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Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and Implications for the Wellbeing of Sāmoan Youth in Aotearoa, New Zealand

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology
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Abstract

Family plays a fundamental role in the wellbeing of Sāmoan young people. The ways in which families are structured and organised influences the levels of wellbeing for Sāmoan young people. In New Zealand and migrant enclaves, Sāmoan families have experienced major transformations that affect family structure and organisation due to social and economic influences. These transformations can have both positive and negative effects on the wellbeing of Sāmoan families.

This thesis presents the voices of 45 Sāmoan young people attending secondary school in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. The young people shared their experiences on how various elements of their family relationships influenced their wellbeing. It uses a mixed method approach, using qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the connection between wellbeing and family from a variety of sources. The methodology, *o le tele o sulu e māua ai figota*, literally translated as “the more torches used the more shellfish found” refers to the different perspectives, methods and theoretical frameworks used in this study to gain more knowledge and understanding of the connection between wellbeing and family.

The findings from this research emphasise that there are both positive and negative connections between wellbeing and family. European theorists proposed that positive relationships are protective factors for the wellbeing of young people. This study extends this notion by stating that positive collective, balanced relationships which consist of mutual understanding, respect, trust and support in families are protective factors for Sāmoan young people. The findings from this research suggest important areas warrant further investigation and future consideration for Sāmoan people.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to members of my family who have passed on:

- My late beloved father, Mr Iliai'a Fa'alau Ese, who did not live to see the result of his hard labour as a provider.
- My late maternal grandmother, Mrs Lina Aunese, who taught me the value of family and helped me with my spiritual wellbeing.
- And my dearest oldest brother, Mr I'aovaea Fa'afiu Fa'alau, who did not live to see his children grow up and share this happy time with us.

You are forever in my heart and will be remembered always.

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**Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name!
Psalm 103:1**

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Soifua

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction and Overview of Study

My journey on this thesis was very much driven from what I learned as a Pacific researcher in the Youth 2000¹ survey conducted by the Adolescent Health Research Group (AHRG) at the University of Auckland. During the analysis of the Youth 2000 survey data, I was introduced by Sāmoan young people to some rather challenging ideas about their families. As I was trying to digest the information and develop ideas for further investigation of aspects of Sāmoan families, I remembered my late maternal grandmother's last words before I boarded my very first flight from Sāmoa to New Zealand in search of a bright future. She told me, "Fiva, ia e magakua mai lou āiga, a augoa ma lou āiga e leai sou āoga" or "Fiva, you must remember your family because without your family you are nothing". Only when I discovered a great interest in finding out how family, young people and wellbeing are connected to each other did the significance of these words become clear. My grandmother's words reminded me of how important families are to our lives, health and wellbeing.

Since most people spend much of their formative years living with families it was self-evident that families have a major impact on their lives and wellbeing. For many years, 'family' has been the focus of studies in a range of disciplines internationally. Many family theories have been developed in an effort to explain changes in family organisation and the growing diversity in family forms. Most family theories are based on European understanding, perspectives and philosophy of what 'families' entail. Understanding and comparing these research findings is complicated by the various definitions of family types used and many measures utilised to determine the connection between family and wellbeing. Despite this, important positive and negative connections between wellbeing and family have been established by these European studies.

¹ This study is the New Zealand first nationally representative youth health survey conducted in the year 2000 followed by the second survey in 2007. Publications and reports by the Youth2000 Adolescent Health Research Group are available on Youth2000 website link: www.youth2000.ac.nz

A body of research which investigated several hypotheses on the affect of changes in family structures concluded that adolescents raised by two married, biological parents (Dawson, 1991; Ganong, Coleman & Mapes, 1990; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994) were better off than those in a single parent family (McLanahan, 1983; Dornbusch, Carlsmith, Bushwall, Ritter, Leiderman, Hastorf & Gross, 1985; Fallon & Bowles, 1997) and family types (Demo & Acock, 1996; O'Connor, Dunn, Jenkins, Pickering & Rasbash, 2001).

