

**An Exploration into the ways in which  
Multi-Generational Samoan Households  
Contribute to the Development of Societal and  
Collective Values about Aiga/Families in  
Contemporary  
New Zealand/Aotearoa/Niu Sila**

**Selina Malama Ledoux-Taua'aletoa**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Social Practice  
Unitec Institute of Technology New Zealand, 2013**



## DECLARATION

**Name of Candidate: Selina Malama Ledoux-Taua'aletoa**

This Thesis entitled: *An Exploration into the ways in which Multi-Generational Samoan Households Contribute to the Development of Societal and Collective Values about Aiga/Families in Contemporary New Zealand/Aotearoa/Niu Sila*

Is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of:  
Master of Social Practice

### *CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION*

I confirm that:

- This Thesis Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: No UREC 1177

Candidate Signature:

Date: April 2013

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## **ABSTRACT**

This autobiographical/collective biographical research examines the ways that multigenerational (m/g) household contribute to the development of societal and collective values around Samoan aiga in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

There are several global trends impacting on Aotearoa/New Zealand. These trends include but are not exclusive to the housing shortage, an ageing population coupled with longer life expectancies, and the on-going impact of the global recession.

Multigenerational households are the norm in collective societies such as traditional Samoan society, in Aotearoa the multigenerational household are an anomaly. Policy design does not necessarily include the multigenerational household during the inception process of policy relating to aiga. Through the exclusion of the multigenerational household in the consideration of policy the strengths and potential that the multigenerational households have to offer Aotearoa are not fully explored or supported.

The research explored whether Samoan participants felt that living in the multigenerational household in Aotearoa is a valuable experience and how they felt that their life realities are received by peers and colleagues as a positive life experience.

What was found is that attitude towards the living situation had a profound impact with regards to how the individual assessed their experience within the multigenerational household, even though in some cases upon reflection participants felt that they enjoyed many advantages in the multigenerational household that are no longer available to them.

Through this autobiographical/collective biographical research project narratives and life stories were shared discussing such issues as shared parenting and child care, transference of knowledge such as culture, religion, spirituality and parenting skills. Through the narratives/biographies of the participants it was found that there is potential within the multigenerational household that if supported can possibly provide services that currently fall upon the State.

## DEDICATION

To my family who have always brought me more smiles than frowns, more laughter than tears and just enough challenges to appreciate the good times. Mum and dad you are my heroes, my mentors and my 'quiet place'. I love you



*Figure One* Ledoux Family Portrait. Photographed by Erona, J. from personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa (2008) reprinted with permission.

Back Row: Malaelo Brown, Lealand Brown, Joyanna Brown, Taulauniu Seumanu, Danielle Ledoux-Taua'a, Jeu'dore Ledoux-Taua'a, Johnny Seumanu, Hershyl Seumanu.  
Front Row: Jerry Junior Ledoux, Elma Seumanu, Elexandra Seumanu, Matese Brown, Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, Penimina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, Jet'aime Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, Malamaisaua Ledoux, LeBron Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, Jerry Senior Ledoux, Cole Brown.  
Seated Children: Selma Seumanu, Gabrielle Seumanu, Peaches Ledoux-Taua'a, Cheyna Brown, Logan Ledoux-Taua'a.  
Private Collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa

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I would like to acknowledge and thank several people for their support and assistance through this piece of research. To Dr Helene Connor who inspired me to undertake this method of research that has both challenged and enlightened me.

To my parents Jerry and Ann Ledoux who I have the blessing of seeing (if I so choose) every day. Who are a source of wisdom, support and the most reliable and loving childcare. They quietly observe my struggles as a parent and gently whisper words of encouragement and strength. They are my heroes, my confidants, my mentors.

My boss Peter Alexander and John (Hone) Wihongi who though they did not realize it, were great sources of support, they unwittingly provided me with valuable insights through discussion and debate, their passion for social justice is contagious.

I would like to acknowledge the participants in this project that shared with me so many insights and sacrificed their time to assist me. I humbly pray that they enjoyed and were enlightened by the experience as I have been.

To my beloved children Jeu'dore, Danielle, Peaches, Logan, LeBron, Jet'aime, Saber, Ice, L'amour and Cain thank you for your understanding, support, encouragement and kindness.

Blason, you bought our family new hope, a new beginning and bought us back to a state of equilibrium.

To my husband Peniamina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, the centre of my universe, for supporting me quietly from the comfort of the couch I love you.

Last but not least to Jeu'dore Selina-Malama Junior, mama loves you to the moon and back and then some, now and forever.

Throughout this research you will find pictures of my family who have taught me everything I know, shown me everything that I am and have become the promise of everything I want to be.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	
Declaration	I.
Abstract	II.
Dedication	III
Acknowledgements	IV
Table of Contents	V
List of Figures, maps, photographs, images, etc	VIII
List of Tables, charts, whakapapa, pepeha, etc	X
Glossary	XII
CHAPTER ONE - BACKGROUND	1
Locating Myself in the Research Process	1
Aims and Objectives of the Research Process	5
Outline of the Research	6
CHAPTER TWO- LITERATURE REVIEW	17
Defining Aiga	17
Power and Authority	20
Independence Versus Collectivism	22
Remittances	27
Gender within Aiga	30
Resources	33
Pregnancy & Birth	38
Child Care & Parenting	41
Aged Care	44
Death	47
Transference of Culture	50
Traditional Remedies	52
Spirituality/Religion	53
CHAPTER THREE- METHODOLOGY	56

Introduction	56
Collective Biographical Research	57
Teu le va Model	59
Ula Model	62
Autobiography	64
Narrative Research	65
Telling Stories	66
Language	66
Memory	67
Recruitment	68
In depth Interview	71
Preparation for Interview	71
Questionnaire	75
The Participants	76
The Sample Group	81
The Venue	82
The 1 <sup>st</sup> Interviews	85
Reports of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Interviews	86
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Interviews	86
Cultural Advisors	88
Validation and Ethical Issues	89
CHAPTER FOUR- FINDINGS	93
Support	93
Parenting	94
Age Care	101
Pregnancy & Childbirth	110
Conflict Resolution	114
Individuality versus the Collective	119
Transference of Culture/Information	124
Values and Attitudes	130
Conclusion	133
Recommendations	137

References	138
Appendices	147

## LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure One	Picture of the Ledoux Family	III
Figure Two	Picture of LeBron & L'amour Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	1
Figure Three	Picture of Ice Selina-Grace Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	5
Figure Four	Map of Samoa	8
Figure Five	Picture of LeBron Benjamin Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	22
Figure Six	Picture of Logan, Jet'aime, Danielle, Peaches & LeBron Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	22
Figure Seven	Picture of Saber Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	27
Figure Eight	Picture of LeBron & Peaches Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	30
Figure Nine	Picture of L'amour Fa'apili Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	38
Figure Ten	Picture of Selina & Peniamina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	41
Figure Eleven	Picture of Jerry Ledoux	44
Figure Twelve	Picture of LeBron & L'amour Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	47
Figure Thirteen	Picture of Jet'aime Leoloa-Lynn Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	50
Figure Fourteen	Picture of L'amour Fa'apili Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	52
Figure Fifteen	Picture of Peaches & Logan Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	53
Figure Sixteen	Picture of L'amour Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	57
Figure Seventeen	Picture of Jet'aime Leoloa-Lynn Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	76
Figure Eighteen	Picture of Saber, Jet'aime, LeBron, Logan & Jeu'dore Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	81
Figure Nineteen	Picture of a Samoan Fale	82
Figure Twenty	Picture of a Samoan Cultural Group	88
Figure Twenty One	Picture of a Samoan Fale	93

Figure Twenty Two	Picture of Jeu'dore & Danielle Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	94
Figure Twenty three	Picture of Anne & Jerry Ledoux	101
Figure Twenty four	Picture of Saber (baby) & Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	110
Figure Twenty five	L'amour & Ice Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	114
Figure Twenty six	Logan, Peaches & LeBron Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	119
Figure Twenty seven	Ann Ledoux & Ice (baby) Ledoux-Taua'aletoa	124

## List Tables/Charts/Whakapapa/Pepeha

		Page
Table One	Taku Pepeha	4
Table Two	Samoa Population in New Zealand, 1991-2001	9
Table Three	Growth of Pacific Population in New Zealand 1945-2006 Censuses	10
Table Four	Growth of Pacific Ethnic Groups 1986-2006 Census	11
Table Five	Family Type of the Samoan, Pacific and New Zealand Populations, 2001	12
Table Six	Samoa Population by Household Type, 1991-2001	12
Table Seven	Changes in Real GDP from Peak to Trough	13
Table Eight	Home Ownership Among the Samoan	14
Table Nine	Life Expectancy at Birth, by sex, 1985-1987 to 2007-2009	15
Table Ten	Pacific Island Countries Indicators of Remittances	28
Table Eleven	Median Annual Personal Income of the Samoan, Pacific and New Zealand Populations 1991-2001	34
Table Twelve	Annual Personal Income of the Samoan Population, 2001 by Sex	35
Table Thirteen	Sources of Annual Personal Income of the Samoan, Pacific and New Zealand Populations, 2001	36
Table Fourteen	Ethnicity & Age for People living in crowded & non-crowded households.	37
Table Fifteen	Types of Unpaid Work for the Samoan Population 2001	43
Table Sixteen	Samoa Population Able to Speak Samoan, 2001 by Birth Place and Age	51

Table Seventeen	Samoaan Population with a Religious Affiliation, 2001	55
Table Eighteen	A Biographical Research Matrix in Health and Social Care Research	91

## Glossary

Samoaan Words	English Translation
Aiga	Family this includes extended family
Aiga potopoto	Extended family
Alofa	Love/ compassion
Autalavou	Church youth group
Fa'aaloalo	Respect, deference, courtesy or politeness
Fa'amalaiaina	Curse
Fa'aSamoa	Broadly speaking, fa'aSamoa is the total make-up of the Samoaan culture, which comprises visible and invisible characteristics and in turn forms the basis of principles, values and beliefs that influence and control the behaviour and attitudes of Samoans. Fa'aSamoa is the 'umbilical cord' that attaches Samoans to their culture. Its meaning for Samoans in their native land will be somewhat different or have different emphases than for those in Aotearoa. (Mulitalo-Lauta, P. 2000).
Fa'alavelave	An occasion where the extended family members are expected to contribute (Ngan-Woo, F. 1985)
Fale	House
Fanua	Afterbirth/ placenta another meaning is land
Gafa	Ancestry/ genealogy
Mamalu	Holy/Sacred
Nu'u	Village
Palalagi	Westernized
Sa	Forbidden, sacred
Siva	Dance
Tala	Story/stories, talk
Tautua	Service
Toga	Sacred goods in a ceremonial exchange
<b>Maori Words</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
Turangawaewae	The area that is a person's home.

Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whangai	Foster/adopt
Tikanga	Maori customs and traditions that have been handed down through the passages of time from our Tupuna
Te Reo	Maori Language
Tupuna	Ancestors
Me	And
Pepeha	The pepeha is the way in which you introduce yourself in Maori
Kete	Basket
Rangatiratanga	Having control over one's life

## **CHAPTER ONE**



*Figure Two: LeBron and L'amour Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J. (2012)  
From Personal Collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa*

### **Locating Myself in the Research Process**

'In Samoan culture there are three perspectives. The perspective of the person at the top of the mountain, the perspective of the person at the top of the tree, and the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish. In any big problem the three perspectives are equally necessary. The person fishing in the canoe may not have the long view of the person at the top of the tree, but they are closer to the school of fish, this research represents the culmination of all three perspectives, as it sought a range of views both long and short, from women and men...' (Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi).

The methodology for this research project is an autobiographical/ collective biographical research. Traditionally in qualitative research commentators in methodological texts have stressed the empathetic orientation to the 'subject' on behalf of the researcher, who nevertheless has an objective role as the questioner, interpreter and presenter of the finished research text.

More recently however the emphasis has shifted to recognition of the collaborative and reflexive role of the researcher. Writers have called for researcher to state their relationship to the research and the influences that are inherent in their own thinking process, such as gender, culture, ethnicity and social background (Roberts, B. 2002).

Robert Atkinson (1998) asserts that immersing the researcher fully in the research process in the collection of stories is a fundamental part of sociology that is the telling of stories. It not only provides the subject or participant in finding or creating meaning to their stories but it also provides the researcher with an opportunity to draw on their own experiences (Roberts, B. 2002). I have accepted that invitation in choosing the collective and auto/biographical methodology. The auto/biographical methodology invites individuals to share their experiences as they remember their experiences, it does not require them to justify their positions or to rationalise their actions but to rather to tell their story.

Through this autobiographical/collective biography I will explore the ways in which multi-generational Samoan households contribute to the development of societal and collective values about aiga in Aotearoa/Niu Sila. I hope to explore whether there are supports available within these multigenerational households that may be 'taken for granted' or over looked and are therefore left unseen in terms of their potential for creating resource and capacity within the family/aiga and the wider community.

I will explore the life experiences of nine participants who have lived in the multi-generational household along with my own insights and experiences. I will invite these participants to share their experiences within the multi-generational household and explore whether there are any commonalities or disparities that

I was born in Moto'otua Hospital in Samoa and came to Aotearoa/Niu Sila at approximately six months of age. I have two older siblings, a brother and sister, and one younger sister. All of my siblings were born in Aotearoa/Niu Sila. I have been married for over twenty years and have ten children. Since having my first child over twenty years ago, I have lived in a multigenerational household.

In my second year of tertiary study I fell pregnant with my first child, so I chose to defer my education to commit my time and energies to start a family. After having my first child I fell pregnant with my second child shortly after. After bearing my second child, I made a decision to resume my education.

Just before I completed my Bachelor Degree I found employment with the Department of Child Youth and Family Services as a care and protection social worker. I still had a

few papers left to complete to be awarded my Bachelor Degree, my two children at home and I was working full time.

A few years ago a friend of mine who is of a similar age to me, who was raised in the same suburb of Auckland as me, comes from the same ethnic group and raised in the same religion asked me 'how I could live in the same house as my parents?'. I had been married for several years at this time and had five children.

He was a close enough friend that I did not bother being offended. I reflected for a while trying my best to give him the most honest answer, and then responded 'I can't imagine my life any other way, I love that I can see my parents every day and that my children know them'.

This initiated a curiosity within me. I had always made the assumption that people living in the same situation as me, lived that way out of choice and not circumstance. As a social work practitioner I often worked along-side Samoan aiga where I wondered whether stronger input from older generations within the aiga might be useful for these 'nuclear families' in crisis.

During the times my husband and I were living together we lived with my parents either in their home or in ours. Looking over the span of my marriage I have enjoyed a myriad of supports because of my living situation.

I have lived in Aotearoa my whole life a practice that feels most relevant to me is the bearing of my pepeha it situates me within the world and specifically within Aotearoa.

## Taku Pepeha

Ko Hamoa toku motu	Samoa is my island
Ko te Moana Nui Akiwa toku moana	The Pacific Ocean is my Ocean
Ko Vaia toku maunga	Vaea is my mountain
Ko Magiagi raua ko Aleisa toku turangawaewae	Magiagi and Aleisa are my villages
Ko Tamaki Makaurau toku kainga	Auckland is where I live
Ko Jerry Ledoux toku papa	Jerry Ledoux is my father
Malamaisaua Perese Ledoux toku mama	Malamaisaua Perese is my mother
Peniamina Taua'a toku hoa rangatira	Peniamina is my husband
E nga iwa oku tamaiti I tenei wa	I have nine children at this time
Jeu'dore te mataamua,	Jeu'dore is the oldest
Danielle, Peaches, Logan, Jet'aime me Ice oku tamahine.	Danielle, Peaches, Logan, Jet'aime, Ice and L'amour are my daughters
Lebron raua ko Saber oku tamatane.	Lebron and Saber are my sons
Ko Selina Malama Ledoux-Taua'aletoa taku ingoa	My name is Selina Malama Ledoux-Taua'aletoa

**Table One:** Taku Pepeha

For the better part of my life I have lived in a multi-generational household, it is what some people might describe as over-crowded. It is what some people have described as chaotic. I however, have always viewed it as entertaining and full of laughter.

## BACKGROUND



*Figure Three:* Portrait of Ice Selina-Grace Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2010). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Research Project**

The aim of this thesis was to research the context of Samoan multi-generational households with the intention of exploring the ways in which Multigenerational Samoan Households Contribute to the Development of Societal and Collective Values about Aiga/Families in Contemporary New Zealand/Aotearoa/Niu Sila.

The thesis aims to explore whether there is space within the multigenerational household to create capacity within the aiga/whanau/family. In creating capacity within the household capacity is also created within the wider community. If there is space for capacity building within this family model it is hoped that this research might assist in informing policy and design and analysis particularly within governmental and statutory agencies.

This thesis is also a conscious endeavour to add to the literature and research with regards to Pasifika communities particularly the Samoan community (Connor, H. 2007). While there has been an increase in research relating to Pasifika communities I have found it difficult to find research relating specifically to the multigenerational household which is a family model that exists as a 'norm' within the traditional Samoan paradigm. There has been no exploration relating to the types of experiences this family model can provide to those that live within the multigenerational household.

## **Outline of the Research**

Within this thesis I hope to explore Samoan multigenerational households within Aotearoa/New Zealand/Niu Sila. The methodologies utilized for this piece of research are Autobiography and Collective Biography. It draws on narrative analysis aligned with concepts asserted by Margaret Somers (1994).

This narrative methodology aligns with concepts of Maoritanga which are similar to fa'aSamoa that hold to the fore of their traditional communities and culture, aiga and relationships (Bishop, R. 1996, Graham, J. 2005, Royal, C. 1998).

For this research I am utilizing an autobiographical/ collective biographical approach. Collective biographical narratives allow participants to create their own identities (Roesler, 2006), and therefore through this method new appreciations and values can be given to any set of circumstances regardless of societal norms.

I chose to utilise this research methodology because I believe that it creates the opportunity to provide a voice to the individual's story and possibly within those individual stories it provides space for idiosyncrasies that are specific to particular cultures or ethnic groups, specifically in this piece of research Samoans.

The biographical/autobiographical research is the opportunity to create individual heroes, who may reflect on their own successes. Banner (2009) noted that biographies while useful in acknowledging different truths and challenges the researcher to produce lucid writings. Biographies illuminate the processes by which individuals negotiate their identities and their interpretation of social norms (Breen, J. 2009).

The intent of biographical research in its various guises is to collect and interpret the lives of others as part of human understanding (Roberts, B. 2002). This research methodology aims towards treating social actors as knowledgeable, intentional agents, active and reflective in the constitution of their own identity(ies) (Gardner, G. 2001).

The autobiographical/collective biographical methodologies seek to discover what the motivations are that actors have in acting in particular ways. (Gardner, G. 2001).Retelling people's lives and experiences can help us to understand our social worlds (O'Neill 2006).

Collecting data for biographies or life stories can be done in different ways, by group work, journals, diaries, other autobiographical writings, documents and by interviews (which will be the method used in this project), or and by a combination of these.

Connor (2007) asserts that 'biographical writing can not only position us as the subjects of our own inquiry but it can also provide a space for articulating our multiple lives and identities'.

Collective biographical research provides opportunity for participants to discuss, reflect and narrate their experiences. In this specific piece of research the reflection will concentrate on participant narratives around living in the multigenerational household. The collective biographical methodology of research creates an opportunity for a rewarding celebration of life (Lang, 2007).

When minority groupings within a society are not participating actively at a political level, policy and policy design may not consider cultural or ethnic idiosyncrasies of those minorities. These idiosyncrasies of those cultures or ethnic groupings may be strengths that if supported will bring welcomed diversity and value to Aotearoa.

Autobiographical/collective biographical research can inform policy makers so that they can have a higher level of understanding and sensitivity when making policy so that policy can include the potential strengths within minority groups.

There is currently very limited research available in respect to Samoan culture and families. I hope to add to the current kete (basket) of information in the hopes that it might inform policy makers. When engaging on autobiographical/collective biographical research one embarks on an agenda for action and agency (Somers, M. 1994).

This methodology also considers narrative analysis as have been influenced by the theories of Michel Foucault (1979). Foucault asserted that narratives show people that they can feel freer than they feel, for minority groupings such as Samoans where traditional practices may enhance life within Aotearoa this is relevant.

This piece of research while concentrating on the Samoan experience within the multigenerational household, has a strong Maori influence. This is both a result of geography in that the research is conducted within the context of Aotearoa and therefore must in one way or another acknowledge that it must be influenced by its

surrounds. This is coupled with my having lived for all my whole ‘remembered’ life in Aotearoa.

Reflecting on the four core functions as outlined by Jo Cribb for the New Zealand/Aotearoa Families Commission, I will explore whether the four functions are addressed within the multigenerational household. I will also explore how the multigenerational household contribute to societal values in Aotearoa/Niu Sila.



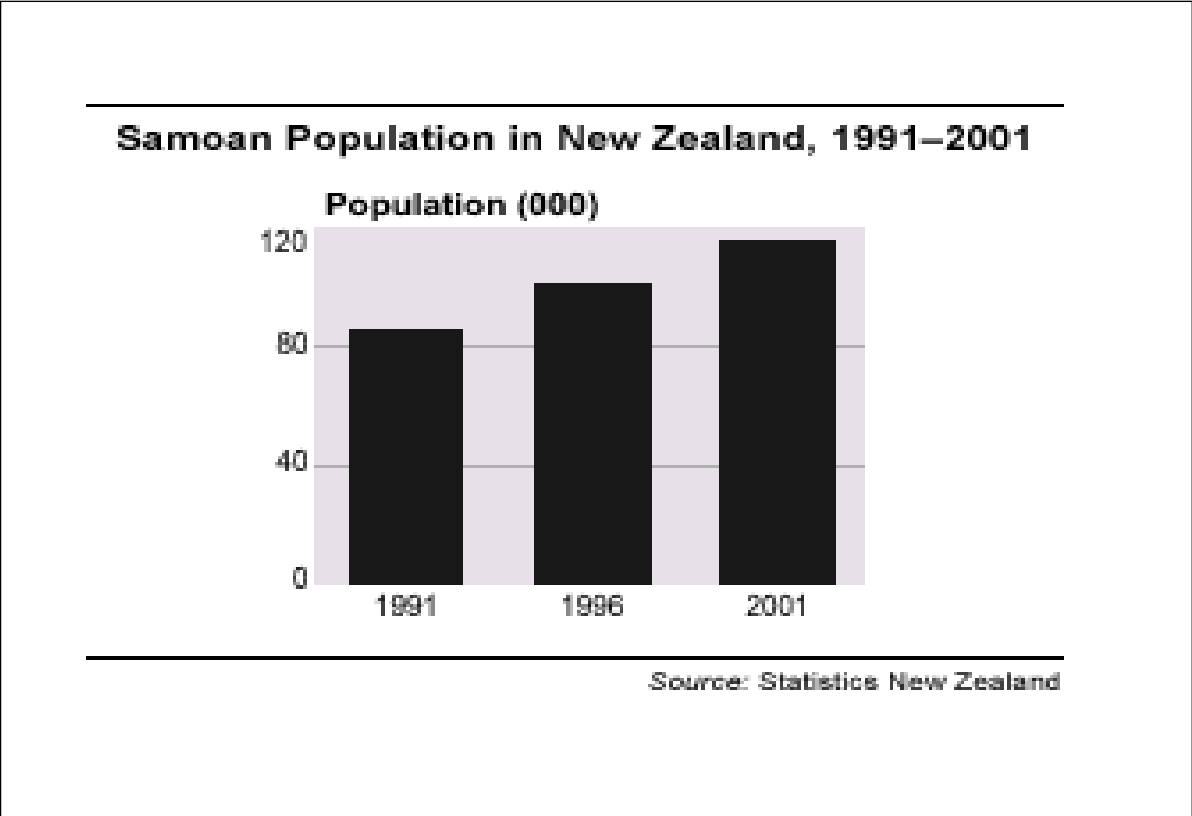
Figure Four: Map of Samoa. Sourced from Nationmaster.com. Retrieved from website: [http://images.nationmaster.com/images/motw/islands\\_oceans\\_poles/westernsamoa.jpg](http://images.nationmaster.com/images/motw/islands_oceans_poles/westernsamoa.jpg). Reprinted with permission.

During the 1960-1970’s the Government of Aotearoa targeted Pasifika nations to fill a gap in the unskilled work force, Samoa inclusive. Enticed by the possibility of opportunity and material gain many Pasifika people made the journey to Aotearoa. There was a general belief by those who ventured across the waters that once they had made some money they would return to their Pasifika homes (Macpherson, C & Spoonley, P & Anae, M. 2001 & Melisea, M. & Schoeffel, P. 1989). Some of these immigrants did return to their Pasifika homes, however many remained in Aotearoa making Aotearoa their home.

There was a general expectation that migration would benefit extended households and sometimes whole villages (Macpherson 1994). In Samoa migration was seen in very simple terms “to seek wealth for all” (Muliaina 2001). It was assumed that family

members who remained in Samoa would receive assistance and financial support by way of remittances sent by family members working in Aotearoa (Macpherson 1994).

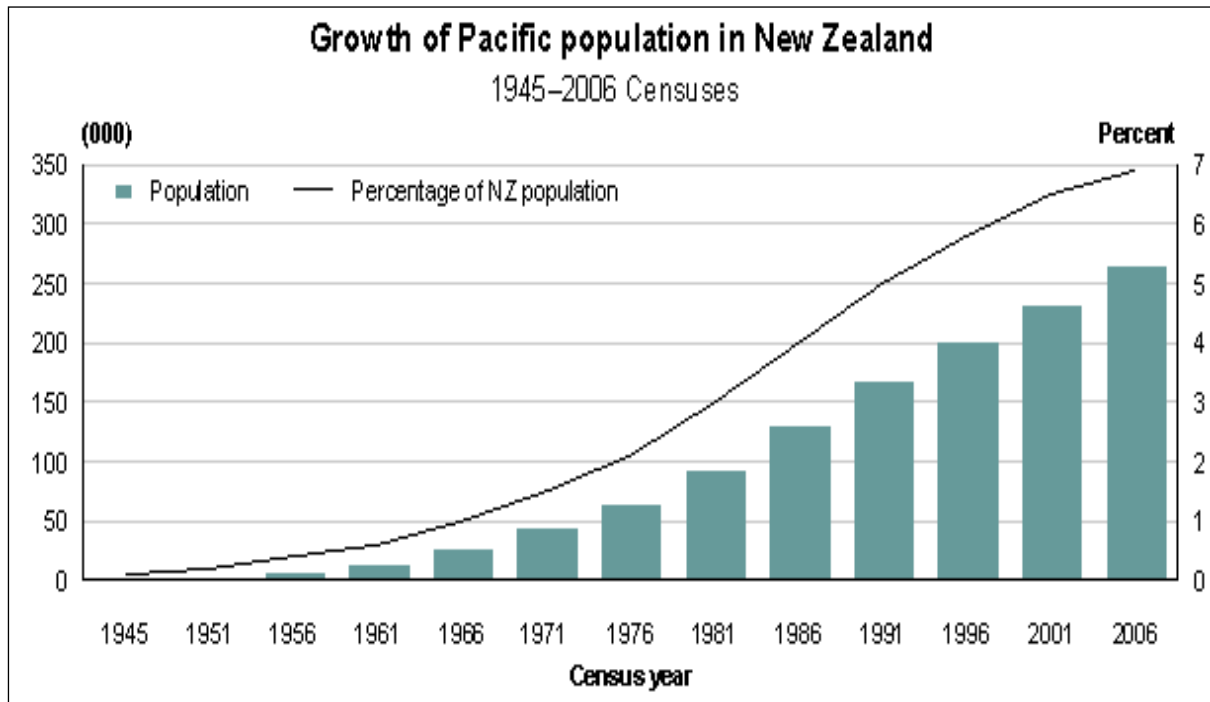
By 2006 the Samoan population had increased significantly in Aotearoa since the 1960s, as seen in Table Two below, increasing from just over 80,000 in 1991 to just under 120,000 in 2001.



**Table Two:** Samoan Population in New Zealand, 1991-2001 Sourced from Statistics New Zealand [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/pacific\\_peoples/pacific-progress-demography/population-growth.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/pacific_peoples/pacific-progress-demography/population-growth.aspx). Reprinted with permission.

Table Three below captures the increase in the Pasifika population of Aotearoa. The Pasifika population of Aotearoa/ Niu Sila is a young one, with low rates of mortality and high rates of fertility, these factors combined produces a high natural rate of population growth.

Within the Pasifika populations the Samoan population is the highest as reflected in Table Four. The low rates of mortality and high rates of fertility have remained stable contrary to the current trend of other ethnic groups outside of the Pasifika populous, and to the ageing trend worldwide.

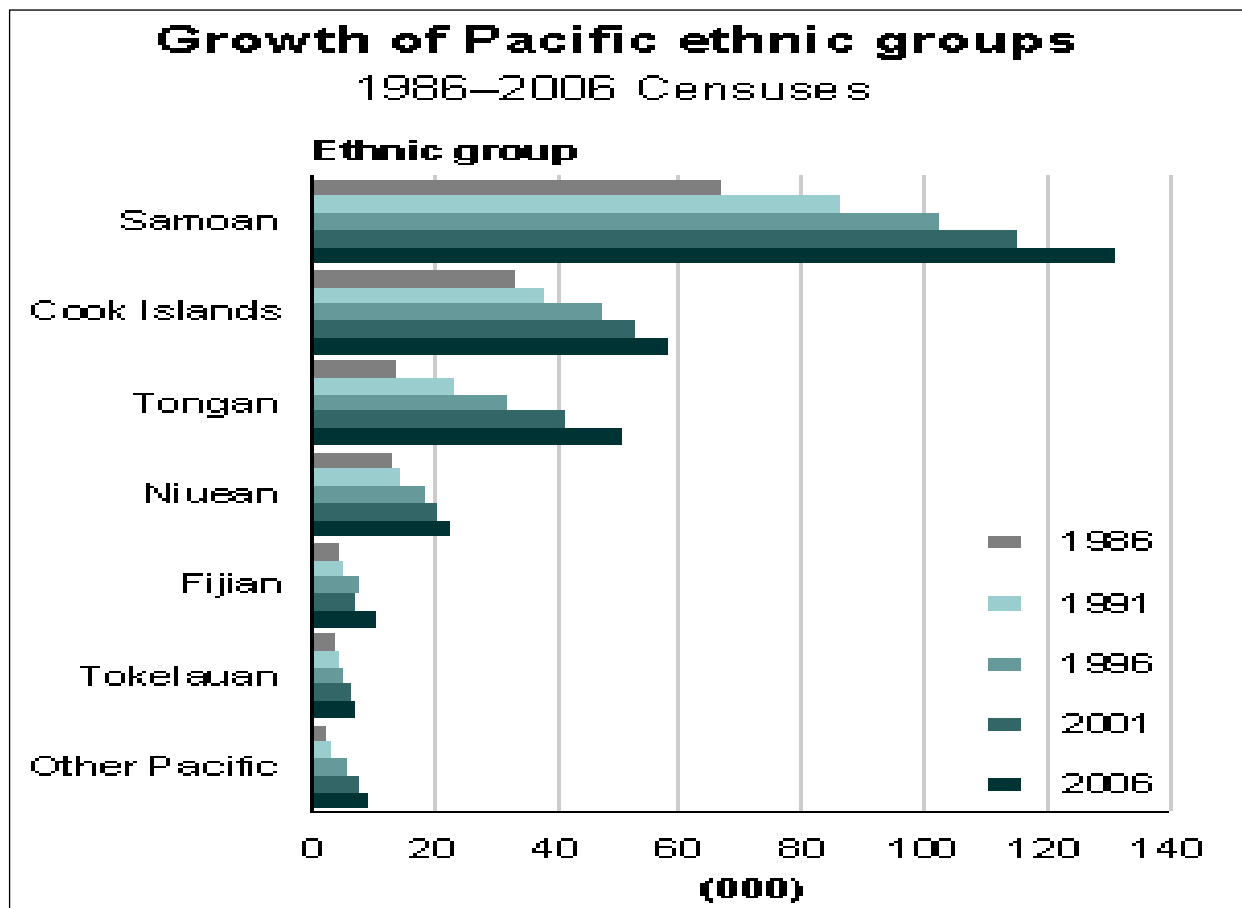


**Table Three:** Growth of Pacific Population in New Zealand, 1945-2006 Census Sourced from Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved from website: [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/pacific\\_peoples/pacific-progress-demography/population-growth.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/pacific_peoples/pacific-progress-demography/population-growth.aspx). Reprinted with permission.

Table Two and Three indicate that the Pasifika and Samoan population in Aotearoa/Niu Sila is increasing. However, Pasifika peoples are still under represented in both political participation (including voting) and elected office according to the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (<http://www.hrc.co.nz/report/summary/summary06.html>). This can, and possibly does affect policy and legislation design, in that idiosyncrasies peculiar to Pasifika and more specifically Samoan culture may not be sufficiently explored.

For Aotearoa/Niu Sila enabling minority ethnic groupings, Samoans inclusive to be seen, accepted and included is no longer a moral responsibility it is a strategic imperative. If, diversity is not seen for it's potential benefit, than Aotearoa loses that potential. There are many benefits that can be gained from the diversity and cultural/ethnic practices of these minority groups (Singham, M. 2006).

