pacific.[90] Only regarding Niue is Christianity identified as having a positive influence on a Pacific society. Nga Vaka states that the "values and beliefs of Niuean people today are inextricably tied up with Christianity. The church has played a role in building spiritual strength to encourage peaceful relations with one another."[91] Although Christianity's influence on Niuean culture is recognised, no strategy for meaningful engagement with the church is considered. The initiatives reviewed by Malungahu and Nosa present a particular image of the Pacific that minimises the influence of religion. The initiatives highlighted here go about separating Christianity off from other spheres of Pacific life, such as culture or national identity. This process of separation, as Hurd, Mahmood, and Scott argue, is a distinctly secular quality. Secularism imagines Pacific culture can be distilled from Christianity and thus identifies Pacific culture as something located within a pre-Christian Pacific. In the recommendations of their literature review, Malungahu and Nosa focus on cultural concepts without mention of religion as a means to effective policy and practice. It is unclear whether or not they include religion under the umbrella of culture. However, at various points throughout the review, the authors make some brief suggestions for greater engagement with religion by FV initiatives, although these suggestions are without an extensive discussion as to why this engagement is necessary.

The work of Malungahu and Nosa was part of a larger research series by MSD and representatives within the Pacific community to address the lack of data regarding FV in the Pacific community. The research series involved four reports including the aforementioned literature review by Malungahu and Nosa. The other three reports focused specifically on one Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand: Cook Islanders, Tongans, and Samoans respectively. The Cook Island ethnic report reviewed the literature searching for cultural concepts to inform FV interventions and practice. The researchers identified four as especially important: Akono'anga Māori: Cook Islands Culture, Pacific Pathways to the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Mou piriia te kōrero 'ā to 'ui tūpuna, aka'ora'ora'ia: Culturally responsive pedagogy for Cook Islands secondary schools' physical education, and Tūranga Māori: A Cook Islands Conceptual Framework transforming family violence—restoring wellbeing. Like the Nga Vaka framework on which this report is based, here, Christianity is not viewed as potentially important in

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[90] *Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu: A Pacific Conceptual Framework to address family violence in New Zealand*, Ministry of Social Development (Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, 2012), 25, 27, 35.

[91] *Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu: A Pacific Conceptual Framework to address family violence in New Zealand*, 38.

responding to FV issues in Cook Island communities, as the only reference of it is in relation to a pre-Christian Cook Island history.

The Tongan report in the research series looks at Tongan ethnic-specific approaches to family restoration. It explores how a Tongan faith-based programme, Kainga Tu'umalie (KT), has combined Christian and indigenous cultural approaches to FV issues in Tongan communities. This programme was implemented by Affirming Works, "a social service/community enterprise that provides mentoring and educational services for Pacific people…with a view to affecting positive change in the whole community."[92] The report states:

> The Church is integral to Pacific peoples' wellbeing and, as a core aspect of communal life, the Church constitutes the indispensable soul of Pacific culture. Thus, Pacific churches are identified as effective community contexts for engaging and working with Pacific communities and are potentially transformative sites for family violence prevention and intervention. This is also the belief of the Affirming Works team implementing the KT programme.[93]

This report provides an alternate narrative in the discussion of Christianity in Pacific communities that acknowledges the high proportion of Christians in Pacific communities and identifies churches as 'potentially transformative sites' in response to FV issues. While the report did not make any recommendations, listed in the key findings was a call for further research on Christian responses to FV issues: "The centrality of spiritual faith within Pacific cultures suggests the significance and potential of the findings of this research and the need to conduct further research exploring faith-based strategies for addressing the issue of family violence."[94] However, since this report was published in 2016, further research in this area has yet to be conducted.

The last report in the MSD research series draws on the experiences of Samoan men and women that have been in harmonious marriages or partner relationships in New Zealand.[95] The researchers interviewed a total of 21 participants: ten males and eleven females, all of whom

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[92] Sesimani Havea, *Tongan Ethnic-Specific Approaches to Family restoration: Scholarship Research Report* (Wellington: Pasefika Proud, 2018), 5.
[93] Havea, *Tongan Ethnic-Specific Approaches to Family restoration: Scholarship Research Report*.
[94] Havea, *Tongan Ethnic-Specific Approaches to Family restoration: Scholarship Research Report*, 15.
[95] The researchers do not define what is meant by 'harmonious' or whether the term was clarified before questioning the participants. Research by Galumalemana Steven Percival suggests words like harmonious, love, etc do not necessarily mean non-violent in Samoan contexts. Penelope Schoeffel, Ramona Boodoosingh, and Galumalemana Steven Percival, "It's All About Eve: Women's Attitudes to Gender-Based Violence in Samoa," in *Rape Culture, Gender Violence, and Religion: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Caroline Blyth, Emily Colgan, and Katie B. Edwards, Religion and Radicalism (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018); Galumalemana Steven Percival, *Sisi Le La'afa = Raise the Sennit Sail: Exploring Violence Against Women and Girls in Samoa* (Samoa: Paradigm Documentaries, 2015).

identified as Samoan and had been in a marriage or partner relationship in New Zealand for at least ten years. The researchers identify three main themes that have emerged from the participants' responses to questions: "expectations of a partner, what makes for a good marriage, and challenges experienced and how partners dealt with these." Participants often referred to their Christian faith in the responses, most frequently mentioning a commitment to faith and family as the ideal qualities of a partner. I quote some responses to questions regarding the 'expectations of a partner':

> Being a Godly person. Families should be Christianised because that's where good things are borne out. A person who prays, goes to church, reads the Bible and prays for the Bible to speak to her, will gain an understanding and be able to apply these things in her own life. [She] should know and understand the Bible, she must be Christian and she must love.
> (Male 1)

> My expectations? They would have to love my family. My family is everything [and] that comes with a whole lot of other expectations. To love my family means that we will share the same beliefs and the same values. We don't have to be exactly the same in what we do; my wider family [cousins], because we're like brothers and sisters and we're part of the package. [If] we disconnect with our family [we become] disconnected with our culture, disconnected with the church. [So] Christian, hardworking and honest.
> (Female 8)[96]

Although, the researchers did not recruit Christians for this project, nor did they ask questions about religiosity, most participants frequently reference their faith, the church, or their relationship with God in discussing their relationship with their partner. The participants continue to reference Christianity in their responses when questioned on the second theme, 'what makes for a good marriage'?

> The way I play my role is ordained by God. Spirituality is a major factor [that] dictates the way I treat my wife. (Male 1)

> Well [marriage] is not all a bed of roses. We always find that we go back to God. [One will say], 'I think we need to do a lotu' and that brings us back to a sense of peace, because you know you can

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[96] Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, Koleta Savaii, and Eti Puni, *What Makes for a Good Marriage or Partnership?: Samoan Case Study*, Ministry of Social Development (Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Social Development, 2016), 17.

get caught up in your own 'I'm right' – no I'm right'. If we are out of touch [with each other] it's being out of touch with God. We even laugh and say, 'It's not very Palagi!' God in the middle!

(Female 7)[97]

These responses further demonstrate the extent to which Christianity contributes to relational ethics for Pacific Islanders. Regarding the third theme, 'Challenges and how they are dealt with', discussion arose around who in the relationship was head of the household. Some responses include:

> If you think about it the Samoan way, he goes, 'Remember I have to be the head of the family' and you know me being the strong woman, I go 'Yeah whatever'. But when I look back in terms of our faith, the Bible and lotu, it's actually true, because that's what I believe as well. When you have too many people trying to be the chief at the top, then how does it work?
> (Female 7)

> [We must] remind men and women that men are not God's authority on earth. Work with religious institutions to shift their patriarchal views of family [and] society.
> (Female 4)[98]

The participants' responses show the prominence of Christianity in the lives of Samoan peoples in New Zealand and its significance in marriage or partner relationships. The responses of females 7 and 4 illuminate that particular interpretations of Christianity can either reinforce the subjugation of women to men or, be a part of the deconstruction of patriarchal Pacific views that underpin women's subjugation. Pacific Christianity here is not just one part of a binary opposition, but rather within Pacific Christianity there is a possibility for multiple future moral orders. It is not merely 'good' nor 'bad' but nuanced in complex ways. If Christianity shapes normative gender ethics, as the interviews above suggest, and if gender ethics are crucial to questions of FV, as I have argued, clearly this is an area that those who want to respond to FV will need to understand and engage, including those who work for the state.

Despite the participants' frequent references to the role of Christianity in their lives and its importance in partner relationships, the researchers highlight instead only Samoan indigenous cultural practices as a potential protective mechanism for women in partner

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[97] Fairbairn-Dunlop, Savaii, and Puni, *What Makes for a Good Marriage or Partnership?: Samoan Case Study*, 18.

[98] Fairbairn-Dunlop, Savaii, and Puni, *What Makes for a Good Marriage or Partnership?: Samoan Case Study*, 20.

relationships without considering religion. They recommend the traditional concept of the *feagaiga*—a protective relationship model between brother and sister—be reconceptualised as a generic relationship model and believe this warrant's further research. Although the connection between participants' and Christianity is obvious from their interviews, how participants' faith influences their views of family and relationships are not indicated as an area requiring further research. Instead, we find a recommendation for the revival of pre-Christian Pacific traditions.

The last policy document I consider here is from Oranga Tamariki (OT), also known as the Ministry for Children. I highlight an OT resource called Va'aifetu Part I: Data, Literature, Practice Environment (Va'aifetu) which serves as a guide for engaging with Pacific Islanders. Va'aifetu is aimed at guiding organisations or individuals regarding engagement with Pacific communities, and Pacific children in particular. Part 1 of the Va'aifetu framework demonstrates OT's policy toward religion:

> Churches are communities with spiritual, economic, cultural and political significance to many (but not all) Pacific families. For some cultural groups, churches are pseudo villages where their languages, worldviews, values and rituals are lived and passed on to younger generations. Religious beliefs continue to promote a natural order of patriarchal control and authority in home and communities; this is so embedded that established norms remain applicable in households that are not particularly religious. Religion and biblical teachings are thus undeniably influential in many households, at times more so than state law.[99]

The document's author/s[100] acknowledge the prevalence of the church in Pacific communities in New Zealand. However, by going on to conflate religious beliefs generally with patriarchal control and authority, this acknowledgement of the church's prevalence in Pacific communities also serves as a statement of the prevalence of patriarchal control and authority in Pacific communities. This statement is problematic because it does not acknowledge the diverse manifestations of religion, such as its potential for peace and equality.[101] Because Pacific communities are inextricably linked to Christianity, this statement also conflates Pacific Islanders with patriarchal control and authority. As Hurd argues in the opening paragraph of

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[99] *Va'aifetu Part I: Data, Literature, Practice Environment*, Oranga Tamariki (Wellington, NZ: Oranga Tamariki, 2019), 43, https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/practice-standards/working-with-pacific-peoples-vaaifetu/#resources.
[100] It is not clear who, or how many people authored this resource.
[101] I highlight this potential in the Conclusion of this thesis under the section Toward Pragmatic Engagements with Religion.

this chapter, secularism is consolidated through oppositions to the religious. By conflating Pacific communities with patriarchal control and authority, OT, as a secular entity, implicitly positions itself as a liberating force for oppressed religious Pacific women. This statement demonstrates the binary opposition between religion and the state, Pacific Islanders and OT. Va'aifetu provides further information about Pacific communities:

> Violence is a problem in Pacific nations; it is committed by choice and cannot be blamed on culture, religion, alcohol, drugs, or anything else. The sacredness of women as sisters, mothers and elders appears to diminish in violent partnerships where they are wives or partners; perhaps because while there are cultural protocols that uphold the status of sisters, mothers and elders, there is relatively less regarding spouses aside from religious/biblical hierarchy.[102]

Despite indicating that Pacific violence "cannot be blamed on … religion," the author/s do just that. They identify that cultural protocols—non-Christian protocols—protect women from violence outside of intimate relationships. They then assert that the only protection from violence for women is religion, which the author/s have already established is a vehicle "promot[ing] a natural order of patriarchal control and authority." In other words, for OT, religion cannot provide an environment that is safe for Pacific women in intimate partner relationships. This is another example of religion viewed simply as violent, patriarchal, etc. 'Cultural protocols' make up the other half of the binary here. Statements like those above present this characterisation of religion as a universal truth. Tacitly the non-religious secular is configured as the peaceful and egalitarian opposite to religion's violence and patriarchy.

Like the policy reports highlighted earlier in this section, OT presents a gender-egalitarian Pacific society as one that is liberated from Christianity:

> Traditionally, Pacific women have held strategic status in many Polynesian, Micronesian and Melanesian cultures such as women holding ariki (paramount chief) titles in the Cook Islands, fatupaepae for Tokelauan, and matai for Samoans. Women continue to hold hereditary roles over customary lands, especially in matriarchal communities in Melanesia and Micronesia. Women have also been the creators of traditional forms of wealth, such as koloa (tapa and crafts in Tonga) and tivaevae (Cook Islands quilts). In the Pacific islands, around 80 percent of market vendors are women, contributing to family and national wealth. The esteemed status of women has

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[102] *Va'aifetu Part I: Data, Literature, Practice Environment*, 45.

unfortunately slipped even in matrilineal societies of the Pacific, fuelled by the increasing monetisation of wealth, religion, and patriarchal colonial influences.[103]

As I have shown, religion is deeply embedded in nearly every facet of Pacific life. OT's presentation of the Pacific is effectively a critical analysis—it is highly subjective, revealing a secular bias against religion. This document suggests that religion cannot be part of the modern Pacific, as religion is, through patriarchy and violence, imagined only as the source of women's subjugation. Because of the perceived danger of religion in the public/political sphere, state actors go about separating religion from aspects of public life. Religion, therefore, tends to have a limited place in the formulation of policy documents and the design of state or NGO programmes. Although OT's Va'aifetu policy is more forceful with its assertions about religion, it nevertheless exhibits a similar stance toward religion to that of MSD policies—both separate religion from 'secular' aspects of Pacific life and suggest a future secular moral order as a means to address FV in Pacific communities.

The policy reports outlined here go about separating Pacific life into two spheres, politics and religion and public and private. They do so by defining what is secular and religious for Pacific Islanders and in the process invent these categories. The effectiveness of the 2016 Pacific Research Series is yet to be seen. However, given the fact that Christianity in the Pacific is so interwoven with modern Pacific traditions for Pacific migrants living in New Zealand, the role of Christianity as a source of Pacific identity is accentuated. This is due to Pacific culture being transported from the Pacific and safeguarded in New Zealand by the church. For them, Pacific culture is inextricably linked to Pacific Christianity. Instead, what we observe is that these policies make attempts to define the religious and separate it from secular aspects of Pacific life. They therefore represent a European cultural project rather than a Pacific one.

In the introduction to the MSD research series, its editor Yvonne Crichton-Hill, states: "These MSD funded research projects demonstrate how important it is to understand Pacific notions of family and relationships and Pacific solutions to issues such as family violence."[104] However, by not engaging in a thorough discussion about religion, these policy documents fail to engage with Pacific institutions, ideas, and relational dynamics. In the next section, I critique a particular tacit assumption about secularism evident in FV policy which associates it with women's emancipation. Given the gendered nature of the FV issue and the religiosity of the

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[103] *Va'aifetu Part I: Data, Literature, Practice Environment*, 44.
[104] Yvonne Crichton-Hill, *Pacific Family Violence Research Series*, Ministry of Social Development (Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, 2018), 1.

Pacific community in New Zealand, it is crucial to understand the validity of this assumption. I question whether secularism ever promised to liberate women in the first instance, and if so, in the case of Pacific women, was that promise fulfilled.

Gender and Secularism

One trope that is underwritten by a secular-religious binary is that secular knowledge is free and democratic, and religious knowledge is subjugated by superstition and arbitrary power. Fitzgerald expands upon this, stating, "the opposition between … religious barbarity and violence against our peace-loving and only reluctantly violent secular rationality becomes a partly unconscious nuance or presupposition … These binaries so deeply underpin the dominant modern *imaginaire* … that they have acquired the status of universal truths, and have been virtually removed from systemic critique."[105] Against the perceived binary nature of religion and secularity, Talal Asad posits in *Formations of the Secular* that the religious is constituted by the secular, especially regarding political and scientific discourses. Therefore, 'religion' and knowledge of it is a construction of Western secular modernity.[106]

As I showed in the last section, this binary between religion and the secular is evident in FV policy reports for the Pacific community. Those policies and programmes determine that violence and patriarchy are inherent values of religion. This is because when state actors remove religion from the discussion of FV in Christian communities, the absence of religion is implicitly located as a precondition for non-violent family relationships. This act simultaneously presupposes the secular as peaceful and egalitarian. In this way, religion has become synonymous with several oppressions, gender inequality most prominent among them. In this section, I seek to analyse the validity of this argument, that secularism is the precondition for women's emancipation.

