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**AN EXAMINATION OF CULTURE AS A PROTECTIVE
MECHANISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE:
A CASE STUDY IN MT. BOSAVI, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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Abstract

Development literature has not accorded sufficient attention to culture as a positive aspect of development until recently. Hence, in terms of using culture as a protective mechanism against gender-based violence, not much has been investigated or reported, since most studies on gender-based violence have focused more on cultural influences as the cause or effect of violence against women. However, in the case of Papua New Guinea (PNG) culture has always been the focus in regards to gender-based violence, portrayed as the cause of violence against women. Occasionally sources state there are traditional customs or beliefs that protect women from violence, but further explanation is not provided. Hence, this research investigated the question, “How can culture address gender-based violence in contemporary, rural Papua New Guinea?” This study offers an opportunity to view PNG culture as a solution to a problem, instead of as merely a problem to be solved.

To investigate how culture can be used positively as a strategy to address gender-based violence, a case study was conducted among the Sulamesi people of Mt Bosavi in the Southern highlands province of PNG. This research was conducted in a rural area because in general Papua New Guineans perceive people living in the villages as the ones living a traditional lifestyle, where established cultural norms and behaviours prevail. Using a qualitative research approach, the research investigated whether there were any traditional protective mechanisms in PNG used to address gender-based violence. This thesis concludes that through the identification of culture-driven protective mechanisms, it can be demonstrated that culture can be used as a strategy to address gender based violence. However, caution must be applied, since not all the protective mechanisms identified are desirable or constructive.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved *tete* Wagira, you will always be in my heart; and to my parents Gerard Dogimab and Eileen Dogimab whose endless love and continued support made all this worth it. Finally, to my two sisters Georgina Dogimab and Esther Dogimab, I hope with all my heart that you don't ever have to experience violence against women.

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVAC	Collective to Fight Violence Against Women
ECPNG	Evangelical Church of Papua New Guinea
EU	European Union
FGC	Female Genital Cutting
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMA	Forest Management Agreement
GAD	Gender and Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Project
KI	Key Informant
KJV	Kutubu Joint Venture
MYWO	Maendeleo Ya Wanawake
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PATH	Programme for Appropriate Technology
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SSI	Semi-structured Interviews
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WID	Women in Development
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature

Local terms

Kisim meri long rot	'Get a woman on the road' – Tok Pisin expression for marrying without parental consent
Long haus	Long house
Man tru/trupela man	Real man
Pasin tumbuna	Traditional way
Rabis man	Rubbish man/worthless man
Raskol	Criminal
Trupela meri	Real woman
Wantok	One of the same language group