In 2006 Samoans made up 49% (131,100) of Pasifika people living in Aotearoa (265,974) as shown in Table Four (below), this was an increase since 2001 by 14%. Samoans born in Aotearoa make up 60% of people identifying themselves as Samoan (Census 2006).

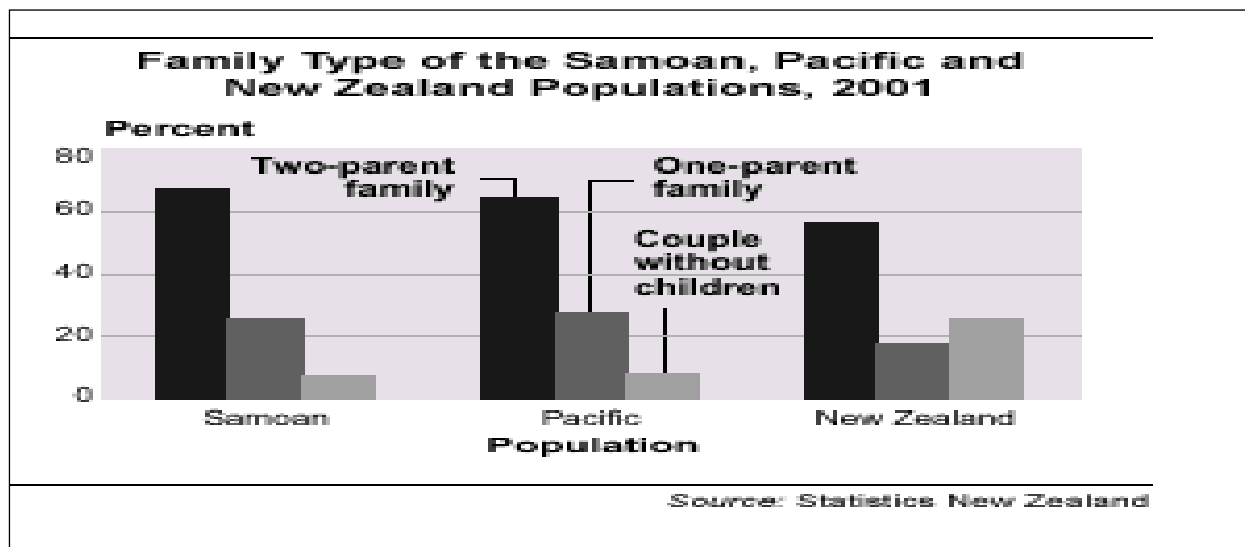


**Table Four:** Growth of Pacific Ethnic Groups 1986-2006 Census. Sourced from Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved from website: [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/pacific\\_peoples/pacific-progress-demography/population-growth.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/pacific_peoples/pacific-progress-demography/population-growth.aspx). Reprinted with permission.

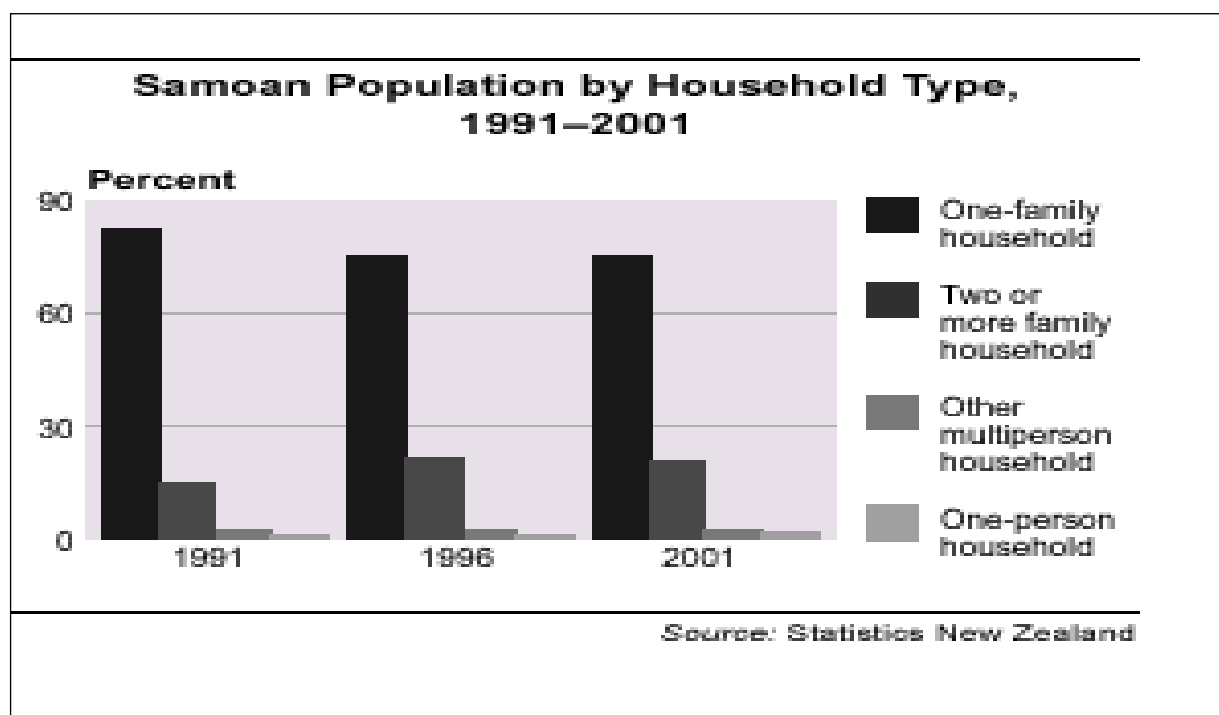
In 2006, 83% of Samoans were living in a family situation comparable to the general populous of Aotearoa/ Niu Sila where 75% of the general population were likely to live in a family situation.

The 2006 figure of 83% is an increase of 3% from the previous census of 2001. This is similar to the total Pacific Island population of 86% living in a family situation in 2006. The percentage of Samoans living in a family is similar to the Pasifika population as a whole, and higher than the percentage for Aotearoa general population.

67% of these Samoan families comprised of couples with children. This remained the same as the 2001 Census. The total for Pacific peoples living in the same situation was 64% and the total for Aotearoa was 56%. The Samoan percentage for families comprising of couples and children is higher than that of Pasifika peoples as a whole and significantly higher than Aotearoa as a whole as demonstrated in Table Five below (Statistics New Zealand Census 2006).



**Table Five** Family Type of the Samoan, Pacific and New Zealand Populations, 2001. Sourced from New Zealand Statistics. Retrieved from website: <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/nzstories.nsf/fb471f7feb8c8d5fcc256af1000fa1c1/f375f35d8c64be01cc256ccb006862f0?OpenDocument>. Reprinted with permission.



**Table Six:** Samoan Population by Household Type, 1991-2001. Sourced from New Zealand Statistics. Retrieved from website: <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/nzstories.nsf/fb471f7feb8c8d5fcc256af1000fa1c1/f375f35d8c64be01cc256ccb006862f0?OpenDocument>. Reprinted with permission.

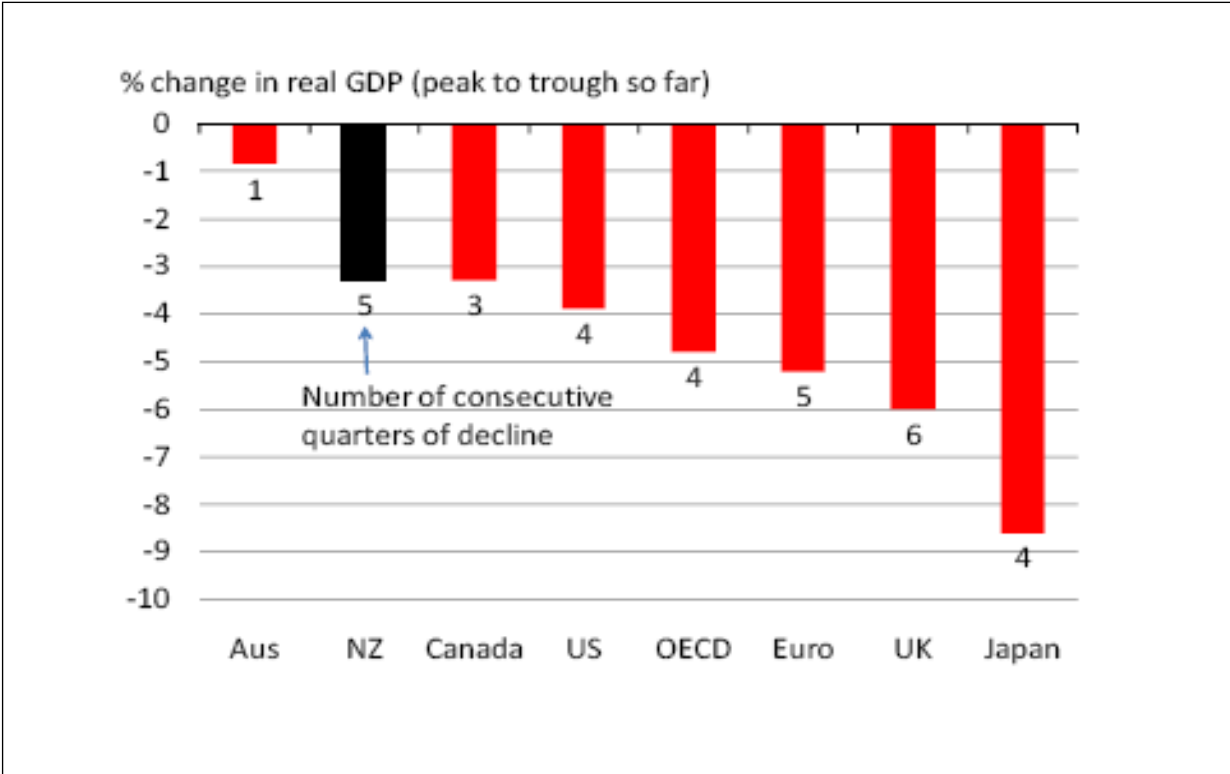
35% of Samoans in 2006 were living in an extended family household, this is an increase from 2001 of 5%. This is comparable to the total for Pasifika peoples at 34% which is an increase of 5% from 2001 and the Aotearoa total at 10% and increase of 2% since 2001. Across the nation there is an increase of the extended family situation. The 2006 Census did not distinguish between multigenerational households and

extended family households. There are many factors that may have contributed to the increase of families living in the extended family situation, ethnicity and cultural values continue to be a factor.

I chose to explore the multigenerational household as opposed to the extended family household to explore what supports if any were available through the different generations within the household.

The recession in New Zealand may have contributed to the increase of the extended family household. In Aotearoa the recession began in the March 2008 quarter, which is just after the gathering of the data from the 2006 Census. However the recession occurred in New Zealand before any OECD nation, as a result of domestic factors. New Zealand’s recession was thus one of the longest, although it was also among the first to finish and one of the shallowest as reflected in Table Seven below. The fall in real GDP of 3.3% between the December 2007 quarter and the March 2009 quarter was the 6th equal smallest with Canada. (<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/economy/mei/jan10/03.htm>).

**Changes in real GDP from peak to trough**

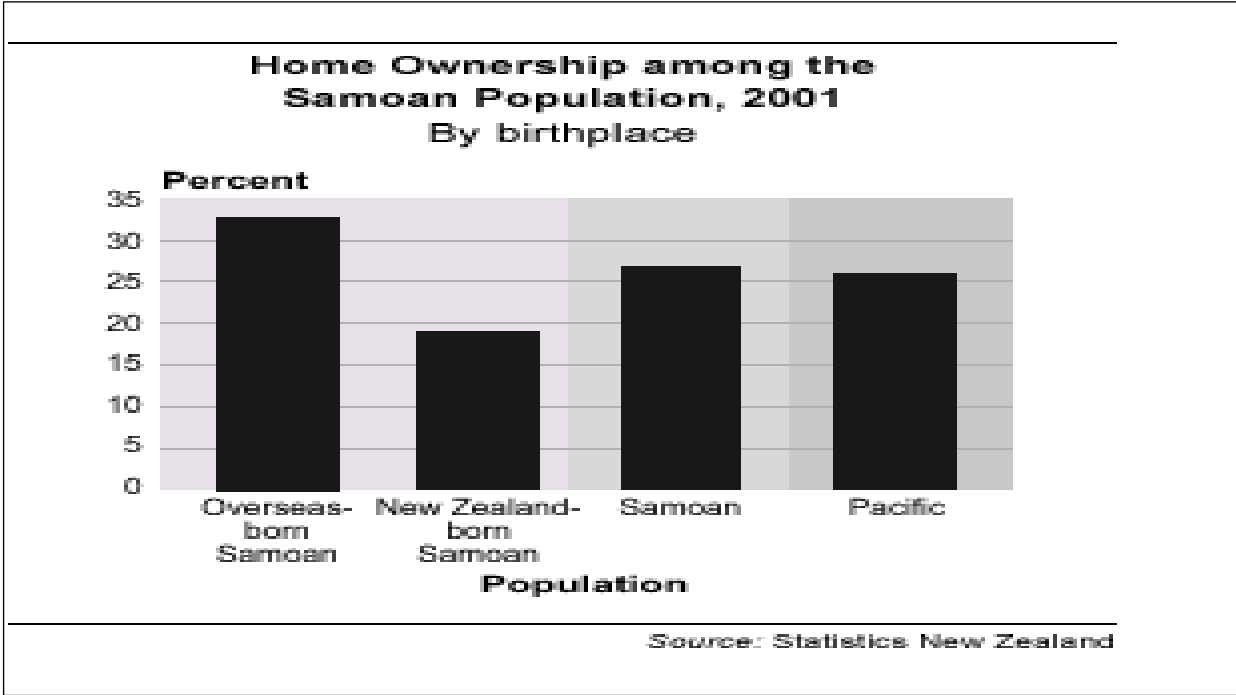


**Table Seven:** Changes in Real GDP from Peak to Trough Source: OECD, Treasury calculations cited in Business Day. Retrieved from website: (<http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/674684/Housing-shortage-forecast>). Reprinted with permission.

The housing shortage in Aotearoa may also be contributing to people living in a multi-generational home. Lincoln University property professor Chris Eves predicted that demand would build up as new housing stock dwindled, setting off the boom-and-bust cycle again. (<http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/674684/Housing-shortage-forecast>). This prediction was made prior to the earthquakes in Christchurch 2010 and 2011.

Table Eight below shows that in 2001 27% of Samoan people aged 15 and over stated that they owned or partially owned their own home. 56% of Samoans aged between 45 and 64 years owned their own home compared to those aged between 25 and 44 who had the equivalent of 27% ownership of their own homes.

Samoans born overseas were more likely to own their own home at 33% than their New Zealand born counterparts. The older age of the overseas born Samoans is possibly a contributing factor (Statistics New Zealand, Census 2006).



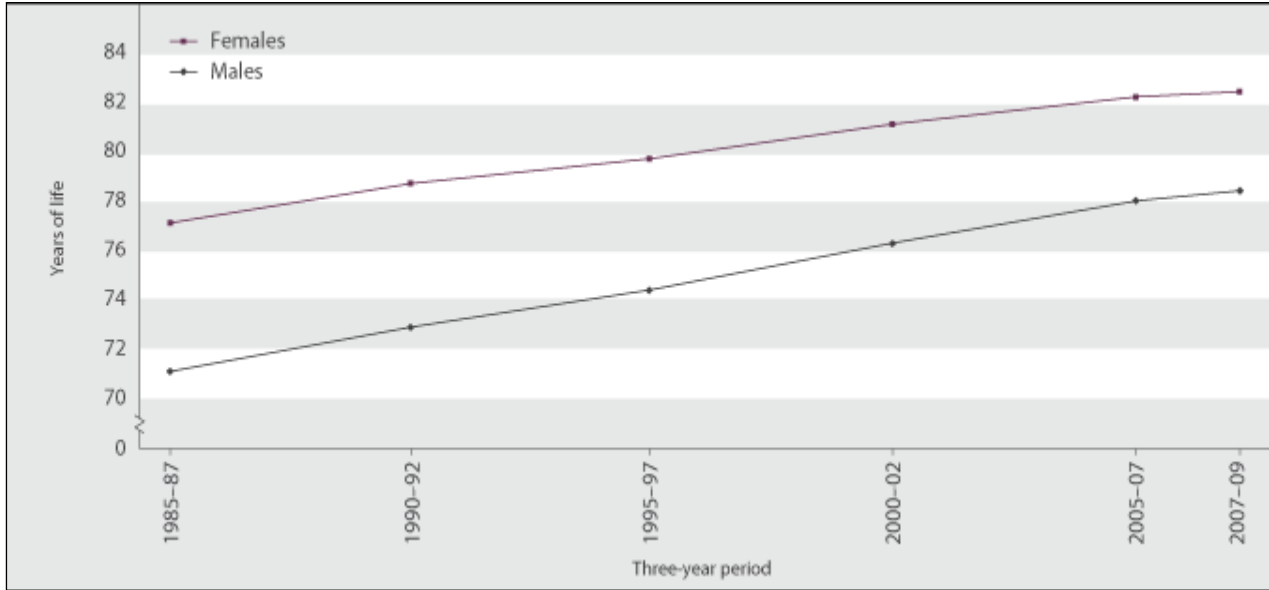
**Table Eight:** Home Ownership Among the Samoan Population 2001 Sourced from Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved from website: <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/nzstories.nsf/fb471f7feb8c8d5fcc256af1000fa1c1/f375f35d8c64be01cc256ccb006862f0>. Reprinted with permission.

As 56% of Samoans indicated home ownership, it is unlikely that the housing shortage has had an impact on the likelihood of Samoans living in a multigenerational household. The increased Samoan population in Aotearoa however may be a factor.

People are living longer increasing the opportunity of living in a multigenerational home. Based on the mortality experiences of New Zealanders in the period 2007–2009, life

expectancy at birth was 78.4 years for males and 82.4 years for females reflected in Table Nine below. In other words as grandparents are living longer there is greater opportunity to live with their grandchildren.

The gains in life expectancy since the mid-1980s can be attributed mainly to reduced death rates for people in the late-working and retirement age groups (55–84 years). However, reduced death rates for infants (from 11.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1986 to 4.9 per 1,000 in 2009), for people aged 45–54 years, and for women aged 85 years and over were also significant. (<http://www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz/health/life-expectancy.html>).



**Table Nine:** Life expectancy at birth, by sex, 1985–1987 to 2007–2009

Source: Human Rights Commission New Zealand. Retrieved from website: (<http://www.hrc.co.nz/report/summary/summary06.html>). Reprinted with permission. Note: The period life table data in this graph is from complete life tables for all periods up to 2005–2007 and an abridged life table for 2007–2009.

Modernization and migration have resulted in and required Samoans to modify and change the structure, function and accessibility of the aiga (Pitt & Macpherson 1974; Macpherson 1978; Higgenbotham and Marsella 1977; Filoiaili’I& Knowles 1983).

Or though Samoans more than other ethnic groupings seem to have retained the practice of living within multigenerational households there has been a shift towards nuclear households and a shift within households of power and authority.

In essence the Pasifika population is growing, both in number and diversity. The complexity of this growth and diversification must be considered in the development and design of governmental policy (both local and central government).

The Pasifika population and research paradigms must consider Pacific immigrants and recent arrivals, Aotearoa born Pacific people and people and children of mixed heritage. This growing diversity necessitates unprecedented multi-ethnic considerations in terms of research, policy and formation of service delivery (Anae, M. 2010).

## **CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Defining Aiga/Family**

“O le fogava’a tele” One family.  
(Anon, Samoan Proverb).

The definition of family has broadened to encompass most family situations. Family holds many different meanings for many different people. Family can relate to biological, religious, cultural and many other connections that are of value to the person defining a familial connection. (Bogenschneider, 2006 Young, Melli, & Fleming, 1993: Jacobsen, Fursman, Bryant, Claridge, & Jensen, 2004; Stone, 2000). As a social construct family can be defined as whatever you say it is (Newman, F 2009).

Family definition recognizes the dissolution of relationships and acknowledgement that relationships do not necessarily last as long as they once did. Blended families have become common place, as have single parent families. (Families Commission, 2005; Ministry of Social Development, 2004a; True, 2005).

There is legal recognition for de facto and de jure relationships by cohabitation and marriage, same sex parenting families, single parent families, couple families and extended families. (The Civil Union Act 2004, Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989, Care of Children Act 2008).

Jo Cribb of the Aotearoa Families Commission identified four core functions of the family which are relevant to Aiga Samoa:

- The nurturing, rearing and socialization and protection of children.
- Maintaining and improving the wellbeing of family members by providing them with emotional and material support.
- The psychological anchorage of adults and children by way of affection, companionship and a sense of belonging and identity.
- Passing on culture, knowledge, values, attitudes, obligations and property from one generation to the next (Families Commission 2005).

The official definitions of family consider who we are living with and with whom we consider as kin (Newman, D 2009). Belonging to a family gives us a set of obligations or responsibilities. Within families there is an assumption of power that is inherent whether it is recognized or not, and this may differ from one society to the next.

Within families sexual relationships amongst adults are regulated, people are cared for, there are births, deaths and protection is afforded. Forms of family and roles within families differ from one society to the next. However whatever the differences or similarities are, families remain the centre of social life in virtually all societies (Newman, D 2009).

The term aiga translated into English means family however it can extend to include members of a common village, where the loyalties and commitment is as strong as if those individuals had a biological connection (Meleisea, M. & Schoeffel, P. cited in Adair, V. & Dixon, R. 1998).

The central element in fa'aSamoa (Samoan culture) is the aiga (family). Within the aiga and fa'aSamoa, giving and receiving tautua (service), fa'aaloalo (respect) and alofa (love) are crucial in social relations (Anae, M. 1998).

In fa'aSamoa aiga is used for kinship in all its dimensions. It is inclusive of nuclear family, extended family as per the Western understanding. Aiga also incorporates descent group, blood relatives, relatives by marriage and adopted relatives (Meleisea, M. & Schoeffel, P. cited in Adair, V. & Dixon, R. 1998).

The traditional Samoan aiga structure is hierarchical where generation, sex, age and distinctions between those related by blood and those related by marriage are all factors which dictate roles, status and rank. In most situations age is the most influential factor (Meleisea, M. & Schoeffel, P. cited in Adair, V. & Dixon, R. 1998).

Households in Samoa are usually made up of extended family, however there is little data or research in relation to this. Shore (1982) described through his research from a total of 55 households, Shore identified only 1 as being a one-generational household while 16 he described as two-generational and the remaining 38 as three-generational (what would be described in this research as multigenerational) (Fitzgerald, M & Howard A. 1990).

Within the aiga all children owe respect to the members of the generations that precede them. Younger brother shows respect to older brothers as younger sisters will show respect to older sisters (Mageo, J 1991).

Traditional households within Samoa vary in size and structure. Some aiga living on the family land could be made up of several nuclear families. In some circumstances each nuclear family occupying the aiga land could live in smaller fale on the land. It is also possible that a couple of nuclear families could be living in the same fale.

Individual nuclear families living on the family land did not necessarily cooperate at the domestic level but would pool resources for such things as contributions for village, church and family ceremonial contributions (Bedford, R. & Robert, D. cited in Macpherson, C & Spoonley, P & Anae, M. 2001).

There is very little data available to give precise breakdowns of ratios within the Samoan community of how households are made up (Fitzgerald, M. & Howard, A. 1990). There is however general acceptance that 'extended family' is the most appropriate description. Fitzgerald and Howard conducted a piece of research where one of the difficulties is that participants from the same household could not agree on who was or was not a member of the household. The reason for this was that between interviews for the research households changed dramatically. This was an indication of the fluidity of the Samoan households where people continually came into and left the household moving in or out for longer or shorter periods of time (Fitzgerald, M. & Howard, A. 1990).

Within traditional Samoan culture the eldest grandchild could be claimed as a matter of course by the paternal grandparents, and the second grandchild could be claimed by the maternal grandparents. Children can be moved between uncles and aunties as needed, and the child is referred to as toga (sacred goods in a ceremonial exchange), this affirming that the child belongs to the aiga not just to the parents. Mageo contends that egocentric societies assume that mothers will love their children unconditionally, even though mothers are often unable to live up to this expectation.

'The absolute reliance we place in mothers Samoans place in their families' (Mageo, J. 2001 p.46).

## Power and Authority

'Le ala I le pule o le auauna'. The way to leadership/power/authority is through service. (Anon, Samoan Proverb)

Traditionally Samoan aiga were led by Matai. Strictly speaking Samoan titleholders or Matai occupied the land from which their title is derived. The Matai system is an important social construct in Samoan society. Every Samoan family is represented by a Matai who is in essence the executor or caregiver of the family estate. The Matai becomes the representative for the family in village council (Yamamoto, M. 2007).

A Matai or chiefly title is a name passed from generation to generation within an aiga. Each title has its own duties and responsibilities to the family. A matai is appointed by the consensus of the aiga. Criteria for selection for Matai include but are not exclusive to the following:

1. Blood connection to the title. This is a fluid process of selection. The husband of a female member of the aiga may be selected or an adopted family member.
2. Services (tautua). Where a family member has provided service to the family they may be selected as Matai.
3. General Fitness. An understanding of fa'aSamoa is considered, the aiga will consider a family member that will be represented within the village context.
4. The will of the deceased. The aiga may consider a member of the aiga that has been nominated by a dying matai. This is only considered by the aiga will make the final decision.

(Yamamoto, M. 2007).

Traditional Samoan leadership emphasizes the cultural values of service, sharing and caring. Where the matai is head and coordinator of the affairs of the aiga, and the aiga reciprocates and gives active support and service to their matai the system works well. It needs to be built on alofa and respect (Betham, E. 2008).

While traditionally Matai needed to occupy the village from where his title was derived this has no longer become a requirement. In my situations Matai or chiefly titles will be conferred upon people who do not live in Samoa.

A matai has two pivotal roles within the aiga. 1. They are the caretaker of the family estate and 2. They are representatives for the aiga within the village setting and therefore must be well versed in protocol and process, this includes the ability to gather valuables for exchange in ceremony, valuables might include, fine mats, tapa cloth, money etc. (Yamamoto, M. 2007).

These ceremonial exchanges can be costly and taxing on aiga. Aiga in Samoa have become more reliant on members of the aiga living outside of Samoa to meet the perceived needs for these ceremonial exchanges.

The matai may ask non-resident siblings and relatives to contribute to these exchanges and therefore it may become advantageous to Samoa based matai to confer a matai title on a non-resident family member in order to ensure their cooperation and contribution for ceremonial exchanges (Yamamoto, M. 2007).

Within the Aotearoa context the Matai system has adapted and modified to fit better within the new and changing social context. In a study conducted by Fitzgerald and Howard 1990 indicated a progression away from frequent obligatory service to matai. The matai system is responding to commercial economy by retaining obligatory service but by reducing the demands on family members in recognition of their new social setting.

Fa'aSamoa is evident in the legal system in Samoa which has two branches, the western type model that is administered by Police and the Government and the traditional system which is administered at the village level (<http://www.samoa.co.uk/music&culture.html>).

## Independence versus Collectivism



Figure Five. LeBron Ledoux-Taua'aletoa

Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.



Figure Six. Logan, Jet'aime, Danielle, Peaches and LeBron Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

'I am not an individual, I am an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies. I am not an individual, because I share a tofi with my family, my village and my nation, I belong to my family and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me, I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me, this is the essence of my sense of being', (Efi, T Keynote Address 2003).

As the individuation and acculturation process for immigrant youths also entails increasing detachment and separation from family, they may also lead to family and intergenerational conflict. Bray et al. (1999).

Individualism is the concept in which the person conceives him or herself as being separate, autonomous, and distinct from others. The orientation is toward oneself and internal attributes. Collectivism refers to a perception of self that is embedded within social roles and social relationships; separate selves are de-emphasized with an orientation towards others and the welfare of the group or the community (Le & Stockdale 2005 p.685).

Le and Stockdale assert that for adolescents the process of individuation involves developing an identity that is separate and autonomous from the family. This process

entails the change in the relationship between child/adolescent and parents which is one of the most significant transitions during adolescence.

Le and Stockdale contend that there are two process of individuation that are generally propelled forward by Developmentalists, one relates to the individual being adaptive which denotes a level of differentiation or detachment from parents that leads to pro-social development such as a healthy self-reliance, and the other process of separation relates to rebellion and or defiance with the primary objective being emancipation from parental control.

Many theories of socialization emphasize the importance of ethnicity and culture orientation on family structure. Research informs us that in spite of common geography and social setting there are marked differences in socialization within the family according to cultural norms (Le & Stockdale 2005). For example Samoan children are taught from birth whether overtly or covertly that the needs of the collective are paramount (Mago, J. 2001).

“Unlike the nuclear family of Western society, Samoa’s social existence is collective and corporate. Family life extends out beyond the nuclear family, incorporating uncles, aunties, both sets of grandparents and many cousins. Therefore children are thought of as belonging not only to their parents but also to the wider kin group and in the case of Samoans, to the village community, inclusive of the church” (Taule’ale’asuumai, F. 1997, p.166).

Early life experience has profound implications cross-culturally. For egocentric cultures the child is a form of belonging and belongs to their mother and father. Traditionally for Samoans the child belongs to their aiga, rather than to the parents or an individual person (Mago, J. 2001).

In fa’a Samoa children are treated as members of a collective. Children are encouraged to identify with the collective and achievement motivation is directed into group enterprises. Treating children like members of a collective encourages conformity, which implies a general playing down of personal thoughts and feelings (Mago, J 1991).

In Samoa, the nuclear family,... was imbedded in an extended family,; ties between mother and child were diluted by ties to other females who could succour and breastfeed the child. The close identifications necessary for the sort of super-ego formation which was recognized in our culture were diffused as young children were cared for by child nurses and many other members of the family. Authority was vested in

a senior titled male-seldom the father of the young child-who presided over the whole group, not as a jealous head of a horde but as a responsible and honoured organizer. (Mead 1959:61).

The Samoan self is described as having meaning only in relationship with other people. The individual cannot be separated from the relational self. Within the Samoan context people are usually described and identified according to their relationship with others i.e. 'she is the niece of Paulo from his sister' (Tamasese, K. Peteru, C. Waldegrave, C. & Bush, A. 2005).

Mageo 1988 contends that within traditional Samoan social development had a pre-established place, personal development was not a matter of concern for parents. There were no expectations of how a child should be acting at any particular age. Children and young people slipped out of the latency groups in their own time and at their own pace.

In Freudian theory and in Western society, discord within society had its roots within the nuclear family. Within Western society children are tied to their parents. In traditional Samoan society when there was discord within the household there was easy escape, children simply moved to the home of another relative. Relatives were obliged to provide sanctuary to runaway members of the extended family (Mageo, M. 1988).

Relative groups usually lived close to each other in many cases within the same village so movement between relatives was easy. In traditional Samoan society it is useful to note that the fale had no walls so relatives were aware of the different dynamics occurring within different households of their extended family or aiga potopoto. Samoans also use the same word to refer to their mother's and father's generation group, that word was 'tina' for mother which could also be used when referring to an aunt and 'tama' for father that could also be used when referring to an uncle (Mageo, M. 1988).

Newman (2009) contends collective cultures such as Asian cultures and I believe that the discourse extends to include the Samoan cultural tradition. Newman describes collective cultures as valuing sacrifice, duty and compromise as valuable traits, where the needs of the collective outweigh the needs of the individual. However collectivism does not negate the need of the individual to ensure their own well-being or interests, instead it sponsors the notion that the collective's well-being will ensure that individuals

well-being (Hofstede, 1984; Sinha, Sinha, Verm, & Sinha, 2001 cited in Newman, D 2009).

Meleisea and Schoeffel 1998 contend that while children contribute the least in the household financially, children are taught *tautua* or service to other members of the group/collective or household within the traditional culture. In the multi-generational household the idea of contributing in ways other than economical to the collective continues to be enforced. These contributions can be measured in childcare, senior care, support, mentoring and coaching and in a myriad of other ways.

Newman describes individualist cultures such as Western European cultures, United States and Australia as examples and again I believe that this discourse can be extended to include the dominant culture of Aotearoa. Individualist cultures are described as celebrating individual achievement (which is usually measured by material wealth), and self-reliance, (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985 cited in Newman, D 2009).

As the individuation and acculturation process as contended by Te and Stockdale (2005) occurs for immigrant youth there are implications that this can cause detachment and separation from the family. It can also be a catalyst for contention and conflict within the family due to differences in the rates of acculturation.

In the multi-generational household there might be several adults including older sibling that will take up a parenting role. Freud tells us that the 'self' is established when the child differentiates themselves from their mother. In collective societies such as Samoa where many people care for the child 'absence is not an important experiential category' (Mageo, J 1991).

In 2009 Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'iai Efi addressed the New Zealand Families Commission a few months after the devastating tsunami wrecked destruction in both Samoa and Tonga. Tui Tamasese Efi gave a description of the importance of the individual within the collective setting of the aiga.