A 1996 study by Demo and Acock is typical of this approach. This study used data from a sub-sample of 850 families in the National Survey of Families and Households in the United States. This survey was conducted in 1987 with a total sample of 13,017 families. Demo and Acock examined the impact of family structure and family relationships on the wellbeing of adolescents from four types of family; “intact first-married family units, divorced, single-parent families, stepfamilies and continuously single mothers and their children” (1996, pg 457). Three measures of wellbeing used were “socio-emotional adjustment, academic performance and global wellbeing” (pg 458). The adolescents’ socio-emotional adjustment was measured using a 10-item scale. Six items “indicate healthy adolescent adjustment: willingness to try new things, keeping busy, cheerful, obeying, getting along with others and doing responsibilities” (pg 464). Four other items reflect adjustment problems: “being depressed, losing one’s temper, being fearful, and bullying or being cruel” (pg 464). Their academic performance was measured by asking mothers what grades their child typically received. The mothers responded to the question by choosing from a nine response options question ranging from mostly A’s (coded 9) to mostly F’s (coded 1). The adolescents’ global wellbeing was measured by a single item: “all things considered, is (child’s name) life going: (1) very well, (2) fairly well, (3) not so well, or (4) not well at all” (pg 464). Demo and Acock also used six sets of explanatory variables to measure adolescents and their mothers’ relationships. The six variables were: “other-adolescent relations, mother-father relations, family resources, mother’s characteristics, adolescent’s age and gender and a control variable based on the sampling design” (pp 465). Five measures of mother-adolescent relations used: “mother-adolescent disagreement, supervision of adolescent, parental support, mother-adolescent interaction and mother’s aggression towards the adolescent” (pg 465). The findings demonstrated that adolescents from households with both first

married families have higher levels of wellbeing than those from divorced, single parent, and step families. The adolescents from divorced, single and step families were more likely to “have major disagreement with parents and had very low level of parental interaction” (pp 484).

More studies, driven by a variety of interests and approaches to families, also demonstrated that family relationships are fundamental in the health and wellbeing of children and young people. These found that these relationships can be protective and can produce a positive effect which strongly associated with a high level of positive wellbeing (Blum, Boyle & Offord, 1988; Resnick, Harris & Blum, 1993). In New Zealand, a study by Harvey and Byrd (2000) investigated aspects of family interaction in relation to young people’s familial attachments and the ways their families cope with problems. A total of 95 participants from Canterbury University completed a questionnaire containing four measures designed to identify attachment style. Three types of attachments were identified as ‘secure’ which was defined as warm loving relationships with families, ‘anxious/ambivalent’ referred to fearful relationships, and ‘avoidant’ which was defined as having minimal levels of attachment with families. They found that individuals with high levels of ‘secure’ attachment perceive themselves as having a cohesive relationship with their families and were more interactive in solving family problems. They reported that young people with high levels of ‘anxious/ ambivalent’ relationships were more likely to be involved in family conflict such as disagreements with parents or arguments with other family members. For those with avoidant relationships tend to avoid family tensions as their way of maintaining peace within the family and their wellbeing could be better than those who are directly involved in family disputes.

Studies, such as Silva and Stanton (1996), have shown that family relationships have a central role in influencing positive life experiences and choices available to young people. Some factors associated with high levels of wellbeing presented in the literature included a strong sense of connectedness to family and environment (Resnick, 2000; Witten, Penney, Fa’alau & Jensen, 2006), positive and healthy relationships between parents and adolescents (Dekovic & Buist, 2005; AHRG, 2003 & 2007), consistency and quality of care and support from family members during

infancy to adolescent stage, and ongoing involvement of both parents in the lives of adolescents (Bornstein, Davidson, Keyes & Moore, 2003; Silva and Stanton 1996).

Conversely, these family connections can also create negative effects for some families (Libbey, Ireland & Resnick, 2002). The impact of weak and negative family environments can cause behavioural problems such as distress, depression, disorder and disadvantage for young people (Pryor and Woodward, 1996; McCreanor, Watson & Denny, 2006; Fergusson & Horwood, 2001). Some of the factors reported in the literature as having negative effects on the wellbeing of young people were the lack of parental support and supervision (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Patten, Giltin, Farkas, Gilpin, Berry & Pierce, 1997), the absence of fathers in the lives of these young people and lack of parenting skills (Amato, 2005).