Historian Joan Wallach Scott argues that the secular as the antonym of religion is taken to mean gender equality without much consideration about whether or not secularism has actually brought about women's emancipation. Scott points to the history of secularism as a reason to question this claim, arguing that "the equal status of women and men was not a

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[105] Fitzgerald, "Summary of the Argument," 86, 88. Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization: a Global Comparative Perspective," 7-8.
[106] Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, 191-92. See also, Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

primary concern for those who moved to separate church and state."[107] Furthermore, that liberal secularism has had little to do with gender equality, but rather intensifies dilemmas attending to sexual difference.[108] This is because, for Scott, the private and public distinction at the core of secular politics is based on a pre-existing distinction between the sexes. One which sets up hierarchical oppositions between the two, where women should occupy the private sphere and embrace domestic, child-rearing roles, and; men should occupy the public sphere and embrace politics, big business, and breadwinning roles. Scott states, "at the originary moments of secularism (in its democratic or republican forms)—but also well into its history—women were not considered men's political equals. The difference of sex was taken to be a legitimate ground for inequality."[109] Women have historically been marginalised from politics and other public institutions based on the sexual division of private and public spheres with women confined to the private, and men assigned to the public. Women's 'place' in the private, domestic sphere segregates her from the public sphere and therefore limits her participation in politics. This division provides the framework on which secularism is based.

Secularism, viewed in this way, cannot offer gender equality because the private/public division it enshrines is based on a division of the sexes that has subordinated women to men. In her essay, Sexuality and Secularism, Mahmood summarises Scott:

> Scott's argument is not merely that liberal secularism has been historically inimical to gender equality. More important, she is arguing that the opposition between the public and the private, so fundamental to the political order liberal secularism institutes, presupposes and is based on a form of gender inequality that is uniquely modern in history. I take Scott to be suggesting here that secularism and sexuality are intrinsically and necessarily linked in part because of the problematic place sexual difference occupies within the liberal secular imaginary. The public and the private division enshrines sexual difference at the core of the modern secular political order and provides the matrix for organizing other hierarchical oppositions such as state and family, reason and sex, politics and religion.[110]

Scott's argument is an important one to consider for this thesis because of the way in which state actors measure the values of New Zealand's religious minorities, their compatibility with a secular democracy, and the equality (or *in*equality) of religious women as against an unquestionable secular standard of judgement. Scott questions the emancipatory

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[107] Scott, "Secularism and Gender Equality," 26.
[108] Scott, "Secularism and Gender Equality," 30.
[109] Hurd, "Rescued by Law? Gender and the Global Politics of Secularism," 211.
[110] Mahmood, "Sexuality and Secularism," 49.

presupposition of that secular judgement; "It is taken to be an idea, either timeless or evolving, that signifies a universal project of human emancipation specifically including women."[111] And for Scott, secularism never promised this. Scott is right to question the binary oppositions of modern/traditional, gender equality/patriarchal hierarchy and secular/religious. For Scott, these binaries should not lie beyond our critiques or considered 'universal truths' as Fitzgerald put it.

I apply Scott's argument to the New Zealand context by asking: what the effect of secularism is on the interaction between Pacific victims and survivors of FV, and secular FV initiatives? The secular nature of FV initiatives may explain why only four to six percent of Pacific women use secular services like Women's Refuge and Wellington Rape Crisis despite the disproportionate representation of Pacific Islanders in FV statistics.[112] If this is true, the low number of Pacific women accessing these services presents secularism as a potential obstacle in addressing FV in Pacific communities in New Zealand.[113] Viewed in this way, if the secular state does not engage religion in meaningful ways, secularism exercised by FV services may partition those services off from Pacific women, exacerbating the issue of FV in Pacific communities. Here, secularism is not a liberating force for Pacific women, but rather, it may have had the effect of further marginalising Pacific women by inhibiting their access to state services. The metaphoric 'wall of separation' that divides religion and the secular can be seen here in quite literal ways.

Some Pacific feminist theologians argue that religion should not be ignored but engaged with on issues of FV, especially in Pacific contexts. In *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women*, Joan Filemoni-Tofaeono and Lydia Johnson critique patriarchal biblical interpretations, church traditions, and male clerical power in an attempt to provide a theological response to violence against women. For the authors, religious patriarchy is at the core of the FV problem in Pacific communities.[114] Although they highlight

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[111] Scott, "Secularism and Gender Equality," 25.

[112] In the next chapter, Kyla Rayner, manager of Wellington Rape Crisis (WRC) informs me that of all women accessing WRC only 4–6 percent are Pacific women. Kate Burry, programme development and research advisor for Women's Refuge (WR), noted similar statistics to me in an email, that only 6 percent of women who accessed WR were Pacific women.

[113] This is not to say that secularism is the only obstacle for Pacific peoples accessing FV services—I address this further in the next chapter.

[114] It is important to note that Christian theology should not be read as a synonym for patriarchal oppression. Early feminist thought was inspired and shaped by theology. See the work of 16th and 17th century feminists Jane Anger and Rachel Speght, and also Elizabeth Cady Stanton's 1895 book, *The Woman's Bible* are examples of this. Therefore, criticism of patriarchal theology and traditions by feminist Christians might be seen as a reclamation project. Stanton, *The Woman's Bible*; Anger, *Jane Anger Her Protection for Women: To Defend them Against the Scandalous Reportes of a Late Surfeiting Louer, and all Otherlike Venerians that Complaine so to bee Ouercloyed with Womens Kindnesse*; Speght, *The Polemics and Poems of Rachel Speght*.

how patriarchal interpretations of the Bible can be used to justify violence toward women in Christian contexts, they never offer secularism as the means in which to deliver women's emancipation in the Pacific. What they attempt to do is change normative gender ethics from within Pacific churches.[115] The role of the Pacific church in the formation of normative gender ethics in Pacific communities is, in fact, one reason why government departments and secular NGOs should engage with religion rather than occlude it.

As shown at the beginning of this chapter, Christianity is not *just* patriarchal, but is crucial to Pacific identity, culture, and social organisation, perhaps more so in the diaspora. Therefore, if secular FV initiatives require Pacific women to sunder themselves from religion, those initiatives are also requesting that those women sunder themselves from an important part of what makes them Pacific Islanders. If in the eyes of the secular state, religion is only violent and patriarchal, then the state cannot appreciate the complex ways in which religion is bound up in notions and understandings of what it means to be a Pacific Islander because secularism obstructs this possibility. As shown in the next chapter, because FV policy does not engage religion, Pacific women experience a particular oppression because their intersectional identities are in part occluded by secularism. By not engaging religion in policy documents, the New Zealand state does not recognise the importance of religion in the lives of Pacific Islanders, and therefore it cannot completely perceive Pacific women's identity because it fails to acknowledge how and to what extent their identity is partly constituted by, and intersected with, religion. This particular oppression is not considered by many state actors because they assume that secularism is an emancipatory force for (religious) women. Therefore, the state does not consider that without engaging religion, it will struggle to provide Pacific women with appropriate responses to FV. Although Scott has shown that secularism never promised women's emancipation, we see that state actors enact secularism with this assumption, however, in the case of Pacific women, this promise has not been fulfilled. In Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety,* she illuminates some of the complicated intersections between religion, post-colonial struggles against cultural domination, and women's liberation.

Mahmood highlights some of the considerations non-Western religious women make when deciding upon liberations—from religious patriarchy and colonial domination. Although she is commenting on the predicament of Muslim women in Egypt, I believe their struggle is

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[115] Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 28; Ah Siu-Maliko, "A Public Theology Response to Domestic Violence in Samoa."; Douglas, "Christianity, Tradition, and Everyday Modernity: Towards an Anatomy of Women's Groupings in Melanesia."; *Divine domesticities: Christian paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 2014).

indicative of a larger struggle for religious women from post-colonial states—such as those in the Pacific. For Mahmood,

> the desire for freedom cannot be claimed as universal, as it is part of particular cultural and historical trajectories. If Western feminists assume that all women have the inherent desire to liberate themselves from religious and male authority, this ignores the particular historical circumstances in which women in Egypt see their submission to a conservative religious tradition as part of a broader struggle for freedom from Western social, political and cultural domination.[116]

Mahmood suggests, therefore, that conservative religion can work as a liberating force for colonised peoples, therefore Egyptian women may not necessarily seek emancipation as imagined by Western secular feminists.

As Scott has identified, secularism's claim to gender egalitarianism is deeply problematic. Because of this, Western feminism, which provides much of the theoretical basis for secular FV initiatives, cannot be considered as offering Pacific women emancipation especially if that emancipatory project is secular. Furthermore, we must also consider that for minority women facing "political and cultural domination", their liberation as women is also, in various ways, bound up in their struggle against colonial political and cultural forces. If the New Zealand state does not acknowledge the specific patriarchal Christian theologies and practices that perpetuate FV in Pacific communities, nor the fundamental role of Christianity for Pacific Islanders, it greatly limits its ability to engage effectively with Pacific communities on FV issues. In the next section, I critique another assumption of the secular state, one which implies that peaceful Pacific communities are ones that renounce religion and revive Pacific customary traditions.

Egalitarian Traditionalism—or Cultural Patriarchy

In this section, I address a tacit claim of the secular state, which advocates for the revival of Pacific traditionalism as a means to address the FV problem in Pacific communities. This claim is highly normative in that it seeks to facilitate an alternative moral order. Policies like the

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[116] Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: the Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Islamic revival and the Feminist Subject, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). Quoted in Kim Knibbe and Brenda Bartelink, "Gender: Religion, Secularism, and Women's Empowerment," in *Religion and European Society: A Primer*, ed. Benjamin Schewel and Erin K. Wilson (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), 132.

Va'aifetu document assume that a peaceful, egalitarian Pacific society is one that forgoes Christianity and rediscovers primordial Pacific culture. However, this is in contrast to the arguments made in the Introduction to this thesis by Mere Pulea and Nicole George, who show that patriarchal Pacific attitudes toward gender are informed by both religion and traditional customs. Scholars of the Pacific echo this point, arguing that Christianity did not introduce patriarchy to the Pacific, but rather Christian patriarchy became inflected with pre-existing patriarchal norms.

In *Reweaving the Relational Mat*, Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson argue that pre-colonial patriarchal values in many Pacific societies would later support Christian patriarchal traditions, in effect creating "a hybrid culture of patriarchy that has drastically impacted upon the lives of the inhabitants of the island nations in Oceania."[117] In a 2009 United Nations (UN) report on the *Harmful Practices Against Women in Pacific Island Countries*, Imrana Jalal outlines numerous pre-Christian customary practices that subjugate women to men. The report points out that "There is a want of good practices in legislation in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to combat harmful practices against women…Customary law, largely unwritten, plays a big part in sanctioning harmful practices against women:

> Harmful practices against women are some of the ways in which violence is used to enforce sexual norms and gender roles on women by the State and non-State actors, including the family and the community. The more well-known forms of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), honour killings and the like do not occur in the PICTs. However other forms of harmful practices, both traditional and contemporary (modified versions of traditional practices), do occur with impunity, in various parts of the PICTs, including the deliberate burning or beheading of women perceived to be witches in parts of Melanesia … brideprice practices (Melanesia and East Timor), traditional forgiveness practices, the burning of mainly female witches for alleged sorcery (Melanesia) and early or arranged or forced marriages.[118]

Although Jalal does not explicitly highlight a link between harmful customary practices against women and Pacific Christianity, she does not necessarily separate those customary practices from Pacific Christianity as the above policy writers have done. Jalal's report features a statement by the Fijian Women's Crisis Centre which illuminates this connection. "Many

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[117] Oranga *Va'aifetu Part I: Data, Literature, Practice Environment*, 43.
[118] Jalal echoes Nicole George's argument discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, that legislation alone cannot successfully eliminate FV in the Pacific because this does not address customary law which is vernacular and pervasive. Imrana Jalal, *Harmful Practices against Women in Pacific Island Countries: Customary and Convention Law*, United Nations (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UN, 2009), 2.

customary practices are still in place and reinforce certain interpretations of religious (mainly Christian) beliefs about women's roles."[119] Like Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson, Jalal (via the Fijian Women's Crisis Centre statement) highlights that customary and Christian forms of patriarchy are entangled with and mutually constitute each other in nuanced ways.

This is not to say that some customary traditions cannot be revived to help support healthy familial relationships—like *feagaiga*—but rather, to point out that patriarchy in the Pacific is not reducible to only Christian influences. We should consider that policy reports that recommend traditional customary practices as a means to pushback against Christian patriarchy, may be offering up another system of patriarchal customary practices as the solution. Furthermore, if government policy reports only highlight practices like *feagaiga* without acknowledging the other patriarchal customary practices that go along with Pacific traditionalism, then the state enacts a highly selective process which, to some extent, has the effect of sanitising Pacific traditions. This effectively reconfigures Pacific traditions to better fit secular New Zealand requirements. I point this out not merely to say that Pacific traditions are 'bad', or that Pacific Christianity is 'good', but rather to show that our understandings of Pacific traditions and Pacific Christianity is impeded by the secular 'need' to imagine these things as either secular or religious, therefore constituting them as binary opposites. Instead, I illuminate the complexity of these features of Pacific life so that we may understand that they should not be depicted so one-dimensionally. This is to say that both Pacific traditions and Pacific Christianity can be, in a general sense, simultaneously patriarchal and violent *and* an invaluable source of Pacific identity. This selective exercise does not allow state actors to develop nuanced and sophisticated understandings of the FV problem in Pacific communities precisely because it occludes other important dimensions of Pacific reality.

Compared with New Zealand state policy, Jalal's UN report offers different insights into the customary practices of various Pacific societies. This report acknowledges that there have been, and still are, patriarchal customary practices in the Pacific. And as Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson argue, harmful customary practices often support contemporary Christian patriarchy in the Pacific. In my analysis of policy reports, I highlighted the binary opposition between (non-religious) Pacific 'culture' and Pacific 'Christianity'. In this section, I problematise this binary because if policy reports imagine Pacific culture as peaceful and egalitarian and Pacific Christianity as patriarchal and violent, those reports occlude the

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[119] Jalal, *Harmful Practices against Women in Pacific Island Countries: Customary and Convention Law*, 10. Quoted from Fijian Women's Crisis Centre.

possibility that these two 'opposites' are in fact interwoven with each other in complex ways. In the next section, I consider the entanglements between politics and religion as shown in my analysis of policy. In so doing, I consider this attempted separation and suggest it has resulted in some unintended negative consequences.

Entanglements of Politics and Religion

Secularism imagines religion and politics to be cleanly separable from one another. However, the policy highlighted above, and the aforementioned discussion of Christianity in the Pacific demonstrate that the clean separation of religion and politics is not a simple exercise when considering Pacific Islanders. Much of the FV policy addressed above occludes Christianity despite its salience in Pacific communities. Instead, they focus on pre-Christian Pacific culture in response to FV. Implicit in those policies is a powerful normative secular agenda. I use Philip Fountain and colleagues' definition of normativity here, which they take to mean "an invocation to be otherwise." They argue that a normative "claim involves the articulation of a desired future moral order, which compels changes in the present so as to facilitate its active pursuit."[120] Despite religion's dynamic presence in Pacific lives, the state identifies what is religion and what is not. Policymakers do so by separating religion off from other aspects of Pacific life in a way that does not reflect Pacific realities. This is to say that secularism is a politically constructed social reality rather than an actual reflection of Pacific social reality. As such, the state excludes religion from meaningful analysis of FV among Pacific communities. Considering how deeply interwoven Christianity is in the lives of Pacific Islanders, the secular nature of FV initiatives may explain the low numbers of Pacific women that use secular services which is cause for concern given the over-representation of Pacific Islanders in the FV statistics.[121]

The normative secular forces that are present in many FV services are therefore a reflection of state secularity—this is to say that the spaces in which policies and programmes

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[120] Philip Fountain, Doug Hynd, and Tobias Tan, "Theology, Anthropology, and the Invocation to be Otherwise," *St Mark's Review*, no. 244 (2018): 9.

[121] Kate Burry—Programme Development & Research Advisor for Women's Refuge, forwarded me the following via email: "I've taken a look at our data from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 for all of our Refuges and their service streams excluding FVIARS, Whangaia and ISR services and the overall percentage of women and children who have been identified as Pacific People is 6 percent of our overall referrals." Kayla Rayner, Manager of Wellington Rape Crisis, noted that the number of Pacific women accessing her service is between 4-6 percent. Both Women's Refuge and Wellington Rape Crisis are government-funded secular NGOs that address FV and sexual violence.

are produced, materialise under this normative expectation. This is important to keep in mind given the fact that nearly all of the policy reviewed in this chapter was written by Pacific Islanders, for Pacific Islanders. Policy analysts are often expected to keep their findings and recommendations in line with the secular nature of the institution they represent. However, in practice, as I discuss in the next chapter, the entanglements of religion and politics are being actively navigated by state actors who work at the coalface of government supported FV work with Pacific communities.