“When I say that I am not an individual, I do not mean that my individual happiness is not important. The ideals of the family in the Samoan context is shaped by respect for each person’s mental, physical, social and spiritual wellbeing. It is the responsibility of the family, especially the heads of the families, to make sure that each person in the family is happy”.

Meleisea and Schoeffel 1998 identified a particular problem that Samoan families face in Aotearoa where the belief is held that children should have personal freedom to make choices such as choosing their own friends and activities, quite a contrast from Samoans who grew up in the Samoa who predominantly interacted with family and members of the same community where values and customs were similar. This is a difficulty that is experienced by many families within Aotearoa where external influences and factors can be at conflict with the values that aiga try to instil within their families. However, this is especially difficult for Samoan families to navigate as the dominant culture within Aotearoa encourages individualism as opposed to collectivism. While many of the aiga from Samoa who have migrated into and made Aotearoa their home, had some understanding that there would need to be adaptations to fit into their new environment, usually there was not enough insight to understand the impact that this new environment would have on the collective.

Some of the wider implications of the paradigm shift for individuals and collectives within the Samoan context of Aotearoa, is that individuals now earned their own money rather than there being a pool of resources. 18 year olds are now adults who have rights to privacy and confidentiality and can where applicable receive their own financial assistance from Work and Income New Zealand, cars belonged to the individuals whose names were on the ownership papers rather than it being a resource for all members of the aiga.

## Remittances



*Figure Seven: Saber Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2011). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.*

“Ua solo le lava-lima” To be prosperous (Anon Samoan proverb).

Remittances play an important role in the smaller islands and or nations within the Pacific. Samoans, as previously mentioned viewed migration in very simple terms ‘to see wealth for all’ (Muliaina 2001).

Samoans reported that they sent remittances for such things as, repayment of family loans, building a family house, contribution to weddings, bestowal of chiefly titles and contributing to funerals (Muliaina 2001). Remittances are also sent for crises situations e.g. after tsunami and cyclones (Muliaina 2001). Remittances for Pacific Island peoples in general are motivated by altruistic factors rather than by self-interest (Browne & Mineshima 2007). The overall impact of remittances in the Pacific has been relatively minimal indicating that remittances have been used for basic needs as opposed to investments.

Samoa and Tonga are estimated to rank among the leading recipients of remittances in relation to the GDP in all developing countries. There are more Samoans and Tongans living away from their homeland than there are living in their homelands (Browne & Mineshima 2007).

**Table Ten:** Pacific Island Countries: Indicators of Remittances, 1997-2005 (in millions of US dollars)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Fiji	41.4	32.3	25.3	43.9	82.5	97.2	122.6	171.6	183.9
Kiribati	6.7	6.7	8.5	6.1	5.7	6.0	11.3	11.9	11.2
Marshall Islands	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4
Micronesia	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0	6.0
Palau	-6.1	-5.7	3.3	-1.4	-7.2	-4.8	-4.2	-6.9	-8.0
Papua New Guinea	-32.1	12.6	-7.6	-9.8	-41.7	22.0	36.0	39.9	41.0
Samoa	39.4	37.3	42.6	43.2	50.6	57.7	74.1	97.7	106.2
Solomon Islands	5.0	0.3	0.4	0.6	3.1	1.0	1.1	2.2	2.7
Tonga	38.8	33.9	40.4	45.9	52.9	58.7	79.6	91.6	89.9
Vanuatu	-8.6	-14.6	-10.9	-9.3	4.2	-8.8	-9.9	-10.0	-7.6

Browne & Mineshima 1997 cited on <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2007/wp0735.pdf>

Wutzburg (2004) stated that ‘as a result of remittance economy immigrants to New Zealand may find it difficult to save the funds necessary for mortgages, hire-purchases and other financial transactions. Helen told me, ‘You have this wonderful budget that works until someone dies the next week.’ This seems to be a recurring theme for many Samoans (Macpherson 1994, Wurtzburg 2004, Muliaina 2001).

Temporary migrants remitted more to their aiga and homeland than permanent or long term migrants. There seemed to be less pressure on long term to permanent migrants (Connell, J. & Brown, R. 2005).

International migration and remittances have contributed notably to increased standards of living. Migration within the Pacific is a response to real and perceived opportunities elsewhere as previously mentioned. The recognized importance throughout the Pacific of education and health services have been influences in continued migration in the Pacific (Connell, J & Brown, R. 2005).

A note to consider is that while second and third generation migrants tended to send less remittances, less frequently i.e. only when requested Pacific Islanders dislike what is perceived possibly by others as remittances as 'hand-outs'. There is a sense amongst Pacific Islanders that this 'hand-out mentality' overlooked and denied any initiative by Pacific Islanders. Hau'ofa (1984) stated:

Islanders in their homelands are not the parasites on their relatives abroad that misinterpreters of 'remittances' would have us believe. Economists do not take account of the social centrality of the ancient practice of reciprocity. ...They overlook the fact that for everything homeland relatives receive they reciprocate with the goods they themselves produce, by maintaining ancestral roots and lands for everyone. ...This is not dependence by interdependence.

Even in terms of remittances relationships are a key component and of relative importance. The connection and relationship that Samoans in Aotearoa have to Samoa has a bearing on the feelings and attitudes attached to remittances. There is evidence that links between second generation Samoans in Aotearoa and their home lands are declining (Mulianina 2001: Morton Lee 2003:2004a). These migrants are more inclined to act as individuals rather than to perceive themselves as members of a wider transnational social grouping (Connell, J. & Brown, R. 2005).

## Gender within Aiga

“In my Samoan indigenous reference, each member of the family has an inheritance, including gifts and talents that are bestowed from God, nurtured within the family and shared with the community. Individual talents are used for the benefit of the whole. Ensuring that the good of the whole is always just requires competent and vigilant family heads, capable of commanding authority or pule on the one hand, and demonstrating grace and personal integrity on the other” (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi Efi, 2009).



*Figure Eight: LeBron & Peaches Ledoux-Taua’aletoa.* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua’aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua’aletoa.

The actual constitution of Samoa provides for equal opportunity regardless of gender and it would seem that there are no entrenched legal, social or religious obstacles to equality across genders (<http://www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Samoa.html>).

However, similar to the experience of Samoan women in Aotearoa, women in Samoa have found that they lag behind their male counterparts in areas of employment, income, education and representation in policy and high level decision making and business management and ownership (Naomi Mataafa 2010 – National Policy for Women of Samoa 2010-2015). Naomi Mataafa is the minister for the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development in Samoa.

The vision of the National Policy for Women was ‘to ensure that all women and girls have equal access to and benefit from the utilization of opportunities that will secure their full participation in the sustainable development of Samoa towards achieving an improved quality of life’. The Mission of the Policy was, ‘Develop and enhance the capacity of women of Samoa in partnership with stakeholders, ensuing in particular that women are well informed of their human rights as well as ways and

means of accessing needed services and resources, through strengthening the monitoring and evaluation role of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development in line with the public sector reforms’.

The creation and existence of this policy indicates that whether explicit or implicit there are disparities within the wider social context both in Samoa and in Aotearoa for Samoan women.

Within the traditional Samoan context small children have a collective status, regardless of sex. Duties are allocated according to age, capacity and size rather than gender. Small boys will start to show some interests in the older males and their duties from the age of five and naturally start to gravitate towards gender appropriate duties (Bedford, R. & Robert, D. cited in Macpherson, C & Spoonley, P. & Anae, M. 2001).

Samoa society is organized in an age-grade hierarchy rather than one based on gender particularly within the aiga setting (Mead, J. 1973) even though it is acknowledged that gender is a factor. Those at the lower end of the hierarchy demonstrated their respect with fa’aaloalo towards those at the higher end of the hierarchy (Mageo, J. 1988).

In adolescence a young person is expected to know the members of their aiga. The daughter is expected to help their mother while a son is expected to do most of the manual work in and around the house. These practices have changed drastically particularly in Aotearoa where Samoan practices have been influenced by the dominant culture and there is an emphasis on the rights of women and girls (Ngan-Woo, F. 1985).

When considering gender issues within the Samoan context I also considered the relationship between the genders. Where there is no village or blood connection between members of the opposite genders there is often an air of ‘cheekiness’ between the genders (Mead, Mageo, J 1988) particularly in adolescence.

Between 1966 and 1969 Richard Moyle recorded the sexual songs, dances, and poems that were once part of formalized joking between peers. The following is an example of a poem that was recited during a kava as youths of one village paid formal visit to the maidens of another village:

Sulitu 'ua 'e ita.  
'Uapa'filouma'lmasina  
'Ua out ago atu,  
Se'la'elamulamu.  
'o a'unei 'o Pili.  
Le tagata 'aimeananamu.  
'Afai e tefiafa'alogo  
I le gasese o le ponatolo.  
Na'ona 'e fa'aloloa,  
Pei 'oefuna e te 'aisuamoa.

Sulita you are angry,  
Your clot of menstrual blood has fallen.  
I reached out,  
Snatched it up and chewed it.  
I am Pili.  
The one who eats strong-smelling things.

If you want to hear  
The noise of the sugarcane node,  
Just lie back, girl,  
As though you were eating boiled chicken. (Moyle 1975:233).

Moyle's explanation of the piece of poetry is as follows. "The reference here is not so much to the node as to the base of the sugarcane stalk, a metaphorical expression for the erect penis, The noise is that of the sugarcane moving in the wind, a reference to the sounds involved in copulation...chickens are usually cooked on their backs, the legs spread" (ibid.).

The use of these types of salacious poetry and songs is unusual now, however it does provide some insight into the traditional paradigm and the relationships quite crudely alluded to in a very accepted practice between opposite genders of unrelated adolescents.

Females who were found not to be virgins in the defloration ceremony that preceded her wedding bought shame on the aiga, while to be potent is an expectation of Samoan males (whether married or not) (Mageo, J. 1988). An extremely discontent adolescent female might as a sign of rebellion purposefully fall pregnant to bring shame upon her aiga.

Strength is the hallmark of manhood. Mageo uses the example of a son who shows reluctance to do heavy physical work, where his mother might say, "*e le ai se aoga, e*

*faiai le namea tautua!*” which translates to ‘*there is no use your having that hanging thing*’ (Mageo, J. 1988).

These are examples of the different expectations for females and males with in the Samoan culture. While gender is not necessarily a determinant of the hierarchy in the aiga, there was/is a behavioural expectation according to gender.

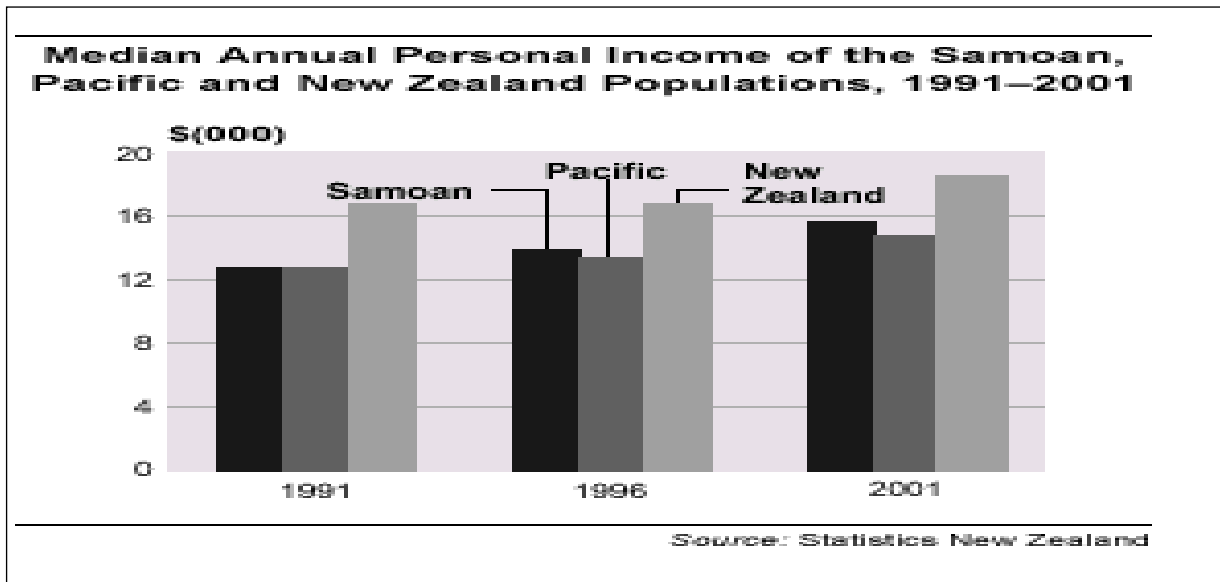
## **Resources**

“O le’ e lave i tiga, o le ivi, le toto, ma le aano.” He who rallies in my hour of need is my kin (Tui Atua Tamasese Ta’isi Efi, 2009).

For some time there has been continued debate with respect to lifting the status and standard of living of indigenous people in Aotearoa. The same discussion occurs for the situation of Pasifika people in Aotearoa (Bedford, R. & Robert, D., C & Spoonley, P & Anae, M. 2001).

The median income as reflected in Table Eleven below indicates that the Samoan population earn significantly lower than the general population of Aotearoa/Niu Sila, but higher than the general Pasifika population of Aotearoa/Niu Sila. The median annual income of Samoan people increased by 23% from 1991 to 2001. Over the same period the median income for the general population of Aotearoa and the Pasifika population increased by 16% and 11% respectively.

While there have been significant gains in the median over time for the Samoan population 85% of the median annual income for Samoan adults in employment in 2001 was \$23,500 comparable to the general population of Aotearoa/Niu Sila which was \$27,700.

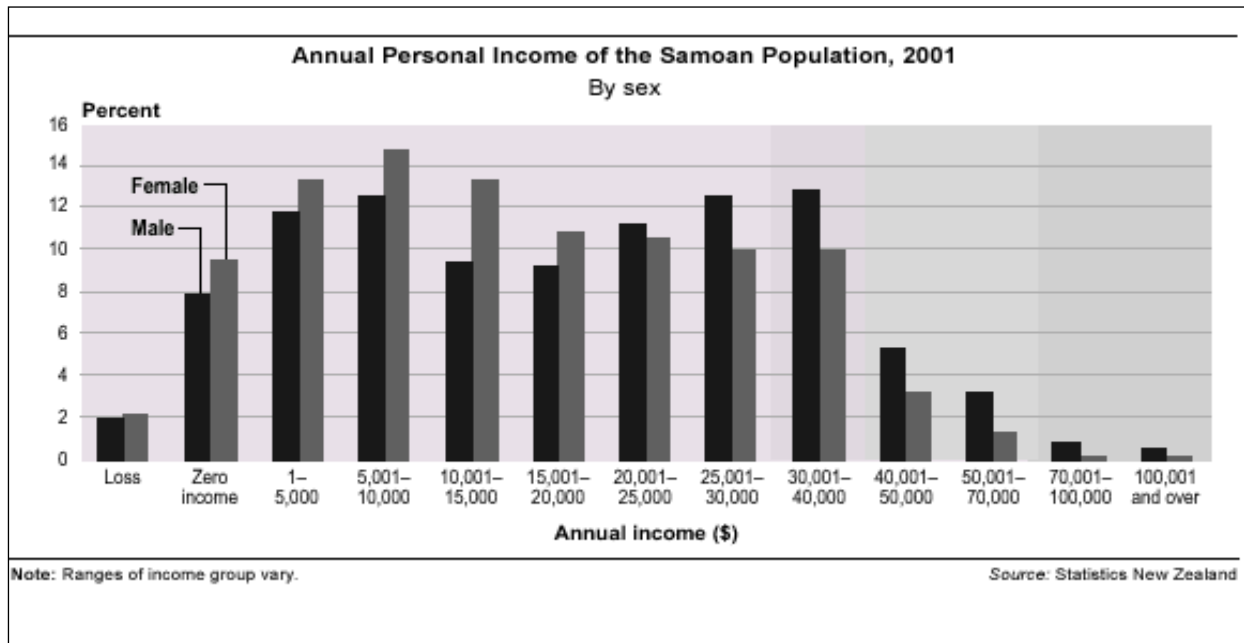


**Table Eleven:** Median Annual Personal Income of the Samoan, Pacific and New Zealand Populations. 1991-2001 Sourced from Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved from website: <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/nzstories.nsf/092edeb76ed5aa6bcc256afe0081d84e/3a7c970ed02c0f74cc256ccb006c3e49?OpenDocument>. Reprinted with permission.

Within the Samoan population of Aotearoa/ Niu Sila, New Zealand born Samoans had a higher median annual income than Samoans born overseas \$17,200 comparable to \$14,800.

Table Eleven below is an indication of the personal incomes of the Samoan population differentiating between male and female Samoans. The median of the Samoan women was equivalent to 57% of that of the Samoan men \$13,700 comparable to \$18,300.

The table shows that Samoan women are more likely to be within income bands of less than \$20,001, while their male counterparts are more likely to be in income bands of over \$20,001 and over



**Table Twelve:** Annual Personal Income of the Samoan Population, 2001 by Sex. Sourced from Statistics New Zealand retrieved from: <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/nzstories.nsf/092edeb76ed5aa6bcc256afe0081d84e/3a7c970ed02c0f74cc256ccb006c3e49?OpenDocument> Reprinted with permission.

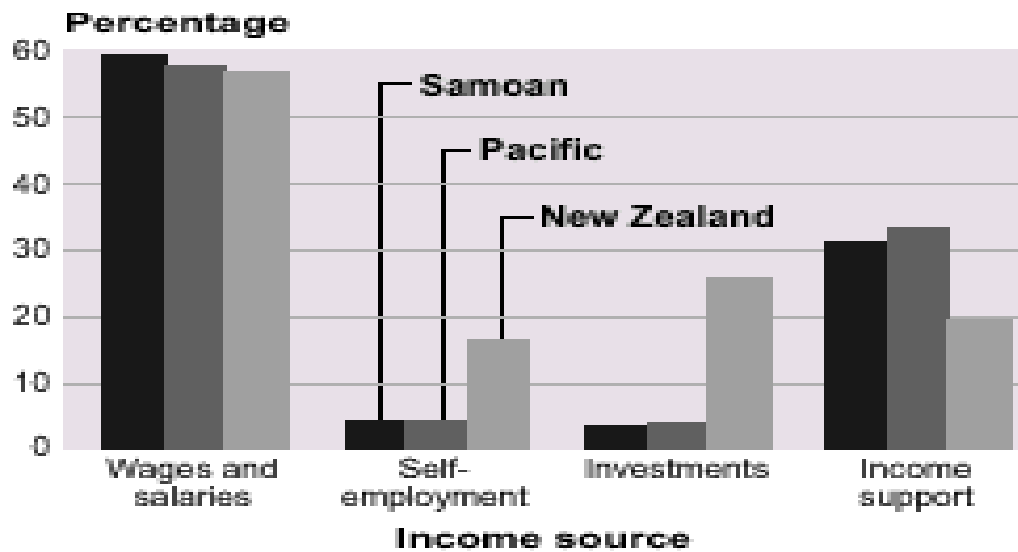
The sources of income are reflected below in Table Thirteen, in the year to March 2001 59% of Samoan adults received wages and salaries. The equivalent proportions among Pasifika and New Zealand populations were 58% and 57% respectively. 4% of Samoan adults received income from self-employment or self-owned business this was the same for the general Pasifika population comparable to the general population of Aotearoa which was 17%.

3% of Samoans received income via interest, dividends or some type of investment this was similar to the Pasifika population and comparable to the generation population of Aotearoa which was 26% just over one in every four.

In 2001 32% of Samoan people received some form of income support at some point during the 12 month period, overseas born and New Zealand born Samoans were equally as likely to have received income support with percentages of 31% and 32% respectively. This was very similar to the general Pasifika population where 33% received income support over the 12 month period and comparable to the general population of Aotearoa with a result of 19% over the same time period. 36% of Samoan women received income support comparable to 26% of Samoan men.

Samoans and Pasifika generally are earning less than the general population of Aotearoa and therefore needing more income support.

**Sources of Annual Personal Income of the Samoan, Pacific and New Zealand Populations, 2001**



Source: Statistics New Zealand

**Table Thirteen:** Sources of Annual Personal Income of the Samoan, Pacific and New Zealand Populations, 2001. Sourced from Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved from website: <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/nzstories.nsf/092edeb76ed5aa6bcc256afe0081d84e/3a7c970ed02c0f74cc256ccb006c3e49?OpenDocument>. Reprinted with permission.

While the median income for Samoans may be lower than the general population of Aotearoa it is slightly higher than the Pasifika population of Aotearoa. The median Samoan income has increased substantially over the last few years, however Samoans living in the extended family situation has also increased. Increased income has not decreased the likelihood of Samoans living in the extended family situation.

Housing for Pasifika people is reported to be over-crowded and there is an increased reliance on rental accommodation (Cook, L. & Didham, R. & Khawaja, M. cited in Macpherson, C & Spoonley, P & Anae, M. 2001).

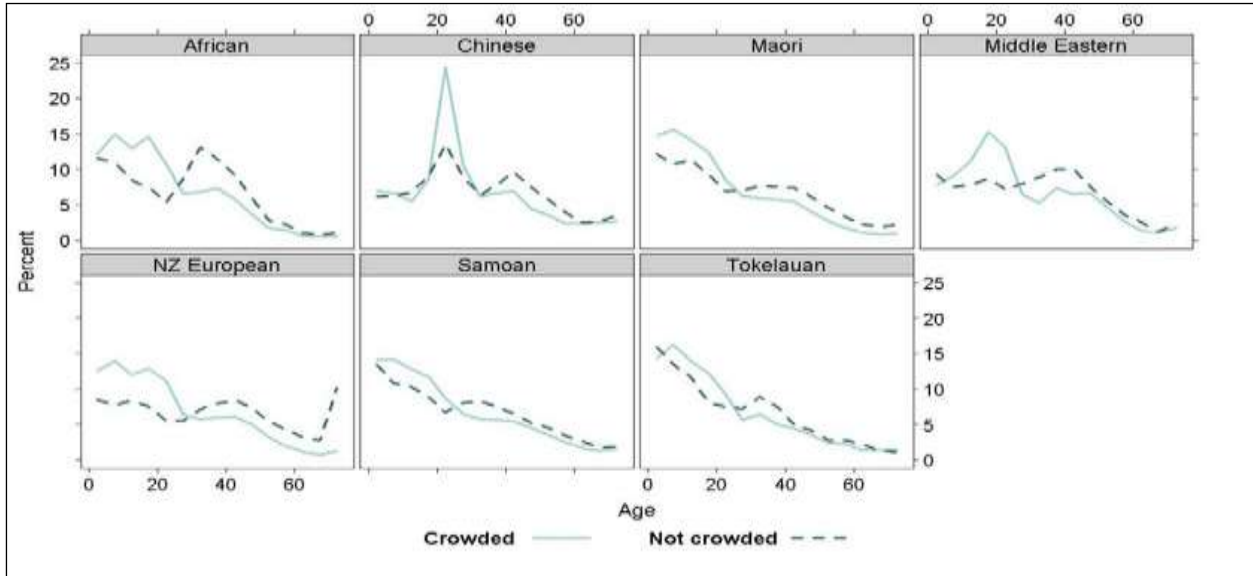
Overcrowding as defined by Statistics New Zealand is when the dwellings that people live in are too small to accommodate the number of people in a household. The measure used by Statistics New Zealand is the Canadian National Occupancy Standard, which calculates numbers of bedrooms needed based on the members of a household. It presumes that there should be no more than 2 occupants to a bedroom, though allowances are made for couples with young children.

International studies carried out in California noted that crowding was not just a consequence of poverty, as they found that levels of crowding remained high even when controlling for factors such as low income [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/housing/ethnicity-crowding-1986-2006.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/housing/ethnicity-crowding-1986-2006.aspx).

The level of crowding experienced by Pasifika people and Maori appear to be a result of a combination of factors, inclusive of affordability, i.e. that household cannot afford a dwelling large enough to accommodate their numbers.

Table Thirteen below compares percentages of people living in crowded houses to people living in non-crowded housing according to ethnic groups and age. Within the Pasifika populations the age distribution within the crowded houses is very similar this may be indicative of a large portion of Pasifika peoples living in multi-family households.

**Ethnicity and Age for People Living in Crowded and Non-crowded households**



**Table Fourteen:** Ethnicity and Age for People Living in Crowded and non-crowded households (2006 Census). Sourced from Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved from website: [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/housing/ethnicity-crowding-1986-2006.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/housing/ethnicity-crowding-1986-2006.aspx). Reprinted with permission.

For all ethnic groups, households with children were disproportionately at risk from crowding. Households with children are also the most vulnerable to the health risks of living in crowded households. Improving housing is one of the keys to improving health among children in vulnerable populations (Census 2006).

The 2006 Census indicates that people in ethnic groups with higher levels of crowding had lower incomes than the general population. Samoan households ranked high in the

overcrowded housing statistics. There are several health risks associated with crowded housing particularly communicable illnesses.

The 2006 Census indicates that income is not a precursor necessarily to living in what may be deemed an over-crowded home, though it may be a factor. The Asian population that also ranked highly in the overcrowded housing statistics have a significantly higher income when compared to the Pasifika population. Of significance is that Asian communities also have a collective culture (Newman, C. 2009).

Samoans do have a closeness and desire to live with aiga for reasons beyond the kind of material support they provide. Research suggests that relationships with other members of the household are special and cherished. There is a strong sense of identity and emotional bonds (Fitzgerald, M. & Howard, A. 1990).

A recommendation made via the Census 2006 report with respect to overcrowding and the health issues that are a result of overcrowding is to improve housing and reduce crowding.

### **Pregnancy & Birth**

“When I think of the idea of family, I think of the relationships of kin and belonging and of the ties that sustain us as social and spiritual beings” (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi Efi, 2009).



*Figure Nine: L'amour Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

In the islands (Pacific Islands) when a woman goes into labour the family and neighbours will gather around the home, bringing and cooking food, and assisting in the caring of the other children, it is very much a community affair (<http://www.mothersmatter.co.nz/Culture/Pasifika.asp>)

The birth of a child is seen as a sign of a living aiga. Both the maternal and the paternal aiga claim the child. Aunts both maternal and paternal will usher the expectant mother into the hospital. Traditionally in Samoa the birth would take place in the home village of the mother. In Aotearoa, aiga will be informed after the husband has taken his wife to hospital (Ngag-Woo, F. 1985).

More women in Samoa are opting to give birth in hospital now. If the pregnant woman wants medication but an elder forbids it the expectant mother must forego the use of medication. A labouring woman is not allowed to cry out in pain, if the labouring mother forgets this it would not be unheard of for her to be swiftly reminded via a slap across the face by a female elder. [http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan\\_04.html](http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan_04.html)

The afterbirth is called the fanua (land) and it is buried immediately after the birth of the child into the family land. This practice is central to the individual's sense of belonging. It relates to the relationship of the individual with their land (Ngag-Woo, F. 1985). There is also a practice of burning the fanua outside of the woman's home. This is believed to keep the baby/child close to the home or if the child leaves as an adult, it means that he/she will always return ([http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan\\_04.html](http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan_04.html)). In both these scenarios the fanua must be buried or burned completely to prevent it being found by evil spirits that may want to harm the baby ([http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan\\_04.html](http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan_04.html)).

In the islands (Pacific Islands) the family is of great importance, and a woman would expect to rest and be supported by her extended family for up to several months post-partum. Her job is to feed the baby (<http://www.mothersmatter.co.nz/Culture/Pasifika.asp>)

There are what some might refer to as 'old wife's tales' such as, a pregnant woman should not wear anything that wraps around her for example a necklace or a bracelet because this can cause the umbilical cord to wrap around the baby's neck and choke the baby ([http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan\\_04.html](http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan_04.html)).

Chairs need to be dusted off before a pregnant woman can sit down, this will care away any spirits that could harm her baby. A pregnant woman cannot drink a canned beverage without first pouring some out. If she drinks from the can without pouring any out, baby will have a lot of mucus ([http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan\\_04.html](http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan_04.html)).

Pregnant woman cannot walk alone. It is believed that baby is facing mother's back and that because of this, spirits can come from behind to harm baby. Someone must always walk behind her to prevent this. Her mother will rub coconut oil on the pregnant woman's belly to help keep the baby healthy. If a pregnant woman is ugly, she will have a girl (the girl will steal all the mother's beauty). If a pregnant woman is beautiful she will have a baby boy ([http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan\\_04.html](http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan_04.html)).

The big baby is viewed as a healthy baby, and breastfeeding traditionally is seen as the only option, this tradition has stood the test of time. The new mother will eat a lot of fish, poi and coconut milk. Female elders will provide care to both the mother and the baby. The baby's maternal grandmother will chose a name for the baby, usually this name will be a 'family name'. This elder may or may not be deceased. As the child continues to grow the child will become the responsibility of the entire village to raise and rear that child ([http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan\\_04.html](http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan_04.html)).

It is usually for infants and toddlers to sleep in bed with other family members and infants and toddlers will often be carried around during the day. Older sibling and other relatives will play a significant role in caring for the baby.

The rates of post natal depression amongst Samoan women in New Zealand using a screening questionnaire in a recent study showed 7% suffered from some form of post natal depression the only comparison made was with Tongan mothers where there was a reported 30% of new mothers suffering from post-natal depression (<http://www.mothersmatter.co.nz/Culture/Pasifika.asp>)

Where the biological parents are unable to raise the baby for whatever reason, the baby is placed with the extended family members. It will usually be extended family members who are unable to have their own child. These extended family members will raise the baby as their own.

In situations where the birth mother is too unwell to care for the child the extended family will also be called upon to provide care for the child. The baby will be raised as if she/he is the extended family's own child. If the children are raised by extended family members, as their own, the children are not told that they are not the birth children of the family raising them, it is never mentioned again ([http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan\\_04.html](http://www.hawaii.hawaii.edu/nursing/RNSamoan_04.html)).

## Child Care and Parenting

“...The ideals of a Samoan family find the concept of single parenting a misnomer. Samoan households are extended family settings. Kin should always be on hand to share in parenting responsibilities...” (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi, 2009).



*Figure Ten: Selina & Peniamina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, P (2011). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.*

Family structure and instruction is the most basic source of socialization. Traditional anthropologists attribute compliance to social values to child rearing (Mageo, J 1991). It is from within the family that values are determined notwithstanding the influences of the macro and meso-systems. Socializing attitudes are more powerful and blatant in childhood because of the power that parents or adults hold over children (Mageo, J 1991), thereby making parenting a pivotal role in ensuring cultural and traditional practices continue.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognizes the interdependence of the human family and the importance for the children's well-being of their place in their family. The primary obligation for parenting is placed on the parents

on the premise that parents are generally best placed to determine the needs of their child/ren (Tapp, P. cited in Adair, V. & Dixon, R. 1998).

Traditionally for Samoan's whole families provided child care. Through the influence of Christian missionaries and Western culture the Samoan understanding of the wife has been contaminated, placing the full burden of child care on the mother (Mageo, J. 2001).

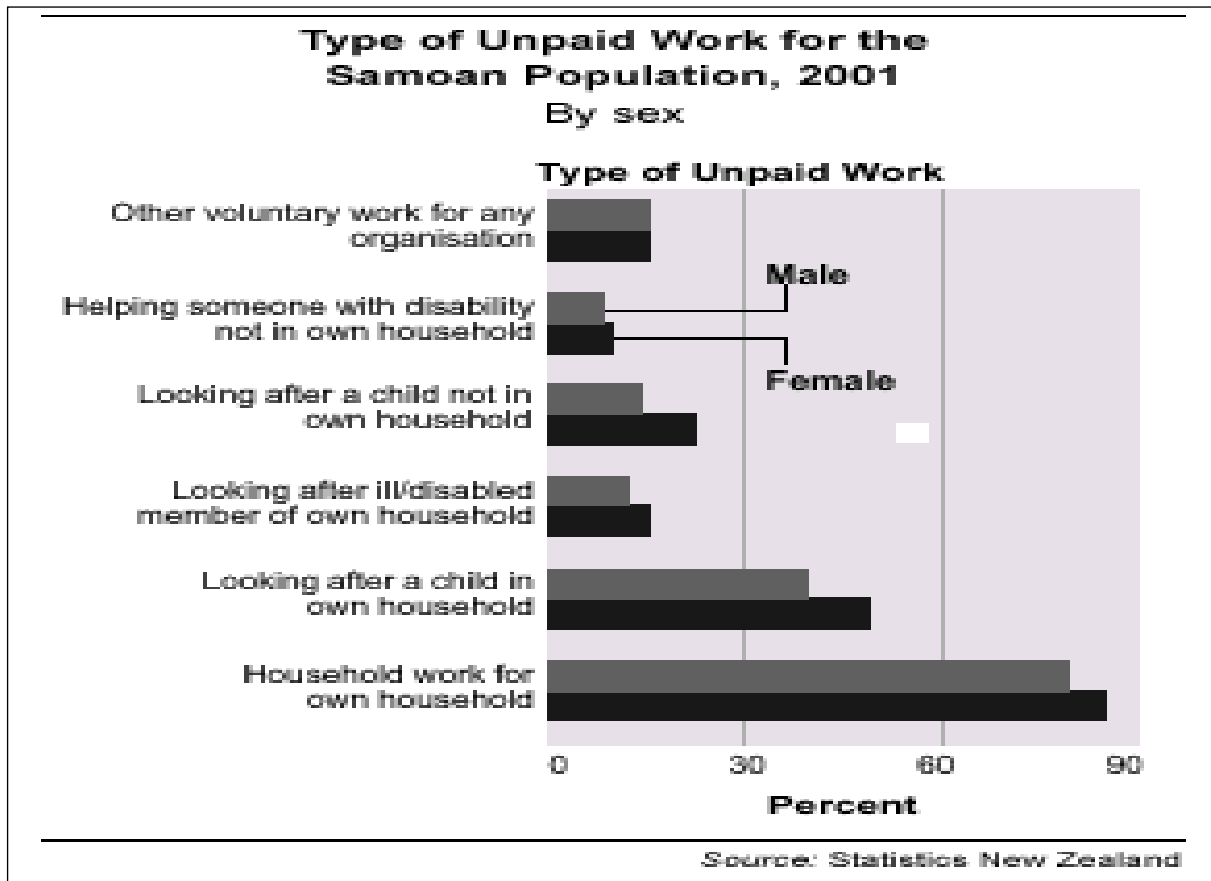
Mageo (2001) contended that childcare for Samoans has been significantly changed from the traditional paradigm. In the traditional paradigm entire aiga provided care for children there could be one person among them that may be identified as the 'nurse maid' who was predominantly in charge of the provision of childcare. This role has decreased in importance due to socialization processes.