While the vast majority of family studies have focused on families in the United States and in Europe, Sāmoan families have not escaped attention. Many scholars have detailed Sāmoan families and family relationships and the influence of fa'a-Sāmoa² on Sāmoan families (Anae, 1998; Va'ai, 1999; Tupuola, 2004; Suaalii-Sauni, 2006; So'o, 2007). These scholars and many others (Macpherson, 1978; Schoeffel-Meleisea, 1995; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996; Macpherson & Macpherson, 1999; McCallin, Butler & Cowley, 2001; Tiatia, 2003; Samu, 2003) explored and outlined the structure and organisation of Sāmoan family in both Sāmoa and in migrant enclaves. The studies acknowledged the importance of family relationships in both Sāmoa and in the enclaves. The studies also argued that both family structure and relationships between young Sāmoans and their parents are strongly influenced by fa'a-Sāmoa values which are embedded in the Sāmoan concept of āiga³ (Alefaio, 1999; Anae, Moewaka-Barnes, McCreanor & Watson, 2002; Tiatia, 2003). These scholars also demonstrated the importance of a collective and cohesive family unit (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998; Taule'ale'ausumai, 1997) and showed that family obligations, responsibilities and contributions of family members can strengthen and maintain these family relationships and sense of connectedness (Samu, 2003; Tiatia, 2007)

² Fa'a-Sāmoa is often glossed as Sāmoan way of life and to describe Sāmoan cultural values and traditions.

³ is a generic term for kinship and family which is commonly used by Sāmoans when talking about family household and/or extended family units

Conversely, the lack of cohesion, where family members ignore their responsibilities and do not make contributions, can cause a lot of pressure which affects these important relationships and weakens this sense of connectedness. A study by Alefaio (1999) examined the impact of family structure on the ethnic identity of Sāmoan young people. A total of 154 young Sāmoan young adults between the ages of 16-29 in Auckland completed a survey developed to “measure the impact of family structure and family environment on Sāmoan young people” (1999, pg 20). Alefaio found that collectivism and cohesion in family relationships strengthened ethnic identity for Sāmoan young people in New Zealand.

Another study, Fa’alau & Jensen⁴ (2006), explored and extended these insights using quantitative and qualitative data on family relationships gathered from young Sāmoans in South Auckland. The findings suggested that these young people understood that their relationships are heavily influenced by values and practices of fa’a-Sāmoa. These young people reported having respectful, loving and caring relationships and talked about the tensions and pressures to uphold these relationships. All these young people accepted that this was normal for Sāmoan families. Fa’alau and Jensen (2006) concluded that practices and behaviour of Sāmoan young people and their families living in New Zealand reflected new ways of connecting with fa’a-Sāmoa and with each other. These transitions reflected various beliefs and attitudes about āiga, and the place of both fa’a-Sāmoa and family relationships in the lives of Sāmoan young people today.

This brief summary concludes that family is extremely pertinent to adolescents’ health and wellbeing. Studies of the relationships between wellbeing and family show that there are positive, protective elements of family relationships that contributed to high levels of wellbeing for adolescents. Conversely, there are negative, adverse elements of family relationships that are strongly connected with low levels of adolescent wellbeing. This current research sets out to connect different aspects of Sāmoan family structure and organisations are connected with wellbeing in the experience of Sāmoan youth in Aotearoa New Zealand. To get a clear understanding

⁴ Two independent studies conducted concurrently in South Auckland: Youth 2000 Survey and Youth Mental Health Promotion were combined and presented data on strengths of Sāmoan family relationships from the perspectives of some Sāmoan youth.

of Sāmoan family relationships and of their connection with adolescent wellbeing, it was important to explore these within the context of fa'a-Sāmoa and through the voice and experience of these young people.

Background to the Study

As a mature Sāmoan woman, researching the complexities of changes in attitudes and behaviour, and the environmental adaptation of Sāmoan people in New Zealand, I have developed an interest in research that impacts on the general health and wellbeing of Sāmoan young people. Through participation in the nationwide Youth 2000 Survey and related research projects, I gained an understanding, not only of survey methodology, but also of the ways in which the different backgrounds and family dynamics influenced young Pacific participants' diverse views on family issues. The structure of the Youth 2000 study, a large-scale, computer-based, English language survey, constrained some participants' understanding and interpretation of the questions, and the range of response items available for questions used in the survey further limited their options. I was somewhat concerned that the wording of the questions and limited range of options from which to choose posed challenges for young Pacific participants and indeed members of other cultural minorities.