In sum, like secularism elsewhere, secularism in New Zealand is "more like different emphases within the context of the wider historical construction of secular politics and the nation-state, and the 'othering' of 'religion'. However, underlying…these emphases lies a common binary opposition that, in separating the 'religious' from 'the secular', at the same time invents them."[122] My reviewing of FV policy reports in Pacific communities shows that state actors identify religion and remove it from the Pacific experience. This has the effect of simultaneously inventing a 'Christian' and 'secular' Pacific experience that are not only separate but often configured in opposition to each other. Furthermore, this separation does not accurately reflect Pacific social realities, which reveal that these 'separate' spheres are entangled with each other in highly nuanced ways. Saba Mahmood writes on the role of the state in religious affairs: "In many instances modern nation-states have had to act as de facto theologians—distinguishing what is properly religious from what is not—in order to render certain practices indifferent to religious doctrine, thus legitimately bringing them under the domain of civil law and state regulation."[123] Viewed in this way, the secularisation of FV policy in Pacific communities, evidenced by the aforementioned policy reports, legitimises state intervention and regulation on FV issues in Pacific communities because these issues are now classed as secular, not religious. However, this very process of secularising FV in Pacific communities may have occluded Pacific Islanders from effective FV responses precisely because, for them, the FV issue is inextricably entangled with religion.

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[122] Fitzgerald, "Summary of the Argument," 81.
[123] Mahmood, "Sexuality and Secularism," 47.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I described secularism in New Zealand by analysing government policy. I showed that in New Zealand secularism as expressed in FV policy reports separates the religious and the secular into distinct, often opposed spheres. The reports I reference highlight the dynamics of, and suggested solutions to, FV in Pacific communities according to the New Zealand government. I drew attention to the absence of religion in the reports to illuminate that government policy engages in a selective or partial retelling of Pacific realities. The reports' architects enact secularism by identifying and removing religion from the lives of Pacific Islanders, and I suggested that this secular agenda has had an unintended consequence. Which is, secularism has also separated Pacific Islanders from government and NGO FV services precisely because these services are secular.[124] If this is true, the 'wall of separation' between religion and the secular is not just evident in policy reports. Its effects are felt most forcibly by those religious communities that secularism seeks to manage. Described in this way, we see that secularism has had a negative effect on Pacific women when it comes to addressing FV in their communities because it occludes a significant part of their identity.

The secular agenda evident in these policy reports is not informed by constitutional or legislative frameworks. I have argued that secularism in New Zealand is shaped by its historical legacies. The New Zealand government's engagement with Māori, particularly in the last three decades, represents the integration of non-mainstream cultural values into the New Zealand-European mainstream. This integration has enabled some fluid engagements between the state and Māori, including on issues concerning religion when that 'religion' is categorised as 'culture'. However, FV policy demonstrates that state engagement with Pacific religion has not been so accommodating, rather government engagement with Pacific communities on FV has had the effect of occluding religion. This amorphous engagement with religion is what makes secularity in New Zealand distinct from laïcité and JCS. In some instances, lines are blurred, and in others, the demarcation between religion and politics is reified.

In this chapter, I showed that the lack of a clearly defined constitutional basis for secularism in New Zealand has not meant that the New Zealand state is only vaguely secular, albeit secularism is expressed in different ways by different state entities. The policy reports show that secularism is in fact quite pervasive. It is enacted by seemingly well-informed, well-drilled secular officials who know how to form their discourses in ways that leave religion out.

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[124] I took the low proportion of Pacific women accessing secular FV initiatives as a starting point for this inquiry.

The policies highlighted in this chapter demonstrate one expression of secularism by the state. To explain how secularism works in practice, in the next chapter I explore conversations I had with Pacific Islanders as they navigate the coalface of the three constituent elements of this thesis: the FV issue, Pacific communities, and the secular state.

Bridging the Divide: Pacific Islanders Navigating the Secular

In this chapter, I report on my interviews with Pacific Islanders navigating the coalface of government supported family violence (FV) work with Pacific communities. Their views give a distinctive vantage in which to consider the secularity of the New Zealand state. I highlight a particular narrative about secularism that is distinctive to the Pacific community in New Zealand. This story comes not from policy analysts, but from interviews with four[125] Pacific Islanders whom all self-identify as Christians and occupy government spaces. I feature these four accounts because they illuminate a secularity that does not express itself neutrally, but which has impacted quite forcefully on the lives of Pacific Islanders. They paint a picture of secularism as a normative force, an 'invocation to be otherwise'—to be secular.[126] Underlying this invocation is a deep misunderstanding of religion, and what it means for Pacific Islanders to be Christian. State actors envision the relationship between Pacific Islanders and their religion as something akin to a Venn diagram: two separate circles whose common constituents are represented by the limited overlap of the two circles. As stated in Chapter One, to imagine religion and the secular as separate spheres is a pernicious exercise because it invents the religious and the secular in ways that are often foreign to religious minorities. In the case of Pacific Islanders, the Venn diagram's two separate circles that represent the religious and the secular are entirely artificial, making the process of navigating secularism an intricate, abstruse undertaking for them. As I will show, secularism—which is premised on promising neutrality—has had the effect of marginalising Pacific Islanders. Secularism is therefore not neutral, but deeply preferential toward the secular citizen.

The following conversations illuminate a 'wall of separation' that goes beyond policy. As stated in Chapter One, this 'wall of separation' is not employed through constitutional or legislative documents, rather, it is a normative force produced and articulated in the vernacular; as expressed through argot, parlance, and everyday rhetoric in government and NGO spaces. It is enacted by state actors who emphasise secular assumptions, such as the neutrality of the state when considering religion. The conversations below elucidate how Pacific Islanders within state and NGO services navigate this 'wall of separation'. They do so, emphasising the difficulty of this task when the spheres of religion and the secular do not exist for them or the Pacific

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[125] I feature four accounts prominently and one other (Glenys) is supplementary.

[126] Fountain, Hynd, and Tan, "Theology, Anthropology, and the Invocation to be Otherwise," 9.

communities they belong to. Their stories call to attention the partiality of the secular state, not its neutrality. These conversations reveal that the limitations produced by secularism make engagements with Pacific Islanders on issues of FV highly impractical. We also see the interviewees attempt to compensate for this by frequently employing a language of bordering and bridging, of trying to make the secular project work for a community that does not know how to be 'properly' secular.

Interwoven Identities: A conversation with Kyla Rayner

I met with Kyla[127] on the back of a conversation I had with Natalie Thorburn of Women's Refuge (WR). Natalie had kindly put me in contact with Kyla because, as Natalie put it, "Kyla can speak to this topic in so many ways." Natalie was right. Kyla, a Samoan-New Zealander, Christian, woman, and the manager of a government-funded FV agency, does indeed occupy many of the spaces I explore in this project.

Kyla has worked with Wellington Rape Crisis (WRC) for three years and WR for seven years before that. I met with Kyla late on a Wednesday afternoon in Winter. She is, as you might expect someone to be who has worked on the 'frontline' of family and sexual violence (SV)[128] for as long as she has, exceedingly warm, and in the first 30 seconds of meeting her, has your trust. Kyla offered me a "poor judgement coffee"—or something to that effect. We laughed, coffee in the late afternoon is always a bad idea. I say, "yes please". I really mean, "no thanks". But I figured, if she is going to put up with me for an hour, over-caffeinated and anxious, the least I could do is join her.[129]

We moved into one of the meeting rooms to conduct the interview, and I started by telling Kyla a bit about myself and why this topic is important to me. I pressed record and Kyla began, describing WRC and the absence of Pacific women involved in this service—both as employees and clients:

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[127] The names of all interviewees are their own.

[128] Although FV and SV are often represented as separate issues, they are interwoven with and mutually constitute each other in various ways.

[129] In the introductory paragraphs of each interview, I have inserted a few sentences indicating my initial thoughts, feelings, or emotions regarding the spaces in which these conversations have been conducted. I have done so to give life to the interviewee, in order to better represent them as 'real' people and to indicate my presence in their space. Furthermore, I have done so to emphasise that the spaces I occupy for these conversations also have life. They affect me and my behaviour in particular ways. This is to say that all spaces, particularly those we are not familiar with, evoke certain economic, cultural, social, political, and/or secular-religious normative ethics.

Kyla: [WRC] is a mainstream service, open for all women, but what that means is Pākehā.[130] I'm from Auckland[131] originally, so I've been in Wellington[132] for ten years, and so that's a contributing factor to what I think is happening here for Pacific people, is that this to me feels really white.

Jake: Do you mean the women coming through your door?

Kyla: This city and this sector, this whole set up is. We say it's Tauiwi[133] and it's mainstream and what that often means is it's Pākehā.

Jake: What percentage of women that access WRC are Pacific?

Kyla: Off the top of my head, between 4 and 6 percent.

Jake: In an interview I did with Women's Refuge, they told me 6 percent. Do you share the same data?

Kyla: No, we're completely separate. So, they're DV [domestic violence] and we're SV, but how real are these silos, aye? They're constructs.[134]

Jake: Yep! But 4 to 6 percent, that's interesting.

Kyla: It's tiny, and we know that Māori and Pasefika women are overly represented in the prevalence and what we're not seeing is those people walking through the door. And I think that what creates the space for people to walk through the door is creating a space where they feel like they belong here, and actually, it's about workforce, having people who are delivering the services

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[130] In New Zealand, the term *Pākehā* is commonly used to refer to New Zealanders of European descent, and Kyla's use of the term indicates this. However, throughout this thesis, I will use the term 'New Zealand-European' to refer to New Zealanders of European descent. I do so because the term *Pākehā* can be defined generally as 'a foreigner', or 'non-Māori', as well as 'European'. Therefore, all non-Māori communities in New Zealand may be defined as *Pākehā*, including Pacific communities. As non-Māori/non-European groups in New Zealand have vastly different cultural, religious, and national identities to New Zealand-Europeans, I will separate them by using the term 'New Zealand-European' which is more specific.
[131] Auckland is New Zealand's largest city with the world's largest Pacific community.
[132] Capital city of New Zealand.
[133] *Tauiwi*, like *Pākehā*, can be defined as both, New Zealanders of European descent and as non-Māori. Kyla has used the term *Tauiwi* to refer to the New Zealand mainstream—which she then identifies as *Pākehā*. This is to say, she is referring to New Zealand's mainstream or dominant culture as New Zealand-European, as opposed to non-Māori.
[134] Kyla notes that the perception of FV and SV as separate imagines them as categorically different—existing without overlap. She is suggesting that the two are not mutually exclusive.

who look like you, that are gonna get where you're coming from and what your background is. So, are we training enough of our people in this really specialist area? We're not. If you can't even go to a church and say hey, I'm doing a masters project on this, then clearly this is not an attractive space yet for Pacific people. In Auckland, there are dedicated specialist services that might work with SV for Pacific people, but there's none of that in Wellington. We don't have a Pasefika person in our space, it's just me, but I don't do frontline work anymore.

In Kyla's opening remarks about WRC, she immediately made comments about race and ethnicity—and the *whiteness* of not just WRC but the Wellington public sector in general. For Kyla, one of the key reasons for the low number of Pacific women using services like WRC and WR is that there are very few Pacific frontline workers working for secular FV agencies. In Kyla's opinion, what will encourage Pacific women to access FV services is a sense of belonging. She is suggesting that to convey a sense of belonging is difficult, if not impossible if a FV service does not have staff that have shared cultural or religious experiences with the women seeking help. So why are so few Pacific women working in the FV space? Kyla suggested that it is because FV is not an attractive space for Pacific women to work in—it is a *taboo* subject in many Pacific communities.[135] But another question we can consider regarding this problem is: are secular FV services seen as 'safe' spaces for Pacific women to work in? Kyla spoke of an attitude within government and NGO circles that is hostile toward religion:

> I'll take baby to church or mum to church and people will just be like, "uuuhhh! church?! I would never step foot in a church!". I had a way different experience in Auckland because there's a way bigger Pacific community and so white people around you are just like, 'oh yeah, that's what Islanders do, they have white Sunday', people, your friends would know about those events because you were visible.

Kyla's choice of the word 'visible' here is important because it suggests that Pacific Islanders and their way of life do not feature in the Wellingtonian consciousness—they are unseen or unheard, and marginalised from greater Wellington culture—and attitudes toward Pacific religiosity exemplify this. Notably, Wellington is where parliament and the majority of New Zealand's public service headquarters are located. This is to say that the Wellington culture Kyla talked about is also heavily influenced by New Zealand government agencies. If

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[135] For more on attitudes toward FV, see, Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*; Percival, *Sisi Le La'afa = Raise the Sennit Sail: Exploring Violence Against Women and Girls in Samoa*; Schoeffel, Boodoosingh, and Percival, "It's All About Eve: Women's Attitudes to Gender-Based Violence in Samoa."

comments like, "uuuhhh! church?! I would never step foot in a church!" are common in government and NGO spaces, then working for FV services does not represent a safe space for people who hold religious or cultural views that differ from mainstream secular norms. Kyla highlighted the challenges Pacific women face in using FV services:

> So, I worked for a long time at [WR] as a social worker, for about four years and then delivered all our women's programmes and did training and stuff for three years and … I'm also raised in a Samoan church myself. So, once you actually have those people representing the people that we want to come through the door and taking up that space and talking about their identity, and talking about their background, then you will see more and more people access your service … I found myself a lot of the time where [Pacific women] were keen to access the service, but they wanted me to go and meet their friend, almost as a precursor to accessing the service … because [Pacific women] needed something before making the decision to walk through the door because they don't know if this is a safe place or not. Especially with [FV] you're trying to have some control over your life and the idea of walking into a place like this is just, you'd be letting go of your control … What would happen to your partner? What visa are you guys on? What happens to your children? … You lose all of this control. So, we've got to do all of this work just to get people to understand the way in which we work to make them know that coming here would help them as opposed to create more problems for them.

Kyla noted the apprehension of Pacific women when accessing WR or WRC. In part, this feeling of apprehension comes from Pacific women identifying difference between them and the organisation they seek to access. Because many FV services cater to a 'perceived' typical woman client which as Kyla highlighted is of New Zealand-European descent, Pacific women are not made to feel welcome in FV services. Women who experience FV often experience a loss of confidence in their sense of self, it is therefore important for FV services to provide a supportive environment. To elaborate on this further, I insert an excerpt from another interview with a Pacific woman (Glenys) who uses the women's group at her church to counsel women regarding FV issues:

> I think that it's important that they know their identity, 'cos quite often, they get lost in their abuse and they don't know who they are, so for us, I know for me and our [women's] group it's about knowing who you are, not necessarily about knowing who you are in Christ, but helping them along that journey. What are their goals? What are their dreams? What is it that they actually want to do with their life? Giving them that sense of, they don't belong in that situation anymore, they do have something to look forward to and snapping them out of the whole dependent mindset, we try and help them develop, and empower them.

For Glenys, restoring a victim/survivor's identity is important for her recovery. However, if religion is a significant part of her identity, a question needs to be raised as to whether she can achieve this in a secular FV service that struggles to have an accommodating dialogue with religion, or worse, openly lambastes it. And this is true for both Pacific women accessing secular FV services, and for frontline workers. Kyla's comments are supported by the low number of Pacific women who access FV services like WRC and WR. Furthermore, Kyla describes the reassurances that Pacific women need before accessing a FV service because it is not immediately clear that secular services are a safe space for them. Pacific women are effectively in a liminal space, on the threshold of two locations that both represent their lack of autonomy. On the one hand, Pacific women experience a loss of control in their private/domestic life, which is most clearly manifest in the violence and/or abuse she experiences at home. On the other hand, in public spaces which are assumed to represent her safety, such as a secular FV service, a Pacific woman is also faced with losing control to a foreign culture, leading the Pacific victim/survivor of FV to feel alienated in secular FV services.

However, Kyla showed that for Pacific women this loss of control is also evident in other ways. For example, before deciding to access a FV agency, Pacific women may have to consider the immigration status of her and her partner; and her perceived responsibility in keeping the family together. Depending on the severity of the violence or abuse committed against her and/or her child(ren), if she reports these crimes, authorities may intervene and deport the family, or just the male partner who may represent her financial security.[136] Therefore, for Kyla and Glenys, the loss of control that Pacific women experience is constituted distinctly from non-Pacific women because of particular religious and immigratory factors.

In Kyla's comments we see how important it is for FV services to have a level of Pacific cultural and religious literacy[137] in dealing with women who do not fit the mainstream New Zealand-European mould. In Chapter One, I argued that the distinction between 'secular' and 'religious' spheres is constructed by policy writers, essentially inventing secular and religious categories. First, this means that the 'secular' and the 'religious' are being defined for Pacific Islanders by state actors who do not, or, are unable to acknowledge the nuanced entanglements between the two spheres (given the normative secular agenda of many state spaces). Moreover, this sharp separation or 'walling off' of the two spheres is experienced by many Pacific

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[136] Perpetrators of FV sometimes control their partner's access to economic resources, diminishing their partner's independence, making them dependent on the perpetrator.