Child care was also provided by older siblings who are now attending school. In some circumstances the lack of a nursemaid means that the mother becomes the primary caretaker. Childcare is not the traditional occupation of adult Samoan women. Due to the unavailability of nursemaids and older sibling caretakers, the child/ren are often left with the grandparents.

Mageo refers to older sibling providing care for their younger sibling as the 'Tei Relationship'. This role is not restricted to older sibling but can incorporate older cousins and or other members of the same village who provide care to younger children.

Within the traditional regime Samoans will go to great lengths to sponsor and protect younger members of their aiga. Notions such as nepotism elicit negative responses within the social setting of Aotearoa. This is referred to as fa'a'aiga (the family way) for Samoans and is not 'frowned upon'.

Older relatives, including cousin's may chastise their younger Samoan tei if and when appropriate and will not be challenged by the parents of the children, to do so would be to undermine the older child's authority and therefore undermine the Samoan system of childcare (Mageo 1988).



**Table Fifteen:** Types of Unpaid Work for the Samoan Population, 2001

Traditionally for Samoans the care of younger siblings or young children living in a household was the role of older sibling. Children were organized into small caretaking hierarchies by the older members of the household: the eldest child was expected to look after the next eldest and so on (Meleisea, M. & Schoeffel, P. cited in Adair, V. & Dixon, R. 1998).

The 2006 Census Report found that a higher proportion of Samoans reported carrying out unpaid activities that involved looking after a child who was a member of their own household than the total Aotearoa population. Members of the Samoan and Pacific populations were more likely to report looking after a sick or disabled member from their own household (Statistics New Zealand, Census 2006). This indicates that the tradition of providing care to younger/dependant members of the aiga has been transported to Aotearoa.

## Aged Care



*Figure Eleven: Jerry Ledoux Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, P (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.*

Like many other countries the population in Aotearoa is ageing. The fertility rate in Aotearoa is currently below the replacement rate. If the current rate of fertility continues coupled with the longer life expectancy the implication will be that one (1) in every four (4) New Zealanders will be over the age of 64 by 2021 (Statistics New Zealand, Census 2006).

The Census Report 2006 shows that all population projections indicate that there will be an increased number of older people and ageing of the Aotearoa population. The increase in age is across all ethnic groups, however the broad Maori, Pacific and Asian populations are likely to remain younger than the broad European population because of ethnic differences in fertility, mortality and migration (Statistics New Zealand, Census 2006).

As previously stated this is a wide spread phenomenon affecting many countries. Other countries have implemented governmental policy to ensure that the needs of the aged are provided for in the years to come, and that the workforce can be replaced. These policies include the shift by Australia to support increased size of families and ensuring that policy and financial assistance is provided to families so that mothers are able to take time off work to bear and rear their children. The New Zealand Government is also trying to address the issue of the ageing population by the implementation of such policy as the Family Tax Credit that provides tax rebate to tax payers with children.

An ageing population has many implications for New Zealand. One of which becomes who will provide care for the aged. The aged population will have several issues to contend with; some will have severely diminished savings and will be reliant on superannuation. Savings are a finite resource and the tax payer will pick up the bill in old age. Whilst this is appropriate as the aged population will have worked and paid tax for decades and should benefit from some assistance in their old age the national budget is not infinite. There will be increased demand for services related to the aged throughout many of the State services. There will be higher expectations of care and there will be greater proportion of late onset illness. (<http://nzaca.org.nz/events/conference.htm>).

The 2006 New Zealand Census Report found that 65+ live in one of three main living arrangements. 1. partner in a couple without children family (most of whom will have had children who have left the parental home). 2. person in one-person household. 3. person in a non-private dwelling (this is inclusive of hotels, motels, hospitals, retirement homes, prisons, hostels, boarding houses and defence barracks).

The findings indicate that smaller household numbers are due to the ageing population. It is projected that average household size will decline to 2.6 by 2021. Both one-person and two-person households are projected to increase in number by about 50 percent between 2001 and 2021. However, the percentage of people living in non-private dwellings is assumed to decrease slightly in the future. This is due to better health and the preference of most to live independently for as long as possible. The number of people living in non-private dwellings (including rest homes) is projected to increase. In 2001 31,000 people aged 65 and over were living in non-private dwellings by 2021 54,000 people aged 65 and over will be living in non-private dwellings (McGregor, J. 2012).

There is a tendency for older people to be viewed as passive recipients of care. Staff can become blasé about care provided and routine tasks and not necessarily consider whether those routines cause discomfort. Age Concern (2010) called upon care staff to respect and promote the human rights of rest home residents. If residents do not receive the quality of care they need, Age Concern (2011) considers this institutional abuse. The solution is the development of a culture of respect, empathy and person-centred care and a management regime which fosters this (McGregor, J 2012).

Treating older people with care is a major determinant on quality of care received. Respect and caring are factors that determine quality, but these three things are not things that can be enforced or measured (McGregor, J 2012).

While it is not possible to legislate care and respect in job descriptions, where care and respect already exist there is a possibility that governmental policy and legislation can be extended to support carers, such as family members who are already willing and providing care to senior members of their aiga (McGregor, J 2012).

In traditional Samoan society the elderly people are highly respected, honoured and loved. They are regarded as the living links with the ancestors. The senior people in Samoan aiga are traditionally offered the best of everything that the aiga is able to offer. In Samoan society, old people are pampered with their favourite foods even though it is usually accepted that they may not eat it, and most times families will spare no expense to provide for the elderly, (Pesio, I. 1986)

In the aiga the elderly are given a protection that is afforded to them because they are old. This ensures that they will not be neglected or abused during their golden years when they can often be reliant on their family and vulnerable. The elderly expect to be provided with this care and protection by their aiga.

Traditionally fa'aSamoa places a sa (taboo) on the elderly and for those who break the sa there are consequences of fa'amalaiaina (curse) and being socially ostracized (Ngag-Woo, F. 1985).

Within fa'aSamoa elders possess a mamalu (holiness/sacredness) and they are a valued possession. They are not regarded as a burden but as a sacred treasure for the aiga.

## Death

'Amuia le masina, e alu ma sau'

Blessed is the moon which goes and returns! (the implication being men die and do not return)

Anon Samoan Proverb.



Figure Twelve: *LeBron & L'amour* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

Samoans do not look to doctors or medicines for cures for their elderly people. This is because they accept that death is God's will; they accept that old people will die' (Sister Iosefo Pesio 1986).

I have heard it said that for the young there is potential they will get older they have a lot to experience, their whole lives lie before them. The same is said for the young adult. For the young parent there are many more experiences to be encountered. But for the elderly as graciously as they may age and as full as their lives may be, there is limited time left and there is only one further stepping stone in this life...death, (Lindemann Nelson, H. & Lindemann Nelson, J. 2001 p.136).

Daniel Kuhn recognizes that in westernized societies such as American, death is perceived as a personal individualized experience. Kuhn notes that while the needs of the individual are important, the emphasis on the individual detracts from the communal or collective nature of death and dying (Holstein, M. 1997; Hardwig, J. 1990, Jecker, 1993 cited in Holstein, M. & Mitzen, P. 2001).

Traditionally in fa'aSamoa the dying are never left alone. They are constantly surrounded by the business of life and the living, and this is believed to bring them

comfort. Aiga will actively bid to take care of the dying. Caring for the dying is seen as a privilege and an honour reserved for the favoured and the blessed. In Samoan society it is considered a bad thing if a dying person is separated from their family (I, Pesio 1986).

Death, in Samoan tradition is considered 'God's will'. For Samoans there is no protracted grieving because of values of taking hardship without complaint and the fatalism that accepts death and tragedy as God's will (Sabar 2000). It is traditionally believed that Samoans should die at home or one's spirit may cause problems for the family. Before the advancement of mortuary science in Samoa, the deceased were buried the day after the death. Now it is common practice for the family of the deceased to wait several days for relatives from overseas to arrive.

The traditional appropriate attire for funerals in Samoa is the lavalava or ie faitaga for the men with white shirt, tie and jacket and sandals. 'Do not walk in front of chiefs' warns Papalii aged 85 'Do not enter a funeral in long trousers; you should wear a lavalava' (<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2006/Aug/02/il/FP608020307.html>). and pule tasi or muumuu for the women.

Funerals are usually inundated with gifts for the aiga, these gifts can be monetary or in fine mats (i'e toga). The bereaved family will usually reciprocate by giving gifts of food, i'e toga, and money in return. This can be a financially exhausting affair (<http://www.funeralwise.com/customs/samoan>).

In Samoa, Samoans similar to the tradition of Tangatawhenua in Aotearoa commonly bury their dead on family property, this makes as a constant reminder in the lives of the survivors (<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2006/Aug/02/il/FP608020307.html>).

The customary Samoan way of viewing death can often put Samoan tradition at odds with other important groupings within the process of death such as hospitals. Hospital protocol may not allow Samoans to grieve and pay respects in the manner that is most relevant to them (<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2006/Aug/02/il/FP608020307.html>).

For Samoans, children are included in the process of death. As part of the aiga they will also be bought with the adults to visit with the departing/departed to pay respects

and farewell their beloved. This again can sometimes be at odds with the social regime and ethos of the hospital/hospice etc. (<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2006/Aug/02/il/FP608020307.html>)

Death and fa'alavelave are linked and one cannot be discussed without the other. Fa'alavelave literally means "an interruption" an indication of an interruption from the family's usual routine (Efi, T. 2009). Fa'alavelave emphasises principles and values of reciprocity and tautua (service). Fa'alavelave and the familial obligations attached to fa'alavelave enabled families to finance large scale family events. During the aftermath of the 2009 tsunami several bodies were recovered and buried. Tui Efi talked about the sudden loss of life as being a point of reflection in terms of what fa'alavelave meant and what it should mean.

Samoaan funerals have over time become very costly and extravagant. At one time before new motivations crept into how funerals were organised, funerals were meant to provide relief and pay homage to the memory of the departed. Through different influences and motives, this has changed to where funerals have become a source of stress, financially mentally and spiritually. Families now place themselves in extreme financial stress in order to avoid the social stigma of not financing a funeral with all the pomp and ceremony that are now customary in Samoaan funerals, (Efi, T. 2009). Efi spoke about the 'ordinariness' of the tsunami funerals and how they captured the true essence of fa'aSamoa and fa'alavelave.

"The seeming ordinariness of the tsunami funerals, with the minimum fuss and bother that surrounded them, did not, however, lose any face by their simplicity. Instead they gained in that they reminded us of what really mattered. In this instance, rather than raging menace the tsunami chastened and cleansed, we might say that it forced us to front up to our vanities and cupidity, violently shaking and unmasking us of the façade and exploitations that befalls status at funerals and making profane anything other than what is fundamental to the act of celebrating life and providing relief from sorrow and pain. In a nutshell, the tsunami has forced us to ask – Are our families suffering because of our own misplaced and inflated expectations? If the answer is yes, then we must take pause to sort out why this is so." (Efi, T. 2009)

It is important to consider this in its context as this can inform attitudes and values held or dismissed by Samoaan's within their aiga in Aotearoa. Efi, made reference during this address to a Samoaan brother and sister living in Aotearoa.

This matai, who lives in Wellington, rang up his sister, and said gently. "the fa'alavelave is now over; I suppose you had forgotten about your contribution?" She responded: "Look here dear brother, one of my

principal prayers is: Dear God, call us to heaven before our children spurn what we ask for because there are too many fa'alavelave!" (Efi, t> 2009).

## Transference of Culture



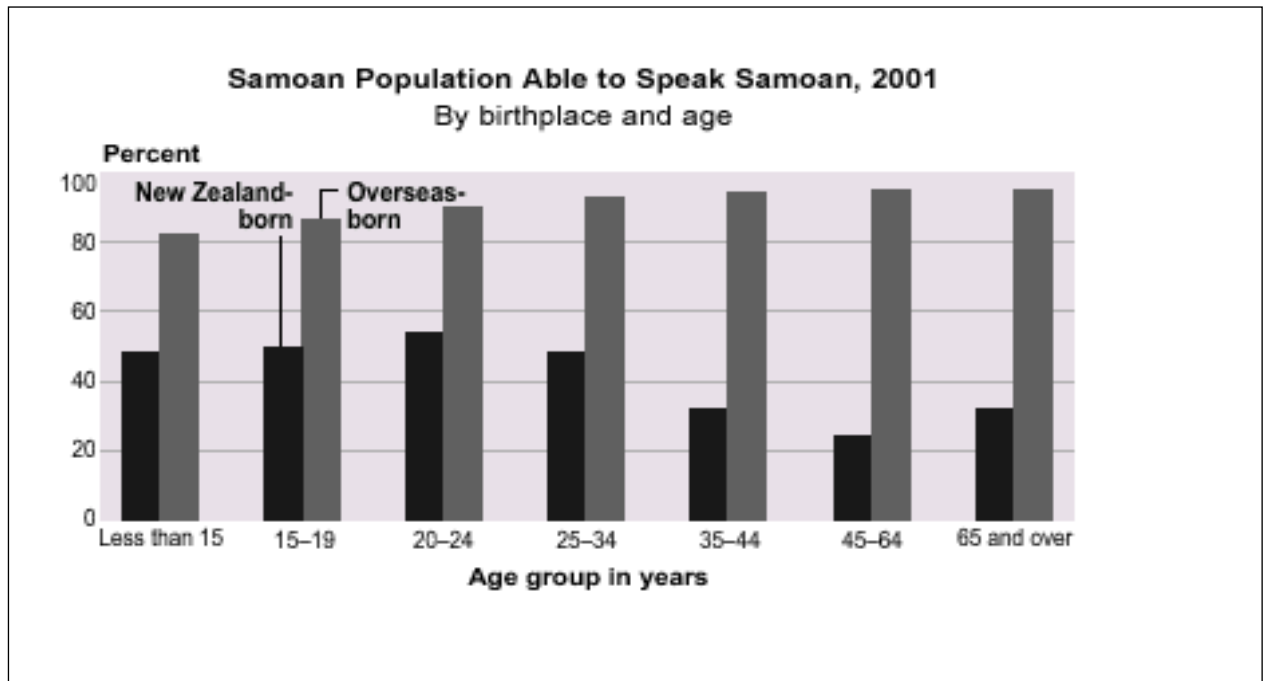
*Figure 12: Jet'aime Ledoux-Taua'aletoa* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2011). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

Family structure and instruction is the most basic source of socialization. Traditional anthropologists attribute compliance to social values to child rearing (Mageo, J 1991).

Concerns have arisen for Samoan's with respect to the dangers inherent in immigration. Mokuau & Tauili'ili talk about the cultural conflict that exists between Samoan culture and American culture, and I believe the same concern is relevant to Samoan culture and the dominant culture in Aotearoa.

Familial and social support is one such area of conflict. Fa'aSamoa takes obligation and responsibility to the aiga and church more seriously than they do career and wealth (Lynch, E. & Hanson, J. 1999).

Most Samoan born migrants will speak Samoan fluently but not all Samoan's in Aotearoa will speak Samoan, though many may understand Samoan regardless of whether they can speak it or not.



**Table Sixteen:** Samoaan Population Able to Speak Samoan, 2001 By Birthplace and Age.

Where Samoan parents do not understand English, those New Zealand-born Samoans who speak Samoan fluently are often obliged to speak Samoan in the home. Some have learnt Samoan language and culture through their jobs, or by helping their elders deal with schools and government authorities. Others pick up Samoan language and culture through membership in the autalavou (church youth group) (Anae, M. 2001). In 2001, 64% of people of Samoan ethnicity could speak Samoan, although only about 40% were born in Samoa. (<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/samoans/3>).

A study conducted by Fa'alau and Jensen of Massey University showed that for 80% of the participants of their study indicated that it was very/somewhat important for them to be recognized as being Samoan, and that much of their Samoan culture was maintained by them through Church and via speaking the Samoan language within the home setting

<http://www.pacifichealthdialog.org.fj/Volume%2013/No2/Original%20Papers/Samoan%20Youth%20and%20Family%20Relationships%20ANZ.pdf>

Young people involved in this study indicated that upholding and maintaining traditional Samoan values was paramount.

## Traditional Remedies



Figure 14: *L'amour Ledoux-Taua'aletoa* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

Little is known about traditional Samoan remedies prior to European contact. Upon first contact the art of healing was practiced by what is described as Samoan priests who attributed un-wellness to the possession of *aitu* (spirit of departed person). This is a belief that is still widely held by Samoans.

Samoans have held on to many of their traditional remedies. While western medicines and remedies are available when illness looms Samoans will seek out *taulaea* or *fofo* (traditional healers) for traditional remedies. Many consumers will turn to alternative remedies after they have not had any success with scientific medicines, this is seen often when a terminal illness has been diagnosed. For Samoans the threshold for turning to alternative methods is low. A patient may wait one day for antibiotics to work and where no change in symptoms is felt they may turn to alternative medicines very quickly.

There are many Samoans who believe that certain diseases effect Samoans specifically and these illnesses are described as *ma'i aitu*, these types of illnesses where *taulaea* and *fofo* are sought out (Agricultural Development in the American Pacific, Pacific Land Grant Programs 2001).

## Spirituality/Religion

“O le ola e taupule-esea”. Our lives are decreed by the Gods (Anon Samoan Proverb).



*Figure 15: Peaches & Logan Ledoux-Taua'aletoa* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

Every Samoan who lives his culture speaks to the dead, the dialogue between the living and the dead is the essence of a Samoan spiritual being, (Efi, T Keynote Address 2003).

Pre-contact with European cultures, spirituality for Samoan's related to the natural environment and ancestral worship (cited in Lynch, E & Hanson, M. 1999), congruent with importance of the Samoan family structure and of one's origins.

Traditionally Samoans believed in many Gods. They believed in the spiritual world that pervaded everyday life and therefore were aware and conscious not to break 'sa' or taboo. Gods were traditionally embodied within the environment that people lived and genealogical ties could always be traced back to deities.

There was a belief in the supreme being Atua Tagaloa who created the earth and the heavens. The traditional Samoan believed that they were descended from Gods and that their connections and relationships with all creation were from a common divine ancestry. Spirituality for the Samoan is relational and is grounded in a healthy self-image, and this grows from healthy, nurturing relationships (Betham, E. 2008).

In traditional Samoa there are four special relationships known as key indicators of spiritual wellness:

- Relationship between human beings

- Relationship between human beings and the cosmos
- Relationship between human beings and the environment
- Relationship between man and self

(Betham, E. 2008 p.8).

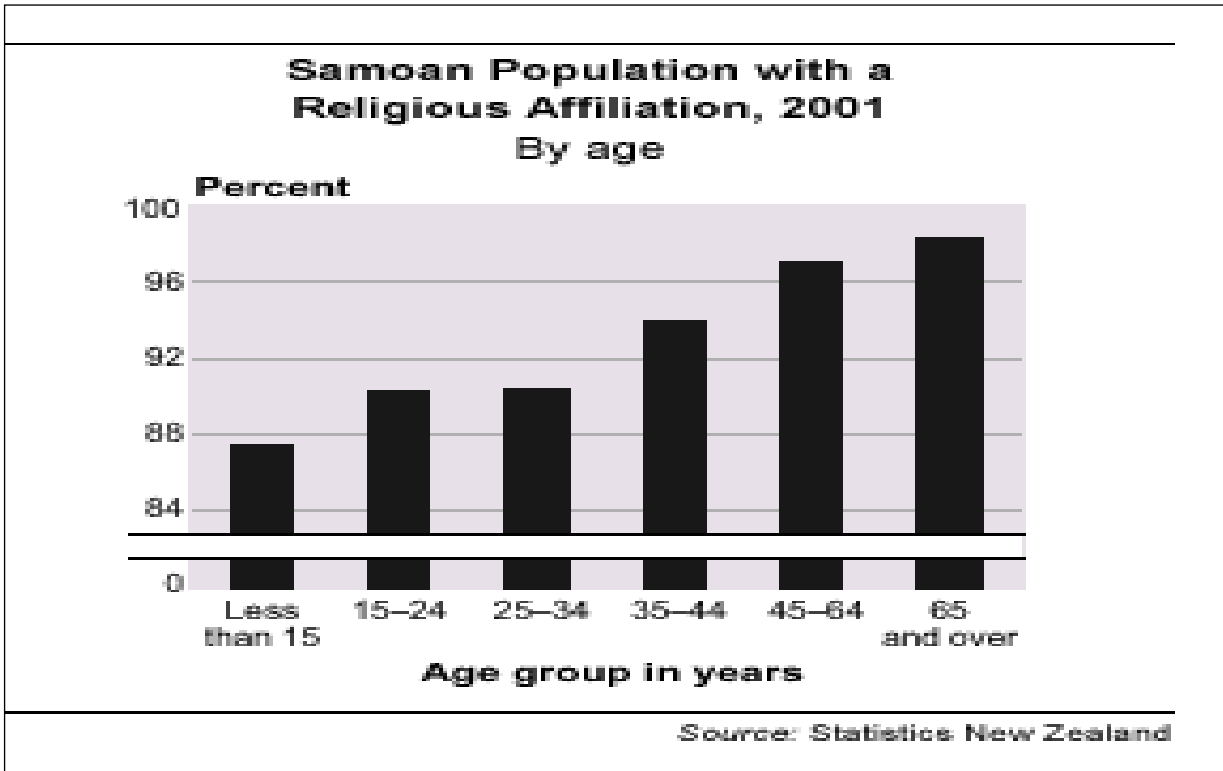
When these four keys find equilibrium there is peace and harmony. Even with the arrival and acceptance of Christianity, a person's relationship to land, sea, ancestors and God remains central to the Samoan sense of self and wellness. For the Samoan, spiritual and mental aspects of being are so closely related the consideration of one without the other would be incongruent (Tamasese, K. Peteru, C., Waldegrave, C., Bush, A. 2005 & Anae, M. 2010).

The traditional Samoan social structure and organization of aiga illustrates for us the nurturing relationship in the life and spirit of Samoan society. There are mentors within the aiga who take up the responsibility of guiding and direction their younger 'kei' (relatives) remembering that in the traditional Samoan context this includes younger people from within the same village as well.

Within the aiga and the village context there is constant exposure and reinforcement for valuing a life of service, evident in the Samoan proverb 'o le ala I le pule o le tautua', which means the way to leadership is through service. This value for service either within the aiga or within the village aligns well with biblical stories of Jesus Christ and Christianity (Betham, E. 2008). These concepts denote to healthy relationships within the aiga contributing to healthier spirituality.

The first documented contact between Samoans and Europeans was in 1722 with the arrival of the Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen (Lynch, E & Hanson, M. 1999). Christianity arrived in Samoa just over a century later in the 1830 with the arrival of the London Missionary Society. Many Samoans were converted to Christianity the dominance of Christianity is still prevalent. Prior to Christianity Samoans genealogy worshiped, which permeates through fa'a Samoa in the regard and importance given to the aiga (Lynch, E & Hanson, M. 1999).

In 2006 86% (105,903) stated an affiliation to at least one religious denomination, 11% (13,491) did not affiliate with a religion whilst 4% (5,223) objected to the religious question. It was predominantly the Aotearoa born Samoans that belonged to the group that did not affiliate with a religion and the group that objected to answering the question (Census 2006).



**Table Seventeen:** Samoan Population with a Religious Affiliation, 2001

Christianity was embraced by Samoans and is still a very important institution within fa'aSamoa. Evening prayers are still an integral part of life in Samoa. Samoans will still make space before a school exam, an important sports game, travel etc. to pray (Ngag-Woo, F. 1985).

## **CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

‘...there is a sense of urgency in the way Pacific researchers are heeding the call to...disrupt hegemonic research forms and their power relations and to alleviate and reinvent new research methodologies and perspectives...With current government demands for evidence based and culturally appropriate research, and Pacific communities calls for research which is for Pacific by Pacific, the drive to develop new ways of thinking about research and the need to build Pacific research capability and capacity has become more and more apparent...’ (Anae, M. 2010 p.2).

The research approaches which were utilized throughout this thesis were that of the collective biographical/autobiography research methodology through the in-depth interview. I believe that these approaches are relevant to working with Samoan people and Samoan issues.

These research methods incorporate within them a narrative inquiry approach and thematic analysis of the participant’s individual and collective stories. In deed the biographical and autobiographical methodologies are also known as Life Stories and Narrative Research.

Autobiographical and Collective Biographical Research – are Qualitative research approaches that connect practice or actual lives with theory. Biographical research are the illustrations that academic writings can be concrete personal and engaging (Merrill, B & West, L 2009).

## Collective Biographical Research

Politicians are often bemoaned as the cause of unnecessary clutter, whilst scholars, researchers...are heralded as the poor souls who have to 'unclutter the clutter'. But agreeing on a methodology for how best to do this is as important to politicians as it is to researchers and evaluators. The exercise of uncluttering the clutter therefore draws as much on professional expertise as it does on personal temperaments and political manoeuvrings (His Excellency Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, 2004, p. 8).



*Figure 16: L'amour Ledoux-Taua'aletoa* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

Pacific research in Aotearoa has been glossed over and can ignore the cultural complexities of not only the multi-ethnic nature of Pacific communities, but also the intra-ethnic nuances of the diverse groupings and identities of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa (Anae, M. 2010). The development of appropriate research methodologies that consider culture can lead to best practice and outcomes for researchers, funding bodies, communities and policy makers.

The collective auto/biographical methodology was chosen because of the ability to pick up a diverse set of themes and stories as opposed to more rigid modes of research. More rigid research methodologies might have limited the voices and experiences within the multigenerational household (Erben, M. 1998).

Connor contended in her biographical research of Betty Wark that biographies provide a vehicle for liberation for minority cultures. Connor was specifically referring to the plight of Maori but I believe that this extends to Samoans:

Biography can also illustrate ways in which the power of social values can either entrap or free the individual. One reading of Betty Wark's biography is

to study the impact of the social values attached to the cultural discourses on the meanings of Māori. For Betty, the disruption of monoculturalistic discourse brought about a re-imagined, reconstructed way of being that affirmed being Māori. In the wider context of New Zealand culture, collective discourses around race relations filtered out monocultural values and established an alternative - biculturalism. (Connor, H. 2007).

Biographical research provides an opportunity for the researcher to let the participant guide the research through their story, this will guide the researcher away from being too rigid in their methodology (Erben, M. 1998). This is an important aspect of biographical methodology in relation to Samoan research as it creates space for the different experiences and voices of the participants to be heard.

This research acknowledges that there is no single Samoan experience. The experience of the Samoan who was born in Aotearoa will be different to the Samoan who was born in Samoa and migrated to Samoa. Again the life experience of Catholic Samoans will be different again to the experience of perhaps Latter Day Saint Samoans, there are many variables that can inform how and why Samoans have different and varied experiences within Aotearoa inclusive of gender, where they live and education etc.

For the purposes of Samoan research the Collective Biographical methodology is an appropriate approach as it allows the researcher to incorporate appropriately Samoan cultural beliefs and values.

Nadel contends that Biographies are a form of cultural reproduction:

In this way biography embodies the discourses of a culture, preserving (but also rewriting) a past culture while enacting a new one through certain choices of style, valuation and presentation. A biography cannot isolate its subject from its culture; the conventions of birth, education, career, and death (Nadel, I. 1994, p. 74 cited in Connor, H. 2006).

Presenting collective biographies as an appropriate methodology for Samoan research, preserving and presenting values, thoughts and ideals as held by the participants.

The lives and the stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared with us. And, in return, this sharing will allow us to write life documents that speak to the human dignity, the suffering, the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we study (Denzin, 1989, p. 83).

Biographers will try to present their subjects through the flair of language (Connor, H. 2006). Connor noted that James Clifford (1962) had made the argument that biography should conform to the guidelines of 'craftsmanship' or history as an 'objective science', so that it can be taken seriously (Connor, H. 2006).

Is writing a life a narrow branch of history or a form of literature? Or may it be something in between, a strange amalgam of science and art? The difference between a craftsman and an artist is obvious. The one knows exactly what his product will be. He works with specific materials and uses traditional techniques. His skill comes as a result of serious study and long practice. The other works intuitively, evolving each move that he makes, and not certain until the end just what his work will be. Originality and genius are more important than practice. Is the life-writer one or the other, or both? (Clifford, J. 1962. p. ix)

While there might be different views on whether biographies are a form of literature or a branch of history what biographers can agree on is that biographies can illuminate the society and the culture of their subject thereby presenting through biographies cultural experiences (Connor, H. 2006).

Collective biographies as a methodology was also chosen in this piece of research so that it could capture the life stories of a number of participants. It is an appropriate approach as it allowed a representative from each of the three generations to participate.

### **Teu Le Va Model**

Collective biographies/autobiographies as a research methodology can be situated within a Samoan frame work. Collective biographies/autobiography research can incorporate multidisciplinary approaches (Connor, H. 2006). The "Teu le Va" Model which is a concept of the Samoan self as a relational being as asserted by Melanie Anae 2010 can be incorporated within collective biographies/autobiographies, particularly when considering multigenerational households. Tupua Tamasese Tupuola Efi expressed the Teu le va model as being "the fatu (essence) of fa'aSamoa".

The Teu le va model considers the relationship between brother, sister, parent, male and female, host and guest, matai, the living and the dead and how these relationships determine how the Samoan 'self' responds in different situations (Anae, M. 2010).

The Te le va methodology considers the following cultural reference points to ensure that research is appropriately gathered:

- The centrality of the communal group, focussing on the collective rather than the individual;
- The centrality of the concept of fa'aaloalo as the face-to-face conducting of relational arrangements manifested and performed formally and informally;
- The Samoan person as sacred;
- The relational arrangements as sacred;
- That personal and collective well-being is assured if relational arrangements are maintained;
- That tapu and sa contained within the protocols and etiquette protect and enhance the sacred nature of people;
- the centrality of language and how the metaphor and nuances of language become indicators shaping/illuminating the va;
- How language and ritual facilitate day to day conduct;
- The va fealofa'i is both physical and metaphysical;
- That relationships have boundaries guarded by tapu;
- That the infringing of tapu introduces risk and offence to the guardians of tapu;
- That placing people and oneself of the correct relational arrangements results in an unbalanced relationship;
- That through protocols and etiquette this imbalance can be corrected and parties allowed to return to the correct relational arrangement; for example, a formal apology followed by forgiveness;
- That maintaining good relational arrangements can bring blessings; and
- That body language (facial expressions and gestures, proxemics) in terms of physical and social distance can teu le va.

I explored these principles in the context of collective biographical/autobiographical methodology. While collective biographies are centred on the individual collective biographies still have the potential to include the collective identity (Connor, H. 2006). Throughout the discourse of the participants they often would talk about their responsibility to the collective, younger sibling were accepted as the responsibility of all older family members. Collective Biographies embrace all the principles of 'Teu le va'.

Tamasese, K. Peteru, C., Waldegrave, C., Bush, A. (2005), asserted that in order to understand how to conduct research culturally appropriately and furthermore to provide culturally appropriate services in accordance with the research particularly when dealing with Samoan people, the researcher must understand the Samoan concept of 'self'.

The Samoan is a relational being. There is no such thing as a Samoan person who is independent of others. The Samoan being belongs within the collective context. (Tamasese, K. Peteru, C., Waldegrave, C., Bush, A. 2005 & Anae, M. 2010). That has changed through the impact of other influences within the social context of Aotearoa, and therefore collective biographies/autobiographies create a space to honour those realities, where the struggles of the cultural identify and the collective context come into conflict with the social setting.

Connor (2006) asserted that biographies and I believe this is applicable to collective biographies and autobiographies are a powerful research tool for Maori women. I believe that the usefulness of the collective biographical/autobiographical methodology can be extended to research with Samoans. For Samoans the telling of stories or personal narratives can be transforming on both an individual and collective platform (Connor, H. 2006).