Some questions were based on 'yes' and 'no' response options and some participants struggled with this where they felt they fell somewhere between these categories. For example, a question 'Do you talk about your problems with anyone in your family?' required students to answer 'yes' or 'no' (Adolescent Health Research Group, 2000:11). In discussion, however, participants explained that talking to family members about problems depends very much on the nature of the problem and who they talked to: therefore there were times they talked to family members and other times when they chose not to. These and many other concerns led me to the conclusion that a descriptive study, employing a more qualitative approach, would provide a more nuanced explanation of how, when, and why young Pacific people shared what problems with their families.

As an island-born Sāmoan female who was brought up in the fa'a-Sāmoa and completed higher education in New Zealand, I have a general interest in the

experience of Sāmoan people living in New Zealand. I was fortunate to have had a series of experiences which prepared me to pursue these interests. My upbringing and education made me competent both in the Sāmoan and English languages. Working in a Pacific social service agency extended my knowledge and understanding of the transformations which are occurring in relationships for Sāmoan families. Since I arrived in New Zealand in 1986, I have interacted and socialised with my young New Zealand-born nephews and nieces; associated with Sāmoan church youth and have participated in many Pacific youth forums which have given me insights into the cultural values and practices of both Sāmoan and other cultures. As a consequence, I consider myself biculturally competent and that I have an understanding of the different cultural universes in which these Sāmoan youth live their daily lives.

My participation in both mainstream and Pacific research projects with many institutions and organisations has highlighted the benefits of learning to work with and combine different research methods. The mixed method approach which combines quantitative and qualitative methods, and researchers from many social science disciplines, makes good use of the combination of the two approaches. Exploring some studies that had used mixed methods encouraged me to use the two methods in this research project. One of the advantages of combining the approaches in this study was the opportunity to use the large body of data from the Youth 2000 Study which surveyed 9,699 (AHRG, 2003) young New Zealanders and then to augment these using interviews and focus groups with both Sāmoan young people and key informants to assist with interpreting these findings.

Importance of the Topic

Having identified the main areas of focus for this research, family relationships and youth wellbeing, I realised that this study provided an opportunity to connect these issues and further my knowledge. The literature had little to say about how family relationships and wellbeing are connected for young Sāmoans. Therefore, by relating the experiences of these young people to their family dynamics, this study could discover how aspects of family organisation contribute to different levels of wellbeing. The available literature had revealed some real differences between the New Zealand-born and raised and Sāmoan-born and raised youth in respect of their

understanding of some family values; interaction with family members and participation in family activities. This exploratory study acknowledges these differences and seeks to shed some light on these levels of understanding and their influence on these young people's wellbeing.

Although this restricted sample may not allow for generalisation to Sāmoan youth in general, it is a critical group to study. This study is important because it provided the opportunity to present in more detail the voices and experiences of these Sāmoan youth. These young participants described their family relationships in their own terms and at their own pace. Afeaki's (2007) study, of young Pacific people's perceptions of their identities within the context of their families and communities and the process of adjustment, acknowledged the importance of young people's thoughts and voices being heard. Therefore, the findings of this research are significant because assumptions about positive and negative issues of family relationships for them are clarified and redressed through the voices of these young people.

Furthermore, identifying and clarifying the positive and protective factors in these relationships is appropriate for the development of strategies and policies to protect and enhance family relationships, health and wellbeing of Sāmoan young people and their families.

Gaps and Controversial Issues

In the arena of social science research, different disciplines provide insights into the connection between family and wellbeing which I found useful. However, one controversial issue that has dominated social science research internationally for years concerns the euro-centricity of perspectives on both family and wellbeing. The majority of family studies used European paradigms and models of family to investigate the connection to wellbeing within societies in Europe and North America. This tendency is more marked in some disciplines than others. The development theories in psychology recognize the importance of family in the individual's life through their interactions with others during the stages of their development. On the other hand, family sociology research recognizes the diversity role of family forms and functions which led to the development of at least eight family theories. Only

recently have more studies been conducted among non-European populations to examine the influence of different family structures on the lives and wellbeing of young people in non-European societies.

Similarly, many studies of wellbeing provided measures and theories based on the European philosophy of individualism. This was especially so in the discipline of psychology where observations and measurements focused mainly on the individual person (Beilharz & Hogan, 2002) as opposed to a collective approach to wellbeing which is held by many non-European people including the Sāmoans. Social psychology conceptualises wellbeing based on an individual's subjective assessment of their life. On the other hand, sociology conceptualises wellbeing in terms of social integration and cohesion and focuses on individuals' relationships with and contributions to their families and communities. For Sāmoans, wellbeing is based primarily on the maintenance of cohesive relationships with family and community. A comparison between these theories and perspectives produces significant variance and resemblance between these perspectives.