[137] See, for example, Stephen R. Prothero, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know-and Doesn't*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007).

Islanders as an external imposition. Second, for non-Pacific FV workers who lack good understandings of Pacific experiences, they will frequently fail to consider the entanglements of religion in secular domains. As a consequence, the combined absence of FV policy that engages religion, and of Pacific women working in FV initiatives has led to a situation in which secular FV initiatives do not have the requisite resources to make their spaces a safe one for Pacific women.

Another way of considering this problem is through analysing the intersections of religion and ethnicity. In this example, secularism effectively marginalises Pacific Islanders from state or government-funded NGO services, and indeed the same would be the case for any other community that does not conform to mainstream secular norms. This type of segregation is not explicit, but implicit. By not creating an accommodating space for Pacific women, both for women who seek assistance or for women who may consider a career in the FV space, these state services effectively do not provide Pacific women with realistic options to address the FV they experience. Kyla stated that secularism "absolves our government off from any responsibility for these marginalised groups who have the highest prevalence of harm." Therefore, the issue of FV in Pacific communities does not get adequately addressed, and Pacific women are not effectively catered for. This takes place even though there is FV policy that specifically targets Pacific communities. In highlighting the need for more diverse approaches to FV responses, Kyla followed her comments on secularism with a dialogue on how FV affects the lives of religious women:

> The impact of SV and FV has a real spiritual impact on people, and it absolutely impacts people's relationship with God. But I've also seen God or faith being used as a way for people to leave those harmful relationships. When you think about family violence or sexual violence and how it erodes someone's self-worth or self-esteem, confidence, and for many of the women that I've worked with and for me myself when you're in that place, it's really hard for you to believe in yourself or to want better for yourself, but when you have faith, it's like this massive opportunity to let something else guide you to somewhere better. And I think that because this sector is so white and so secular, they love to hate on religion because that's the cool thing to do … and we don't have enough Pacific people in these spaces to make [being religious] normal. The church has been my village here and it is so important to me culturally, but they're not exposed to that at all. They don't see the incredible potential in how faith can be a vehicle for safety.[138]

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[138] I engage with Glenys again here, who tells me a story of a counselling session in which she helped a woman disconnect from her abuser. She starts by describing the client's emotions: "Fear, rejection, she felt abandoned and unheard when she told people that her uncle was abusing her. For me, rejection is a lie, God didn't abandon you. God loves you … that weight just came off her, and a sense of freedom came with it." As Glenys alludes to,

Kyla described the positive role and importance of faith in her own, and other Christian women's struggle with FV and SV. For religious women, religion provides distinct strategies and language potentially aiding in their recovery from FV. Kyla also conflated the terms 'white' and 'secular' in describing the public sector and FV initiatives, emphasising the unaccommodating attitudes of the white secular public sector and FV initiatives toward religion, highlighting her position as an 'other' in these spaces. This acknowledgement of a pervasive white secular normative agenda can be read as an example of the ways in which religion and ethnicity are closely linked because Kyla experiences this agenda most forcefully as a Pacific Christian. Moreover, Kyla offered an insight into how Pacific Islanders experience a particular subjugation to the white secular because they are religious. Her use of the expression "hate on" is revealing here, as it alludes to a Black American cultural idiom, which provides a language of critique and resistance against an oppressive white racism. By using hate on to describe her own experiences as a Pacific Christian in a secular environment, Kyla equates her struggle to that of another oppressed ethnic and racial minority group. By doing so she implicitly connects the oppression of Blacks in America and Pacific Christians in New Zealand. To "hate on religion" is to also hate on Kyla as a Pacific Islander given the entanglements between Pacific culture, religion, nationhood, and identity. In other words, secularism in New Zealand is framed as being embedded within ethnic and racial logics and exclusions.

A popular argument for secularism is that it is a means to provide freedom of religion for all citizens by way of removing any particular religion from dominating the public sphere. However, this assumption is supported by the notion that secularism is neutral, which I have argued, it is not. Instead, as shown here, it imposes quite forcefully on religious minorities. Moreover, the problem with the extent to which religion has been privatised in New Zealand is that, for Pacific Islanders who do not make the distinction between the secular and the religious, there are limited services that engage with FV issues that: 1) accept their Pacific identity, and 2) offer a nuanced understanding of how Christianity is entangled in FV issues in Pacific communities, both in the justification of violence and in its critique. Secularism in New Zealand has the effect of perpetuating the FV issue in Pacific communities by not effectively

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the victim in this case has felt abandoned and unloved over the course of her life. Fear for abandonment makes her disconnection from the perpetrator extremely difficult. Here, God becomes a powerful source of unconditional love which is ever-present. Glenys emphasises this because she seeks to disconnect the victim from their source of violence, which is also their source of love. If Glenys is to be successful in her task, she must provide the victim with an alternative source of unconditional love which is God. This is an example of how Christianity can be used to help a Christian woman out of a violent relationship.

engaging Christianity. In other words, secular responses to FV in Pacific communities that do not engage religion are often ineffective.

A recent report published by the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse confirms this. It notes in its key findings that "'Mainstream' family violence initiatives and programmes are not usually effective for Pacific peoples… Funding criteria should allow each provider to develop a service that reflects their organisation's philosophical base, incorporating the Pacific cultural norms and culture within which it works."[139] Given the interwoven nature of Pacific culture with religion, funding criteria that requires religion be omitted or partially occluded from faith-based social services severely hampers the ability of those organisations to respond to issues in Pacific communities in culturally appropriate ways, potentially rendering them ineffective. As a result, many of the FV services created for Pacific communities are in a position where they are made to choose between funding or creating a FV service that works for Pacific Islanders. The fact that these pursuits are mutually exclusive should warrant policy analysts to reconsider government criteria for funding.

By holding too tightly to the separation of the religious and the secular, state FV workers do not consider that engaging Christian or the church could be an effective way to engage FV in Pacific communities. It is both the place where patriarchal interpretations of the Bible can be addressed and also where women experiencing violence and abuse may be cared for in a manner they are most comfortable with. My discussion with Kyla also addressed the role of the church in Pacific communities in New Zealand. She commented on the cultural importance of the church for Pacific peoples and Christianity as a key source of identity:

> I absolutely see churches as an integral part of our immigrant story, they were the villages for my family when my mum arrived here and for my wider family, that's where we went, that's where we learnt our culture, that's where we learnt our language, that's where we learnt our way of being in the world. It is such a source of pride, and it's our identity, so to not bring your identity is not ok.

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[139] Given that this report was published in June 2020, one month before the submission of this thesis, I was unable to discuss it in more depth. However, I would note that the report, despite outlining that mainstream service do not work for Pacific Islanders, engages only superficially with religion and its institutions. Thus, not identifying religion as a crucial point of engagement if FV responses are to be successful in Pacific communities. This approach toward engaging religion is similar to policy highlighted in Chapter One. However, the authors' point about broadening the funding criteria for Pacific services is commendable. Fuafiva Fa'alau and Sharyn Wilson, *Pacific Perspectives on Family Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand*, New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (Auckland, NZ: New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2020), https://nzfvc.org.nz/sites/default/files/NZFVC-Issues-Paper-16-pacific-peoples.pdf.

Kyla demonstrated the entanglements of Christianity in the lives of Pacific Islanders, highlighting that the church acts as a surrogate village for Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, and it is a crucial space for the transmission of Pacific culture and language. Indeed, it is one of the key places where Pacific Islanders learn how to be Pacific Islanders in the diaspora. Kyla showed that the entanglements of Christianity and the Pacific have led to a particular identity for Pacific Islanders. This identity is placed under strain regarding the FV issue because, for Pacific women, the intersectionality of their Christian-Pacific identity with their identity as women is not acknowledged by secular FV initiatives. Therefore, secularism is a key issue in providing Pacific women with adequate responses to FV in Pacific communities, precisely because it occludes religion, and in the process, part of Pacific identity.

My conversation with Kyla turned to discuss Christianity's role in the colonisation of the Pacific. She commented on the layered nature of traditional Pacific spirituality and Christianity such that Christianity in the Pacific and colonisation should not be read as synonyms for each other, but as constituting each other:

> There are interesting conversations for us to have as Pacific peoples about spirituality and about faith and about organised religion and about how we were colonised. That doesn't necessarily mean we have to throw it away. Because we always had faith and we always had spirituality, I think that it would be interesting to learn more about those [pre-Christian] practices and beliefs but I also think they're all inter-connected right, it's still all about believing in something that's bigger than yourself and propelling you forward to somewhere good.

For Kyla, traditional Pacific spirituality is in some ways a foundational aspect of Pacific Christianity. Viewed in this way, Christianity in the Pacific never completely supplanted indigenous religion, but rather it built upon pre-existing religious frameworks and values.[140] Given Kyla's opinion on the importance of the church in the lives of Pacific Islanders, I asked her if the church should be involved in FV responses:

> Absolutely! This is the place where this type of education, this type of analysis needs to be shared, but it can't look like the way we are currently packaging it. It's just a different planet you know, it's not the right approach, it's not the right framework. We need to do something in collaboration with the church to design a programme that feels accessible.

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[140] Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 43.

Although Kyla felt strongly about the church as a site for FV work, she believed that the current 'packaging' of secular FV programmes would not be successful if delivered to Pacific Christians. Her choice of the word 'packaging' speaks to the secular framing of the FV issue, and its ineffectiveness in reaching Pacific Islanders. The need for different 'packaging' also speaks to the FV issue as a taboo subject in Pacific communities, and furthermore, it may indicate that Pacific Christians think about the dimensions of FV in different ways compared to non-religious citizens. Specifically, that notions of patriarchy and gender are formulated with reference to the Bible, and therefore, addressing patriarchal theologies becomes crucial in effective FV responses.[141] Kyla continued, suggesting that successful FV programmes for Pacific communities need to be created in collaboration with Pacific churches and faith-based actors, but in this case, secularism serves as a significant obstacle to effective state FV programme design.

Part of the issue the state faces in designing effective FV programmes for Pacific communities is the sharpness of the binary oppositions imposed by the state on this issue. Specifically, the assumption that religion in the public sphere is 'violent' and 'patriarchal', and that the secular is 'egalitarian' and 'peaceful'. Because the religious and the secular are opposed in this context, the construction of a FV programme with religion at its foundation is considered problematic, if not impossible. It would require a reconfiguration, or reimagination, of religion in relation to state engagement with FV.

Secular assumptions of religion have embellished an iniquitous image of religion in the public sphere and this is pertinent for the contexts of state engagement with FV.[142] However, such assumptions neglect forms of religion that are committed to addressing the FV issue; if some churches are committed to addressing FV issues in their community, should not policy reflect this? Pacific churches could be powerful vessels for addressing FV in Pacific communities if churches are involved in the formation of programmes. This is not to say that the task will necessarily be easy, as what is required involves challenging power, and some

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[141] Lesley Orr Macdonald, Helen Hood, and Penny Stuart, "Speaking Out and Doing Justice: It's No Longer a Secret but What Are the Churches Doing about Overcoming Violence against Women?," *Feminist Theology* 11, no. 2 (2003): 221; Marjorie Proctor-Smith, "The Whole Loaf: Holy Communion and Survival," in *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Sociology Sourcebook*, ed. Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fourtune (Continuum, 1995), 473; David M. Scholer, "The Evangelical Debate over Biblical Headship," in *Women, Abuse, and the Bible: How Scripture Can Be Used to Hurt or Heal*, ed. Catherine Clark Kroeger and James R. Beck (Carlisle, Cumbria: Patemoster Press, 1998), 32.

[142] Benjamin L. Berger, *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Fitzgerald, "Summary of the Argument."; Hurd, "Rescued by Law? Gender and the Global Politics of Secularism."; Mahmood, "Sexuality and Secularism."; Scott, "Secularism and Gender Equality."

churches, congregations, and policymakers may be resistant to change. Kyla shared her insight into the patriarchal attitudes that underpin some ministerial responses to FV in Pacific communities:

> Their first thing is like, 'stay, work it out, do marriage counselling' with no analysis and no understanding. And, 'how dare you get a protection order, you're breaking up your family, you're stopping this person from seeing your kids!'

While not all ministers address FV in this manner, Kyla's description of FV responses by some ministers is an insight into the patriarchal theology that informs many ministerial responses to FV in Pacific communities. These responses do not effectively meet the needs of Pacific women who are experiencing FV. Feminist theologians Joan Filemoni-Tofaeono and Lydia Johnson discuss fundamentalist approaches to the Bible that inform gender ethics, and in turn, FV responses in the Pacific: "The place where patriarchal theology and biblical interpretations are played out through preaching, policies and practices is the church."[143] For these authors, "the churches of Oceania have relied upon the tenets of patriarchal theology … as justification for minimizing or ignoring violence against women, blaming women for their own suffering, and sanctioning men's abuse of power."[144] Kyla acknowledged the link between biblical interpretation and FV perpetration, but also recognises that biblical interpretation can be used to help Christian women:

> And certainly, there's that stuff around the scriptures that are unhelpful and harmful, but we know there's heaps of other things in scriptures that are protective and supportive of healthy relationships.

Kyla here illuminated that theology can both oppress and liberate women. It can be used to keep women in abusive relationships, normalising the violence they experience by re-enforcing traditional gender roles,[145] and alternatively, it can be used in positive ways as well.[146]

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[143] Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 85.

[144] Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 79.

[145] Michael Flood and Bob Pease, "Factors Influencing Attitudes to Violence Against Women," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 10, no. 2 (2009): 126, https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838009334131.

[146] In her *Christian Faith and Family Violence: A Report for Samoan Communities in New Zealand*, Samoan feminist theologian Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko highlights numerous ways in which the Bible can be used to inform better relationship behaviours. I insert one here: "The New Testament gives explicit prohibitions against the mistreatment of people. In his Letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul writes, 'Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.' Paul makes it clear that we are all made one in Christ, who breaks down all dividing walls. He says, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male

However, rather than working with the particular nomenclature of FV in Pacific contexts, including biblical texts that communicate in ways familiar to Pacific Islanders, these religious modes of communication and reason are ignored by the state because they are religious. Kyla also stressed the importance of government-church collaboration though a "co-design" of programmes:

> There's an opportunity here for churches, agencies like us and government to maybe create the space, there needs to be some kind of co-design happening.

Kyla pointed out that collaboration between church and state is already happening in other spaces. The Samoan church, Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS) run early childhood programmes or Aoga Amata around the country, and they do so with government funding:

> I mean they're doing it because it's a good thing to do but they're also getting a Ministry of Education contract … [but] why isn't this happening in my space because [FV] work needs to happen in the church … there's some space here to put a proposal through to MSD to say, 'contract us to run a programme', it's about getting in the door.

Kyla highlighted that the New Zealand state will engage religion on particular topics and may be reluctant to on others. This collaboration between church and state on education shows that the state does not universally occlude religion on matters pertaining to Pacific Islanders. In the case of early childhood education, education occupies the intersection between the Venn diagrams spheres of 'state' and 'Pacific Christianity'. However, according to Kyla, the state sees the issue of FV is an outlier, separated from Pacific Christianity. Instead, FV is constructed as a subset within the larger sphere of the secular state (this could be represented pictorially as a Euler diagram). Therefore, because of the distinction between FV and Pacific Christianity, FV in Pacific communities must take on secular logics.

I have argued in the previous chapter that this amorphous engagement with religion has been shaped by New Zealand's distinct history, and New Zealand secularism's non-constitutionality, enabling different state departments and government-funded organisations—who are not beholden to a specific vision of secularism—to adopt different modes of

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nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus'(Gal.3:26-28). In this unity, in which we are bound together in love, there can never be any justification for violence," 14.

engagement with religion. Without an official statement of secularity, New Zealand's amorphous secularism is instead employed through normative forces produced and articulated in the vernacular. This is to say that policy managers across various state departments and government-funded organisations may not be systematically monitoring state actors in their engagement with religion and holding them accountable to universal government standards in either policy or practice. Additionally, it may in part be due to the particular issues concerned. As mentioned above, in the imagination of the state, 'public' religion's close association to patriarchy and violence make it incompatible with state initiatives that address FV. Conversely, I would suggest that early childhood education is categorised as existing in the private sphere, as it is not mandatory and many children under the age of five receive some, if not all, of this education in the home. Configured in this way, Aoga Amata occupies the private sphere and, therefore, is not imagined as incompatible with state initiatives, hence there is collaboration between state and church on this particular matter.[147]

Kyla elaborated further on the topic of collaboration between state and church:

I'm not saying let the churches do what they want because then we'll get the celibacy workshop for like, 8 weeks. If they had the answers, we wouldn't have this problem. This is expert knowledge, and specialist knowledge, and churches and Pacific communities need to be open to bringing that expert knowledge in. I don't want to see another programme that's like, 'I'm proud to be an Islander! Let's eat chop sui!' You know it's like, we have fucking years of intergenerational trauma, we've been colonised, we're a migrant population, who now are overly represented in every bad statistic, we need to have these serious conversations, people are dying! So, I think churches are the ideal setting where we need to do a lot of work in. But it's going to require champions.