The principle of fa'aaloalo is fundamental principle within collective biographies this genre represents the life story of the individual paying respect to what the individual offers as explanation for their life experiences (Connor, H. 2006). This aligns with Teu le va principles (Anae, M. 2010).

Collective biographical studies are an opportunity to celebrate new appreciations. They give space to create heroes out of normal people. They validate the narratives of minority groups and create space for social justice (O'Neill, M. 2006, Lang, H. 2007, and Roesler, C. 2006).

Collective biographies/autobiographies are an account of viewing events, actions, norms and values from the perspective of the people who are being studied. It considers social setting, and is committed to understanding events and behaviour from the perspective of the subject, this is both respectful and empowering for the people being researched (Connor, H. 2007).

The appeal of the collective biographical/autobiographical research is that explores in a diverse methodological and interpretive way how individuals account for their life experiences. Collective biographies/autobiographies provide space for individuals to share their life experience within the context of their culture and societal settings that they are situated within (Roberts, B 2002). This philosophical underpinning allows the

researcher to honour the story told by the individual and the collective. It pays respect to the sacredness or the 'tapu' of both the individual and the collective.

Collective biographies/autobiographies are a means of social intervention it awakens the consciousness generating unity amongst unheard voices (Roberts, B. 2002). The collective biography in methodology can be aligned with Narrative research. Narrative researchers assemble storied texts analysing them for the meaning that they express (Polkinghorne, D. 2007). The truths sought by narrative researchers are individual truths not historical truths.

### **Ula Model**

I also considered Seiuli Sauni's Ula Model 2004. This model has eight components that must be considered when engaging with Samoans in research, each component in opinion as valuable as the next:

- Love/alofa. The model creates space for emotion allowing the researcher to be passionate as opposed to objective about the subject matter.
- Respect/fa'aaloalo. Aligned with principles within biographical research respect is afforded to the participant and their story.
- Service/Tautua. Recognizes the importance of service within the Samoan culture. Biographical research is both a service by the researcher for the participants as biographical research can become a life document that can be cherished by the family (Breen, J. 2009). It is simultaneously a service by the participants to the researcher.
- Covenant/Feagaiga. The covenant is the promise that is made by the researcher to the participants that their story and their privacy (where applicable) will be honoured.
- Spirituality/Fa'aleagaga. The Ula model recognizes that spirituality is an important part of the Samoan.
- Reciprocity/Fesuaiga. Within the Samoan culture reciprocity is important and is most notable within fa'alavelave. Within research, reciprocity is can ensured by (again) ensuring that the stories of the participants are respected, acknowledging their sacrifice, ensuring that their views are sought, and that they have an opportunity to see the draft and the final report.
- Relationship/Va fealoai. Fa'aSamoa values relationships all communication and dialogue recognizes the importance of relationships. Relationships can allude to relationships within aiga, village and between both aiga and village. Within research the researcher must respect the importance of relationships within the

Samoaan context, honour their words as the words used carry emotion, culture and deep meaning, and will usually be used acknowledging the relationships within their life stories.

- Language/Gagana. Recognizes the importance of valuing the language used by the interviewee/subject/participant. Within the context of Aotearoa this could be either Samoaan or English.

Sauni notes that the most relevant differences between the Ula Model and Western models in terms of engagement are:

- Western models do not necessarily recognize status and rank which is an important and relevant concept and notion within the Samoaan context. This is aligned with recognizing relationships and paying homage to the heritage of the aiga that you are research.
- Western models do not necessarily value intuitive skills, when considering biographical research one must use some intuitive skills, which is also important in the Samoaan context.
- Western models do not necessarily require a spiritual context within the engagement process. Within both the Samoaan and the biographical contexts space is created for spirituality. This can be done by allowing the aiga and or the individuals to offer prayer at the beginning of your engagement. It is also very appropriate when dealing with Samoaan aiga to (outside of prayer) give thanks both to the aiga and to God for the opportunity to meet with them.
- Western models do not necessarily require a cultural context within the engagement process. However to engage successfully with Samoans a space must be created to ensure that the research methodology and the engagement allow for culture to be honoured. For Samoans this can be done by allowing them space to tell their story as they feel appropriate.
- Western models follow logical steps that can sometimes hinder the creation of space. Space alludes to rapport building and allowing the story to unfold as it seems natural and appropriate to the participant. Biographical research while there are questions and themes that guide the research the methodology must be flexible to ensure that the life story of the participant is captured as honestly and appropriately as possible.
- Western models are formal and based on information/data. The biographical research methodology honours the individual's story as they remember it, honouring the value that they attached to the memory and how that event and

memory impacted on their life. This is most appropriate within the Samoan context particularly as Samoans have an oral history, culture and tradition are captured within their stories.

If you seriously want better outcomes for Pacific...people and their families, then policy settings that impact upon them need to be congruent with this world. You need to be drawing upon the strengths, understandings and meanings of this world....That would lead to a plurality of policy settings, of research approaches, of methods of evaluation practices in the field...In the Pacific case, it would enable policies and practices that will enhance identity, draw upon positive strengths in the cultures and facilitate authentic Pacific development (Efi, 2009, p. 91).

## **Autobiography**

Autobiography is a special case of life writing...Autobiography suggests the power of agency in social and literary affairs. It gives voice to people long denied access. By example, it usually, but not always, eulogizes the subjective, the 'important part of human existence' over the objective, 'less significant parts of life'. It blurs the borders of fiction and non-fiction. And, by example, it is a sharp critique of positivist social science, in short, from my perspective, autobiography in its changing forms is at the core of late twentieth century paradigmatic shifts in the structures of thought (Smith, L. 1994 p. 288).

Both biographical and autobiographical writings are representations of life. They are an urge to tell a story and offer an explanation of the sociological and historical landscapes of that life (Connor, H. 2006). The biography is the life of the participant/subject produced by someone else, while the autobiography is life as told by the person living it. Autobiographies involve both reflection and critical thinking, allowing the subject to making deeper connections than they previously would have (Nelson, A. 1994).

The autobiography contains information about the 'self'. It captures 'one's' history, spiritual confessions, didactic essay and ideological testament (Tenni, C. Smyth, A & Boucher, C. 2003).

The authors of autobiographies typically story those events that have some profound meaning in their lives. These would be those moments in time that define who we are or who we have become (Connor, H. 2006).

The use of this type of research and the resulting data is well accepted in disciplines such as social practice. It is also an accepted part of some research traditions for the researcher to examine their own personal practice (Tenni, C. Smyth, A & Boucher, C. 2003).

One of the considerations that must be examined when embarking on an autobiography is the personal risk to the writer. Engaging with your own data, understandings, reactions and feelings can be a difficult undertaking. Autobiographies require the researcher to have a greater self-awareness. There must be a willingness to see, confront and make discoveries about one's own practice because it is this process that valuable data is created (Tenni, C. Smyth, A & Boucher, C. 2003).

## **Narrative Research**

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting,...stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation. ...narrative is present in every age, every place, every society; it begins with the very history of mankind...It is simply there, like life itself' (Barthes, cited in Riessman 2008).

Narrative research is a means by which we systematically gather, analyse, and represent people's stories as told by them, which challenges traditional and modernist views of truth, reality, knowledge and personhood. It creates space to use the language and the understanding of the interviewees in order to capture their experience and the value that they attach to those experiences (Clandnin, J. & Connelly, J. 2000).

Narratives are the storied descriptions people give about the meaning they attribute to life events (Polkinghorne, D. 2007). General publications on evaluation research propose an increasingly important role for interviews and personal stories. The storied description people give about the meaning they attribute to life events is the best evidence available to researchers about the realm of people's experience (Polkinghorne, D. 2007).

Sikes and Gale 2007 contend that in recent times research has taken on what is described as narrative or auto/biographical flavour. This shift for researchers has opened up opportunities of explicitly framing and realising their research in terms of it both being, and using, narrative (Sikes & Gale 2007).

Narrative research challenges the researcher to attend to the stories before they try to analyse and theorize the lives that the stories represent (Sandelowski, M. 1991).

## **Telling Stories**

I have made reference to Tui Atua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi's speech to the New Zealand Families Commission in 2009 previously, the address he made to the Families Commission was a dedication to the loss of life and destruction of the tsunami that devastated both Samoa and Tonga. Through his dialogue I believe that he encapsulates the relevance of 'telling stories' for Samoans in this following passage:

“When preparing for this address I kept thinking about what it is that holds families together and keeps them well despite the turbulences of life? How have the values of a Samoan family survived such turbulences? How have we named and captured these values? How do we celebrate the joys of family? How do we cope with its challenges, paradoxes, ironies and riddles?

Sometimes the best way to provide an answer to hard questions is by telling a story. I want to share stories told to me by some of the survivors and counsellors of Samoa's recent tsunami to help illustrate the point about the power and the fragility of family and of the importance of understanding and nurturing what is best in families.

Samoan society taught it's principles through stories (Brady, M. 1997; MacDonald, M. 1998). Before the introduction of written language story telling was the way in which culture, values and Samoan history was passed on through the generations (Egan, K. 1989). The use of story-telling compliments cultures with an oral tradition such as Samoan. It is the way in which Samoans in fact all human make sense of their world. Much of the way the people think and order their lives and thoughts are through story telling. This has caused there to be a lot of interest in the nature of storytelling.

## **Language**

The Samoan language holds within it culture and history. Samoa has an oral history whose words hold deeper meaning than the literal translation. The biographer can mould their subject according to the words and language they utilise to reflect what the participant has shared. Language holds importance in the reflection of collective biographies/biographies/autobiographies, narratives and life stories because they are a statement of culture, context and social discourse (Connor, H. 2007). It is therefore imperative for me to honour the stories of the participants and to use their words in the language they chose to speak, whether it be English or Samoan.

Providing the participants with a choice of language is reflective of the diversity of the life experiences of Samoans in Aotearoa, the Samoan born who have migrated to

Aotearoa, the Aotearoa born Samoans, the Samoans who do not speak Samoan and the Samoans that do, each different experience should be respected and honoured.

## **Memory**

Auto/biographical and collective biographical research are extremely subjective and relies on the memory of the participants and or their interpretation of events. The value that the participant's place on their experiences can influence what they share.

Auto/biographical and collective biographical data can sometimes create imagined or symbolic memories, rather than facts. Nevertheless, Ahponen 2005 asserts that it is more important to interpret how people subjectively narrate themselves. Collective biographies/biographies and autobiographies give coherence to people's lives. Biographical research can provide insights into the participants self and into 'conceptions of selfhood' (Coullie, J. 2010 p.313). Gardner (2001) asserts that social processes are dependent on the practices and interpretations of concrete individuals, and therefore the accounts they give of themselves and others should heavily inform the researcher's account of those processes.

Autobiographical memory is the aspect of the memory that is concerned with the recollection of 'personally experienced past events'. These memories are central to our functioning and how we perceive ourselves and our life's experiences (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). Locke attempted to address the issue of distinguishing between perception and memory, ultimately he concluded that

“...to remember is to perceive anything with memory, or with a consciousness that it was perceived or known before” (Locke, J. 1959, p. 109).

Each memory we have can trigger a string of memories can possibly they can be memories of times and moments long forgotten. Often participants will arrive with no memories but as questions are posed and memories are triggered the task now becomes 'which memory do I tell?' Memory vividness and accuracy is a difficult issue to approach because there are many mental processes interplaying that can contribute to memory accuracy (Rubin, C. 1995).

The task for the researcher is to listen actively pursuing details and images to bring stories to life in our own imaginations. Remembering can however be difficult and can

bring floods of a myriad of emotions, happiness, sadness, laughter and perhaps remorse (Torrance, H. 2006).

## **Recruitment**

The identification, initial contact, screening and recruitment of potential human participants are important processes to consider within a process where informed consent is desired. The screening and recruitment process should reflect respect for the dignity and autonomy of any participant, incorporating ideas of 'teu le va' (Anae, M. 2010).

### Ethical Issues to consider when recruiting:

There needs to be some consideration around whether the recruitment strategy will help ensure that the appropriate audience is targeted. The propriety of the audience is determined by the nature of the research.

There has to be respect for the privacy of the participants. The recruitment process needs to provide an appropriate level of privacy for potential participants. During a screening process if further questions need to be asked, provisions need to be made to ensure that there is reasonable privacy for the potential participant when answering those questions. How the appropriate audience identified for recruitment should also be considered in privacy issues. For example in medical research how did the researcher gather the names of potential participants? Were the potential participants on a patient's list at the hospital? Had they consented for their names to be put forward for research purposes prior to being contacted?

Researchers must ensure that potential participants do not feel coerced into participation. Researchers need to provide the potential participants with enough information and time to consider whether they would like to participate in the research. "Who" makes the request for participation is an important factor to consider, for example when a science lecturer asks their science student that he provides grades for, is this appropriate? "How" the request for participation is being made? Is there an offer of excessive inducements?

The researcher must ensure that the information about the purpose of the research and the commitment in time for the participant is clear and honest. Participation in the research should not be made to appear or sound more attractive or exciting than it is.

The researcher should not purport to provide through their research more than they actually do. For example if the research is potentially a cure for illness, the researcher must not exaggerate the possible outcome of being a participant.

The researcher should explore issues of conflict in interests. For example when recruiting for research should an employer recruit an employee? How 'free' does the employee feel to decline an invitation? (<http://ohrpp.research.ucla.edu/file/10030/5-1.pdf>).

As this piece of research targeted families for participation several factors needed to be considered. The venue of the research was an important facet. Each individual family member would be interviewed alone which would mean that the other family member participants would be awaiting their turn. I needed to consider a venue that provided comfort for all family members.

I employed two methods to recruit participants for this piece of research. Initially I posted an invitation on my Facebook page. The invitation included a brief outline of the research, its purpose and what the criteria was for potential participants, inviting those who fit the criteria and were interested in participating to email me privately.

I received several private emails from interested parties then sent them information sheets (see appendices) with detailed information of what the purpose and process of the research would be.

Prior to starting the recruitment process I was under the impression that recruitment would be simple. I believed that there were several people who would fit the criteria and would be willing to participate. In fact this was a fair assumption to make. I did get several responses from interested people who strictly speaking fit the criteria for participation but after I sent the more detailed information letter, and conducted a screening process, many interested participants needed to withdraw from the research.

Some of the reasons for participants needing to withdraw their interest was, while there were three members of the family willing to participate some members of the family were too young and from my perspective I could not ascertain with full confidence that their participation was fully informed.

There were interested potential participants in families who were too old so the interviewing process would be difficult both for the participant and myself as the interviewer because of issues such as hearing etc.

Through a process of information provision and screening that by default became a process of elimination I was left with three families, where all members who wanted to participate were of sufficient age and physically able to commit time and energy to the interviewing and research process.

The criteria for participants was that they needed to have lived whether current or historical in a multigenerational household for at least 24 months, this did not have to be 24 months consecutively, and they had to identify as being of Samoan ethnicity.

Ethnicity is a challenge to define and difficult to understand. For the purposes of this research I rely on the definition outlined by Wurtzburg 2004, the term ethnicity denotes both the self-consciousness of belonging to an ethnic group and the dynamic process that structures, and is structured by, ethnic groups in social interaction with one another (Wurtzburg, S. 2004 p 51).

Once the three families had been identified I met with each family to discuss the purpose of the research and the process. By this stage each of the families had three participants from each generation who were willing to participate. After discussing the process with the entire families as a collective I spoke with the individual participants. As the researcher, it was important for me to speak to each individual participant independently to ensure that their participation was not coerced. It was also an important part of the introductory process that I met with the whole family as I anticipated that some of the stories that would be shared belonged to the whole family.

During my discussions with each family and the individual participants, the research process was discussed in full. I provided them with copies of research ethics approval and discussed the involvement of research supervisors and cultural advisors and explained their roles in the process.

## **The In-depth Interview**

“Ua le se’I mau se ala va’a” Why not steer a straight course? (Anon, Samoan Proverb).

Collective biographical research requires some skill in interviewing, and an ability by the researcher to understand where the story lies and or which story they would like to pursue (Seidman 1998).

The interview will seek to describe and find meaning to what is central in the interviewee’s life, through the interview one seeks to find out the factual and the meaning that interviewee’s place on those facts (Kvale 1996). I hoped to impress upon the participants that it is their experiences within the multigenerational household that I want to learn about, how they perceived those experiences and to some extent how they believed their experiences were perceived by others.

As previously mentioned I have worked in social practice for several years and through my work I have nurtured and developed my interviewing skills. In organizing the interviews I used the following format to ensure I was appropriately prepared.

### **Preparation for Interview**

The setting for the interview was chosen with care. It was important to have a space that had the least distractions and that was comfortable for me but more importantly for the participants.

Even though I was confident that the information letters that I had sent to participants as families and as individuals outlined the purpose of my research I felt that it was still important to discuss the purpose of the interview again in person at the initial interview. I felt that this would give the participant an opportunity to ask any questions that may have arisen either from the explanation letter or from this discussion.

I again addressed terms of confidentiality. In most biographies as participation is clear and they are a celebration of the ‘life story’ anonymity is not provided. However as views and opinions may differ anonymity and confidentiality was discussed and agreed upon.

I explained the format of the interview and asked the participants if there were any suggestions that they felt were appropriate in terms of what they understood their own needs to be.

I indicated that there would be three interviews and that each individual interview would be approximately one hour in duration depending on how much they were happy to share with me.

I had decided upon three interviews as I believed that this would give me sufficient opportunity to explore each family's collective experience living in the multigenerational household. It was envisaged that the first two interviews would give both the families and I an opportunity to establish some rapport, and for the sharing of their stories. The final interview would be used to share reflections and insights and to ensure that I had captured their stories accurately.

Using three sets of interviews also provided the participants, inclusive of myself as the researcher, ample opportunity between each interview to reflect on the stories that had been shared.

I provided each participant with my contact details so that they could contact me at any time if they felt concerned for any aspects of the process. It was also in case they had any further ideas of things that they may have wanted to share with me.

I provided an opportunity for the interviewee to clarify any doubts that they had about the interview and or any part of the process.

I ensured that I had a dictaphone prepared and adequate pens and paper for note taking. Whilst this seems like a menial task that is so simple in its need, it was necessary for me to note it on my check list of 'must dos' because it was a task so easily overlooked.

In my preparation for the interview I ensured that the interviewee was clear about the feedback process and how they could provide feed-back once they read my initial draft report of the interview.

Collective Biographies/Autobiographies are research methodologies that holds the interviewee as the expert and the interviewer as the student. The interviewers interviewing techniques are motivated to learn everything they can from the interviewee. Listening intently to the interviewee and following up with probing questions are all to elicit the fullest and most honest response from the interviewee (Guion, L. & Diehl, D. & McDonald, D. 2012).

Guion et al 2012 have Seven Stages to the In depth interviewing process:

Stage One: Thematizing. In this stage it is important to clarify the purpose of the interview. Once you have decided on your general purpose for the interview you can pinpoint the key information that you want to gather through the in-depth interview. As the in-depth interview for my purposes was to explore the life-story of my participants in terms of their experiences within the multigenerational I looked at themes that I believed would be relevant to both New Zealand and Samoan born Samoans. I also considered aspects of the Samoan culture that seemed to define one's 'Samoanness'.

Linda Tuhiwai Mead (1996) suggested key principles of Kaupapa Maori theory that can be reframed in the context of research (Connor 2006). When mulling over the principles as set out by Mead I felt that the same principles are relevant when considering themes for Samoan research.

1. Whakapapa (a way of thinking, learning, storing knowledge, way of positioning for Maori in terms of iwi, landscape, creation of universe). I believe that this can consider Aiga which is a way of thinking, learning, storing and transferring knowledge, it is a way of positioning yourself in terms of your landscape which includes the social setting and allows one to create their universe. Ancestral knowledge is highly valued within fa'aSamoa. Within Samoan spiritual tradition aiga could trace their lineage back to deities (Betham, E. 2008).
2. Te Reo (Maori language – viewed as being absolutely crucial to the survival of Maori people). I believe that gagana Samoa is congruent with the ideas and notions of Te Reo. Gagana captures language and elements of the Samoan culture. I considered whether the multigenerational household helped to retain the Samoan language within this landscape of Aotearoa. The 2006 New Zealand Census indicates that Samoan is the third most spoken language in Aotearoa.

3. Tikanga Maori (customary practices, obligations, behaviours). This is congruent with fa'aSamoa. I considered cultural practices as they relate to childcare, pregnancy, senior care etc. and whether these practices have been transported successfully into Aotearoa, whether these practices have been retained within the multigenerational household, and whether participants valued the retention of these practices.
4. Rangatiratanga (having control over one's life). I believe that the notion of Rangatiratanga gives space to a discussion of self-determination within a culture that values the needs of the collective above the needs of the individual. I considered whether within the landscape of Aotearoa the value traditionally placed on the collective has been altered and if it has, has this caused conflict within multigenerational households.
5. Whanau (extended family, support structure). Within this research I align this principle with Aiga, exploring the support structure that exists within the Samoan multigenerational household.

Stage two: Designing. After you determine what you want to explore you need to design a way to elicit this information via the interview process. This is done by formulating an interview guide that will include the key topics and questions (Guion et al 2012).

Stage three: Interviewing. As previously discussed.

Stage four: Transcribing. This involves recording verbatim the discussions within the interview. At the completion of the interview I gave the participants an opportunity to glean over what I had recorded and asked them if they wanted to make any additions or amendments to my recordings. I made additions or amendments as required. Initially I had thought that I would record the interviews by audiotapes which I did for the first interviews, but what I had learned from those initial interviews was that I could type the interviews as they were occurring. As a touch typist I was able to 'keep up with the interviewee, and I was able to give the interviewee more time to reflect on their answers.

Stage five: Analysing. This involves re-reading the interview transcripts to identify themes emerging from the respondent's answers. Through this research the themes that I had identified in the thematizing stage were used to organize my analysis.

I had initially planned to translate discussion in the Samoan language into English but after some reflection and discussion with my cultural advisors from Te Vaka Pasifika I reflected on Tamasese, K. Peteru, C., Waldegrave, C., Bush, A. (2005), that I might lose nuances and the important 'essence' of meaning and information in translation. Where Samoan language was used I retained the use of the Samoan language in my reports.

Stage Six: Verifying. This involves checking the credibility of the information gathered and a method called triangulation. What this entailed in this piece of research was receiving cultural guidance from Kato Prescott of Te Vaka Pasifika. Prescott had access to all transcripts and notes and a draft of my initial report and provided feedback according to her own observations. Prescott and I made the same observations from the transcripts and notes taken.

Stage Seven: Reporting. It is important to share the results with the participants through both a verbal and written report (Guion et al 2012). The primary report was completed in English because all of the participants spoke fluent English and the interviews were conducted in English even though interviewees were offered the option of being interviewed in Samoan.

## **Questionnaire**

Questionnaires and interviews are often used together (Harris, L. & Brown, G. 2010). Questionnaires can indicate some patterns or though in the sample group used in this piece of research it would be difficult to establish patterns.

Before formulating the questions it is imperative that you are clear about the research question and what the intended goals are. For the purposes of this piece of research the questionnaire was a useful tool to centre the participants particularly as the interviews were conducted in their homes where other distractions may impinge.

A questionnaire was presented to participants during the first interview (McNamara, 1999). The Questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes for each of the participants.

An issue to be considered when compiling a questionnaire is that prompts can be misunderstood by interviewees (Harris, L. & Brown, G. 2010). The wording for the questionnaire is important. The questionnaire was compromised with close-ended questions and was constructed using the Likert scale. The questionnaires were self-administered with some brief instructions from me on how to fill in the questionnaire.

A benefit that I had not initially considered from using the questionnaire is that it assisted the participants in focusing on the subject matter which is the multigenerational household and their experiences as Samoans living in that situation in Aotearoa.

### The Participants



*Figure 17: Jet'aime Ledoux-Taua'aletoa Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.*

Participants were invited to participate in this piece of research through Facebook and via my personal networks. The criteria for selection for participation was that participants are of Samoan descent and have lived in a multi-generational household for at least two years, whether that is past or present, and be living in Auckland. Place of birth was not a factor for considering participants.

Participants were met individually and as families to discuss the research. A full explanation of the reason for this piece of research and it being a voluntary process was provided. Participants needed to be 16 years or older. I had decided upon restricting the age of participants 16 years and over as I believed that the interviewing process would be lengthy and require some discipline and focus from participants.

Three participants were identified in each family representing each generation within the home. Each of the participants were interviewed two times, both interviews taking approximately one hour each. Three participants from each of family was sufficient to ensure that each generation group was represented.

The increasing use of interviews as a method of research has been accompanied by the recent calls to take advantage of the opportunity to listen to the plurality of voices that occupy different spaces, (Gardner, G. 2001). Listening to the plurality of the voices within the interview presents the researcher with the opportunity to be better informed by the differing voices. It also encourages researchers to acknowledge that social spaces can be occupied by multiple voices and perspectives, (Gardner, G. 2001). I watched for facial expressions and physical queues to either pursue (or not) particular stories.

There were three families identified for participation who met the criteria. I had decided upon three families as a sample group as I believed that this would be a sufficient starting point to get diverse experiences of the multigenerational household.

I made up fictitious names for all the participants the Alii Family was made up of maternal grandmother Ana, mother Ava and 19 year old son loane. This family had lived in the m/g household for several years. Ava and loane have lived in the m/g household with both the maternal; grandparents and the paternal grandparents. Ava and loane are presently living in a bi-generational home with only parents and children. loane estimates that he has been living in a bi-generational home for seven years. Ava and loane mainly related experiences from living with their maternal family.

Ana previously lived with Ava in a multigenerational household but is still living in the multigenerational household with one of her other children. The experiences that Ana shared of living in the multi-generational household often flitted between memories of living with her daughter's family and her current situation.

In this family Ana speaks fluent English and Samoan. She left school after high school and worked for several minimum wage jobs including Herds Candies. She arrived in Aotearoa in 1961 and has lived in Aotearoa since that time. She was married to her current husband in 1968 and together they had three children. Ava is her second child. Ana considered fa'aSamoa to be an important part of her life or though she acknowledged that her family only practiced particularly aspects of fa'aSamoa.

Ava was born in 1970 in Aotearoa. She understands some Samoan but cannot speak Samoan. Ava completed a Certificate in Administration at UNITEC Mt Albert in 1988 and has worked for Work and Income New Zealand since the completion of her

Certificate. Ava was married in 1992 to her current husband and together they had six children, the oldest of which is loane. Ava did not consider fa'aSamoa an important factor in her life or though she did participate in certain aspects of fa'aSamoa such as contributions for fa'alavelave.

loane was born in 1993 in Aotearoa. He is the eldest of six siblings, he can neither speak nor understand Samoan. He left after being awarded NCEA level two but has not yet secured work. loane felt that fa'aSamoa is important to him but admitted that he did not know much about fa'aSamoa.

The Uso family is made up of paternal grandfather Ufi, uncle Ulu and niece/granddaughter Sala. The Uso family still live in the multi-generational household and have done so for over ten years collectively. Ulu did refer to a few years when he lived in Samoa with only himself and his parents in the house.

Ufi arrived in Aotearoa from Samoa in 1959 and has lived in Aotearoa in the main since then. He married in 1961 and had four children. Ulu is the oldest of his children. Ufi completed High School in Samoa and found work as a manager in what he described as one of the largest shops in Apia at the time. When Ufi's sister who had moved to Aotearoa, found herself in financial difficulty, Ufi was sent to Aotearoa to find work and assist his sister financially.

Ufi expressed disappointment in leaving his home in Samoa but he indicated that he understood that his sister who was married with four children at the time needed him and so he needed to sacrifice what he wanted for her. Ufi speaks fluent English and Samoan and said that fa'aSamoa is an important part of his life though he only participates in certain aspects of fa'aSamoa.

Ulu is the oldest child of Ufi and the uncle to Sala. Ulu was born in Aotearoa in 1965 and has lived in Aotearoa for most of his life, bar a two year period where he lived in Samoa. Ulu speaks fluent English and Samoan a skill that he attributes to the years he lived on the island. Ulu completed two years of secondary school and has no formal educational qualifications. He has been on the sickness benefit for several years. Ulu considers fa'aSamoa as an important part of his life but acknowledges that he does not participate in fa'aSamoa.

Sala cannot speak Samoan and describes her understanding as 'minimal'. Sala completed level three NCEA and is currently undertaking a course in Business Administration while she looks for work. She was born in 1994 the second of her four siblings.

Sala often referred to her cousins as brothers and sisters through our discussions which often confused me but as we discussed further I came to the realisation of what the actual relationships were. Sala indicated that fa'aSamoa is important to her though she and her family did not practice it often. She indicated that the only time she was immersed in fa'aSamoa is if there were a funeral and what she really knew about that was that the adults sat in a circle and talked a lot and she stayed in the kitchen and washed and dried heaps of dishes.

The Vavau family is made up of paternal grandmother Sisi, father Paulo and daughter/granddaughter Sina. The Vavau family still live in the multi-generational household.

Sisi and her husband spend time living between the homes of their three sons, though Sisi and her husband own homes both in New Zealand and Samoa. Sisi completed her high school education in Samoa. She married her husband in Samoa. Shortly after the marriage Sisi's husband left Samoa to find work in Aotearoa. Once he secured work he sent for Sisi and she joined him in Aotearoa in 1969.

Once Sisi joined her husband they had four children the second child is Paulo. Sisi speaks fluent English and Samoan and says that fa'aSamoa is an important part of her life and that she practices all elements of fa'aSamoa. Sisi stated that she holds a Matai title from her village as her husband holds a chiefly title from his village. She however did acknowledge that her children do not practice fa'aSamoa or though her son Paulo holds a chiefly title. Sisi was aware when he took upon him the title that he did so under duress.

Paulo owns his own home with his wife and while his parents live with him during several months of the year, he and his family have also lived with his wife's parents historically for several years. The experiences shared by the Vavau family would shift between their current situation and historical experiences.

English is Paulo's first language and he understands Samoan and can speak Samoan at an informal conversational level. Paulo completed high school education and started tertiary studies. When Paulo found employment while he was studying, he left studies for work. Paulo was able to get on the job training as an electrician and has been working for the same company since. Paulo got married in 1991 and has had seven children since. Sina is Paulo's oldest child.

Paulo states that he has a chief title but he does not fulfil his responsibilities as a chief and that he 'didn't really want it in the first place'. Paulo stated that his parents practice fa'aSamoa and that he supports them in what they want but he feels that some practices are not relevant in Aotearoa.

Sina understands Samoan but does not speak any Samoan with English as her first language. Sina has completed her level three NCEA and is currently studying towards an Accounting qualification. Sina felt that fa'aSamoa is important to her but she acknowledged that she doesn't really understand fa'aSamoa as much as she thought that she should.

Two of the three participating families still live in the multi-generational household. For each of these families what I found through their narrative is that whether they were currently living in the m/g household or not they each had sibling who are or had lived in the m/g household as well. Their experiences would often move between their own experiences or experiences they had seen family members go through.

Out of the nine participants only two of them were not living in the m/g household at the time of the interviews. The grandparent participant was living in the m/g household with another one of her adult children and his family.

## Sample group



*Figure 18:* (From front to back) Saber, Jet'aime, LeBron, Logan & Jeu'Dore Ledoux-Taua'aletoa Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, P (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.

Qualitative studies aim to provide illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues and are most useful for answering humanistic 'why?' and 'how?' questions (Marshall, M. 1996).

Generally there are three methods of selecting a sample group for qualitative studies, they are as follows:

1. Convenience Sampling

This is the least rigorous method that involves the selection of the most accessible subjects. This is time, cost and energy efficient. This method of sample selection may result in poor quality of data gathered. This is more commonly used for Quantitative research.

2. Judgement Sampling

This method of sampling is when the researcher actively seeks out the most productive samples to answer the research question. Examples of what the criteria to be chosen for a sample group may be: gender, age, sexual preference, ethnic background.

3. Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling necessitates building interpretative theories from the emerging data and selecting a new sample to examine and elaborate on this theory.

(Marshall, M. 1996).

For the purposes of this research I have used judgement sampling with elements of convenience sampling. I chose the sample group based on if they identified as being Samoan, who had specific experiences (i.e. had lived in a multigenerational household), and were living in the West Auckland area for convenience of communication and interviews.

What I found is that whilst three families enabled me to share with the participant a myriad of experiences I felt that the experiences were quite similar. All three families have a strong Latter Day Saint (LDS) influence. One participant out of all nine did not affiliate with the LDS church, though she did note that she used to attend the LDS church when she was young while living in Samoa.

Only one of the participants smokes cigarettes and drinks alcohol, she affiliated with the LDS church. All of the participants who have had children are married to the other parent of the children. The married participants have been married once and are still married and living with their spouse.

## Venue



Figure 19: Samoan Fale: <http://www.princessstui.ws/images/picturessamoa/16big.jpg>

I scheduled the first interview with the three participants by phone and determined the venue. For each of the participant families the families agreed to have the interviews at

their homes, though I had offered a few alternatives. I hoped that the venue chosen would pose the least distracting and most comfortable setting in order that the most honest discussions could occur. It is important for the interview to occur in a venue that is the most natural environment for what the topic of discussion will be, and therefore in this context the family homes were an ideal venue (Connor, H. 2006).