Although there is an increase in scientific studies focused on various aspects of families and family relationships, so far, there has been little discussion about the effect of Sāmoan family structure and organization on Sāmoan youth wellbeing. This study explores the utility of theories and ideas from various disciplines' theories and conceptual models and attempts to formulate an alternative theoretical model that better reflects Sāmoans' concepts of 'family' and 'wellbeing' and connections between them.

Focus and Aims of Research

The research question addressed in this study was whether there is a connection between the ways family are organised and structured and Sāmoan young people's levels of physical, psychological and social wellness. The main aim of this research was to identify factors in relationships between Sāmoan young people and their families that were positive (protective), neutral, or negative (destructive) for young people's general wellbeing. A number of scholars have addressed and studied these

issues over many years. Some have focused mainly on wellbeing, others have paid more attention to family and some have tried to connect the two concepts.

In exploring the literature, I found some work from various disciplines valuable and decided on an inter-disciplinary approach to the problem. I found it useful to draw on insights and models from these different disciplines rather than to confine myself to models from a single discipline. Indeed, the very nature of this research question required me to draw on different disciplinary frames of references in relation to family and wellbeing. In the same process, I became sufficiently confident to choose what is useful from each of these disciplines and studies to help me think about and explore the issues at the heart of this thesis. During the literature review, I discovered a growing amount of literature available and decided to set a time period for literature which I needed to explore and discuss further. Articles and studies from 1980 onwards were explored as part of the literature review for this research. Key earlier articles, cited in those works, were also explored. The important challenge I envisaged in this study was bringing the literature of wellbeing and family together and this became one of the essential contributions of this work.

However, the underlying goal of this work is to explore the role of family in young people's wellbeing. To capture this connection, it is essential to identify particular elements of family that are important, and which can provide the concepts to frame this thesis. It is also vitally important at this stage to identify the relationships that influence young people's levels of wellbeing. This involved distinguishing between two dimensions of Sāmoan family in New Zealand: single household or domestic units and multi-household extended family units. The young people's relationships with parents, siblings and extended families and their connection and participation in fa'a-Sāmoa were explored in details in an attempt to discover these connections.

Given the scope of this research, the literature review focused primarily on theories of wellbeing and family, and research studies from the disciplines of psychology, sociology and Sāmoan studies. Research from other disciplines was included where it was relevant to the central questions presented in this research. The literature on wellbeing explores definitions, theories and measures of wellbeing from psychology, sociology and Sāmoan perspectives. The literature on family outlines the theories of

family, models of family structure and organization identified in these three disciplines. The literature review for this study identified many family types but I decided to concentrate on two of these, single household units and extended family units, throughout this thesis. The ‘household family unit’ refers to family living in the same home and ‘extended family unit’ refers to members of multiple related households which belong to an extended kin group.

In light of the literature reviewed, the following propositions were formulated to frame this study.

- Family organisation influences young people’s levels of wellbeing in both positive and negative ways.
- Europeans conceptualise ‘wellbeing’ and ‘family’ and the links between them from a eurocentric perspective.
- Do European models of ‘wellbeing’ and ‘family’ and the links between them have any relevance in understanding the wellbeing of Sāmoan youth?
- Do Sāmoan studies reveal similar connections between wellbeing and family or are they different and, if so, in what ways?

Thesis Structure

This thesis has four main sections; the first section includes Chapters one to four and provides the background to the study. Chapter one outlines the aims and the importance of this research the limitations of this study, and provides an overview of its structure.

Chapter two focuses on definitions and models of wellbeing from the disciplines of social psychology, sociology and Sāmoan studies. It outlines the theories and measures used to examine different aspects of wellbeing and explore the ways Sāmoans have conceptualised wellbeing.

Chapter three focuses on models of family and family organization from psychology and sociology and Sāmoan research. It outlines and compares theories of family structure, models of family organization and reports and various relevant elements of

family identified by these disciplines. This chapter outlines and explores these theories and describes different elements and dynamics of family organization. Four models of family organization are identified, and discussed these in more detail this chapter. The review of Sāmoan studies in this chapter focuses on how Sāmoan families are theorized and organized. The literature outlines various accounts of the traditional structure and organization of Sāmoan family at both household family units and extended family unit levels. It also reports on the transformation of this traditional Sāmoan family unit documented by many Sāmoan scholars today.