The early childhood education programmes run by churches like EFKS are certified by the Ministry of Education and only employ staff who have earned the relevant qualifications at a registered tertiary provider. The process to acquire government funding by Pacific churches for a FV programme may in fact resemble the current setup between church and state regarding early childhood education, but a FV programme has the potential to challenge the church in different ways. It would do so because a FV programme may undermine church patriarchy including pastoral leadership and the theological institutions that train ministers.

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[147] I do not offer this suggestion as the reasoning for all of the New Zealand state's amorphous engagements with religion, just this one instance (although there may be other, different situations in which this reasoning may apply).

For Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson, the power differential between clergy and parishioners is great, and it is even greater between clergy and female parishioners.[148] This is supported by the "headship theology" that is prominent in Pacific churches, and taught by Pacific theological colleges, which perpetuates the authority of male over female.[149] They argue that if this process of theological re-envisioning is to be successful, there must be a frank acknowledgement that power is held almost exclusively by men, and women's exclusion from decision-making is a "sin".[150] This presents a difficult task given that male theology and leadership dominate Pacific churches, and patriarchal interpretations of biblical texts pervade theological understandings.[151] The challenges that a FV programme would pose to normative gender ethics in Pacific churches means a FV programme is a 'hard-sell', but a critical one in light of the issues outlined above. Furthermore, Kyla identified another reason church leaders and congregants may be apprehensive about welcoming a FV programme. She explained why FV programmes in Pacific churches, although desperately needed, are a tremendous risk for Pacific churches and the communities they serve:

> Are we brave enough to look at the stats and look at our congregation? That's a scary conversation because that's people in the church that may be perpetrating that harm who hold positions of power. What do you do with these people? Do you put them in jail? That's not the right answer either, so you almost need this justice system overhaul to work better for Pacific families and Pacific peoples. Like if there was a restorative process that stopped the harm, held the people to account, and changed their behaviour then I think families and churches would be more willing to engage with that process because just locking someone up in jail, that breaks churches, people get divided, people start to investigate you know, 'well maybe the kid's lying, or maybe this person's lying' you don't want people to investigate, you want them to believe the person being harmed, and to support the person doing the harm into changing their behaviour. It's not just about implementing a programme, because that programme is going to bring up some shit, so I think churches want to feel confident that on the other side of that programme they feel equipped to deal with the stuff that comes out.

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[148] Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 94.

[149] Headship theology refers to the notion of male leadership in relation to marital relationships reflected in, for example, the Epistle of the Ephesians 5:23. Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 75. See, for example, Scholer, "The Evangelical Debate over Biblical Headship."

[150] Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 133.

[151] Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 135.

Here, Kyla questioned the ability of the justice system to adequately rehabilitate perpetrators. More specifically, she questions the value of a FV programme if it means incarcerating large numbers of Pacific Islanders and potentially destroying Pacific communities. Will perpetrators of minor offenses get a criminal record which would reduce future career prospects? Or for extreme cases, will perpetrators be incarcerated? What happens then to the families involved? Are the children taken into foster care? And what does rehabilitation look like—will prisons engage with the patriarchal theology that Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson argue support FV in Pacific communities, or will perpetrators be left to contemplate the 'wrongness' of their violent act without addressing the ideas that are the foundation for such behaviour? For Kyla, the introduction of a collaborative FV programme must be a carefully considered process to avoid a 'one-step forward, two-steps backward' scenario that may in the long term do more harm than good.

Kyla shone a light on the realities of working in a secular FV service as a Pacific Islander. She spoke of an atmosphere within the state that is not accommodating nor tolerant of religion, but rather, one that enacts a secular normative agenda that has had negative consequences on Pacific communities and Pacific women in particular. She showed that secularism occludes the recognition of religion as a constituent element of Pacific women's identity, and as a result, Pacific women are occluded from FV initiatives as well, exasperating the FV issue in Pacific communities. Moreover, she illuminated the vast nuances between the state, Pacific religion, and the FV issue in Pacific communities. She also highlighted some considerations the state needs to take into account if it chooses to address FV in Pacific communities by engaging religion in meaningful ways. In the next section, I further explore two points: 1) how this secular normative agenda is enacted and 2); what are the effects of this agenda on state actors who work in religious communities.

'Church and State Don't Mix': A conversation with Marie Schmidt

Marie Schmidt is the lead advisor of Pasefika Proud: a FV initiative within the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) that specifically targets FV in Pacific communities in New Zealand. I had emailed Marie in early 2019, roughly one month before starting this project in March that year, in the hope of having a casual conversation regarding MSD and its engagement with Pacific communities on FV issues. Marie invited into the discussion Zaffa Christian of the It's

Not OK FV initiative, aimed at reducing FV in all communities in New Zealand.[152] They were both charitable with their knowledge and encouraged the prospect of research on the topic of FV and Pacific Islanders, noting that "there's not enough of it." That informal conversation I had with Marie and Zaffa helped change the focus of this project from one focused solely on Pacific churches and their role in FV issues in Pacific communities, to the current project on the impact of state secularity on FV responses in Pacific communities. Notably, it became clear in that conversation that, despite Christianity's presence in Pacific communities, Marie and Zaffa could only speak to MSDs accommodation of Christianity in FV responses in limited ways. This was a surprise to me given the fact that Marie is a Samoan New Zealander and a Christian. Months later, after I finished my ethics application to conduct recorded interviews for this revised project, I emailed Marie for a formal interview, knowing that she, as with Kyla, "speaks to this topic in so many ways."

I met with Marie just after lunch on a Friday at MSD HQ in the Wellington CBD. Upon stepping onto Marie's floor, I noted a sea of neatly dressed public servants. Marie and I made our way to a small conference room off to the side of the building, passing public servants as we go. Marie is sure to introduce me to most of them. I cannot help but feel slightly self-conscious as I am wearing (very) casual 'streetwear'. I think to myself, "I hope no one looks at my shoes", which were white when I bought them. Once inside the conference room, we started our conversation on the topic of the church, and whether or not Marie saw any value in engaging the church when addressing FV issues in Pacific communities:

> We work with churches now, we have to because 73 percent of [Pacific] people are affiliated to the churches … initially, I didn't want to because some of them are a little slower to want to change, but I tell you some of them are really good at delivering aye, there's some really good delivery arms out there. And just bringing a church on board like Elim in Porirua, they never used to do family violence [programmes] and we've contracted them to do some promotions for us. They've just recently finished a video for us on relationships … so, that's a church now that never knew Pasefika Proud but understands now exactly what Pasefika Proud is about.

Considering my prior meeting with Marie and Zaffa, and the absence of religion in policy on FV in Pacific communities, I was surprised that Marie was now so open about engaging with churches. And despite some initial concerns, Marie noted that churches were well placed to deliver social services given that they are so embedded in Pacific communities, and in the case

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152 "About Us," Ministry of Social Development, 2020, accessed 11 February, 2020, http://www.areyouok.org.nz/utility-pages/about-us/.

of Elim, happy to address issues relating to FV in their congregation. Marie continued, further emphasising the importance of engaging Pacific churches:

> They are key! I know some people say, 'but not everyone goes to church', but a huge number [of Pacific Islanders] do … [even for the non-religious] your sphere of influence isn't just the church, it's your cousins, your wider family, but they probably go to the church…Even if you target ethnic-specific communities, not the church, but you talk to them, they'll talk about the church … they're all in church, even the young ones…Being connected [through the church] is a protective factor … being connected will make you strong especially if you're a new migrant. You know the new migrants, they all swarm to the local church. The ones in Hastings, they have Samoan church there, Tongan church there, to cater for those coming in to work on the contracts for the orchards and the grapevines, same as in Blenheim, same as in Marton. You know Marton has a thousand Samoans? So of course, there's Samoan churches. Where there's seasonal work, there's churches. Oamaru has 11 Tongan churches.

In her line of work, Marie showed that the church is a largely unavoidable institution and reiterates how embedded it is in Pacific communities. She identified several reasons for this, primarily pointing to the prevalence of Christianity in Pacific communities, but also suggested, like Kyla, that churches play an important social role for Pacific communities in New Zealand as a surrogate village. Marie continued to elaborate on how she approaches churches:

> When I work with churches it's a different approach, because first of all, you test the waters with some of these Ministers because some of these ministers are true to, 'you spare the rod you spoil the child', they're true to, 'your wife needs to submit', you know? So, you have to be careful when you're asking them to do things … some are really open to it and others are not … you generally find out through the grapevine of who to talk to … usually the ones with the social arm attached are the best.

She specifically mentioned the example of Vahefonua[153]:

> Vahefonua [has] 56 churches attached to their Tongan Methodist and you know, it's amazing, and they make sure all of their ministers come to our training. We had a training session and over a hundred people came, and 60 of them were ministers in their churches, that came to our family violence training.

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[153] Vahefonua is the Tongan Methodist Church of New Zealand. In 2017, Vahefonua's 'Famili Vā Lelei' social services program won two District Commander Awards from Counties Manukau Police which recognised it as an effective programme that addresses FV in the Tongan community. "Helping Hands," accessed 26 January, 2021, https://www.pasefikaproud.co.nz/stories/helping-hands/.

Marie's approach regarding Pacific churches is initially tentative due to the tendency of some Pacific ministers to manifest patriarchal Christian social ethics—she tries to gauge a minister's stance regarding the use of violence as pedagogy and the role of women in Pacific society. However, in the case of Vahefonua, she also showed that some churches and ministers are more accommodating of a discussion on FV. I asked Marie if a church's fundamentalist or conservative stance makes for challenging engagements:

> Yeah definitely, and I find too if I am going to get another person to come [with her], to make that other person a male. 'Cos if I'm going to meet a minister … I play dumb so that they still have the power because what some of them don't realise is that they're actually doing power and control when they're with me.[154] But that's all part of building that relationship, and then they realise, 'oh my gosh, she's ok', then they start opening up more.

> …

> When I walk in the door, I always make sure I'm the submissive one, I know it's terrible aye, but that's just how I have to play it, 'cos I don't want to switch anyone off so that's the safest way to play it. For Pacific ministers, I think they just automatically put themselves there because that's just the way they've been trained, and that's the way that they've been served. So this is an example, there was a minister that was employed by us, and every time we had a morning tea, all the staff would do things, but he wouldn't, he'd sit there and want to be served because he's a minister … but even the strong personalities, they've all come around eventually and I'm able to work with them.

Immediately upon entering Pacific churches, Marie assumes the posture of a "submissive woman" as she anticipates this is what the male minister expects. Her approach here reveals how ubiquitous patriarchal gender ethics can be in Pacific churches in New Zealand, despite acknowledging churches like Vahefonua and Elim are more open to change. This is a significant admission because it speaks to the importance of Marie's work in Pacific churches. If abusive relationships are often ones that embody traditional gender roles, then Marie is suggesting, perhaps unintentionally, that this patriarchal standard of gender ethics is pervasive in Pacific churches. Despite the discomfort, Marie's method of engagement here demonstrates that she is focused on pragmatic modes of engagements with Pacific churches on FV issues.

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[154] Here Marie references the Duluth model.

For her, getting her 'foot in the door' in order to begin building relationships with ministers is worth assuming a submissive role at the inception. Once trust is built between Marie and the minister, she effectively gives herself a voice in what may be a patriarchal space. From there, she can begin to employ strategies that address FV.

Marie's acknowledgement of the patriarchal attitudes of some Pacific ministers is in line with the arguments made by Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson discussed earlier in this chapter. Given the link between patriarchal theology and violence toward women as argued by so many feminist theologians from a variety of cultural and national contexts, I questioned Marie on the possible value of state actors discussing patriarchal theology when engaging with Pacific ministers:

> No, we don't go there, we don't go there, because state and church don't mix. We don't go there because it could cause a lot of political turmoil. So, we just don't go there. But I've not known [a minister] to bring it up [patriarchal theology with their congregation], they just stay away from it. Unless I'm really comfortable like Elim in Porirua, that's my old pastor so if he says something we'll just talk freely, but anyone else I say nooo, next minute they quote me and next minute I'm sacked!

For Marie, there is genuine concern about engaging theology and her statement that "church and state don't mix" is a direct expression of the 'wall of separation'. This description of state and church engagement shows that Marie has identified clear boundaries she will not cross however, she has also described situations where she feels comfortable 'bridging the divide'. For instance, for her to engage with the church as a cultural hub or surrogate village is to engage with the church as a Pacific institution that is cultural, social, and religious. This is a pragmatic exercise because to engage with Pacific Islanders without engaging Pacific churches is virtually impossible. However, Marie asserted that engaging in the theological interpretation of scripture is to violate the 'wall of separation' between church and state. Here we see that Marie's perceived redundancy in the event of engaging directly with theology—whether stated explicitly or through a normative secular agenda on behalf of the state—is effectively a disciplinary technique rendering her unable to 'talk' theology despite the obvious need to. This is a clear example of an imagination of a 'wall of separation' between church and state. However, Marie's comments also illuminated an impractical consequence of this separation, as she attempts to reconfigure the patriarchal Christian gender ethics of Pacific churches which buttress FV in Pacific communities, without the ability to speak directly to the particular

nomenclature of FV in Pacific churches, precisely because those nomenclatures are enmeshed with religious language and symbology.

As shown in Marie's comments thus far, to engage with Christianity at a theological and substantial level is not possible given the government-imagined boundaries between religion and the state. My questioning continued along the lines of government-church engagement on theology, as Marie had previously answered this from the perspective of the state, but I was also curious if she thought ministers would be open to it. Marie noted that ministers would likely not welcome the idea of an outsider challenging a church's biblical teachings:

> A lot of ministers wouldn't accept somebody coming in, so we probably wouldn't go there but, I want to contract somebody that can take the messages of how you build strong Pacific families and keep them safe by going into the churches and working with the churches on how you get that message across.

Marie thought that ministers may be opposed to a discussion around patriarchal theology, however, she noted a desire to start conversations with ministers around building 'strong Pacific families.' This type of language distances her work from a direct conversation about FV and Christianity. By using terminology around building 'strong Pacific families', Marie employed a particular nomenclature of FV that is workable in Pacific communities while adhering to the secular requirements of the state. This practice creates space that allows for state actors and church ministers to engage each other in areas of possible common agreement. I asked Marie to describe a typical encounter with a minister and how she raises the topic of FV:

> Yeah, we don't actually do that haha! We just go in and say, 'hey, we want to talk about building strong Pacific families…For example, [Steve][155] runs a church in Auckland, I haven't had time to talk to him yet, but that's a church I want to get into to see how we can contribute to making your Pacific families stronger. So, my approach would be, 'hey Steve, can we get a cup of coffee?', meet up with him and tell him, 'hey, this is what we're about, we're about building strong Pacific families, keeping them safe.' And then we'll ask, 'what's working for your church? what are you doing?' Or if they've got an event coming up, we'll ask to come along. You've got to find a connection, build a relationship, because once you've got that, then that's where you can build from.

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[155] Name has been changed.

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> The best way to work with churches is you've got to build a relationship, you know, so it may take
> three weeks, three meetings before you even begin to talk about what Pasefika Proud is really about,
> because you really want to find out what this church is about before you do anything … you may
> not want to work with a church because they are really strict.

Notably, FV is not explicitly used to describe the reason for Marie's visit, as she prefers to establish a relationship with the minister before introducing the term. As Kyla noted earlier in this chapter, "If you can't even go to a church and say hey, I'm doing a masters project on [FV], then clearly this is not an attractive space yet for Pacific people." Both Kyla and Marie suggested that the topic of FV is a taboo subject in Pacific communities. As such, Marie has used a particular nomenclature of FV to protect her relationship with the minister in order to 'bridge the divide' between church and state. This is necessary so as not to completely disregard the 'wall of separation' between the two spheres.