The Uso family's home was small when thought of in the context of the number of people living in the home, and certain from the responses in their questionnaires they themselves described their home as small. It was tidy and warm. The home was filled with the smells of food, the waft of chop suey met me as I walked into the drive way.

I brought with me sandwiches, juice and fruit a somewhat meagre contribution when stacked up against the meal that had been prepared for my arrival. I recalled my initial discussion with the Uso family when I stated about three times 'please don't worry about preparing anything'.

Once I had arrived and we sat for a while and shared some food, grandma gave the older children a 'nod' started clearing away food and dishes and as quickly as the room was cleared the younger children were ushered out by the older children. I rarely heard them for the duration of the time I was at the home.

I smiled when I looked at the couches that would have easily come from the 1980's but were spotless because they were covered in patchwork quilts with crocheted doilies on each hand rest and probably had been since they were bought. There was a box of tissues on the coffee table that had a home sewn cover. The Uso family are a home proud family, where much of the furnishings had been bought at least a couple of decades ago but were in 'almost' mint condition.

The actions of the matriarch of the home, the older children and even the preparations made for my arrival were a reminder to me of the privileged position the Uso family were allowing me to have. It was also telling of respect that they afforded this process.

The Vavau family had a slightly bigger home but as with the Uso family it was possibly small when compared with the numbers living in the home. The home was comfortable and inviting.

The Vavau family also made preparations for my arrival, but their menu was similar to the offerings I bought with me. They prepared sandwiches and other finger foods, again the aromas could be smelt as you approached the home.

The Vavau family are a home proud family also with furnishings from at least a decade ago in their mint condition. Both the mother of the home and the grandmother were present as we shared our meal and like the Uso family as eating slowed down, gentle nods and motions were made and children responded by clearing the dishes away and then covered the food making an invitation to me to feel free to 'help myself' if I felt the need to.

The children disappeared in to places unknown, and I was ushered into a smaller living area where the family had set up a coffee table for me to use for my equipment. The walls were covered with pictures of family members both living and passed with frames adorned by colourful le'i, and in the shelf under the coffee table were scattered about 10 full photo albums.

The preparations made were telling of the Vavau family's respect for this process. It again was a reminder to me of the honoured position that I was given, but the family also gave me some insights through the interview process that they also felt honoured that they could share their stories.

The Alii family welcomed me into their home. Ana was not at this interview, I had arranged her interview for later on the same day at her home. They were the third family that I interviewed and by comparison their home was fairly spacious. Their home was tidy, warm and inviting. The children were very curious by my presence and would often whisper (loudly) as children do into their mother's ears questions about what I was doing there.

We shared a meal made up of what I had bought with me. The Alii family were the only family that adhered to my instruction 'please don't do anything', which I was very grateful for because I was starting to feel that my contribution was paling in comparison to what my host families were sharing.

As appetites were satisfied, Ava and I cleared the table and then moved into a small living area so that we could start the interviews. The furnishing in the home was

minimalist, very contemporary décor. There were framed pictures of family members on the walls, I noticed that it was only of the 'nuclear family'. I found this telling of the cultural and social setting that the Alii family are now living in, an environment that they have adopted.

Ava was very welcoming but looked and admitted to being very tired. I was quickly reminded of the 'joys' of being a working mother and of how privileged I was that this family were allowing me into their time and space.

I met with Ana at her home. Her home was clean, warm and inviting as everyone else's were. On arrival I offered my sandwiches, drink and fruit while she added to our shared meal fresh scones that she had baked in preparation and a teapot of hot Samoan koko. Her husband watched Sky Sports as we talked and would sometimes look up at us with some curiosity but in the main he sat quietly in front of his 46 inch flat screen only occasionally yelling out 'you stupid fool' at the screen, followed swiftly by his wife hiss of 'shhh', and his quick apologetic smile.

The Alii family were as welcoming and as generous with their time and hospitality as the Uso and Vavau families but there were some significant differences in how they lived compared to the Uso and Vavau families.

### **First Interviews**

Initially I tried to record the interviews, but I found that I was able to type the interviewee's responses as the interviewee pondered the questions. Five of the participants chose to sit next to me while I interviewed so they could read what I was recording. I found that it encouraged deeper consideration both because they could read what I was typing and because during the time I was typing they could reflect and ponder their answers.

It is important to be aware of both the 'said and the unsaid' as there are things to be learned from the unsaid, combined with the silences and body language (Lavery, 2003).

The first interview included a questionnaire (Appendix A), to establish the basic makeup of the households participating, a secondary benefit that I had not foreseen was that participants were given an opportunity to focus on the subject, particularly those who were not currently living in the m/g households.

The questionnaire was followed by the first interview (Appendix A). The questions were organized with a thematic structure and were used to get a general idea of what resources are available to the participants, what the different roles are in the house etc. At the conclusion of the interviews because I had typed up the interviews as I was interviewing the participants I was able to show them what I had typed up and asked them for feedback and whether I had misinterpreted what they had said.

### **Reports of the Interviews**

The reports of the interviews were written up and grouped into the three separate generations i.e. the first generation or the grandparent generation, the second generation or the parent generation and the third generation or the child generation. Experiences were grouped together compared and written up for submission and feedback from Vaka Pasifika.

Having considered the feedback from Vaka Pasifika I modified the report to reflect that feedback, preparing the report for feedback to families at the second interview. Prior to having the second interview I sent out the report from the first interviews so that the families were able to read and consider my findings, giving them space to make comment, additions extractions before or at the second interview.

Space needs to be created to enable participants to take time to add, expand and explain their responses some time later after consideration and reflection so that there is opportunity not to detract from the information, but to enrich and expand on the analysis and to allow the author to write more coherently about the experience (Tenni, C. & Boucher, C. 2003).

### **The Second Interviews**

The second interview began with a discussion and reflection on the report from the first interview. I got the sense that because I typed out the interviews as we were having them, the participant could read what I was recording and I gave them some time to read the interview straight after the interview participants were satisfied that I captured their experiences appropriately.

The second interview was based on the questions prepared (Appendix C). I was able to record the interview in the same way as interview one. I typed out the responses as

the interviewees gave them to me. Again the unanticipated benefit was the participants were able to clarify their answers as they saw me type them out.

I wrote up a draft report of the second interview and submitted it to Vaka Pasifika. I considered the feedback and changed my report where I thought it was appropriate. I sent a copy of the report to the participants for feedback if they had any.

The third meeting with the participant families was to summarize my findings, and to give the families an opportunity to give me feedback and reflect on the project. When I met with the Alii family for this final interview I had no set format for how I hoped this meeting would occur. I invited the family to choose whether they wanted to have the meeting as a family or whether they would like to speak with me individually. The Alii family chose to speak with me individually. The other two participant families the Uso and the Vavau families chose to meet with me as families.

I thanked each of the families for their participation and advised them that they would be sent a copy of my final report. I gave the families space to provide me with any feedback that they thought would be useful. One of the comments that stood out for me was from Ana who said:

‘sometimes people think that we have to live together with our children, we don’t, we never have, I live with my grandchildren so I can see them every day, so I can help them and their parents, so they can help me if I need it. I love living like this, I am lucky, I will not die alone’ (Ana, Personal communication, October 1, 2011).

The final write up of the report was made up of the themes that I could identify from the reports of the two interviews. The main theme that I believed was interwoven in both interviews was support. Support manifested itself in different ways such as, aged care, childcare, cultural transference, choice opposed to circumstance.

## Cultural Advisors



Figure 20. Samoan Cultural Group Performance. <http://www.princessstui.ws/html/pictures.html>. Sited on 30/03/2013. Reprinted with permission.

Wendy Griswold (1987) asserts that it is possible to respect, to respond to, and to explain or use in explanation specific characteristics of cultural data while retaining persuasive techniques of social science.

I have used my cultural advisor as one would normally use a supervisor. When attempting to authorize an autobiography there is a need to engage in external dialogue with others, this includes collaborators, subjects, supervisors and cultural advisors. The importance of the cultural advisor/supervisor cannot be over-emphasised.

I explained to all the participants at the first interview and through information letters that there would be both an academic supervisor and a cultural advisor involved with this piece of research. Their roles were explained to the participants and the participants were invited to discuss any concerns or questions they had with regards to the supervisor and cultural advisor with me. I advised them that the reports provided to the cultural advisor would have no identifying details that would jeopardise their anonymity.

The model for questioning and supervision must be robust in order to fully engage the researcher in their own data. The cultural advisor/supervisor should be able to step away from the data yet remain connected so that they can challenge the researcher to

work at deeper levels. Being open to challenge is essential, data generation and analysis depends on challenge (Tenni, C. & Boucher, C. 2003).

The draft reports were presented to Kato Prescott of Vaka Pasifika and two other representatives of the agency. Kato Prescott a Pacific Island counsellor and Chief Executive for Vaka Pasifika has been a work colleague of mine for several years. Kato started working as a social practitioner with the Department of Child Youth and Family Services in child care and protection. She then became a co-founder to Vaka Pasifika who works with Pacific Island communities primarily in West Auckland. She has worked and advocated for Pacific Island families and their rights to practice safe, culturally appropriate parenting for over a decade.

I was eating lunch with Kato one day at work. We both work for Child Youth and Family Services. I had been trying to make contact with another Pacific Island community agency based in West Auckland for a while with no success. Kato and I started talking about appropriate models of practice within the Pacific Island Community. I realized that Kato and Vaka Pasifika are an agency more than capable of giving me appropriate feedback as Pacific Island social practitioners.

I explained my research topic to Kato and asked her if she could provide me with some feedback. Though I was not surprised, to my great pleasure she agreed to assist me.

### **Validation and Ethical Issues**

Some acknowledged gaps within the biographical research methodology, biographies at their best are based on archival research, interweaving historical categories and methodologies. Biographical research can reflect current political and theoretical concerns but the methodology raises complex issues of truth and proof.

The question of interpretation, 'authenticity' or 'plausibility' of life stories, collective biographies/autobiographies is not a new question. Blumer (1969) argued that a number of important contributions had been made including the advocacy of subjective aspects of social life and the necessity of human documents, and the life record in particular (Roberts, B. 2002).

The authors of biographies and autobiographies need to be aware that information is never theory-free. The author chooses what they will write about and how they will

write it and those choices will be based on the ways we understand the world, our own practices and ourselves. The challenge is therefore for autobiographical data analysis is to attempt to identify and step outside the theoretical constructs upon which the writing of the data was predicated (Tenni, C. & Boucher, C. 2003).

There is also the issue of what stories to collect. The close examination of gathered information inclusive of diaries/journals, photographs can lead to the production of new ideas and insights and possibly raise new research questions. Sociologists have used coding to sort through the material, discerning what story to pursue (Roberts, B. 2002). I have used 'coding' to identify themes and make connections across themes.

The life story or the biography/autobiography is the story that a person chooses to tell about their life that they have lived. Telling your story as completely and honestly as you can remember it (Roberts, B. 2002).

Rowan (1981) asserts that within this research there is a lack of reciprocity that can lead to alienation of the research and the participants of the research. Rowan sees some research methods as alienating because the researcher is separating participants from their words and then using those words to the Researcher's own ends.

The reciprocity I offer in the interview is that which flows from my interest in participants' experience, my attending to what they say, and my honouring their words when I present their experience to a larger public (Seidman 1998).

Biographical research is not necessarily empowering for the participants (Bornat, J. & Walmsley, J. 2008). However, through my methodology I hope that by sharing their stories the participants will make some realisations that they had not previously made, which will make this a rewarding experience for them. Researchers must consider that not all memories are fond memories and participants may not wish to remember some aspects or parts of their lives.

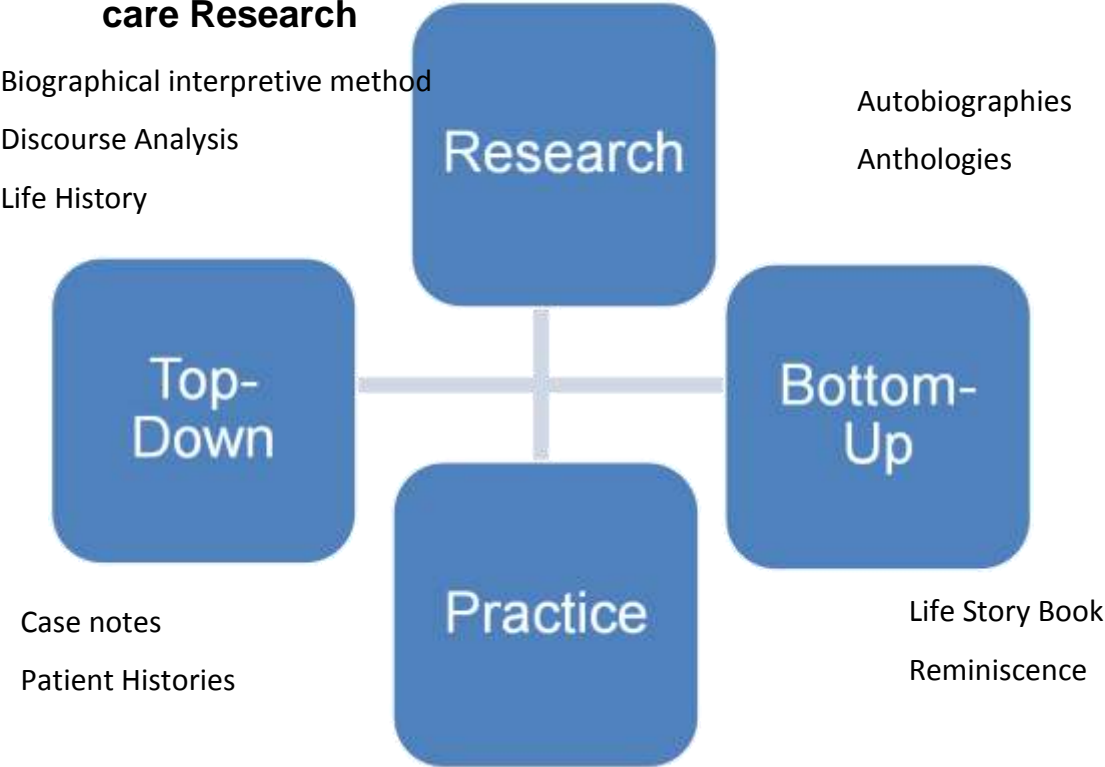
The personal nature of Collective biographical/Autobiographical research poses the researcher with the dilemma, who does the data belong to. The story/biography will always belong to the participant though the research must belong to the researcher. I refer to the Bornat and Walmsley (2008) Research Matrix below Table Seventeen.

The Research Matrix helps address these ethical concerns. This particular piece of research moves between both Top-Down Research and Bottom-Up Research. As a person who lives in the multigenerational household I celebrate the supports that I have enjoyed in my living situation, this is the Bottom-Up approach.

This Bottom-Up approach celebrates rather than condemns bias (Plummer, K. 2001). This research is embarked upon to generate voice for agency. The research matrix recognizes that the researcher, initiated, wrote up and owns this piece of research. Whilst the researcher claims this piece of research the researcher also acknowledges concepts of 'teu le va' of respect, and honour for the individual and the collective story (Anae, M. 2010).

Biographical research has it's own biology thus using the matrix helps map and check shifting empowerment balances during its lifetime (Bornat, J. & Walmsley, J. 2008).

**A biographical research matrix in health and social care Research**



**Table Eighteen:** A biographical research matrix in health and social care Research (Sourced from Bornat and Walmsley (2008:5))

Collective Biographies, story-telling, personal narratives are empowering tools for telling histories from below, the everyday struggle and resistance of those within minority

groups whose voices can sometimes be lost within the regime of the dominant culture (Connor, H. 2007).

Another limitation in this type of research is that it is suited to smaller scale research. However, this type of research provides the opportunity for minority and disadvantaged groupings to be heard (Connor, 2007). Roberts (2002) also asserted that the vital issue should be the quality of the reasoning rather than questions of representativeness.

One of the ethical considerations when embarking on collective biographies is that there is limited ability for anonymity. While for most auto/biographical research there is in depth information on the participant and therefore in most cases there is limited space for anonymity, for the purposes of this piece of research this was not going to be the case.

For this piece of research information that could potentially identify the families was removed. The purpose for offering anonymity for the participants in the first instance was so that individual family members could feel comfortable in sharing their thoughts, feelings and experiences in regards to having lived in a multigenerational household and therefore provide the most honest account of their lives.

However, after careful consideration I concluded that there was no appropriate way without losing the essence of the individual stories to provide anonymity from each other. In other words, through the research methodology and removing identifying information anonymity could be provided to individual families, but anonymity could not be provided to participants from within the same family group. Each individual family member would be able to identify which family was theirs and would know which participant from their family was which.

This was thoroughly explored through the screening process with each of the families and then again at the initial interview, both with the families as a collective and with the individual family members. All of the participants felt that their experiences whether positive or negative were worth sharing. Each participant talked about feeling comfortable about sharing their feelings and perceptions with other family members.

## CHAPTER FOUR- FINDINGS

### Support

“One beam, no matter how big, cannot support an entire house on its own” (Anon, Chinese Proverb).



Figure 21: Samoan fale, Lelepa village, Savaii Samoa 2009.JPG [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Samoaan\\_fale,\\_Lelepa\\_village,\\_Savaii,\\_Samoa\\_2009.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Samoaan_fale,_Lelepa_village,_Savaii,_Samoa_2009.JPG). Reprinted with permission.

The above picture was chosen as a reflection of the notion of ‘support’. The fale provides shelter, a meeting place for the aiga, a dwelling place. It can be the heart of the family where decisions are made and meals are shared, and stands because it has several supports.

The main theme that came through the narratives was the levels of support that participants felt they received through the multigenerational household. All the participants including the participant who initially felt that her experience in the m/g household was forced upon them through financial circumstance, felt that she received a lot of support in the multigenerational household, and they in turn supported and provided service to others in the family (Anae, M 1998).

“Both my parents worked and so they didn’t help with child care in that way during the day, but they always had time after work to help out where I needed it. In fact now that I look back and I think about how I live now, life was very easy for me then because I always had someone who could be relied on to help out. Mum and dad could do the food and often would cook enough food for everyone, they were happy to take the kids to church and that sort of thing. So when I think about it we got

a horrendous amount of support from my parents” (Ava, personal communication, 1/10/2011).

Support was described in many ways. There was tangible support such as the provision of child care, aged support, use of resources, sharing of finances and there was intangible immeasurable support such as, guidance, advice and counselling. All three generations of participants listed these things as valuable (Bedford, R. & Robert, D. Cited in Macpherson, C & Spoonley, P & Anae, M. 2001).

Living in the multigenerational household is a fluid situation. In other words most of the participants had lived in more than one multigenerational household and or moved in and out of multigenerational households. This was dependant on the attitudes held by the participant and or the needs of the participants at particular times in their lives.

## Parenting

‘It takes a village to raise a child’.  
African Proverb Anon



*Figure 22: Jeu'dore & Danielle Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2009). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. Reprinted with permission.*

Parenting and child care featured frequently as a significant area of support within the multigenerational household. All generations noted parenting and childcare without prompting, it was usually the first area of support that participants referred to.

Working parents noted that leaving their children in the care of the grandparent generation is fiscally sustainable to them, and it ensured that their children are given the 'best care'. One second generation participant described the peace of mind that he enjoys because he knows that his children are well loved and cared for when they're in the care of his parents (Mageo, J. 1991).

The third generation participants talked about the importance of their being involved in parenting. They believed it was appropriate that they assist in parenting where needed. This is consistent with the Samoan traditional value of parenting being provided by entire families (Mageo, J. 2001). It also aligned with members of the Samoan populations being more likely to report looking after members of their own household (Census 2006). Third generation participants made statements like:

"Parenting is shared in many ways, we help out if someone needs to be picked up, dropped off, if someone needs to attend a parent-teacher interview. If one of the kids were having a tantrum we all work together to address it" (Sala, personal communication, October 8, 2011).

"Well I help out where I can, I pick kids up from school or my uncle's and aunt's house. My grandparents help a lot and so do my uncle, aunty and my cousins. I work full time so I can only do so much and my younger brother and sister who are old enough to help out, are still at school so you know we do what we can but we rely a lot on the help of family. I think that is one of the reasons why it was really good when we lived with mama and papa, we never had to worry about things like that" (Ioane, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

Historically grandparents exercised a right to raise and rear their first grandchild in the Samoan context, in New Zealand for two of these families this has continued to some extent. These grandparents are highly involved in the raising and rearing of their grandchildren.

The second generation participants felt that it is the responsibility of all family members to provide assistance in parenting and child care where and when needed. Second generation participants made statements like:

"They (grandparents) care for the children while we go to work. They feed the kids when they are hungry. They provide security, mediation, counselling and mentoring. They provide assistance in spiritual growth with the children. They are the speakers and decision makers for our family when representing us amongst the extended family. They are the peacekeepers for our family during mediation. They provide peace of

mind for us the workers that our children are safe and cared for. There is something special about being able to roll out of bed, have a shower, eat my breakfast and then take off for work, knowing that at 7:30am the school children will be woken up, they will have breakfast, showers and go to school. And the preschool children will wake up when they have had enough sleep, get breakfast and showers, and will be treated with love and care all day long. When you know that is happening you go to work and you're not worried. When the kids are sick you know the grandparents are making sure they get to the doctors and that they are getting their medicine and everything else they need. You know when the kids are being a bit stropky that they're going to get extra attention" (Paulo, personal communication October 15, 2011).

"We all pitch in when the kids are going off track to help bring them back on track. We all help out with sports attendance and sport fees where needed. As the uncle I find that a lot of times the kids will come to me with things that they don't want to talk to their parents about, I always listen and I always tell them to talk to their parents, and whether they do or whether they don't I tell their parents" (Ulu, personal communication October 8, 2011).

The grandparent generation talked about being able to attend school functions, meetings, sports and activities relating to their grandchildren. They talked about providing care to their grandchildren as if it were a blessing as opposed to a 'chore'.

"For me the most important thing that I can do is share my experience. To share it with love so that my children don't make the same mistakes as me and to help take some stress away from them. There are no books to tell you how to parent your children and what to do when they misbehave, you just do the best that you can do and always remind them that you love them no matter what. Parents need help they need other people in the family who love the children too, to do their part. I feel very blessed that I can see my grandchildren every day. I love them very much" (Ana, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

The grandparent generation used words like 'blessed' to describe how they felt about their role in assisting with parenting and childcare. They used phrases such as 'we all do our part', as though it was the 'normal' way of things. They expressed a sense of being valued and contributing to the family. The grandparent participants validated the difficulties that parents experience and the support that they provide to assist parents:

"Being a parent is a very difficult job. There does come an age when the children start thinking that they know best and this can be stressful as well. So by sharing you support each other. Parents need to know that they are not the only parents that have been through this, that it is normal and to keep on trying, to keep on loving their children and never give up" (Ufi, personal communication, October 8, 2011).

“We support the parents in whatever way they need us to. Sometimes it’s to help out with getting the kids to and from school or day care, other times it’s to make sure that they are doing their chores when their parents aren’t around. Sometimes our job is to give the parents advice. You know when the ‘anti-smacking’ bill came in it didn’t matter for us because my kids didn’t smack their children any way, we always instruct with love. And this is where the grandparents are very important we can help take away stress and share our experiences” (Ana, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

One of the grandparent participants felt that she had experienced disadvantages in shared parenting she stated:

“Well in our situation I think that one of the main problems is that my husband and my son don’t get along which means that my husband always over steps his role and my son is easily offended by my husband. But if I look back at when I was growing up with my parents and my grandparents I was always really happy. We never had much materially but we were always well taken care of” (Sisi, personal communication, October 15, 2011).

This participant felt that her son and her husband had different attitudes and belief systems about how a family should be led and the roles within the family. It did not appear that there had ever been any negotiation or discussion with regard to what the roles would be. She felt that her son had a more palalagi attitude towards how the family should be led. Both her son and husband prescribed to the role of the ‘head of the family’, which lead to power struggles and conflict.

Participants who are no longer living in the multigenerational household were able to compare different living situations with comments like:

“I think that I can look at my own experience of when I am living with the kids and compare that to when I’m not, and I can say for sure that I miss living with the kids and the grandchildren and I miss the support” (Sisi, personal communication November 5, 2011).

“I think that your parents show you the best support just by listening to what’s happening. Even sometimes when you don’t want advice but you just want someone to listen my dad was always very good at that”.

“...I do notice that it was a very shared experience when I lived with my parents. They spoil the kids as grandparents do but they were always on hand to help give advice and do what they could for the children” (Ava, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

“I think that maybe I have already spoken about this and that we all support each other in different kinds of ways, by sharing what we have, by helping each other with the kids, by advising our children so they can raise our grandchildren properly” (Ana, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

Grandparents expressed a desire for children to be parented and raised well and that this was also their responsibility.

Parenting teenagers has proven to be an eventful experience for me. As a social work practitioner dealing with youth offenders I thought that my profession would inform my parenting. I have found the opposite to be more accurate, my parenting and experiences via my parenting informs my practice.

My experiences will be similar to most parents in Aotearoa, the challenging of boundaries and temper tantrums of both my teenagers and the parents, the teenaged struggle for autonomy, the unexplained absences from school resulting in an on-going dialogue with school authorities.

I relied on my parents for guidance and wisdom, they always acknowledged the struggles of being a parent and then would give me some advice or opinion that centred me and provide me with encouragement that would last until the next episode.

I observed that my experience of these difficult episodes were profoundly less taxing than my husband's experiences. While he has a positive relationship with my parents he would often internalize his difficulties with the teenagers voicing his frustrations and concerns only with me. My responses to him were usually from his perspective insufficiently reflected the level of anger and frustration that he desired.

I invited my husband to come with me and sit with my parents to 'chew the fat' over our teenaged situation, and when he did, he was also able to refocus and centre himself. The concerns and problems did not go away, but our approach was more considered and reflected better the acknowledgement that our teenaged children needed us to support and guide rather than to instruct.

I have always shared the parenting role with my parents. I have found over the years that while I am usually the first person that my children will come to for advice, assistance or support, they will not hesitate to seek the assistance of my parents when

they need it. This has been profoundly reassuring for me as a fulltime working parent as it has meant that I have been confident that my children are well provided for in my absence.

I am aware that my parents would usually allow the children to modify house rules such as bed times, but they do provide discipline and guidance where necessary.

Where issues emerged that my parents felt needed firmer handling, they would relinquish that responsibility and refer the matter back to my husband and I. My parents are very clear that their role is to support us and provide guidance, but that there are certain matters that are for the parents to deal with directly, even though they will still offer support and guidance.

As a social work practitioner often I hear discussions of 'attachment' where children show a lack of attachment to their parents but a strong attachment to their grandparents. The language used seems to indicate a deficit in parenting. I however aligned my own beliefs with Mageo's proposition that the attachment theories are irrelevant for collective cultures as the needs in terms of parenting that normally fall upon mother's in egocentric cultures are provided for by the collective (Mageo, J. 2001).

My older teenaged children have also assisted in providing some of the parenting to my younger children, referred to as child-parenting by my peers and again often referred to with negative undertones by social work practitioners that I work with (whether conscious or unconscious).

My oldest child, Jeu'dore was 8 years old when my third child Peaches was born, she was always keen to assist with changing nappies, bottle feeding, bathing. As my daughter enjoyed helping I enjoyed allowing her to.

By the time my fifth child was born I trusted my oldest child with any and all responsibilities relating to my children's care, and by this time my second daughter Danielle was also more interested and assuming some responsibilities for the care of her younger sibling.

My children have learnt to care and provide oversight for their younger sibling, whilst younger siblings are taught to obey and respect their older sibling (Mageo, J. 2001). My

third and fourth children Peaches and Logan are both able to bathe and change their younger sibling.

My older children Jeu'dore and Danielle have assisted by providing transport where needed for their younger sibling, ensuring that their younger sibling get to activities such as sports, church activities and school activities. They have assisted with taking their younger sibling to doctor appointments, they have even assisted with addressing school bullying. Their younger sibling have asked their older sibling to assist with school trips as parent helpers.

My children have had the advantage of on-going oversight, support and care from my husband and I, my parents and each other (Mageo, J. 2001).

I also considered my own up-bringing, having lived in a home with my older cousins and sibling. My older cousins were raised in Samoa and when it was financially possible my parents paid for them to migrate to Aotearoa.

My older cousin's had ingrained in them the 'tei relationship' (Mageo, J. 1988), in fact their arrival was the first time I had ever hear the term 'tei'. I was just turning five when they arrived. I had twin cousins who were a couple of months older than me who would refer to me as their tei. There were another two older female cousins who also referred to me as their tei.

When I started school my cousins ensured that I appropriately dressed, I had eaten breakfast and that I had my lunch before I left the house. At the end of school they would pick me up from class and ensure that I arrived home safely. To this day, when my older cousin's summon me for anything I respond in whatever way they direct. For me the disapproval of one of my older cousin's is more damaging to me than the disapproval of one of my sibling who never took me under their wing as my older cousins did.

## **Summary**

All participants believed that parenting is a shared role though the parents (second generation) are the main parenting providers. They all felt that all members of the household have a responsibility to ensure that the children and or younger sibling are well cared and provided for.

The role of the parent is acknowledged by the grandparent generation as being a difficult role that requires support, counselling and assistance, validating the struggles that parents encounter.

In m/g households where parenting responsibilities are shared there is still acknowledgement that certain responsibilities should be dealt with by the parent generation.

The role of parenting is not just shared between the parent and grandparent generation but can also be shared with the older siblings of the child generation within the household.

The disadvantages in shared parenting seemed to be a result of lack of role clarity, communication and could also be attributed to the attitudes or the paradigms held by individuals within the household.

In the households where the roles are clear and the members of the households hold the same attitudes towards shared parenting support is readily available, plentiful and well received.

### **Aged Care**

“A village without the elderly is like a well without water” (Anon, African Proverb).



*Figure 23: Ann & Jerry Ledoux. Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, S (2008). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. Reprinted with permission.*

It is the responsibility of matai and the aiga to promote the care and protection of members of the aiga. This is an obligation for life that encompasses the welfare of children, young people, women and the elderly (Mulitalo-Lauta, P. 2000).

Support appears to be reciprocated through the ages. As grandparents offer support by providing child care to their grandchildren, in all three families it is acknowledged that grandchildren also provide support to their grandparents. The participants described reciprocity of support through grandchildren assisting their grandparents where ever they could by completing errands for their grandparents or by providing support.

Grandparents talked about their grandchildren assisting them with mobile phones, sky television, computers and the like, one of the grandparent participants described situations where her granddaughter would read through contracts for her. This particular participant has an excellent grasp of English but she felt that when there are things that she is not quite familiar with in her contract she would rely on her granddaughter to assist her.

All participants believed that support and care for the aged could be provided through the family for 1. as long as their grandparents/parents chose to live with them and 2. until their grandparents/parents passed away. For these participants there did not seem to be an option of the aged being moved to 'retirement villages'. This aligns with the traditional positioning that the elderly or senior members of the family are valued, old people are pampered with their favourite things even though it is usually accepted that they may not be used, and most times families will spare no expense to provide for the elderly, (I, Pesio 1986).

The retirement village optioned seemed to be viewed negatively. When asked about what they thought happened to seniors normally I got responses such as

"They go to an old people's home to die alone" (Ufi, personal communication October 8, 2011).

"When I first moved to New Zealand and I saw old people homes, in fact we used to live in front of one, that was a new idea to me. I could see the old people coming and going from the home. There were some occasions when I would see visitors coming to see some of the old people there. There were other old people I noticed that didn't have any visitors. I only used to see Palalagi people living there, but now I do notice that there are more and more Islanders living there" (Ana, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

These comments captured the general flavour of how the participants viewed retirement villages/old people's homes, inclusive of all three generations. It also aligned with

assumptions and findings through the New Zealand 2006 Census Report that indicated that the likelihood of aged moving into Rest homes decreases because quality of health increases and people try to live independently for as long as possible. Seniors will opt for alternatives to the retirement village where possible.

Participants indicated that seniors or the elderly in the households were assisted by other members of the household in attending medical appointments, doing their shopping, hanging up laundry, and general household chores.

Senior members of the household indicated through their narratives that they feel valued and needed in their households. When asked what they thought would happen to them as they became less independent one participant stated:

“I think that my children will take over more and more. I’m not too sure what will happen if it gets to the stage where we are unwell and we need full time help and care. But I remember one time when I was talking to my son about moving into our own place, my daughter in law and my son couldn’t stop crying. They love us and they want us with them and that feels so special and makes me feel so needed, and that for me is very important” (Ana, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

However, another grandparent participant while they felt valued their experience is a little different in their current living situation:

“In my own family in Samoa I am very much valued and most other older people who live with their family are very much valued by their children. But I feel that in my particular role and in this son’s home I don’t feel as valued. I feel that I am there to help him and I love it, but I feel that once my usefulness is finished that my role in the family will disappear” (Sisi, personal communication, November 11, 2011).

The experiences seemed to be similar but it was really dependant on many variables and the attitudes of those living in the m/g household. This particular participant had indicated that she felt that there was a power struggle between her husband and the son they were living with at the time of the interviews. For her the son she was living with seemed to want the best of two worlds. He wanted to be the ‘head of his family’, but he needed the help of his parents to assist with child care. For his father, he, was the head of the family, because his son was still his son.