Chapter four outlines the relationship between wellbeing and family. Sociologists and psychologists have demonstrated links between wellbeing and family. The linkages identified in this research framed this current study. The chapter reports research that directly links aspects of family structure, family relationships, family organization and cultural knowledge with wellbeing. The review of the Sāmoan studies revealed a clear contrast between the focus on the individual and household structure in non-Sāmoan studies of family and wellbeing, and the collectivist approach in studies of Sāmoan family organization and wellbeing.

The second section of the thesis comprises one chapter which describes the research design and methods utilised in this study, and explains the rationale for use of a mixed method approach. The Sāmoan proverb, ‘O le tele o sulu e māua ai figota’ literally translated as ‘the more torches used the better the catch of shellfish’ is used as a justification for the mixed methods approach to the issue. A mixed method approach allows this study to use a combination of perspectives: the cultural practices from both social science and Pacific research paradigms to achieve gains for this research which would not have been available for one or the other alone.

The third section of the thesis comprises chapters six, seven, eight, nine and ten reports the main findings of this present study. It presents central themes from five separate sources of data: the Youth 2000 survey, and from individual interviews, focus groups, a wellbeing survey and key informant interviews conducted as part of this study. Chapter six presents this study’s findings of on the link between wellbeing and family structure in Sāmoan families. It outlines how Sāmoan youth define family based on their experience and observations. While the literature identified several

types of the family, most Sāmoan participants made clear distinctions between household units and extended family units. The participants identified various elements of both household units and extended family units which highly influenced their wellbeing and these will be reported in this chapter.

Chapter seven presents this study's findings on the link between wellbeing and family relationships in Sāmoan families. The literature review argues that loving and caring relationship between parents and youth strongly influenced a high level of wellbeing. This chapter focuses on three main types of family relationships which were connected with wellbeing.

Chapter eight presents findings of this research on the link between wellbeing and elements of family organization in Sāmoan families. This chapter reports on how these elements of family organization in households and extended family units influence the lives and wellbeing of these Sāmoan youth. It focuses on five main dimensions of family organizations: patterns of family activity, the level of family encouragement for young adults, family concern for and expectations of young adults and their involvement process of making decisions. The data made a clear distinction between the interaction within household units and extended family units in young members' wellbeing.

Chapter nine presents findings on the link between wellbeing and cultural knowledge in Sāmoan families. It focuses on the linkage between wellbeing and knowledge of Sāmoan language, understanding of fa'a-matai⁵ knowledge and cultural values and levels of participation in and involvement with fa'a-Sāmoa. Participants have different levels of experience with regards to their cultural knowledge and different views on its role in their lives. This chapter discusses these differences of experience and describes how some young people utilize opportunities to learn more about their culture and improve their level of knowledge. The high level of experience correlates with highly confident young people with positive attitudes towards fa'a-Sāmoa.

⁵ Fa'a-matai is a generic term used by Samoans to refer to aspects of their chiefly system.

Chapter ten presents the discussion and conclusion of this study. The discussion is divided into three main parts. The first part of this chapter presents a general statement from the findings of this research and summarizes positive and negative linkages between wellbeing and family for Sāmoan youth. It presents a discussion of the contribution this thesis makes to knowledge of the relationship between wellbeing, family and Sāmoan youth. The second part of the discussion focuses on the implications of the findings of this research by determining its cultural relevance to Sāmoan families and Sāmoan communities. The final section of this discussion presents some recommendations of how this research could contribute to policy guidelines relating to Sāmoan youth and their families. The thesis concludes that there is growing diversity in both Sāmoan youth and family organization and that ‘one size will not fit all’ and summarizes the evidence to support this.

Summary

This section introduces the structure of the thesis with an outline of why this thesis is important. The gaps and limitations identified in the existing literature reveal the need to consider and address these issues in research projects. Theories and models of linkages between family organization and wellbeing from studies based on European philosophies and paradigms and conducted in European societies have identified positive and negative connections between them. They raise the question of whether the same linkages exist in non-European societies which have different dominant family forms and conceptions of wellbeing. This chapter outlines how this study sets out to explore the perspectives of Sāmoan youth to determine whether their experiences reveal similar connections between family organization and levels of wellbeing. The review of Sāmoan studies indicates that family organisation influences young people’s levels of wellbeing in both positive and negative ways.