Despite the clear connections between Pacific Islanders, religion, and FV, Marie, like policy analysts in this space, is inhibited in her work because of perceived limits in her capacity to engage with religion. Moreover, if Marie's earlier comments on redundancy speak to secular attitudes toward religion in government spaces, state actors' jobs may depend on their continued compliance with the imaginary 'wall of separation'. This problem is made all the more important when we consider that there is no constitutional basis that explicitly calls for the exclusion of religion from public discourse or state policy in New Zealand. Yet, policy analysts, as shown in Chapter One, and practitioners such as Marie, seek to circumscribe conversations on religion. Here, we see that the secularity of the New Zealand state, particularly as it engages with FV in Pacific communities, is normative, produced by the vernacular, and acts as an attitude toward religion. Marie's knowledge that "state and church don't mix" comes from the quotidian, informal argot, parlance, and rhetoric in government spaces. This is a secularity that is produced and maintained by conversations around the 'water-cooler', so to speak. It is the, "uuuhhh! church?! I would never step foot in a church!" kind of comment that, when echoed by others ensures that religion, and in part Pacific culture and identity, is not welcome in public discourse. This is a type of secularity where the collective 'vibe' toward religion in state spaces matter. It is the atmosphere or culture within these state spaces described by Kyla and Marie that inform New Zealand secularity as opposed to any formal statement.

Because of the lack of an official statement on how state actors are to practice

secularism, they are in effect free to create their own official practices which has resulted in diverse engagements between the state and religion. Where Marie sees engaging Pacific churches as a pragmatic move to increase the effectiveness of Pasefika Proud, other state actors are free to ignore the potential benefits of church engagement. These varied approaches to engaging religion by the state demonstrate a kind of *amorphous secularism* in New Zealand—where the lack of a clearly defined approach to religion by the state has led to the somewhat formless nature of state secularism. In the next section, I further explore the entanglements between Pacific Islanders and religion from the perspective of two probation officers. Although they do not speak directly to the normativity of the state as it engages FV, it is evident in their responses that a secular normative agenda has influenced their engagement with Pacific Islanders.

The Opportunistic Preacher: A conversation with Emi Roache and Charles Patelesio

Emi Roache and Charles Patelesio both work with the Porirua[156] Community Corrections office as probation officers and are employed by the Ministry of Corrections. Emi, a Samoan New Zealander, and Charles, a Tokelauan New Zealander, both identify as Christians. Neither Emi nor Charles are specifically responsible for Pacific Islanders who come through the probation system in Porirua. However, Pacific Islanders that prefer to speak Samoan or Tokelauan are referred to either Emi or Charles. We met at the Porirua Community Corrections office.

I approached the receptionist, "Hi, I'm Jake, I'm here to see Emi and Charles". As I sat awkwardly in the waiting area, I felt a sense of guilt form in my conscience. I turned to tell the one other gentleman reclined on the couch beside me that "I'm innocent, bro." 'Click!', with impeccable timing Charles opened the door of a side room, saving me from embarrassing myself; I see Emi seated behind him. He called out in a soothing voice, "Jake?" I gather this is what it would feel like to visit your probation officer. Charles offered me a seat and after introducing myself, we began our conversation. My initial line of questioning was on the prevalence of FV in Pacific communities. I asked the pair about the number of Pacific Islanders coming through the doors of the Porirua probation office, and how many of them were there for FV offences:

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[156] Porirua is a city within the Wellington region.

> Emi: So, we attend daily safety assessment meetings with the police and Oranga Tamariki, at the moment it's only three of us at the table … and what the police bring to the table daily is family violence incidents that have happened yesterday … and from those meetings that I've attended, the family violence is high, now we don't have the percentages of the Pacific Islanders, how many Pacific Island families in those, but in the meetings I've been to … there were hardly any Pacific Islanders in those. So, I suspect they are not ringing the police.

Emi made an assumption here that the low numbers of FV incidents presented to her and Charles by the police in the daily safety assessment meetings do not accurately represent the FV that occurs in Pacific communities, but rather, she suggested FV incidents are not being reported. Charles elaborated:

> Charles: In my experience, Pacific people are always reluctant to ask for help [from the state]. They will first consult family, someone with a Matai title or elder, or a church minister.

Charles noted that consulting the state is an uncomfortable recourse for Pacific Islanders when seeking to resolve familial disputes. In this case, the enclosed nature of the Pacific community speaks to a distrust of the New Zealand state, specifically its justice system, by Pacific communities.

Another point to consider here is, if these women are getting help from ministers, what does that help look like. If feminist theologians like Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson are any indication of what responses might be possible in church spaces, this should be a point of concern. Regarding Emi and Charles' interaction with Pacific Islanders, I asked if the topic of religion was ever raised:

> Charles: As practitioners, we don't actually go there. I think a lot of our, particularly the older generation, but some young ones too, are really connected to the church. They raise it [religion]. And they raise it in different forms, for example, one guy said to me, 'can we say a prayer first'.

> Emi: They raise it [religion]. And I'm mindful of it, especially when they're older, and especially when the offending is extremely harmful, for example, sexual or especially bad physical violence.

Both Emi and Charles pointed out that they do not raise the topic of religion with their clients however if clients want to engage religion, they are free to do so. Emi's further comment about

her mindfulness of religion when the violence or abuse is extreme is perplexing. It is unclear to me whether she believed extreme offending is interwoven with Christianity in some way, or whether she believed that offenders are in need of a religious intervention. I regret that I did not seek to clarify this statement at that time.

I wondered what exactly "they raise [religion]" meant for the ensuing conversation with the client. I anticipated that the client 'bringing' religion into the 'public' sphere may be a cause for trepidation from Emi and Charles. Our conversation moved forward to explore what happened next:

> Emi: Because they've opened up the door [we can talk about it]. This is not taught, this is because I'm a Pacific Islander and I've been to church and I have some kind of understanding of where they come from, in that, 'cos, I am aware that a lot of Pacific Islanders will go to church and will come out and they're not wearing their Sunday whites, then their behaviour becomes black like their clothes, and they think it's ok. But when they open up that door, then I go for gold and what I hit is the values, is Christian values, because that is what church is about.
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> …
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> Emi: If they say, 'do you go to church?', that is the opening for me to put my little piece in there, so then I can say 'tell me about church?' And so, I've had conversations with them about, 'so what are the values of Christianity that you got from your church?' So, they will try and describe to me what their values are…and then I'll say, 'so which value said that you can go and hurt that person?' So I said that 'it sounds like to me that you've gone to church, and you've come out of church and you think that when you come out of that building that Jesus cannot see you because Jesus is inside that building.'

For Emi (and Charles agreed), she was comfortable engaging religion so long as the client initiates the discussion. Emi described a discussion with a client on the interpretation of theology. However, it is the client's initiation of this conversation on religion that creates an aperture in the 'wall of separation' that was previously occluded. For Emi, this served as an invitation to discourse; one she accepted. "They raise it" is a particular language used by Emi and Charles to recognise the contravening of the 'wall of separation', however, they did not contravene the wall themselves, nor did they manoeuvre through it. Regarding Emi's comments, it was her client that has contravened the wall; therefore, she was not breaking any (perceived) *rules of engagement*. This is possible with Emi's clients in ways that are simply not possible for Marie because of the different institutional and social hierarchies. Marie

described a relationship with ministers in which she felt subjugated and therefore needed to tread carefully so as not to subvert the normative gender ethics prevalent in many Pacific churches and therefore, undermine future engagements. In Emi's case, sociocultural dynamics are completely different. Her client has committed a crime of some kind and she is their probation officer. This is to say that the justice system, of which both Emi and her client are engaged in, grant her authority in their relationship. Therefore, once Emi's client has contravened the 'wall of separation' she is free to engage theology with little to no reservations of undermining future engagement with the client.

Emi and Charles are constantly mindful of the boundaries that shape their engagement with Pacific Islanders. With this in mind, I asked:

Jake: Do you think that engaging with the church would be an effective way to address some of the issues that affect the Pacific community? Say for instance, if there was a collaborative effort between your work and the church, and you were empowered to do that work. Do you think that something like this would be beneficial?

Charles: We can see the benefits, but currently that doesn't happen, in terms of our work.

Emi: I think that's a keyword, 'empowerment'. Because the directions always come from above … in regards to the work that we do in addressing family violence, it was one of the things that we talked about over the last couple of days, in my opinion, [churches are] the key because church is something that Pacific Islanders value. They put the minister or the pastor up on this pedestal you know, and so, that is the key.

Charles: Yeah

Emi: Because, we found that one of the barriers is forgiveness. I feel that bad behaviour is brushed over by the churches under this word forgiveness because God forgives. But the behaviour has not been addressed. So, people are so focussed on forgiving that bad behaviour, but it happens again because it hasn't been addressed and it paints this picture that family violence is ok. But, to address it genuinely, that is the key…We need to approach it in a way that is not going to be hurtful to the church, to not be disrespectful of the faith. But we gotta approach [FV] in a way that it's an important subject to address. Because these are the problems we have in society, is the unaddressed family violence and harm inside the families of the church. And we have to do that at the pastor, minister level. Because that's where the influence is. He's the one that needs to say it…When we approach something like a Church, Pacific Island Churches, who we know can have a very high level of tolerance for bad behaviour, and this word forgiveness, and prayer fixes everything.

Because if you can't forgive, you don't have Christian values and you're not a Christian. But this doesn't address the problems.[157]

Charles: The ministers are very influential community leaders. They're also seen as counsellors and elders. They're also in a bit of a dilemma when it comes to this type of social issue. So, the people in the church actually go to them more so than they go to community agencies, whether that is for counselling, family violence, relationship or parenting. So, although they've got life experience, cultural experience, they don't actually have the right training for family violence issues, they're not practitioners. With respect, their approach may be, 'say a prayer', 'read from the Bible', it's very superficial. Fa'amagalo, that means to forgive. But there's no drilling down which does nothing for the perpetrator, does nothing for the victim…We're talking about ministers but I've also seen it take place in my own extended whanau, where elders in my family actually deal with family violence or any issues like that, it's glossed over and forgiveness is the main tool with some backup information from the Bible. But what we talk about in 'drilling down' is, 'what actually happened in this incident? What was your part in it? What could you have down better? … none of that [holding the perpetrator accountable] happens in my own experience, in my own community, my extended family, and we see it play out when the ministers deal with these things.

It is clear here that both Emi and Charles see the benefits of potential church and state collaboration. Like Kyla and Marie, Emi and Charles' descriptions of the Pacific church identify it as both a site where ineffective responses toward FV are often made, and where there is potential for effective engagement with FV.

Emi and Charles did not envision religion nor the church as completely good or bad. Rather, they see Pacific Christianity as both vital for Pacific communities in New Zealand and flawed in its approach to particular social issues. Their perspectives illuminated the complex nuances of religion in Pacific communities. Their engagement with religion also revealed a language of bordering and bridging used to navigate between religious and secular spheres. This unavoidable but cumbersome task is made necessary because of the construction of an implicit 'wall of separation' as the state engages religion on matters of FV.

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[157] See Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson who write extensively on how theologies of forgiveness justify FV. For them, women that experience violence are expected to be meek, forgiving Christians. If Jesus sacrificed himself for the sins on man and forgave the men who crucified him, then women should forgive their husbands for beating them. Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, 79.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to tell a story about how Pacific Islanders navigate state secularism in New Zealand as they engage in programmes related to FV. This story is told from the perspective of four Pacific Islanders who work at the coalface of the secular and the religious. As Christians, their stories spoke to a prominent and powerful normative secular agenda, that has the effect of not allowing Pacific Islanders space in which to thoroughly engage not only their own religiosity but that of the Pacific communities and clients they serve. The attitude toward religion in secular spaces is not one seeking to accommodate and understand difference, and in doing so, it denies the prospect of productive, pragmatic engagements. The interviews in this chapter highlighted that secularism in New Zealand has had the effect of establishing a 'wall of separation' between state FV services and Pacific Islanders. We saw examples of this in Kyla's interview when she described the absence of Pacific women who sought help from WRC and WR, and the lack of Pacific women that work in secular FV services. We also saw this 'wall of separation' operating when Marie described her hesitancy to confront ministers on questions of patriarchal theology for fear of redundancy. And again, we saw it in Emi and Charles' admissions that although Christianity plays a role in the behaviour of their clients, they feel they cannot raise these issues themselves. However, their stories also reveal that the 'wall of separation' is not impenetrable, but rather there are veiled passageways between religious and secular domains, allowing for tentative engagements with religion.

The 'wall of separation' has produced a number of consequences for Pacific women who, like the greater Pacific community do not make rigid distinctions between the secular and the religious. The interviews in this chapter show that the state marginalises Pacific women through rendering FV services inaccessible to them and, in effect, not adequately serving them. In Kyla's interview, for example, she showed that secularism has had an adverse effect on Pacific women because it does not allow state actors to gain nuanced understandings of the distinct intersectional qualities of Pacific women's identity. If religion is not acknowledged by the state, the identity of Pacific women will go partially unacknowledged as well. In this way, we see that the state fails to fully comprehend the extent to which Pacific women are marginalised on issues of FV, because commitments to a sharp secularism occlude this possibility.

Moreover, if we go beyond gender, we see another outcome of secularism in New Zealand on matters relating to FV. That is, secularism has not just had the effect of managing or marginalising religion in the public sphere, but that it enacts this agenda upon an entire ethnic group when that group's identity is intersects with religion. In this way, secularism in New Zealand can also be associated with a particular type of ethnic marginalisation, one that manages individuals and/or communities based on the separation of religion and politics. Therefore, another reality of secularism in New Zealand is that it implicitly discriminates against religious peoples along lines of ethnicity given those groups' propensity to see religion as an integral part of their cultural identities.

The interviews discussed in this chapter highlight the inability of secular FV services to be pragmatic about the delivery of services, despite efforts by Kyla, Marie, Emi, and Charles to be pragmatic themselves. In their respective roles for state or NGO services, the interviewees all describe complicated, highly nuanced engagements with Pacific communities. Despite the obvious entanglements of religion in Pacific communities, and also in the FV issue, state actors are limited in their engagement of religion. However, because Pacific communities and Christianity are so enmeshed, they also cannot avoid engagements. Therefore, Kyla, Marie, Emi, and Charles must navigate secularism by traversing the complex topography of the 'wall' that separates religion and the state. They look for passageways and tunnels in an effort to engage with Pacific Islanders in practical and meaningful ways. This navigation exercise is an attempt to 'bridge the divide' between religion and the secular. The religiosity of Pacific communities and the secular nature of the New Zealand state forces these navigators to carry out this bridging activity in clandestine fashion. In the next chapter, I conclude by summarising the effects of New Zealand secularism, as I see them, on state engagement with Pacific Island communities on issues of family violence, and also promote the possible emergence of a pragmatic alternative.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined how the New Zealand state engages with Pacific Island communities on issues of family violence (FV). In so doing I have traced the effects of secularism within the lives and work of those located on the interface of this engagement. In the first chapter, I introduced some widely held definitions of secularism globally and identified New Zealand's secularism as having a distinct, amorphous character. I argued that New Zealand's secularity is neither laicism, in which religion is imagined as an antagonist and impediment of modern politics, nor is it Judeo-Christian secularism, in which religion is imagined as a starting point for unity and identity in modern politics.[158] New Zealand's particular history as a nation has enabled a secularism that is distinctive. New Zealand never underwent a formal constitutional or legal separation of church and state. Moreover, the moral obligation to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi and to address historical Māori grievances have allowed for a partial accommodation of religion in public spaces. New Zealand's state secularism is distinctive because it can be both quite rigid and quite flexible; and this malleability gives it a distinctive form as the boundaries delineating the religious and the secular are not always clear.

I have argued that when it comes to FV the New Zealand state tends to construct a sharp 'wall of separation' between itself and religious organisations and discourses. This divide is apparent in the occlusion of religion in policy documents that address FV. It is also apparent in the interviews I conducted with Pacific Islanders working at the coalface. Their experiences of navigating a secular-religious divide reveal a normative secular agenda, which is a vernacular process, articulated and enacted in everyday argot, parlance, and rhetoric in government and NGO spaces. This is therefore an example of a 'hard-line' secularism in the New Zealand context. Though even here, it is never unassailable. I called the integrity of the wall into question and shown that it is not impenetrable.

In describing New Zealand's secularism through state engagement with Pacific communities on issues of FV, I have shown that Pacific Islanders working between their communities and the government have deployed a range of pragmatic and effective strategies for traversing the 'wall'. Figuratively speaking, there are numerous tunnels or secret passageways between secular and religious 'territories', which have been constructed, or made

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[158] Hurd, "Varieties of Secularism," 23.

use of, by state actors who see the wall as a barrier for doing their job—to address FV in Pacific communities. Without a reified secularism, individuals within state organisations seek to discern how and to what extent they can engage with religion, and they do so through a variety of discursive and practical means. This is to say that their engagement with religion largely depends on the implicit attitudes toward religion that are present in the specific state spaces they occupy. We see this most evidently in the state's ambivalence toward religion, with some ministries, departments, and organisations engaging with religious communities to varying degrees and others attempting to avoid 'touching' religion at all.