When I asked one of the first generation participants what they thought was the central way they experienced lagolago within the m/g household he said:

There is a lot of support for things to do with money. Me and mum are both retired now so we need more help than we used to especially with things to do with the big family. We can’t help so much around the

house, we used to buy the grandchildren clothes but not so much anymore. We always feed the grandchildren when they come to visit with us. When I say visit with us that sounds funny because we live together but my daughter in law is very respectful and thoughtful that she tries to make sure that me and mum have our own time with each other, and watches to make sure the kids aren't bothering us. Sometimes the kids will come over to sit with us and talk with us, and we want to eat with them and have fun with them, we love it. We also help take care of the children. But again I think that my daughter in law is very good with us, she makes sure that the children don't get too much for us, she teaches them well to be respectful and to listen to us. Even sometimes when I can hear mum (my wife) talking to the grandchildren and I know that she is talking too long and she's starting to tell the stories from years and years ago, I see the grandchildren just sit and listen to her. I know they get bored and mum's going on too long but they just smile and listen. I feel a bit sorry for them but I'm grateful she talks to them about how hard it was to come to live in New Zealand and even about our culture. I think it's important and I think that what the grandchildren are doing is showing support to my wife, because they show her what she has to say is important, that her life meant something, that she is passing something that will last for after we are gone. (Ufi, personal communication, October 29, 2011).

I had wondered if living in the multigenerational household detracted from the grandparent generations ability to get personal time. The senior members of the household did not appear to feel that all of their time was committed to assisting the family. They indicated that they had time for themselves and could get personal time if they wanted it. They indicated that they were often getting more couple time with their partners than they had been able to get when they were younger.

The younger participants indicated that they respected their grandparent's right to privacy and personal time. When asked if it was noticed whether grandparents were able to spend time as a couple one of the third generation participants stated:

"Yes, both being retired now, also, with their role in the family being more an advisory role they definitely get time as a couple" (Ufi, personal communication, October 29, 2011).

When asked the same question a second generation participant stated:

"My mum and dad get plenty of couple time. And my brother and his wife get couple time as well. I think that they have the advantage of so many adults living in the same house" (Ava, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

Having considered the support provided to the aged and or senior members of the collective it seems a natural progression to move on to matters of death and support available during times of loss.

Death knows no prejudice death comes to all people and as one gets older death comes closer, so therefore in the m/g household are children getting exposure to mortality earlier in life and more intimately than they would be in the bi-generational household? Are there different kinds of supports available? Is there a different way of looking at death?

All participants acknowledged that death was a natural part of life consistent with the traditional cultural paradigm that:

‘Samoans do not look to doctors or medicines for cures for their elderly people. This is because they accept that death is God’s will; they accept that old people will die’. (Sister Iosefo Pesio 1986).

This is slightly out of kilter with all three participating families’ experiences, where they state that all members of the multigenerational household work together to make sure elders/seniors in the aiga get any medical attention and attend any medical appointments that they need to attend. This may align with an acceptance that there are medical remedies that were not historically available, that can prolong and add value to life.

Whilst I hoped that I might be able through the experiences of the participants be able to explore whether living in a m/g household introduced mortality to participants in a more intimate way than if they lived in a bi-generational household, this did not occur.

Sisi spoke about the loss of her mother. Sisi recounted the death of her mother recollecting the support that she received from other members of the family, she recalled it being both a ‘sad and a happy time’, but I was not able to fully explore the effects this had on the third generation participant from this family as Sina was too young to recall the death of her great-grandmother.

The Alii family suffered the loss of a child which did not provide space to explore the introduction of mortality through the presence of elderly within the household. What was described was the support mechanisms within the family. The supports described included financial assistance, emotional support and support in labour where needed.

Irrespective of those factors and my own desired outcome, what was evident through the narratives of all the participants is that support is easily accessed through the generations.

Grandparent participants indicated that they did not discuss death with their families. However, Ufi noted that his son regularly talked about death and what he wanted to have happen should he die.

Ufi acknowledged that it is probably a positive thing as his son is always trying to ensure that his children will be provided for should he meet an untimely death, but asserted that it is not a topic that he felt comfortable talking about.

Having noted from all three of the grandparent participants that death is not a topic that they talk about, I did notice that all three participants referred to their death in their narratives. Ufi stated:

“As the grandparents we spend as much time with our grandchildren individually as possible. We will not live forever but when we pass, we want them to remember us with love” (Ufi, personal communication, October 29, 2011).

Ana stated:

“These things are important for the children and important for me. I want to do as much for them as I can before I leave this world, I think that is the best way you can spend your time by giving to your family” (Ana, personal communication October 22, 2011).

Sisi stated:

“They get moved to elderly homes. I don’t want to die in a home” (Sisi, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

It appeared that while the grandparent participants did not talk about death in their families they seemed to be preparing for death.

I have been blessed with being able to live with my parents for several years during my marriage, either in their home or in mine. During this time I have watched them age, grow weaker and less mobile. As their medical and health needs have changed my

children and I have been able to assist them in different ways. I reflect on the words of Pesio 1986 that traditionally Samoan elders are well respected and loved, and that caring for the elders is an honour.

I never met my grandparents, so the example of my parents caring for my grandparents was never set. Caring for elders in the family was never taught to me explicitly but implied through language in stories and discussions. When my parents related stories about their elders they talked with an air of sanctity, mystery and respect.

I recall the first time I heard my eldest child 'talk back' to my mother. I became so upset I immediately chastised my daughter. I recall she was only four at the time. My mother tried to quell my upset trying to remind me that my daughter was only young. A couple of months ago I heard my four year old son, Saber, answer my mother back. My eldest child was present at the time, she immediately responded by chastising Saber. My children have learnt that disrespecting their grandparents is never acceptable and always inappropriate.

My parents are both retired, financially they need assistance particularly as they still contribute to fa'alavelave in the extended aiga. At present they are still predominantly independent, though, my husband children and I are available to provide them with any assistance they need. This includes, transporting them to and from medical appointments, ensuring that they get all entitlements possible from applicable government agencies. From time to time my mother will still ask me to assist her in reading a contract before she signs it, but I have noticed that she also asks my daughters to help her with these tasks now.

I used to live in a suburb called Grey Lynn in Auckland. In that house we had seven bedrooms in total. My parents lived with me in this home and enjoyed a lot of privacy because of the size of the house. My husband and I made a decision in 2005 that we needed to sell our home in Grey Lynn. My parents doubted that we would be able to find another house that would house us all and where they could still enjoy some privacy.

For several months that was the case. I viewed hundreds of houses, that may be an exaggeration but it certainly felt like hundreds, and I was not able to find a house equal in size (and within my budget) to the house that I was selling in Grey Lynn.

My parents decided that they needed to find a unit for themselves. When my parents told me that they were looking for a unit I became distraught. I could not imagine raising my children without their wisdom, input and support.

The support and assistance that I provide them as they are getting older is a fraction of the support and assistance that they have provided me with through my life time. I reflect on McGregor (2012) who observed through her research of care provided to the elderly that there was no way to legislate empathy and compassion, there is however scope and space to modify policy and legislation to support committed carers who already exist within the family.

### **Summary**

What I found is that there is scope and space for the provision of aged care in the m/g household. The grandparent generation enjoyed living with aiga and believed that they are appreciated and that their contribution to the aiga adds value to their lives and to the aiga.

Senior participants believed that they would be well cared for in their senior years by their families. All the participants expressed negative feelings towards senior members moving into retirement villages or the like.

Second and third generation participants expressed a desire to provide care to first generation members of their families, participants would not consider other options for long term care for senior members of their aiga.

First generation members of the multigenerational household are given their own space and time to enjoy personal/couple hobbies and interests. There is deliberate effort made by both second and third generation participants to ensure that first generation participants have personal time.

Second generation and third generation participants spoke about the importance of the role of the grandparent within the home, they talked about 'story telling', guidance, mediation, counselling that are provided by their grandparents or the first generation participants.

All participants described the role of the senior generation as guides, counsellors, mentors. Their role included parenting and provision of child care.

Where roles in the m/g household are clear and well defined, where members of the m/g household live in that situation by choice as opposed to circumstance there is ample support for senior members that is reciprocated by senior members to their aiga. First generation participants felt that they didn't speak about death during family discussions but in much of their dialogue they seemed to be preparing for death. First generation participants often spoke about leaving a legacy by rearing and caring for their grandchildren, inherent in their dialogue is a sense of duty towards their aiga, and from their aiga to them. One of the concerns that first generation participants talked about was 'dying alone'.

Death is accepted as a part of life, and while in traditional Samoan culture the elderly may not have sought out medication, in these families Western medicine and remedies are pursued and medical appointments and advice is adhered to, there is acceptance the life can be significantly prolonged and improved with the appropriate health care.

While I was trying to ascertain whether living in the m/g household would expose children to death earlier in their lives through having older people in the household, I was unable to explore that in my inquiries.

## Pregnancy & Childbirth

“From little date seeds, great things are born”. (Anon, Namibian Proverb).



*Figure 24: Saber (baby) & Selina Ledoux-Taua’aletoa.* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua’aletoa, J (2009). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua’aletoa.

All participant families shared experiences of expectant mothers within the m/g households getting support and extra assistance when they are pregnant. There was a sense from all of them that the priority for the expectant mother is to be rested and to have a healthy baby, and the whole family took ownership of the ‘pregnancy’. First generation participants made statements like:

“Being pregnant is a blessing, so your responsibility is to do everything that you need to do to make sure that baby is healthy. The blessing is for the whole family so the whole family have to make sure that the pregnant person is healthy and has all the things that she needs to have a strong and healthy baby” (Ana, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

Ufi stated:

“...We all try to make sure that the baby has all the things that the baby needs. The room the baby is going to be sleeping in is ready for the baby. It’s everybody’s job to help out. I remember when my first grandchild was coming, I re-wall papered the room, painted it where it needed paint, re-carpeted the room. Everyone gets excited that’s how it should be, that baby belongs to all of us” (Ufi, personal communication, October 29, 2011).

Paulo through his narrative showed support provided by the grandparent generation included both material support and emotional support. Paulo indicated that childbirth is a spiritual experience for both parents.

“It is truly a blessing. I have been blessed with children. My wife’s parent’s assistance and support have been so valuable. They provide physical, spiritual and emotional strength, financial assistance, with food and clothing our family. Their example to remain spiritually strong throughout the pregnancy kept us well grounded in the differing times of the pregnancy and childbirth. Mum (grandmother) was there for our first two. She provided support and experience to help us to care for our new babies” (Paulo, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

This was in contrast to the experience of the second generation participant Ava who currently lives in bi-generational household, Ava stated:

“In my home I help myself. But I notice my sister in law gets quite a lot of help. She is very self-reliant so she doesn’t actually ask for help but at the same time she doesn’t need to either. I notice when she is hanging up laundry my mother will chase the kids out to do it for her. Meals will be cooked for her and the kids will help with any house hold chores” (Ava, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

There was a difference with how people experienced pregnancy within the household depending on role and gender, Sisi, a grandparent participant with only sons stated:

“I only have sons so it’s not really a shared experience for me. My daughter-in-laws have only ever taken in their mothers”.

Ufi and Ulu two of the male participants stated that they were unaware of any traditions that might exist around pregnancy and expectant mothers. Paulo however talked about his wife’s pregnancies and traditions that he and his family had developed together.

Paulo and all the female participants including female participants who had not been pregnant before, talked about the diet of the expectant mother stating that the expectant mother had to be careful about what she ate, all of them referring to seafood as a danger. When questioned around where they came to this understanding, each of them talked about hearing older family members talking about seafood being a danger.

These families have a very strong religious influence. Each of them spoke about a new born child being blessed in church shortly after their birth and the importance of this to

their aiga. In some cases the grandfather would carry out the blessing in other cases the father of the baby would carry out the blessing.

Paulo (parent participant) and Ufi (grandparent participant) both talked about being able to bless their children or grandchildren and the significance of the blessing for them. They each spoke about preparing themselves mentally and emotionally for the occasion, often fasting, praying and reading scripture to ensure that they were in tune with 'the spirit' to provide an appropriate blessing. Paulo felt that the blessings were important to him both on a religious level and through the influence of his father –in-law who shares the same religious convictions as him.

I have been pregnant 12 times and given birth to 9 children. For the 9 pregnancies where I carried my babies to full term, I was always given dietary advice. My mother would ensure that an iron rich dinner was ready for me when I arrived home from work. My mother often ensured that I was given as much rest as possible. Through my mother's instruction my children would ensure that chores were completed so that I could rest.

My mother was present during the birth of my first two children. After they were born and for the subsequent children my mother stayed at home to care for the children while my husband attended the births. The day after each birth my mother would attend the hospital with the children to visit with her newest grandchild.

For every child born I have taken home the fanua (placenta) to bury in our back yard planting a tree upon it. When burying the fanua and planting the new tree, we have prayed as a family that the fanua will provide nutrients to the tree as the tree will provide us with sustenance in the future.

After each child was born my mother would also ensure that I was given proper rest and the appropriate care was provided to the new born baby. The older children would often be taken away from the home so that I could have peace.

With my last four children born I have returned to work approximately six weeks after their birth. I have been confident to leave my new born baby in the care of my mother each time. My confidence that my children including the new born baby is loved and cared for brings me emotional and mental serenity while I am at work.

## Summary

Pregnancy in the m/g household did not seem to differ from experiences that might also occur in a bi-generational household. Support within the m/g household is more accessible because there are more people available to assist.

When discussing traditions to explore whether the grandparent generation transferred traditional knowledge of pregnancies on to expectant mothers it did not appear that any different knowledge from that which would be found in bi-generational homes existed.

There was a difference in knowledge held or experiences according to your role and gender in the household. Sisi who only had sons, had little experience with regards to pregnancy and the births of her grandchildren. The male participants, Ufi and Ulu were not aware of any traditions for pregnancies and expectant mothers.

Ava who is no longer living in the m/g household indicated through her narrative that she felt isolated and could compare her own sense of reality with what she observed in the m/g household where she felt that in the m/g household she observed more support provided by both the first generation and the third generation.

The third generation participants, Sala, and Sina all alluded to older women in the family influencing their knowledge of traditions around pregnancies and providing support to expectant mothers.

Traditions within the aiga are supported and coached by older members of the family, even where traditions are not acknowledged for example the blessing of the new born baby was not acknowledged as a tradition.

Some aiga have developed their own traditions that are relevant and important to them. This may be adapted from Samoan traditions, may be adopted through religious affiliation or other influences such as culture within Aotearoa/Niu Sila. I adopted practices of tangatawhenua and used them myself as a tradition for my aiga. Through this research I have found that this is/was a practice in Samoa. Sometimes traditions and knowledge is not passed on if it is not consciously pursued.

## Conflict Resolution

“E le pu se tino I upu” Words don’t break bones (Anon, Samoan Proverb)

“E pala le ma’a, a e le pala upu” Stones rot but not words (Anon, Samoan Proverb)



*Figure 25: L’amour and Ice Ledoux-Taua’aletoa* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua’aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua’aletoa.

Members of the m/g household develop their own strategies to address conflict within the home. The two participant families who addressed conflict to their satisfaction seemed to have an informal model to deal with conflict, however this model is similar to the Samoan paradigmatic model in which the underlying value of fa’aaloalo is used to provide the platform for discussion and resolution (Hunkin, G. 2007).

The conflict is discussed and dealt with within a meeting. This meeting is usually facilitated by either the grandparent or parent generation. This is similar to the organizational running of fono, the ta’ita’i or leader/facilitator of the meeting speaks with a vocabulary rich with respect (Milner, G.B. 1961). One grandparent participant stated,

“If it something that I think is going to cause a lot of conflict than I will call the family together and we have a meeting about it. The meeting is like a prayer meeting so that we can all speak to each other in a way that will help the spirit dwell with us and we can have the feeling of love and understanding”.

Participants acknowledged that at different times and in different scenarios different people could play different roles in the family to resolve conflict.

“Mum’s role in the conflict always changes. Say, if the conflict were between me and my sisters, it would be her role to step in as a sort of judge, and basically tell us what to do. But, if the conflict were between the generations, for example I had a disagreement with my uncle, mum’s role would be to act as mediator. Generally speaking everyone has a role but those roles are different depending on what is happening” (Sala, personal communication, November 29, 2011).

It was acknowledged by the people living in the m/g household that conflict resolution was the responsibility of all members of the household. I

loane who does not currently reside in the m/g household stated

“Well with our home my parents just get into it. They don’t hit each other but they are pretty vocal and they have broken furniture before...I think that my uncle and his wife do have arguments but they handle their arguments differently to my parents. I think that they show respect to my grandparents by keeping their argument fairly quiet and they are also careful about how they interact with each other in front of their children...There is always freedom to argue but I think that when you live in a m/g home you are more respectful about how that happens” (loane, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

loane often drifted between his experience living in a either a bi-generational or m/g household and what he observed occurs in his uncle’s home where his uncle lives in the m/g household.

While there seemed to be an acceptance that conflict is a natural part of family life there is also a sense that conflict or arguments get managed in a manner that ensures the harmony in the home through the generations. This aligned with statements other participants made.

“You have the freedom to be yourself in the home but you just have to remember that other people should be able to feel happy and comfortable” (Sala, personal communication, October 29, 2011).

“This is a normal part of being a couple especially when you are first married. We need to let couples be couples so long as they remember to respect the other people in the house. Everybody else should be able to feel comfortable without worrying about other people’s arguments, this is all part of living in a family” (Sina, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

Through the narratives of the participants where conflict is addressed appropriately the issue of conflict is discussed via meetings initiated by either the grandparent or parent generation. When the conflict was not considered serious, conflicting parties are left to resolve matters themselves.

Sisi illustrated through her dialogue that the m/g household was the source of the conflict. Her experience showed that it was because of the power dynamics between her husband and her son that was the cause of a lot of the conflict within her living situation. Sisi alluded to a difference in culture and expectation. Sisi believed that her husband had certain expectations as the self-appointed patriarch of the family while her son had expectations as the 'head of his family' and the two views and expectations seemed to be in conflict with each other.

This conflict was not present in the m/g households where the senior's role was defined and accepted as advisory. In the Alii and the Uso households this was very clear in all the narratives from all the participants that the role of the grandparent generation is, while they are regarded as leaders in their own right, they are to counsel and advise. Participants made statements like:

"The grandparents' role is to give counsel. Help when help is needed" (Paulo, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

"Mama and papa help in all kinds of ways they help with transport, with child care, with cooking, cleaning, advice even financially if needed" (Sala, personal communication, October 29, 2011).

"My role is to keep giving support and advice" (Ana, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

"The grandparents are there for advice to the parents and they are like me they are there to listen to the kids and give them advice and talk to the parents. They are the story tellers, all great messages and morals come through one of their stories, what's crack up though is sometimes the grandparents don't quite get the story right and are preaching the wrong moral" (Sina, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

It is accepted in these households that couples argue and it seemed that they are left to resolve their own conflicts so long as they respect certain accepted parameters such as, no violence, ensuring that their conflict did not impact on the comfort of the other members of the household, and that the children are not present during arguments. Members of the aiga who behave in a manner that will generate disapproval know that will be some form of negative consequence (Wurtzburg, S. 2004).

Conflicts within my family are managed as sensitively as possible because my parents live with us. While my parents provide me with support and guidance they also provide the children with protection, whether appropriate or not. There have been many times when the children are about to be reprimanded that my parents will quickly intervene. During the early stages of my marriage this caused a lot of frustration for my husband.

When there have been issues of concern between my husband and members of my family, I have dealt with those. I recall the frustration my husband felt when we had our first child when my parents would intercede or interfere with his parenting.

When this happened I would often speak with my parents and ask them to give my husband and I space to parent ourselves. This was not easy for my parents, and it took a few discussions, but we did eventually find a method that worked for us as a family.

Over the course of my marriage my family have developed ways to manage conflict. When one of the children needed to be reprimanded, words are chosen carefully to reflect fa'aaloalo (respect) to my parents, inadvertently as parents because we have chosen our words carefully, our children have felt respected.

When there are significant issues that cause conflict we have addressed those issues via family meetings. Similar to some of the participants my family start these meetings with prayer, and stating the ground rules for the meeting. Sometimes my husband and I will facilitate these meetings and other times my parents will facilitate the meeting.

As a child growing up in my parent's home, I recall my parents arguing maybe five times. I recall crying during one of those arguments when I became afraid. I became frightened not because of how they were arguing but because of what they were saying when they were arguing. I cannot recall the words my mother used but the essence of her dialogue was that she was going to leave. When my parents saw me cry the argument stopped my dad left the house quietly and my mother came to comfort me, telling me that there was no need for tears.

I know my parent's argued more than I was aware of at the time. I remember vaguely flaring nostrils at the dinner table when inappropriate jokes were lobbied back and forth. I recall times when my one of them would make a decision that clearly conflicted with the other's thoughts or views. My parents would disappear into their bed room, I could hear their muffled voices talking. I watched my older sibling with their ears stuck firmly against my parent's bed room door. Then watch my siblings scatter as my parents re-emerged usually with a new or at least slightly modified decision.

I got married at the age of 19 my husband was 20 at the time. I was the first of my sibling to get married and I begged my husband to agree to move in with my parents. We were both students so financial constraints assisted my argument.

In the early years of our marriage we argued a lot as many new couples do. My parents would always give us space to disagree, then they would give us counsel about

speaking to each other with kindness even when we disagree. The environment that we lived in taught us to resolve our conflicts in a way that allowed other people in the aiga and the home to be comfortable.

The presence of my parents kept us mindful of how we spoke to each other and how we conducted ourselves.

There was a time when I lived with my mother and father in law. I recall during these times always being mindful of the fact that I was the 'in-law'. When my husband and I argued I never made it obvious. I had learned by watching my brother-in-law and his wife argue that in my husband's family home, my husband would always be 'right', even when he was clearly wrong.

All our disagreements were taken care of in our bedroom, in hissed whispers and when I re-emerged from the bedroom whether the issue was resolved or not, I was always all smiles.

## **Summary**

Where conflict is appropriately addressed in the m/g households, there are clear roles. Mediators within these families are identified, or though there is space for movement and negotiation dependent on the nature of the conflict and who the conflict involves.

There is a forum that is accepted as the place where family conflict is discussed and resolved. Where issues are complex and require on-going discussion there is understanding and acceptance that on-going meetings will occur.

The success of these meetings is dependent on the attitude of family members, and the paradigms held by family members in the household. Where role clarity is not established or there is a political struggle, this can cause disharmony and become a point of conflict.

It is unclear whether this can be resolved if there are different value systems and paradigms within the household, where parties or family members are unwilling or unable to shift or compromise.

Conflict between couples in the household is both expected and accepted. However, in the m/g household there are parameters around how conflict is displayed within the aiga. The comfort of all members of the household should be considered, and arguments should not occur in front of the children.

Where there are potential areas of conflict or concern between in-laws and the grandparent generation or the blood relatives, the blood connection within the couple will usually work as a mediator to ensure harmony within the household (Meleisea, M. & Schoeffel, P. 1998).

The over-riding principle behind conflict resolution appears to be fa'aaloalo (respect) one of the central elements in fa'asamoa. Participants ensured that they showed respect to other members of the household in how they conducted themselves (Aanae, M.1998).

First generation household members have a calming influence on the aiga, giving counsel that ensures that the aiga maintain healthy relationships, congruent with the importance the fa'asamoa attaches both to senior members of the aiga and the collective (Meleisea, M & Schoeffel, P. 1998).

### **Individuality versus the Collective**



*Figure 26: Logan, Peaches & LeBron Ledoux-Taua'aletoa* Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2012). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. Reprinted with permission.

This is another way it is evident that some of the traditional fa'aSamoa values have been transferred through the generations. All the participants acknowledged the collective as important (Mageo, J 1991).

“I think that you can be an individual so long as you also contribute to the family as well” (Sala, personal communication, October 29, 2011).

There was also acknowledgment that for the wellbeing of the individuals within the collective, individuals should be encouraged and supported to explore their gifts and talents (Hofstede, 1984; Sinha, Sinha, Verm, & Sinha, 2001 cited in Newman, D 2009).

Sisi: “like with my own sons everyone is different and you always know this raising a family. As a culture what Samoans place importance on is the collective or the aiga potopoto (the whole family), so sometimes people get a bit stuck on that but they shouldn’t because our people understand that for the collective to be healthy the individuals need to be healthy and so there is always recognition for individuals” (Sisi, personal communication, November 11,2011).

Living in the m/g household may be part an economic strategy, but it also is a protective device for surviving the challenges of the emphasis on individuality in Aotearoa (Howden-Chapman et al., 2000). Paulo acknowledged through his dialogue the contrast between what is done in his home and what happens outside the home. There is a sense of claiming the home for aiga strengthening while other domains are for the advancement of the individual.

I like to think that I encourage the kids to be individuals. Our family prayers and traditions are all to ensure that there is a strong sense of family, because everything else my children do they do alone (Paulo, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

Another participant alluded to the conflict in the dominant culture within Aotearoa and fa’aSamoa.

Ana: “Everyone has the right to be themselves. Even in Samoa you don’t have to live with the family if you don’t want to, you can do what you want. My brother who married a palalagi and decided to go his own way, no one held that against him that was his choice to make. But the family were not so willing to help him when he needed it. You see in the culture it is I help you now because you need it, but you help me later when I need it. So my brother was living two worlds really, when he needed help he came to the family but he was not around when other members of the family needed help. Everyone has the freedom to choose, but every choice has its own consequences” (Ana, personal communication, October 22, 2011).

Ava alluded to believing that moving into her own home with her family was important and the appropriate progression of things. She was both born and educated in Aotearoa. Children born and educated in Aotearoa tended to see financial matters as personal issues, while those who migrated to Aotearoa as adults were more likely to view finances as a matter for the aiga (Wartzburg, S.J. 2004). Her views, values and

goals were more individualistic and consistent with Papalagi paradigms, which was significantly different to the views and the values held by her mother and her son (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990; Macpherson et al., 2001).

Ava felt that it was the normal progression of things that you get married and when you can you move into your own home. She stated

“You need to understand that it was circumstance that led us to live with my parents rather than choice. I guess that was the support I saw, my mum and dad allowing me to live in their house. That’s how it’s supposed to be isn’t it? As married couples you should be working together to stand on your own feet and get your own place. My mum and dad would often baby sit when we needed it, but I was trying very hard to get into our own place so that we could establish our own family routines and traditions. I guess if you look at what I have just said then the central point of support would have been for my children” (Ava, October 1, 2011).

Ava indicated that she lived in the m/g household out of necessity at the time. However, at the end of the first interview she stated

“I am really grateful that I got an opportunity to think about a lot of these things I really want to go see my parents and give them a hug. I actually feel like a spoilt child that took a lot of things for granted. I feel really emotional right now” (Ava, personal communication, October 5, 2011).

loane seemed to feel that he had lost opportunities because he was not living in the m/g household he stated

“When we lived with mama and papa they were the seniors. And I think their role is to tell stories, and keep the family together I feel like that’s what they did. Now that we are just living with mum and dad and I compare myself to my cousins I feel like probably we have lost some of that ‘family feeling’. Don’t get me wrong I love my family and my cousin’s family are not all roses, they have their dramas and the rest of it, but I can see that my grandparents are really involved and that they are all really connected as a family. Sometimes I do feel like I missed out because my parents moved out into our own home. I feel a little jealous even when I see how close my grandparents are to my cousins. I know that they love me too and my brother and sisters, but my cousins actually jump in bed with my grandparents and cuddle up and just talk to them. I could never do that with them, just because I don’t think that they have that same kind of connection with me...” (loane, personal communication, October 11, 2011)

Ava acknowledged that it may have been her attitude that impacted on what value she placed on living in the m/g household. Ava talked about her brother who enjoys living in the m/g household. When asked about whether she spoke with friends and work/school colleagues about living in the m/g household, Ava said she did not.

All the other participants indicated through their narratives that they felt positively about living in the m/g household. These participants talked about their family lives with their peers and colleagues.

As a member of a collective culture I have inherently developed a loyalty to the collective often sacrificing my own ambitions and desires to ensure that wellbeing of the collective. I have done this in my personal and professional life.

In the professional realm when I have sought professional development or promotions I have always rationalised the need for me to seek out these opportunities according to the benefits that the collective will incur. My personal life has been the same, my decisions are not only made according to the impact on my husband and children they are also considered with regards to the impact that they will have on my parents.

As a child I was raised in a bi-generational household but the commitment to the collective was evident in my parent's commitment to the aiga potopoto (extended family). As a child I often observed my parents sending clothing and household goods to Samoa, whilst my aiga had a modest existence. My parent's income did not allow for savings so any financial obligations to family impacted on our weekly existence in a very intimate way. Monies were often sent to Samoa to assist members of our aiga who I had never met whilst we survived on a modest shopping.

I recall questioning my parents about why we needed to send remittances to the aiga potopoto to assist them when we usually did not know them personally. My parents would often respond by reminding me that when our aiga is in need our aiga potopoto will reciprocate. I have not yet experienced this reciprocity but the importance of the aiga potopoto or the collective was impressed upon me.

My parents also however taught me the importance of ensuring that our family needs were met. Regardless of what remittances were sent to our aiga potopoto and how modestly we lived, my parents ensured that the mortgage was paid, that our school requirements were met, often sacrificing their personal needs.

I recall my parent's contributions to fa'alavelave scaled back as I grew older. I recall several meetings with the aiga potopoto facilitated by matai where they debated the need to be more discerning about what fa'alavelave the aiga should contribute to. Members of the aiga and matai recognized that the aiga could not contribute to every fa'alavelave and the financial commitment could and would at times cripple aiga within the collective.

Education was a key area of personal development that my parents encouraged my sibling and I to pursue while we were young. When our performance at school lacked lustre my parents would often tell us, 'doing well in school only benefits you not us, this is for your own good in the future' or words to that effect. My parents emphasised that we needed to do our best in school to ensure that opportunities would be made available to us in our adult working lives. However, I am aware that any accomplishments we attained in school reflected on both my parents and the aiga potopoto.

I recall when my uncle who is the matai (chief) of our aiga saw some photos from my graduation. This viewing resulted in the assembling of all the cousins for a lengthy hour and a half discussion on the tribute that my degree was to the aiga, for the sacrifices that have been made by my forebears.

Personal achievement is important to both the individual and the collective, in most situations the goals and values of the collective will align with the individual.

## **Summary**

All participants recognized the importance of the collective and acknowledged that the needs and the hopes of individuals within these collectives are also important (Bedford, R. & Robert, D. 2001).

There did not appear to be a difference in how participants felt that individual interest and needs are encouraged in Aotearoa compared to Samoa, though there was some acknowledgement that Aotearoa society promotes the wellbeing of the individual without too much acknowledgement to the importance of the collective.

Couples are encouraged to spend time with their spouse and space is created in the household to ensure that couples have quality time with their partners. This is a shift

from the traditional paradigm (Mageo, J. 1991) incorporating new societal values in Aotearoa.

Where the goals of the individuals are positive they will usually align with the goals of the collective. Samoans are adapting well in Niu Sila. As described by Wutzburg (2004) remittances and contributing to fa'alavelave has scaled back to reflect financial obligation and survival for aiga based in Niu Sila, matai have become more discerning about when the aiga should be called upon to contribute.

### **Transference of Culture/Information**



*Figure 26: Anne Ledoux & Ice (baby) Ledoux-Taua'aletoa Photographed by Ledoux-Taua'aletoa, J (2010). From personal collection of Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa.*

Aotearoa has become home for many Samoans. During the 1960s and the 1970s most Samoans who came to Aotearoa planned to return to Samoa after making some money (Macpherson, C. & Spoonley, P. & Anae, M. 2001 & Melisea, M. & Schoeffel, P. 1989). Many Samoans instead established friendships and connections in Aotearoa. They got married and started families.

First generation participants were the only participants born in Samoa. The second and third generation participants were all born here in Aotearoa. None of the participants spoke about returning to Samoa to live, they described it as a holiday destination to visit with family. Aotearoa has become both the spiritual and physical home for many Samoans (Suaali'i-Sauni, T. 2007).

Fa'aSamoa is valued by Samoans but the way that fa'aSamoa is practiced in Aotearoa has had to change as a reflection of this new home. The reality of being Samoan in Aotearoa is one shaped by the realities of Aotearoa (Suaali'i-Sauni, T. 2007).

Participants indicated that one of the main ways they participate in fa'asamoa is through remittances where there are fa'alavelave. Remittances can be requested for other events connected with responsibility towards the aiga, such as weddings, graduations and other events requiring the pooling of resources (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1999; Pitt & Macpherson, 1974).

In 2000 Melanie Anae described a group of Aotearoa based matai (chief) as the 'new wave' matai (Anae, M. 1998, 2000). This seemed to be the most appropriate way for me to describe these participants. These participants similar to the new wave matai, are selective about the fa'alavelave they participate in or support. Similar to the new wave matai, this is not a form of rebellion but recognition and an awareness that participating in all fa'alavelave with all the other financial commitments in Aotearoa is unrealistic, (Suaali'i-Sauni, T. 2007). The only type of fa'alavelave these participants spoke about was funerals.