Chapter Two: Theories of Wellbeing

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on 'wellbeing'. The review is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the literature, but rather to provide some clarity on the different emphases on the conceptualisation of wellbeing in the disciplines of psychology and sociology and to compare these with the Sāmoan conceptualisation of wellbeing. It begins with a discussion of how the concept of wellbeing has been defined and conceptualised by these disciplines. The review of the social science literature on wellbeing indicated that wellbeing was treated as a dependent variable and was commonly related to various aspects of family structure and organisation. Some (Christopher, 1999) scholars acknowledged that the descriptions, theories and models of wellbeing in the literature of European and North American social sciences are built upon European values of individualism which, if used to measure wellbeing of other cultural groups, may produce serious misinterpretation. To gain an understanding of how other cultural groups conceptualise wellbeing, it is important to study their cultural beliefs about life, and specifically their views of relationships between self and society. The Sāmoan conceptualisation of wellbeing, for instance, is based on beliefs about life and health within a collectivity and can only be understood within its societal context.

Defining Wellbeing

The definition of 'wellbeing' varies widely and for most, if not all, societies wellbeing reflects culturally bound ideas and beliefs about health and life in general. It is a complex and difficult construct to define and measure (Pollard & Lee, 2003). The concept is often used interchangeably with health and can mean mental health and feeling good. It can also mean being well looked after and well adjusted, or having a good life and standard of living (Robbins, 2008). There are working definitions of 'wellbeing' available in some disciplines combining both aspects of subjective and

objective wellbeing. For example, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) at the University of Bath, United Kingdom defined wellbeing as:

‘a stage of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one’s goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life.’ (2004, pg 20)

This definition is very much driven by research on poverty in developing countries emphasising the material, relational and affective/cognitive element of wellbeing (ESRC, 2004). Therefore, wellbeing in this context highlights “the connection between personal choices and the question of how we are to live together in society” (2004, pg 21). On the other hand the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined wellbeing as not merely the absence of disease but defined as a “state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing” (Larson 1996, pg181). This definition incorporated aspects of physical, social and mental health which demonstrates the connection between these elements in a state of wellness. However, important elements missing from this definition are the aspects of culture, psychosocial and economic forces that are considered crucial in determining the wellbeing of individuals and societies according to Rogers, Stenner, Gleeson and Rogers (1995). In fact, these scholars extended the WHO definition by including the missing elements and proposed this general definition:

‘Health is a state of being with physical, cultural, psychosocial, economic and spiritual attributes not simply the absence of illness.’ (1995, pg 4)

A strategy formulated by the United Kingdom government, called “Every Child Matters: Change for Children” (2003), adopted the word wellbeing as one key concept and outlined five main indices of wellbeing for children and young people. These outcomes included recognising and achieving full potential without any disadvantages, being healthy and staying safe, enjoying life and making a positive contribution to the community. This definition of wellbeing appears to go beyond some definition of wellbeing such as the WHO definition by giving a particular meaning to social wellbeing and identifying indices which can be used to measure it.

Similarly in New Zealand, the Ministry of Social Development developed a framework of 41 indicators of social wellbeing for children and young people (Ministry of Social Development, 2004). In the Social Report (2005) by the Ministry of Social Development the definition of wellbeing is: “it means those aspects of life that society collectively agrees are important for a person’s happiness, quality of life and welfare” (2005, pg 6). This definition strongly emphasises the individual’s wellbeing and welfare. The Ministry of Social Development’s framework of 41 wellbeing indicators prioritised issues documented in the Agenda for Children Strategy (2002), and Sustainable Development for New Zealand Programme of Action (2003) that needed to be addressed at policy level.

An extensive review of government’s statistical and health reports and consultation with government and non-government organisations was carried out to identify ten key outcome domains. Each domain represents key dimensions of social wellbeing for children and young people in New Zealand. The 10 selected outcome domains were: safety, health, care and support, civil rights, economic security, education, culture and identity, social connectedness, justice and environment. These domains each have a list of indicators considered to be key issues in the life outcome of children and young people that warrant further research and policy response.