The New Zealand state's approach to religion is problematised in Chapter One, where I argued that there was only limited discussion of religion in policy and programmes relating to family violence among Pacific communities, I pointed out that this absence does not reflect the prevalence and importance of religion in Pacific communities. I showed that policy and programmes which either ignore religion or only frame it as a peripheral subject, do not accurately describe the lives of Pacific Islanders and the communities they live in. Although policy does not explicitly articulate that state actors cannot engage religion, it also does not recommend engagement. Therefore, policy does not provide state actors seeking to engage Pacific communities with practicable guidelines for engagement. The lack of an explicit statement for or against engaging directly with religion in policy should not be read as indifference toward religion by the New Zealand state, because as demonstrated in Chapter Two, Pacific Islanders at the coalface experience a pervasive secular normativity in the government and NGO spaces they occupy. This normative secular cultural milieu operates as a barrier for meaningful engagements with Pacific communities. Even though state actors cannot avoid engaging religion when working with Pacific communities.

In other words, the actual engagement practices deployed by state actors as they seek to engage Pacific communities have been severely hamstrung by inadequate policy. State actors working with Pacific communities spend significant amounts of time in religious spaces—in churches, talking to church leaders, etc—however, despite the obvious fact that religion plays an important role in the lives of Pacific Islanders, state actors must find ways to engage Pacific institutions and leaders, like the church and church ministers, that accords with secular policy, which effectively ignores religion. Said another way, the New Zealand state's inclination toward a 'hard-line' secularism on issues of FV in Pacific communities is similar to Ivan Krylov's "Inquisitive Man", who did not notice the elephant in the museum—it is the veritable 'elephant in the room'. I use this analogy to highlight that secularism has occluded something that is both obvious and pervasive in the lives of many Pacific Islanders. Therefore,

FV policy for Pacific communities focuses on numerous other considerations apart from one of the most salient ones. This disconnect between policy and practice represents state unfamiliarity with Pacific realities. Therefore, policy is contorted in practice by state actors to more practically engage Pacific communities. For state actors like Marie Schmidt, Emi Roache, and Charles Patelesio it is a process of navigating the coalface of religion and the state in order to more effectively address FV issues in Pacific communities.

While the amorphous nature of secularism in New Zealand allows state actors some room to improvise when engaging religion, they nevertheless express trepidation in doing so when addressing issues of FV in Pacific communities. With the absence of state documentation regarding the separation of religion and the state, state actors like Marie, Emi, and Charles tentatively engage religion, and in Marie's case, fear redundancy if this engagement crosses 'a line' that has not officially been established. Their anxiousness toward engaging religion, and the absence of an official set of rules for engagement regarding religion, demonstrates that secularism in New Zealand regulates religion through a series of unarticulated (in official state documentation) assumptions within the secular state. And because these assumptions are negative toward religion, secularism has worked as a powerful normative force intent on secularising Pacific Islanders instead of celebrating cultural diversity and accommodating religious difference. A consequence of secularism in New Zealand is, as I have shown, that secular FV services have (unintentionally) disadvantaged Pacific women by not allowing those women to feel comfortable enough to use those services.

The Effects of Secularism

While secularism is often thought of as a neutral and non-political ideology, numerous scholars have argued the opposite: it is in fact a particular cultural and political ideology that has significant effects on the communities it seeks to manage.[159] Likewise, the three interviews that guide Chapter Two describe secularism not as a neutral force, but rather they depict secularism

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[159] See, for example, Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*; Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*; Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization: a Global Comparative Perspective."; Hurd, "Varieties of Secularism."; Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "The Politics of Secularism," in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, ed. Alfred Stepan Timothy Samuel Shah, and Monica Duffy Toft (Oxford University Press, 2012); Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "International Politics after Secularism," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 5 (2012), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210512000411; Mahmood, "Sexuality and Secularism."; Scott, "Secularism and Gender Equality."; Taylor, "Modes of Secularism."; Taylor, "The Meaning of Secularism."; Berger, *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism*.

as an ideology that preserves or imposes a secular non-religious culture. It does so by differentiating, privatising, and suppressing a substantial element of Pacific culture, Pacific Christianity. Because secularism is assumed to be neutral it is therefore imagined as a necessary apparatus to enable democratic values, such as the tolerance of cultural diversity and the accommodation of religious difference. Secularism's tolerance and accommodation of diversity were not formulated by cross-cultural conversations seeking to understand nor through a critical examination of its own symbolic or normative assumptions. As Benjamin Berger notes in *Law's Religion*, "toleration tends to expire at precisely the point at which these assumptions are threatened."[160] Because the secular tends to produce an image of religion as only patriarchal and violent, religion's presence in FV responses is 'intolerable'. This has led to the absence of religion in policy documents. It has effectively been dismissed from government and secular NGO spaces. What is left is a tendency in state spaces—which are dominated by a secular New Zealand-European mainstream—toward occluding religion. A more thorough, pragmatic approach that seeks to understand rather than to exclude or reshape is lacking.

For Berger, if secularism assumes neutrality toward religion, then the secular is configured as distinct from any particular cultural system and therefore, does not exert cultural force.[161] Although Berger's focus is on the effect of Canada's constitutional law on religious difference, his argument is relevant for this thesis. For Berger, the secular state is not neutral, but produces a 'conversionary force'. Berger argues that the language of state neutrality toward religion "has proven to be not just natural but naturalizing, obscuring the currents of power, history, and politics that are at work underneath this pacific idea of [religious] toleration."[162] Berger goes further, "If, under the banner of multicultural tolerance, religious diversity is being subject to conversionary force at precisely those points of meaningful cultural difference, the experience of those minority cultures is not one of respect for pluralism and accommodation of diversity but, rather, of coercion at the hands of the law."[163] By claiming neutrality, the secular state cannot realise secularism's impact on the diverse communities it was meant to protect. By not facilitating proactive engagement with religion, the New Zealand state cannot appreciate Christianity's importance to Pacific Islanders nor its relevance to the issue of FV. Instead, if Pacific Islanders are to address FV in their communities, the state requires them to

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[160] Berger, *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism*, 138.
[161] Berger, *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism*, 106. Berger specifically refers to judicial principles of tolerance and accommodation of difference in response to religion.
[162] Berger, *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism*, 105.
[163] Berger, *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism*, 138.

undergo a conversionary process, transforming them into secular citizens. And as I have shown throughout this thesis, because of the intersections between ethno-racial Pacific identities and Pacific Christianity, we can assume that this conversionary process does not merely impose on religion. But that it includes categories of ethnic and racial identity as well. Such as 'Pacific Islander'.

In *Varieties of Secularism*, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd notes, "If the dualism between spiritual and temporary authority is uniquely Western … then non-Westerners who want to democratize have no alternative but to adopt Western forms of secularism."[164] Even if religious minorities accept the normative forces being imposed on them by liberal democracy, this conversionary process hits a rather large speedbump when those secular aspects cannot be easily demarcated from the religious. This is to say that the conversionary process is an awkward and strenuous one for many religious minorities. Imagining secularism as a neutral force is problematic because it occludes the state's ability to see the intricate ways in which religion and the secular are entangled in religious communities. Therefore, the state cannot distinguish any harm it may be causing by imposing this particular brand of secularism on minorities.

Aforementioned, the identities of 'Pacific' and 'Christian' are interwoven. They are not mutually exclusive categories as both identities help constitute one another. Viewed in this way, secularism cannot be assumed to only 'privatise' and 'differentiate' religious beliefs and practices but, rather, we must also acknowledge that secularism also enacts this agenda upon Pacific Islanders as an ethnic group by failing to understand the intersections between Pacific Islanders and Christianity. This is to say that because Pacific identity is so interwoven with Christianity, the act of differentiating and privatising Christianity on issues of FV in Pacific communities is to also differentiate and privatise Pacific Islanders on FV issues generally. This is a question of visibility and inclusion, because if secularism occludes religion on FV issues, then to some extent the state also occludes Pacific Islanders from the public sphere. This occlusion is not only seen in policy, but also in practice as only four to six percent of women who access secular FV services are Pacific women, despite being over-represented in FV statistics.

The policy, programmes, and interviews I have explored throughout this thesis indicate that secularism in New Zealand has had a particular effect on Pacific communities, moreover, that effect has been especially marginalising for Pacific women. Viewed in this way, the state

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[164] Hurd, "Varieties of Secularism," 44.

cannot completely understand the challenge Pacific women face if it does not understand how secularism marginalises them. Therefore, if the state is to engage in an effective effort to address FV in Pacific communities it must allow state actors to develop a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of religion—in particular, they must be adept at identifying and respecting the intersections between Pacific Christianity and Pacific identity.

The issue of exclusion raises another problematic consequence of secularism. Because FV statistics in New Zealand are some of the worst in the developed world, and those statistics are particularly high amongst Pacific communities, then the absence of Pacific victims/survivors from FV services is cause for concern. Using Kimberle Crenshaw's 1989 essay, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" as an analytical tool, I further illustrate the effect of secularism on Pacific women. For Crenshaw, Black women in America are faced with two oppressions, one of which is not acknowledged because the intersectional aspects of their identity are overlooked. This occurs because Black women experience race and gender discrimination, whereas Black men experience only racial discrimination. She criticises Black liberation movements that only seek to address racial discrimination while ignoring the fact that Black women also experience further discrimination because they are women. According to Crenshaw, Black liberation movements that only seek to eliminate one oppression conceive of oppression as existing on a single axis.[165] Her argument is productive for the present work because it provides a framework with which we can consider how the identity of Pacific women is multi-faceted, and how the discrimination they face can be experienced in multi-faceted ways, including at those precise locations that attempt to help them.

In New Zealand, secular FV responses tend to operate on a dual axis—gender and ethnicity—women are identified as the primary victims and survivors, and Māori and Pacific women have policy specifically written for them. However, because this approach does not take into account the intersections that gender and ethnicity have with religion, Pacific women and the issues they face in relation to FV cannot be properly addressed by state FV service providers. As stated earlier, secularism occludes the possibility of engaging religion, not allowing state actors to realise that in the case of Pacific women, discrimination happens along (at least) three axes. This is to say that if religion is not addressed, effective FV responses for Pacific women may be elusive.

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[165] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, Article 8. (1989): 139-40.

Toward Pragmatic Engagements with Religion

In my concluding arguments so far, I have highlighted the various problems Pacific communities face when seeking assistance from the state for addressing the FV they experience. I would now like to offer an alternative to the exclusionary expressions of secularism currently observed in state responses to FV in Pacific communities in New Zealand. Here, I encourage a pragmatic policy that has already been enacted in some state engagements with minorities, albeit not on issues of FV in Pacific communities. A pragmatic secularity would entail engagements with religion in which the primary objective is to achieve tangible, positive outcomes among religious communities, not one which attempts to enforce divisions between the religious and the secular. This pragmatic brand of secularism should not be guided by a variety of unregulated sources that do not necessarily represent the most practical means to achieve the government's desired outcomes. This type of secularism will require the encouragement of a thorough secular-religious dialogue which at present, specifically on issues of FV in Pacific communities, tends to be only informal or intermittent. As stated above, this recommendation builds on a certain pragmatism already apparent in some parts of the New Zealand state. Those pragmatic moves should be encouraged and enabled. I highlight such pragmatism here.

In an unpublished draft document titled *Pathways for Change*, the Ministry of Social Development's Pasefika Proud initiative outlines a new approach to FV responses:

> The Pasefika Proud Theory of Change is strengths based, focusing on community-led solutions that harness the transformative power of traditional Pacific cultural values and frameworks to encourage violence-free, respectful relationships that support Pacific peoples to thrive.[166]

On the surface, the *Pathways for Change* policy document engages with religion in a way that resembles other government policy documents, in that religion is only treated superficially and Pacific cultural values are emphasised. However, it notes an important change in policy that focuses on 'community-led solutions' to FV issues. This approach opens the door for Pasefika

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[166] *Draft November 2019: Pathways for Change*, Ministry of Social Development (Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Social Development, 2019), 4.

Proud to have more meaningful engagements with religion, as it allows communities to incorporate religion into FV solutions if they so choose. This is to say that if a community-led solution involves religion, then state actors are obligated to engage more directly with religion. Furthermore, the *Pathways for Change* document also highlights the effectiveness of faith-based FV initiatives:

> A formative evaluation of two faith-based projects funded by Pasefika Proud reported transformational change for participating families and concluded that Pacific faith-based initiatives have the potential to deliver positive and sustained outcomes. The evaluation also identified some capacity and capability issues and made a number of recommendations for further support of such initiatives.[167]

This is a clear suggestion by Pasefika Proud that faith-based institutions and actors potentially offer effective ways in which to address FV in Pacific communities. It also states that Pasefika Proud will continue to support faith-based FV initiatives, perhaps even increasing that support. This new, community-led approach to engagement with Pacific communities is a responsive one, as it depends on the community to suggest church or faith-based solutions. *Pathways for Change* opens up the possibility for secular-religious collaboration with religious communities if those communities request and pursue such a collaboration. This policy document, which Marie Schmidt helped shape, echoes a particular strategy employed by Emi Roache and Charles Patelesio which I examined in Chapter Two. In their encounters with Pacific Islanders, they do not raise the topic of religion, likewise, neither does the *Pathways for Change* policy, but if their client (or in this case, the community) raises the topic of religion, Emi and Charles, and now Pasefika Proud have the 'green light' for engaging with it.

Although this policy is a commendable step in the right direction, I believe deliberate, instead of reactive, attempts at secular-religious collaboration on issues of FV would be even more productive. According to American religious studies scholar Jeffrey Stout, the collaboration of religious and secular individuals and groups has "made possible each of the great American reform movements."[168] The movements Stout refers to include the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and the civil rights movement.[169] Furthermore, Stout notes that the

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[167] *Draft November 2019: Pathways for Change*, 22-23.

[168] Jeffrey Stout, "2007 Presidential Address: The Folly of Secularism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 3 (2008): 542.

[169] Secularist Ralph Waldo Emerson, religious moderate Theodore Parker, and 'religious extremists' David Walker and William Lloyd Garrison all joined the coalition for the abolition of slavery. The women's suffrage

collaboration of religious and secular individuals and groups is not uniquely American, and points to Nelson Mandela who used the same coalition model to overthrow the apartheid regime in South Africa.[170] I would also point to Mahatma Gandhi as a further example, whose interpretation of Hindu morality informed his non-violent resistance to British imperialism. Adding to this point, I argue much that the same can be said of several major social movements in New Zealand, including for example the women's suffrage movement, the labour movement, the coalition that pushed for an 8-hour working day, the anti-apartheid protests, the nuclear-free movement, and the peace movement.[171] Not only do these examples suggest that large-scale social change is possible and effective on a range of social issues and in numerous ethno-national contexts if secular and religious individuals and organisations collaborate, moreover it shows secular-religious collaboration to be a New Zealand tradition—albeit an often largely forgotten one within the contemporary secular state.

Despite this evidence of positive secular-religious collaborations, Nicole George raises some concerns about collaborative processes between religious and secular institutions in Pacific contexts. George uses a feminist analysis of 'hybridity'[172] in peace, conflict and security studies to highlight the frictions "that occur when 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' sites of authority interplay."[173] George notes that in Fiji, secular, customary, and faith-based sources of authority collaborate on issues pertaining to security. However, this has not necessarily led to better outcomes for women as vernacular "understandings authorize gendered 'forms of social control' in the form of practical policing activity that, irrespective of the formal provisions of the law, upholds restrictive norms of gender and 'conjugal order'."[174] The collaboration between state, customary, and faith-based sources of authority that George describes here are

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movement was rooted in the Social Gospel which applied Christian ethics to social problems. And during the civil rights movement, thousands of ministers mobilised their congregations in support of civil rights. Ibid.

[170] Mandela had the support of the South African Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Both were influential groups in South Africa at the time. Ibid, 543.

[171] See, for example, George Armstrong, "The Peace Squadron Revisited," in *Pursuing peace in Godzone: Christianity and the peace tradition*, ed. Geoffrey Troughton and Philip Fountain (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2018); Patricia Grimshaw, *Womens Suffrage in New Zealand* (Hamilton: Waikato Art Museum, 1975); Laurie Guy, "Prophetic or Pathetic? The Response of the Churches to the 1951 Waterfront Dispute," *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* 22, no. 2 (2015); Peter Limb, "The Anti-Apartheid Movements in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand," *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* 3, no. Part II (2008); Peter Matheson, "Revolution at the Kitchen Tables: Churches and the 1980s Peace Movement," in *Pursuing Peace in Godzone: Christianity and the Peace Tradition*, ed. Geoffrey Troughton and Philip Fountain (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2018); John Stenhouse, "The Passionate Pastor: The Cultural Performances of the Reverend Rutherford Waddell," *The Journal of New Zealand Studies*, no. 15 (2013), https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.v0i15.2006.

[172] George, "Policing 'Conjugal Order': Gender, Hybridity and Vernacular Security in Fiji."