All of the participants felt that fa'aSamoa was an important part of their lives though they all acknowledged that they did not practice many elements of fa'aSamoa. One participant from the grandparent generation said

“Pure fa'aSamoa is important to me. Fa'aSamoa in it's pure form is beautiful. It is true love and helping. But as it is right now where people use it to show status makes fa'aSamoa a burden” (Ana, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

This aligns with what Tamasese (2006c) expressed when describing traditional Samoan funerals and fa'aSamoa. Tamasese talked about the si'i alofa, an act of love or a gift presented to one family from another to assist in funeral arrangements and alleviate pressure on the family during a time of grief.

Through participation in fa'aSamoa these families accept the obligations of the aiga. In other words their acceptance and participating in fa'alavelave is a symbol that they are committed to their kin group (Ngan-Woo, F. 1985). Samoans have transported to Aotearoa fa'aSamoa structures (though they may be enacted differently) still

demonstrating the special significance of aiga (Macpherson et al., 2001; McGrath, 2002; Sua'ali'i 2001).

These participants described participating in siva Samoa but only out of enjoyment and entertainment. Of interest was that siva was not taught to younger generations by the participants who had lived in Samoa. For two of the families siva was taught to them by their parents who were born in Aotearoa suggesting that they may have been taught siva even if they lived in a bi-generational household.

Participants spoke about using some traditional methods of healing such as the fofo but they acknowledged that it was not their initial response to health ailments, even though they also acknowledged that when they did use traditional methods of healing they believed that they worked. Enlisting the assistance of a fofo or traditional remedies was usually done at the prompting of the grandparent generation. Where there was no prompting there had been some previous experience and advice provided from the grandparent generation around using traditional healing remedies, in this particular scenario information and culture has been passed through the generations.

The parent and third generation participants talked about storytelling by the grandparent generation to pass on lessons, for example parents talked about the grandparent generation providing advice through stories and or experiences that they have had.

There is some transference of information between the generations. This information includes elements of culture, parenting and conflict resolution. First generation participants passed on information, heritage and culture through story-telling and discussions. Participants were able to transfer knowledge to their grandparents and their parents about technology.

One first generation participant made this statement when talking about support within the family, what he relays however is the idea that learning can occur through observation. He talks about what he has learnt from his son and how ideals and values can change over time.

He poses an interesting dilemma and conflict in that church and religion is central in fa'aSamoa (Lynch, E. & Hanson, J. 1999), here the first generation participant is suggesting that while church and religion are still important, there are underlying reasons why church and religion are important, and perhaps the underlying reasons sometimes get forgotten in the 'practice of attending church'. He suggests that values have changed for him over time and through the observation of his son.

“My faith in God, my grandparents, my wife, the life I’ve lived, and even from watching how my son raises his kids I have grown from that. Being around my grandchildren has changed me too and given me new values. Some things that I thought were important when I was raising my own children, I can see now are not so important and some things that I didn’t pay attention to with my own children I can see are very important now. I remember we went to church every single Sunday which I still think is important with my own children, but I watch my son raise his kids and sometimes on a Sunday they’ll just watch a movie together as a family, they’ll just eat lunch as a family, I see them make a picnic in their back yard and play games as a family, and I never ever did that with my kids, but I wish I did” (Ufi, personal communication, October 8, 2011).

“I know that my son doesn’t go to church every Sunday and he spends a lot of time doing family things, but for me knowing what I know now, seeing what I have seen I believe that he is on the right track. There is nothing closer to heaven than family. My son is most at peace when he is with his family. He does make time for church and he loves going to church as well because family is what church is all about” (Ufi, personal communication, October 8, 2011).

Interesting to me is that through the discussions this participant is how he described his family. From the narratives participants have adapted fa’aSamoa to their home in Aotearoa and the social setting here.

“...I love my culture and I think that my culture has been an influence on us as a family and on me as a person but I don’t think especially after answering all these questions that we have a traditional Samoan family, and at the same time I think we are. I think that we took the best of fa’aSamoa and we use it here and it is still dear to us, but we have also been able to take the best of the Papalagi culture. That’s what you do isn’t it? You take the best of everything and hold on to that and leave what doesn’t work...living the way we do is the best, I love it, and we don’t pay attention to what the Papalagi value of needing to move out when you’re eighteen, you just live and be happy” (Paulo, personal communication, October 15, 2011).

Throughout my life my parents have not overtly encouraged me to be aware of my Samoan culture. It is possible that because I was born in Samoa unlike my sibling I have had an unconscious longing to know my culture.

What I know of my culture I have learned from members of my aiga potopoto. I understand the Samoan language; however my spoken Samoan is minimal. What I do know of the Samoan language I have learned from a Basic Samoan language class I took at the University of Auckland.

The culture has however been transferred implicitly via my aiga. Values that my aiga and I have identified as important are values that are important within fa'aSamoa. The importance of the aiga potopoto, respect afforded to seniors in the aiga, shared parenting and care are all traditional Samoan values that assert the importance of the wellbeing of the collective.

My parents have always regretted that my sibling and I were not taught to speak Samoan in our home as children, and have taken the opportunity as grandparents to encourage my children to speak Samoan. I often hear my parents giving instruction to my children in Samoan and watch with amusement as my children give my parents a spoon when my parents asked for a fork.

My parents however seem committed to their decision to ensure that their grandchildren have a deeper knowledge of Samoan culture than their children have. I see my children learning from them the values and the principles of fa'aSamoa from their story telling.

My mother will often tell stories about the sacrifices she made when she first became employed as a teenager, living on as little as possible so that she could save money to pay for other members of her family to migrate to Niu Sila, stories that she also told me as a child. My mother paid for her older sister, her sister's husband and their eight children to migrate to Niu Sila. Once they were in Niu Sila she also paid for them to re-establish by organising school uniforms, fees and the like.

Inherent in her story was not just the importance of sacrifice for the benefit of the aiga, but tautua (service) to the family, and the importance of seeking out the best opportunities for the aiga, so that the aiga could thrive both in Niu Sila and in Samoa.

I also considered traditional remedies and whether the use of those remedies are continuing through transference through the aiga. It was not often but I do recall as a child that my older sister was often unwell particularly during the summer. I always just thought that she suffered from 'heat stroke', albeit my unqualified diagnosis. I remember that my sister would get a fofo from my aunt with a plant that my aunt called a lau ti. My sister never spoke of the usefulness of the fofo. But when she got older and was married with children I recall her making an impromptu visit with my mother, she was feeling unwell and bought with her some lau ti in the hopes that my mother

would fofo her. After the fofo she said 'that always makes me feel better, nothing else works'.

My second child was born with what I would describe as a birthmark. However my mother noticed that the birthmark was getting bigger over time. My mum took me and my daughter to the home of a fofo, he used leaves that I cannot identify along with coconut oil and massaged the birthmark. I did not understand the purpose of the fofo, but several years later when my mum was looking at the birthmark she commented 'lucky I took you to get your fofo see it hasn't grown'.

My fifth child had a similar birthmark and without prompting from my mother I took him with me to the home of the fofo and asked the fofo to massage his birthmark. The birthmark has not grown since.

These are elements of fa'aSamoa that my children are exposed to because of strong influence and presence of my parents in our home. Their day to day interactions with my children encourage an interest in the culture, and as a retired couple their ability to share time and space with my children to nurture that interest is more available than it was for my sibling and I as children.

## **Summary**

Elements of culture are transferred through the generations. These aiga have retained some parts of fa'aSamoa that work in Aotearoa and have foregone other parts of fa'aSamoa. Some of the culture that has been retained by these families are, senior care, living in the multi-generational household, participating in fa'alavelave (albeit adapted to support life in Aotearoa), shared parenting and child care.

Participant families still participate in siva Samoa for entertainment and enjoyment. These participants used some traditional remedies but the use of these remedies was in most circumstances an 'after thought'. However, all participants that did indulge in using traditional remedies did assert that the use of those remedies was useful.

## Values & Attitudes

“E toa e le loto, a e pa le noo”. Strong in heart, but broken in the back. Of a man whose will is stronger than his body. (Anon, Samoan Proverb).

Where living in the multigenerational household was the norm there was acceptance that this living situation was a positive experience. These participants were able to relate to living in the multigenerational household as an experience that resulted in growth. However, in places where the multigenerational household is not the societal/cultural norm, participants felt that the sharing of their experiences was met with curiosity and felt somewhat negative about the experience.

One first generation participant, Ana, felt that when she talked about her living situation with other people in her experience in Aotearoa, even those who came from a similar if not the same ethnic background seemed to view her life style in a negative light.

“Polynesians, Samoan mainly as well as Palalagi react the same. The reaction of Samoans towards our living situation is very negative, and actually goes against what our culture teaches. Our culture teaches to always help each other, love each other, support each other, to always put our family first” (Ana, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

While these comments seemed incongruent with the statistics that indicate that there has been an increase in Samoans living in the extended family situation, it is interesting to note how she feels her living situation is perceived by others.

All the first generation or the grandparent participants had grown up in Samoa where living in the m/g household is the norm, and therefore not an experience that created much curiosity when they were growing up. Through the narration of her life experience it was evident that Ana felt very positively the m/g household and therefore resented the judgment imposed.

“They don’t like it, their opinion is, that we shouldn’t have to look after any children. Their view of it is that we have already raised children and now is our time to rest. Our opinion of it is that we are happy to support, also we feel that child care is very expensive, and we are happy that we are helping our family” (Ana, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

For this participant the dominant culture norms and values in Aotearoa have had some impact on the value her life experience is given. From this Ana's perspective the dominant culture's norms have changed the way that those from a similar ethnic and cultural background view her lifestyle.

The second generation participant from the same family, Ava, affirmed this with her values and what she believed the accepted norms are. Ava felt that moving into her own home with her family is the natural progression of things and that it showed that you had become independent and successful. Her goals aligned with social norms in Aotearoa rather than the social norms of her own ethnic cultural traditional values.

Thinking about it now because I never actually ever thought about it before. I always just wanted to move out of home and into my own home and I guess that was never a slight against my parents but my want to have a place to call my own. My parents were very supportive of me, they made it possible for me to do all the after work things that I wanted to do" (Ava, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

The third generation participant, Ioane, from this family also suggested through his narrative that living in the m/g household was viewed as unusual.

"I went to a pretty Palalagi school there weren't many Samoan kids there, they knew that I lived with my grandparents because my grandparents would pick me up some days from school. And my grandparents came to some trips and stuff as well. I do remember some things that now when I think about it was a bit different. Other kids seemed curious that I was living with my grandparents and both my parents. Like, you only really lived with your grandparents if your mum and dad broke up. It wasn't normal for you to live with your grandparents if your mum and dad were together. So, I knew from their reactions that it was a curious way to live" (Ioane, personal communication, October 1, 2011).

Before I got married and had my children I had never lived in a multigenerational home. My maternal grandparents died before my birth and my paternal grandparents lived in Samoa. When I got married I was still only 19 and my husband had turned 20 a few months earlier, so it would be fair to assume that we had minimal life experience and means to support ourselves. We were expecting our first child when we got married. My parents invited us to stay with them and we gratefully accepted.

I am not sure where my attitudes developed whether they were formed by listening to the stories that my parents would tell. I recall my mother talking about her experiences

with her mother while her mother was still alive in Samoa. My mum told me that her mother passed away when she was nine years old, she wasn't sure what the illness was but she remembered that her mother was always sick.

During the times when her mother was bedridden my mother said that she would sit in her room or lie in her bed with her all day long only leaving to run her mother's chores or to use the bathroom. She said she would eat with her mother and rub her feet while her mother slept. My mother spoke fondly of those memories.

My mother never said explicitly that it was my job or even my sibling's job to care for her when she got older, and I never ever saw her take care of her mother, but it is something as important to me as caring for my children.

A few years ago when my father became ill, my parents made a decision to return to Samoa hoping that the lifestyle and the weather might assist in improving my father's health. I watched my mother walk into the passenger's only part of the airport and felt like I couldn't breathe. I cried every night for a few weeks yearning for my parents. For a little while my husband thought that I was going to have a mental breakdown. I was about 25 years old at the time with a husband and two children. My parents had not been financially responsible for me for a while but in so many different kinds of ways they supported me.

My parents returned to Aotearoa for a holiday by this time I had another two children so four in total. When they returned from Samoa after my father's health had improved my parents moved in with me, that was in 2007 and they have lived with me since.

Over the years as my family has grown in numbers my parents have mooted the possibility of moving out to give my family more space. Even their broaching the subject causes tears throughout the family.

My attitude and the attitude of my children has been formed by listening to stories, by feeling loved and supported particularly when parenting and being a teenager can be difficult.

There are always difficulties even with a third generation in the home in fact that in itself can cause difficulties. There are power struggles, but we have learnt in our household how to manage those difficulties by being clear in our communication and in our roles.

## **Summary**

The attitudes of the participants within the multigenerational household had a direct effect on whether they felt positively or negatively about their experiences within that living situation. Initially Ava felt that the experience of living in a multigenerational household was negative but as she delved into her memories she recalled feeling supported at many different levels while she was living in a multigenerational household. Ava made some realisations and insights that she always believed that to be successful she needed her own space, home and independence and this view of the world coloured her experiences.

## **Conclusion**

This research contributes to existing research findings by adding more knowledge on family relationships for Samoans in Aotearoa. It emphasises changing attitudes, paradigms and values. It explores that on-going conflict in terms of the new social setting compared with the traditional Samoan social setting.

Strong connections within the aiga whether it be the aiga potopoto, as in the multigenerational household or the nuclear family are essential to the wellbeing of Samoans. The importance of connection and support of the families are paramount.

The literature, research and biographies suggest that while some people will live in the multigenerational household because of circumstance, many have chosen to live in the multigenerational household as a life style choice. There is a suggestion that low income is a factor but not necessarily the main catalyst for people living in the multigenerational household.

Samoan families and individuals as a populous have a lower income mean than the general population of Aotearoa/Niu Sila. Statistic show that Samoan households are more likely to be crowded than other ethnicities (Tongan ranking the highest). Research has shown that there is a correlation between crowding and higher likelihood in the spread of communicable diseases (Baker et al, 2000).

The notion of support was highlighted as a key benefit of the multigenerational household. Support within the multigenerational household manifests itself in many forms. Support is provided through assistance with parenting, the provision of aged care, transference of cultural and knowledge between generations.

Participants acknowledge that conflict can occur within the households due to many dynamics inclusive of “in-law’ cohabitation, and political struggle between the generations. Where roles are clearly defined and accepted conflict is addressed appropriately.

Participants acknowledged that individuals have space to pursue their own individual interests as long as this did not conflict with the interests of the collective. The success and failings of individuals within the aiga are either celebrated or commiserated as a success or failing of the collective. Resources are pooled, though there is acknowledgment of individual’s belongings.

In this aging population in Aotearoa and across the world, the m/g household is a viable family model. Through the m/g household senior family members are supported in day to day living by members of their aiga who have a deep respect and attachment to them.

The grandparent generations are accepted members of the household, who feel valued, with a specific role that ensures transference of knowledge, skills and culture.

When exploring the functions of the family Jo Cribb of the Aotearoa Families Commission identified four core functions of the family which are relevant to Aiga Samoa:

### **The nurturing, rearing, socialisation and protection of children:**

This research found that nurturing, rearing, socialisation and protection of children occurs within the multigenerational household.

Third generation participants identified with Samoan values such as, responsibility to the collective, reciprocity of support through the generations, responsibility for sibling, notions of fa’aaloalo (respect), alofa (love), and tautua (service) (Anae, M. 1998).

Socialisation is acknowledged within the aiga by the first and second generation participants who actively ensure the needs of the collective are addressed in the home, as there is awareness that outside the home the interests of the individual are at the fore.

There were clear lines of responsibility and accountability within the household such as older sibling cared for younger sibling (Mageo, J. 1991).

Children are afforded protection within the multigenerational household. In situations where there is conflict, participants indicated that there are parameters and boundaries within the m/g household that ensured the wellbeing and safeguarding of children, this aligned with traditional fa'asamoa concepts of fa'aaloalo (Anae, M 1998).

Nurturing and rearing occurs through-out the generations and intra-generationally. All third generation participants identified a personal responsibility to provide parenting and care to younger sibling. The grandparent generation also expressed a responsibility to provide support, parenting and care to the grandchildren.

**Maintaining and improving the wellbeing of family members by providing them with emotional and material support:**

Participants acknowledged the need to support members of the aiga emotionally, financially and with other resources such as knowledge, skills and people power.

Members of the aiga recognized the importance of ensuring the needs of the family are met. Family members each play an integral role in ensuring that the household functions appropriately on a day to day basis. This is inclusive of children, where attending school and completing chores were identified as their role within the family.

**The psychological anchorage of adults and children by way of affection, companionship and a sense of belonging and identity:**

Children and the adults within the household expressed both affection and attachment. This attachment was evident through-out the generations, manifesting itself through the narrative as profoundly between grandparents and grandchildren as between children and parents.

**Passing on culture, knowledge, values, attitudes, obligations and property from one generation to the next:**

The multigenerational household supports the transference of knowledge, culture, attitudes, obligations and property. This includes the transference of local nuances, attitudes and knowledge even where it may conflict with traditional fa'aSamoa attitudes and knowledge.

Individuals and collectives within the aiga are able to resolve this conundrum. However, where there is inflexibility and differing attitudes and understanding of roles this can cause conflict.

Obligations within the aiga are transferred between the generations, inclusive of obligations to the aiga potopoto. In some cases the response to obligations has been modified to reflect life within the context of Aotearoa.

All four of the core functions as defined by Jo Cribb are met within the context of the Samoan multigenerational household.

## **Recommendations**

There is limited research with regards to the Samoan population within Aotearoa, and in particular with respect to the multigenerational households both for the Samoan populous and the general population of Aotearoa.

There is a shift in attitudes, paradigms and values as a result of the social setting in Aotearoa. Further research raising the awareness and understanding of Samoan aiga, individuals, attitudes and values will assist in bringing about positive attitudes towards cultural safety. That Policy designers consider the idiosyncrasies of minority cultures where there is potential to develop capacity.

I recommend wider research into the potential benefits of supporting multigenerational households via policy and legislation to see whether it is an avenue that might create capacity within communities to provide support that might otherwise fall upon the state.

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Selina Malama Ledoux-Taua'aletoa  
Building 110, Room 2004  
Unitec Mt Albert Campus  
Auckland

20.7.2011

Dear Selina,

**Title: In what ways do multi-generational Samoan households contribute to the development of the societal and collective values about Agia/families in contemporary Aotearoa/Niu Sila?**

Your application for ethics approval has been reviewed by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and has been approved for the following period:

**Start date: 11.7.2011**

**Finish date: 11.7.2012**

Please note that:

- 1. The above dates must be referred to on the information AND consent forms given to all participants.**
- 2. You must inform UREC, in advance, of any ethically-relevant deviation in the project. This may require additional approval.**

You may now commence your research according to the protocols approved by UREC. We wish you every success with your project.

Yours sincerely,

Scott Wilson  
Deputy Chair, UREC

Cc: Helene Connor  
Cynthia Almeida

## Questionnaire

- 1** How long have you lived in New Zealand?
- 2** Who lives in your household?
- 3** Do you live in this situation by choice?
  - a** Yes
  - b** No
  - c** A bit of both
- 4** How does your partner feel about this living situation?
  - a** S/he enjoys it
  - b** S/he does not like it but knows that we don't have a choice
  - c** S/he likes it but would prefer to move into our own home.
- 5** How long have you lived in a multigenerational home?
  - a** 2-3 years
  - b** less than 5 years but more than 3years
  - c** 5 to 10 years
  - d** More than 10 years
- 6** Do you talk about your living situation with friends or other family?
  - a** Yes
  - b** No
- 7** How do you interpret their reactions?
  - a** Positive
  - b** Negative
  - c** Curious
  - d** They didn't really react
  - e** I haven't really noticed
  - f** I get mixed reactions from different friends

Comment

**8** Does the reaction differ between different cultural groups?

**a** Yes

**b** No

**c** I haven't really noticed

Comment

**9** Does your explanation of your living situation differ when talking to different audiences?

**a** Yes

**b** No

**c** I have not really noticed

**d** I don't think so

Comment

**10** What is your role in the family?

**11** What are the different roles in your family as you see them?

**12** How many bedrooms are in your home?

**13** Do you have your own bedroom?

**14** Do you speak Samoan

**a** Yes

**b** Yes but not fluently

**c** No

**d** I don't speak but I do understand.

**15** Do you consider that your family practices fa'asamoa?

**a** Yes

- b** We follow some Samoan practices but not all
  - c** No
  - d** I'm not sure
- 16** Does your family attend church together either on Saturday or Sunday?
  - a** Yes
  - b** No
  - c** Sometimes
- 17** Does your family have lunch together after church?
  - a** Yes
  - b** No
  - c** Sometimes
- 18** How important is education to your family?
  - Very important
  - Important
  - Moderately important
  - Not that important

## **Interview One**

### **Multi-generational living across the life span**

- 1 What was your early childhood like living within this context
- 2 What are your memories of being at school and sharing your family context with others?
- 3 What do you see are the roles of the teenagers in the home
- 4 What do you see are the roles of those in early adulthood in your home
- 5 What do you see is the role of adults in your home
- 6 What is the role of married couples in your home
- 7 What is the role of the middle aged people in your home
- 8 What is the role of the seniors in your home and who do you identify as the seniors
- 9 How you experienced the death of a person within your home
- 10 When there is a death in the family how is this dealt with

### **Sharing of recourses**

- 1 Are resources shared within your home
- 2 How many televisions are there
- 3 How many living areas are there
- 4 Do you have meals together
- 5 Is there cooperative instruction between the generations? For example do the young people teach the older generations how to use the internet....
- 6 Is there are shared bank account for the family
- 7 Are you able to use other people in your family's cars
- 8 Do you have your own bedroom?
- 9 Do you have your own bed?
- 10 Do you have a family garden?
- 11 Who does the gardening?
- 12 Do you siva (dance) Samoa in your home?
- 13 Who teaches you how to siva?
- 14 Is siva important in your household?

### **Multi-generational lagolago (support)**

- 1 Do you feel that your home has an environment that shows lagolago towards each other?

- 2 What are some of the central ways in which you experience lagolago within your multi-generational household?
- 3 How is lagolago reciprocated between the generations?
- 4 Is what you experience of lagolago similar to what you observe in other families who do not live in a multi-generational home?
- 5 What do your parents do to show lagolago for you?
- 6 How do you show lagolago for your parents?
- 7 What do your grandparents do to show lagolago for you?
- 8 How do you show lagolago for your grandparents?
- 9 How do you show lagolago to your sibling?
- 10 How do your sibling show lagolago towards you?

**Multigenerational notions of Samoan culture (NZ born v Samoan born) and what constitutes the aiga/family.**

- 1 Have you ever been to Samoa?
- 2 How much contact do you have with family members in Samoa
- 3 Is fa'asamoa important to you
- 4 Where do you think your values are from
- 5 What has influenced your values
- 6 What type of family traditions does your family practice? e.g. family meetings, prayer etc
- 7 How do you see your family when comparing it to other families, i.e. is your family a traditional family
- 8 Who do you think is one of the most influential people in your lives and why
- 9 Do you think that gender has any influence in the roles of your family
- 10 Do you think culture has an influence on the roles in your family

**Economic advantages/disadvantages**

- 1 Who pays the mortgage in your house?
- 2 Who pays for the shopping in your home?
- 3 Who does the shopping?
- 4 How are bills paid for in your home?
- 5 How is responsible for making sure that bills do get paid in your home?
- 6 How are duties distributed in your house?
- 7 Does your family pass on hand me downs or do you buy new

clothes?

- 8 How do you feel about getting hand me downs
- 9 Do you feel that your family struggles financially more than other families
- 10 How do you think your family could manage finances better

### **Fofo (massage) and other traditional healing practices**

- 1 What do you consider are traditional healing practices
- 2 Does your family or a family member practice Fofo
- 3 Is traditional healing offered in your home
- 4 Are traditional healing practices practiced in your home
- 5 Are traditional methods of healing passed on to younger generations in your home
- 6 What do you think of traditional healing methods
- 7 Do you use traditional healing methods

### **Space for further discussion**

Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Do you have any questions that you wanted to ask me?

## **Interview Two**

### **Multi-generational conflicts**

- 1 How is conflict dealt with in your aiga
- 2 What happens when there is conflict between the generations
- 3 Is there a set mediator in the family
- 4 Is there a common theme in regards to what causes conflict in your family
- 5 What is mum's role in the conflict
- 6 What is dad's role in the conflict
- 7 What is grandmother's/grandfather's role in the conflict
- 8 What happens when there is conflict between couples within the home
- 9 If there was conflict between couples within the home, would they have space to openly show that there was conflict between them
- 10 Do you feel free to have arguments in the home

### **Multi-generational concepts around spirituality**

- 1 What does spirituality mean to you
- 2 What do you think spirituality means to your family
- 3 Do you think that spirituality important in your home
- 4 How do you think spirituality influences what happens in your home
- 5 Do you think the older generations see spirituality differently from you
- 6 How do you think your parents see spirituality
- 7 Do you go to church
- 8 Do you link spirituality and church
- 9 Do you think that other members of your family link spirituality to church
- 10 How important is attending church for your family

### **Pregnancy and Childbirth**

- 1 What was your experience of pregnancy in terms of values or assistance received from the older generations
- 2 Are there any traditional values around pregnancy that you have noticed in your home
- 3 Who helps an expectant mother during pregnancy in your

home

- 4 Is assisting a pregnant mother a shared task
- 5 Are there any expectations in regards to women in your family when they are pregnant
- 6 Are there specific roles that the family members take up when someone in the home is pregnant
- 7 Is childbirth a shared experience in your home
- 8 Have you noticed a difference between your experience of having a child and the experience of others who do not live in the same kind of home as you

### **Shared care of children and shared parenting**

- 1 Is parenting shared in your home
- 2 Who has the main role of parenting
- 3 How is parenting shared
- 4 What are the roles of the grandparents
- 5 What are the roles of the parents
- 6 What are the roles of the children
- 7 What do you think are the advantages about sharing the parenting role
- 8 What are the disadvantages about sharing the role of parenting

### **Caring for seniors within the aiga**

- 1 What happens with seniors in your aiga
- 2 What do you notice becomes their role
- 3 What is your role as a senior in your family
- 4 How do you see yourself participating in family life
- 5 If the seniors need to go doctors etc. who takes them there
- 6 How independent are the seniors in your family
- 7 What will happen to the seniors are they become less and less independent
- 8 What do you think will happen to you as a senior as you become less and less independent
- 9 What do you notice happens with seniors in other families

### **Independence/Individualism**

- 1 How is individuality recognized in your home
- 2 Is individuality supported in your home
- 3 Do you find that you are able to get your own space for

personal time in the home

- 4 Do you and or your sibling get individual time with your parents
- 5 Do you and or your sibling get individual time with your grandparents
- 6 Do you notice if your mum and dad get time as a couple
- 7 Do you notice if your grandparents get time as a couple
- 8 Do you find that you have time with your husband/wife as a couple
- 9 Do you find that you have time to spend with the children individually
- 10 How do you make time for yourself

**Space for further discussion**

Do you have anything else you would like to add

Do you have any questions that you wanted to ask me



## **PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Research Question**

In what ways can Multi-generational Samoan Households contribute to Societal and Collective Values about Aiga/Families, in Contemporary Aotearoa/Niu Sila?

### **Aim of Research**

To create space

### **Values and benefits of the Research**

### **Method of Research**

### **How the data will be analyzed**

**Thank you**

### **Information for participants**

*My name is Selina Ledoux-Taua'aletoa. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Social Practice degree in the Department of Social Practice at Unitec New Zealand. Part of my programme involves a research thesis. My research topic looks at ways can Multi-generational Samoan Households contribute to Societal and Collective Values about Aiga/Families, in Contemporary Aotearoa/Niu Sila?*

The aim of my project is:

- Through a collective biographical research project, the research project hopes to find out whether multi-generational homes enrich the aiga and if so in what ways. For example, the care giving that occurs with the most

vulnerable aiga members, the very young and the very old. It will also consider the limitations and whether there is any stigma associated with this style of living together as a collective.

- Through the sharing of your experiences and reflecting on our discussions, I hope that we may have a better of understanding and or appreciation for your living situation.
- This research may result in informing the policy makers to invoke change to better support Samoan aiga, and possibly families of other ethnicities who have similar cultural values, e.g. Housing New Zealand, Department of Social Development

I am seeking participants to assist me with my research through three face-to-face in depth interview.

I would appreciate it if your family could meet with me initially for about one hour to talk the research. I will come to your meeting point whenever agreed upon. I will take notes for future reference. I will ensure that no feature identifies you and will not take any photos during the discussions.

If you are 18years old or below and agree to participate, your parent/guardian will be asked to sign a consent form. However, you still reserve the right to withdraw from interview even if your parent/guardian gives consent. You may wish to terminate participation without notice but I am requesting you to give me three days notice before you terminate your participation.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file and only you, I, my research assistants and my supervisors will have access to data.

If you are happy with above could you please fill in the attached consent form which I will collect.

Please contact us if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact our supervisor:

My supervisor is Helene Connor phone **09 8154321 Ext. 5010** or email [hconnor@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:hconnor@unitec.ac.nz)

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting. If you have any queries about the research, you may contact my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

My supervisor is Helene Connor, phone **09 8154321 Ext. 5010** or email [hconnor@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:hconnor@unitec.ac.nz)

**UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (1177)**

**This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (11/07/2011) to (11/07/2012). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.**



## Participant consent forms

In what ways can Multi-generational Samoan Households contribute to Societal and Collective Values about Aiga/Families, in Contemporary Aotearoa/Niu Sila?

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the principal researcher, and research assistants. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely by researcher's supervisors for a period of five years in which after it shall be destroyed.

I understand that notes of my discussion with the researcher will be taken and no photos taken of me.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

*Participant Signature:* ..... *Date:* .....

*Project Researcher:* ..... *Date:* .....

**UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (1177)**

**This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (11/07/2011) to (11/07/2012). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.**



## Consent form for unmarried 16-18 year olds

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understood the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I do not have to be part of this if I do not want to and I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researchers. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely by researcher's supervisors for a period of five years in which after it shall be destroyed.

I understand that my discussion with the researcher will be taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

*Participant Signature:* ..... *Date:* .....

*Parent/Guardian Signature*..... *Date*.....

*Project Researcher:* ..... *Date:* .....

**UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (1177)**

**This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (11/07/2011) to (11/07/2012). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.**



Selina LeDoux-Taua'aletoa  
24 Barbary Avenue  
Kelston  
Auckland

02 March 2011

Talofa Lava

As a family I thank you for agreeing to be my consultants and participants in my research project.

This project is necessary for me to complete my Masters in Social Practice with Unitec Auckland, but I also believe that it will be a rewarding experience for all the participants.

I will provide you with a very brief outline of what the requirements of this project are, and a fuller explanation will be given to you when we have our first meeting.

At our initial meeting I will meet with your whole family to provide an explanation of the project and will ask you to choose three members of your family over the age of 16. Each of these members need to be a representative of each generation in your household.

I will schedule a time with each of those co-researchers (participants) to have a conversation of what living in a multi-generational household means to them. The interview (conversation) can be at the most

convenient venue for you as a family. Each participant will be interviewed three times.

After each interview with your family I will weed out the common threads in the interviews and write up a report. I will provide your family with a copy of this report before our next interview, so that you have a chance to read over it and consider anything that you might like to add, or just general comments or thoughts that you have had since.

I will provide you with and encourage you to keep a journal so that you can record your thoughts etc so we can reflect on them.

After the third interview I will write up the report in the form of a collective biographical study that will discuss how people who live in Multi-generational households experience life in Aotearoa. I will give you a draft copy of this report for your feedback. Once you have given me your feedback I will submit my work to my academic supervisor.

I will be repeating this process with two other families, including my own.

Your family names will not be published and anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained.

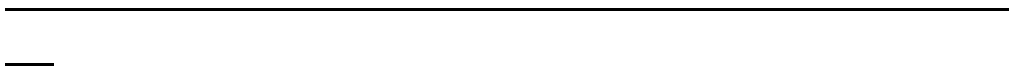
My setting this out like this may seem like a bigger commitment than you may have believed you were making initially. Please remember that you can withdraw from this project at any time by calling me on 0296501293 or 813-3797 or 926-8004 or by emailing me on tauaaletoa@yahoo.com . You do not have to explain or justify your withdrawal. It is my privilege to hear your family's story.

To turn your consideration to a commitment to participate in this project please fill in the attached consent form which I will collect.

Fa'afetai tele lava

Selina LeDoux-Taua'aletoa

(09)926-8004



CONSENT FORM

We have read the introduction letter and had the process explained to us.

We understand that:

1. We can ask questions at any time during the process.
2. We can withdraw at any time during the process.

There will be nothing in the final report that will identify our family.

Our family agree to be co-researchers to Selina LeDoux-Taua'aletoa in a study to explore Multigenerational Samoan Households in New Zealand.

.....(Signature)

..... (Date)