[173] George, "Policing 'Conjugal Order': Gender, Hybridity and Vernacular Security in Fiji," 56.

[174] George, "Policing 'Conjugal Order': Gender, Hybridity and Vernacular Security in Fiji," 56.

problematised because in this collaborative relationship, vernacularised (and gendered) understandings of security and order are privileged over other regulatory systems of security such as policy. I do not interpret George here to be advising against secular-religious collaboration with Pacific communities, rather she illuminates various layers of Pacific culture (customary and religious) that must be taken into account when seeking to provide security for women in Pacific contexts.

To avoid outcomes like the one described by George, a pragmatic secularism would require both state and faith-based organisations and actors to develop sophisticated and nuanced understandings of how to deliver security to Pacific women and families within frameworks that both the secular and the religious can value and affirm. This requirement demands that the state engage in a comprehensive discussion of Pacific reality, which understands religion as a crucial factor. As George's study shows, the security of women will not be achieved if both sides do not come to a mutual agreement regarding how to provide safety for women and children in Pacific communities. In the next section, I present a contemporary example of pragmatic secularism to highlight what a collaboration between a secular institution and religion may look like.

Pragmatic Policy in Practice

As stated in the previous section, pragmatic secular-religious collaborations have a rich tradition in New Zealand, however the examples I provided spoke to New Zealand's history extending back into the 19th and 20th centuries. I would like to note that there are people employed by the state, namely Marie, Emi and Charles, who are currently employing a kind of pragmatic secularism, although its effectiveness is hampered by the broader institutional contexts they operate within. Their stories are not an example of the state endorsing their pragmatic engagement with religion, but rather, their pragmatic engagement with religion is an unavoidable element of dealing with Pacific communities. Hence, they have developed discreet passageways or tunnels to navigate the 'wall of separation'. In recruiting for this project, I found one contemporary example of state-religious collaboration in which a particular state institution encouraged direct and substantive engagement with religion.

In responding to the March 15th Christchurch mosque shootings in 2019[175] the New Zealand Police worked closely with local and national Imams (Muslim leaders) to re-establish peace and provide justice for the Muslim community in Christchurch, and also for the greater ummah (Muslim community). To enquire about this collaboration, I sent a questionnaire to Deputy Police Commissioner Wallace Haumaha who led the police response to the mosque attacks in Christchurch. His portfolio includes Māori, Pacific, as well as other Ethnic communities. He provided the following statement:

> Police have had a valued and long-standing relationship with New Zealand's Muslim Community leading up to March 15th. This was built over a decade of committed engagement and programmes of work to build trust and confidence. These works included developing a National Ethnic Strategy, the first in the New Zealand Public Service, and developing a network of Ethnic Liaison Officers from diverse backgrounds and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand amongst other major programmes of action. The significant investment over the years by Police and the Muslim community proved invaluable in terms of the relationship as the events of March 15th unfolded. It was a crucial and essential part of the response which helped settle tensions, anger, grief, frustrations as a result of the cultural and religious understanding that Police were able to manage during the first 48 hours. We worked closely with the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand and their Imams council. This council is the peak body in New Zealand overseeing all religious matters. Police transported a group of key Imams immediately after the terrorist attack to work alongside us on and not limited to victim identification, burial process, theological guidance, welfare and counselling support, medical queries, community engagement and reassurance, family notifications, national call to prayer and memorial service planning, blessing of the Mosques, hospital and funeral home, funeral director liaison and engagement with local Iwi. What is important here is that we listened to our community leaders having greater empathy and understanding for one another, simple acts of getting to know one another better.

This response to the Christchurch attack shows that, at senior levels, the police recognised that providing peace and justice to New Zealand's increasingly diverse communities requires a concerted effort to better understand those communities. Police in this case allowed Imams to guide them in response to the attack, effectively helping the police navigate cultural-religious terrain that they may otherwise have been unfamiliar with. In this specific example, it was especially important to seek culturally appropriate methods of engagement given the particular rituals and practices associated with Muslim funerals. If the police were insensitive towards

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[175] A terrorist attack in which an Islamophobic, white supremacist murdered 51 Muslims and injured 49 others in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Islamic funerary rites, the police may have never acquired (or lost) the trust of that particular community. Therefore, it was important to accommodate the advice of Imams in policing to avoid that outcome.

Haumaha provides an insight into why this approach was taken in response to the attack:

> Police are always looking for ways to increase police members' awareness and appreciation of the rich cultures and religions in New Zealand and improve capability in meeting the needs of modern dynamic communities…The successful delivery of these outcomes required Police to have a better understanding of the diverse communities it served.

For Haumaha, the police are motivated primarily by achieving desired outcomes, rather than an adherence to secular boundaries. Below, Haumaha lists two policy documents that were created by the police to more effectively engage with New Zealand's minority communities. These policies provide the police with a reference tool for engaging with diverse communities. Those documents are the 'Ethnic Strategy' and 'A Practical Reference to Religious Diversity':

> The First Police *Ethnic Strategy Towards 2010,* was launched in February 2005, "it acknowledged the complex nature of new communities settling in New Zealand and that Police, like the general New Zealand population, needed assistance in incorporating these groups into policing processes." The strategy recommended that, over the next five to six years Police focus on reducing ethnic communities fear of being targets of crime, and work towards increasing their confidence in police. It also recommended two policing outcomes for ethnic communities towards 2010: (1) Police have the capability and capacity to engage with ethnic communities; (2) Culturally appropriate strategies to be implemented with ethnic communities that increase community safety, and prevent and reduce crime, road trauma and victimization.

> …

> It was important that Police develop Training tools to support Police in their understanding of the role of religion in New Zealand's diverse society. The Office of Maori, Pacific & Ethnic Services that was established in 2002, developed two editions of "*A Practical Reference to Religious Diversity".* This resource provided New Zealand Police members with information about major religions in New Zealand. It covered topics such as religious background, death and related issues, gender role and family, physical contact and other sensitivities, alongside religious practices and policing. The content of this booklet was based on a similar initiative of the former Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau. The latest edition in 2009 was further informed by the

fantastic feedback received from individuals and groups keen to help Police make the first issue even better.

An analysis of how the above policing strategies are practised by the police in the field is beyond the scope of this thesis. Moreover, if Judge Mere Pulea's comments in the Introduction of this thesis are any indication, policy can breakdown significantly in practice especially when that policy departs from mainstream norms, like the secular normative agenda observed in state spaces. However, what is clear from these policy documents is that the police, as a state institution, have taken a different approach to engaging religion when compared to other state policies highlighted in Chapter One. The above strategies acknowledge that the police must, where appropriate, seek alternative approaches to providing safety, and that these approaches need to consider the cultural and religious implications of policing work in diverse communities. These strategies acknowledge that the police do not have all the answers, therefore it allows police some freedom to pursue other avenues in order to achieve desired outcomes.

These alternative avenues may not have been prescribed by policy writers, but what the strategies allow for is the pursuit of pragmatic solutions, effectively allowing the police to use initiative in certain situations. Unlike the policy highlighted in Chapter One, which hamstrings state actors because of its limited engagement with religion, police policy allows police much more room to manoeuvre regarding issues of religion. Therefore, I think it is pertinent to consider the 'Ethnic Strategy' and 'A Practical Guide to Religious Diversity', as valuable resources for facilitating a basic level of cultural and religious literacy for the police. This is an attempt to minimise the risks inherent in allowing individual police officers greater space to exercise their initiative. As individual police officers may have their own prejudices about minority communities or religion generally, we should not assume that these strategies have been implemented to the complete satisfaction of those religious communities. However, this policy stance toward New Zealand's diverse communities by the police does demonstrate a curiosity about those communities and displays an openness toward learning about them.

The policy highlighted in Chapter One represents a different approach. Those policies are more focused on managing diversity and making it more compatible with New Zealand's liberal secular governance. Chapter One's discussion of FV policy in Pacific communities shows that various state entities engage with religion in a fashion that reveals a particular imagination about the religious. This imagination sees religion, almost as a material structure that can be moved and placed outside of particular spheres which are deemed to be secular.

Once separated, a wall is erected to maintain that separation. This imagination operates on an assumption that the secular and the religious can be separated in the first place. As I have shown in the case of Pacific Islanders, the religious and the secular are entangled with each other in complicated ways—ways that are insufficiently recognised by the secular state. The attempt to separate them and maintain their separation has been counterproductive to achieving desired outcomes, for government and Pacific communities alike. We see this tension manifest in the accounts of those state and faith-based actors who seek to respond to the FV issue in Pacific communities. In effect, the 'wall' is not always an impenetrable object, but rather at times it allows for discreet thoroughfare. This thoroughfare is a subversion, as it goes against the wall's purpose of separating religion and the secular, but it is a necessary risk to take if state actors are to effectively address FV in Pacific communities.

In contrast, police policy shows us a different imagination about religion—where it is understood as something that can be fundamental to particular communities. The police are more concerned with avoiding confrontation and building and maintaining trust. Haumaha echoes this sentiment, "It is absolutely essential that when the public sees the face of the police, they expect to see themselves looking back, a true reflection of the diverse makeup of the Police Service. The first principles of policing recognize that the police are the community and the community are the police." This is an attempt to dissolve any systems of othering between the police and the communities they work in. It does not perceive the act of religious engagement to be a 'sin', but rather as a useful tool in the delivery of its services.

When compared with policy from other state entities, the police approach highlights the amorphous nature of secularity within the New Zealand state. The police apply a pragmatic secularism in addressing issues in minority communities as they recognise the importance of religion in these communities. Therefore, a collaboration with faith-based organisations and individuals on social issues becomes a practical means to address the problems within those communities. As highlighted in previous chapters, other state entities are less pragmatic, focused primarily on the particulars of delivery of services, rather than the effectiveness of those services for the communities they cater to. This tells a story of two responses to religion in minority communities. One response highlights an effort to accommodate and tolerate religion in the public sphere, and in so doing, accommodate and tolerate ethno-religious minorities by respond to those communities in culturally appropriate ways. While the other response exhibit's a 'hard-line' secularity, excluding religion from the public sphere, assigning it to the 'other' side of the 'wall of separation'.

Pragmatic secularism should not be imagined as necessarily non-religious, but neither is it inherently Christian, or Muslim, etc. This type of secularism means that both non-religious and religious public entities are, to some extent, engaged in the state apparatus. This does not necessarily mean that the secular state has become enmeshed with the church, effectively dissolving secularism in New Zealand. It is merely a suggestion that, if secularism is a democratic project, then pragmatic forms of secularism are more attuned to that project than amorphous secularity, given its propensity for inclusion across a variety of issues.

Final Comments

This project has attempted to analyse secularism in New Zealand by exploring how Pacific churches, government institutions, and (secular) social welfare NGOs respond to FV issues in New Zealand's Pacific communities. What this project reveals are the variety of ways in which religion is managed by the state. According to Hurd, secularism seeks to either exclude or negotiate the influence of religion from modern spheres of power and authority. This definition still applies when we consider the New Zealand context, however, in New Zealand, secularism carries out this process of separation and exclusion in a fashion that does not resemble her two common models of secularism, laïcité and Judeo-Christian secularism.[176] Instead, the management of religion by the New Zealand state is highly amorphous, in that it both occludes and accommodates religion to various degrees depending on the state entity doing the engaging and the particular issue being engaged with.

This thesis sought to describe not only how the New Zealand state implements secularism, but also to uncover the consequences of secularism on those communities it affects the most. At times throughout this thesis, we see a particular attitude of the New Zealand state toward religion that may be simply understood as a kind of mantra. Something like; 'Secularism Good, Religion Bad', reminiscent of the anti-human slogan from George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, 'Four Legs Good, Two Legs Bad'. So entrenched is this mantra in particular parts of the New Zealand state that it escapes critical analysis. In this thesis, I showed that secularism and the imagined 'wall of separation' it imposes have had the effect of separating Pacific Islanders off from government and NGO FV services. And this unintended consequence of secularism has in some way contributed to the FV problem in Pacific communities by not

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[176] Hurd, "Varieties of Secularism," 23.

allowing state actors to adequately address it. Because of this, we should consider that secularism, as a 'pillar' of liberal democracy, can sometimes weaken the other pillars of democracy, such as pluralism—in which minority groups can maintain their cultural traditions within a larger society—and human rights, specifically women's rights—by not providing Pacific women adequate services for the FV they experience.

In regard to the FV issue in Pacific communities, the secular state configures a binary opposition where religion is 'bad' and the secular is 'good.' This binary is harmful when we consider that Christianity is inextricably linked to Pacific identities. Given this ethnoreligious intersection, Kyla's comment that "they [the secular mainstream] love to hate on religion" might also be read as "they love to hate on Pacific Islanders". Moreover, Pacific women experience this dilemma differently to men because of the gendered dynamics of FV. Viewed in this way, secularism reconfigures Pacific realities in line with a particular imagination of New Zealand's liberal democratic social reality rather than an actual reflection of Pacific social realities. A rigid secularism is therefore unperceptive to many of the overtly negative racial and ethnic undertones present in the normativity of the secular state or, in policy on FV in Pacific communities because it does not acknowledge the intersections between religion and ethno-racial identities.

In an ever-increasing age of diversity, the mechanisms which manage diversity must be critically analysed and assessed. They must be perpetually reconsidered, and when necessary, remodelled for the present demands of our contemporary situation. What I have tried to show in the present work is that, for the New Zealand state to effectively engage the Pacific community on issues of FV, what is required is not the clandestine methods used by state actors to negotiate the 'wall of separation' at present, but rather a clear and effective bridge between religious and secular spaces—one well-trodden by both secular and faith-based actors who wish to see the reduction of FV incidents in Pacific communities.

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Appendix: Information Sheet and Consent Form

STATE ENGAGEMENT WITH PASEFIKA CHURCHES ON FAMILY VIOLENCE IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Information Sheet

My name is Jake Searell and I am a master's student in the Religious Studies programme at Victoria University of Wellington. The findings from this study will be presented in a thesis which will then be submitted for marking to the School of Social and Cultural Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee #0000027527.

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

What is the aim of the project?

This project will explore how the New Zealand state (e.g. Ministry of Social Development, NGO's and the Justice system) engages with Pacific churches as it responds to family violence in the Pasefika community in New Zealand.

Primary Research Question:

My primary research question is: How and to what extent does the state engage with Pasefika Christian communities on issues of family violence in New Zealand?

How can you help?

You have been invited to participate because I would like your insight into how the state engages with Pasefika churches on family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand, because you work at the interface between the state, the Pasefika community and family violence, and you bring unique perspectives to addressing family violence in Pasefika communities. If you agree to take part, I will interview you at a location of your choosing. The interview will take approximately one hour. I will audio record the interview and transcribe it later. Furthermore, at your request, I will send you an interview summary. You can choose not to answer any question or stop the interview at any time, without giving a reason. You can withdraw from the study anytime one month after our interview by contacting me and informing me of your decision. If you withdraw, the information you provided will be destroyed.

What will happen to the information you give?

This research is confidential. This means that the researcher named below will be aware of your identity, but your name will not be used in the research itself. A pseudonym (a fictitious name) or your role in an organisation will be used. This will be determined based on what will more effectively protect your identity. Also, research data will be combined. This means that, where appropriate, your interview and the interview of another participant may be combined to protect your identity. Only my supervisors and I will read the notes or transcript of the interview. The interview transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on 1st January 2025.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my master's research paper and academic publications and/or presented to conferences. A copy of the completed master's thesis and any academic publications will be sent to you unless advised otherwise.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question;

- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;

- withdraw from the study up to one month after our interview;

- ask any questions about the study at any time;

- receive a copy of your interview summary and transcript.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?
If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors:

Student/Researcher:
Name: Jake Searell
School: Religious Studies
Email address: jake.searell@vuw.ac.nz

Supervisors:
Name: Dr Philip Fountain
Role: Senior Lecturer
School: Religious Studies
philip.fountain@vuw.ac.nz
Name: Dr Jan Jordan
Role: Associate Professor
School: Criminology
jan.jordan@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

STATE ENGAGEMENT WITH PASEFIKA CHURCHES ON FAMILY VIOLENCE IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Consent Form

This consent form will be held for five years.
Researcher: Jake Searell, MA student, Religious Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

• I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.

• I agree to take part in an audio recorded interview.

I understand that:

• Either my name or a pseudonym (see below) will be used in the thesis or related work such as academic publications or presentations. The information I have provided will be destroyed on 1st January 2025.

• I understand that the results will be used for a Master of Arts and academic publications and/or presented to conferences.

• I may withdraw from this study up to one month after my interview and any information that I have provided will be returned to me or destroyed.

•	I would like a summary of the interview:	Yes ☐	No ☐
•	I would like to receive a copy of the completed thesis and any related publications and have added my email address below.	Yes ☐	No ☐
•	I would like a pseudonym to be used:	Yes ☐	No ☐

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____
Contact details: _____