The indicators for the health domains focused on “infant mortality, prevalence of obesity and smoking, low birth weight, youth suicide rate and economic security prioritised low incomes and low living standards, youth unemployment rate and earnings from wages and salaried jobs” (2004, pg 26). The safety domain prioritised indicators such as intimidation at school, youth criminals, injuries and mortality rate and youth perception of safety and youth road casualties. The indicators for the education domain included school truancy rate, reading and mathematical literacy and school leavers with no qualifications. Both civil rights and justice domains prioritised young peoples voting eligibility and police apprehensions and cases in the youth court. The social connectedness domain focuses on young people’s participation in sport and active leisure and access to the internet in the homes.

This current study acknowledges all the domains identified above as important however, the three domains: the cultural identity, care and support and the

environment, prioritised indicators which have some relevance to this current study. The care and support domain emphasised the importance of positive relationships with parents and the absence of child abuse and neglect. The Ministry of Social Development reviewed data from the Adolescent Health Research Group survey (2003) and they concluded that children and young people with strong and positive relationships with their parents are better able to cope with life challenges they face particularly in making decisions for themselves.

The culture and identity domain has one indicator and it was in relation to young Maori and the importance of te reo Maori. The Ministry of Social Development reported that cultural identity factors such as language “provides a common ground for sharing values and aspirations, which contributes to young people’s development of security, confidence, optimism and determinations to pursue their chosen goals” (2006, pg 110). The one indicator for the environment domain was household crowding. According to this framework, young people who have a place of their own such as having a room and space in their homes for time out and doing homework, were more likely to have positive feelings of personal security and wellbeing. These mainstream indicators may be problematic if used to measure the health and wellbeing of Pacific children due to many factors especially because they are more likely to live in households with a low standard of living. Furthermore, Pacific people are more likely to have high rates of unemployment which tend to restrict their ability to obtain quality housing and access to health care (Milne& Kearns, 1999).

Therefore, these indicators will be difficult to use to measure the wellbeing of Sāmoan young people because they are being described and defined for political and policy purposes at mainstream level. However, these could be useful as a starting point if the domain outcomes and indicators are being decided and defined by Sāmoan people based on their cultural beliefs, life experience and lifestyles. The last three selected domains emphasised the collective nature of relationships by prioritising the importance of young people’s positive connections and relationships to parents, the importance of their culture and identity and their connection to their physical environment. In the Ministry of Social Development’s Social Report (2004), social connectedness is used to define the relationships people have with others. This report also argued that positive relationships people have with their families and community

provide them with a sense of belonging which allow them to contribute towards their families and communities.

‘Social connectedness is integral to wellbeing. People are defined by their social roles, whether as partners, parents, children, friends, caregivers, teammates, staff or employers, or myriad other roles. Relationships give people support, happiness, contentment and a sense they belong and have a role to play in society’. (MSD, 2004, pg 15)

Others have attempted to define wellbeing and connectedness based on adolescents’ views of their wellbeing. For example, Call, Riedel, Hein, McLoyd, Petersen and Kipke argued that: “adolescents’ wellbeing is determined by adolescents’ interactions with their environments, with the people and settings in their daily lives” (2002, pg 70). This description of wellbeing by Call et al. is similar to Whitlock’s definition of connectedness for young people.

‘...a term increasingly used to describe a healthy, protective relationship between youth and the environments in which they grow up. Connectedness differs from connections with individual adults because it implies a sense of place, respect, and belonging that comes from feeling you and others like you are valued members of a school and/or community’. (2004, pg 9)

The definitions of wellbeing, some of the indicators of social wellbeing by the Ministry of Social Development and the definitions of social connectedness discussed above highlighted the importance of one’s positive connections and relationships with others and their environment to their wellbeing. What these definitions shared in common was the fact that one’s wellbeing is reflected in stable, healthy and secure relationships within the families and their positive connectedness to their social groups and environment. It also depicted that one is ‘well’ and ‘happy’ when they feel included in all aspects of their family, community and environment. The generic definitions of social connectedness discussed above could include Sāmoan views of social balance and interconnectedness in their social relationships within the āiga⁶ their social roles and connections within their village and church as social groups which they belong. There are no specific measures developed to measure the wellbeing of family members based on their collective perspectives about health and

⁶ Samoan term for family

wellbeing. This current study is significant as it will introduce some important domains to measure the wellbeing of Sāmoan young people.

Paradigms of Wellbeing in Psychology

Definitions and measures of 'wellbeing' from within mainstream psychology focus on the individual and specifically the individual's subjective evaluation of life with a focus on feelings. This interest in wellbeing is relatively new in the discipline.

The subjective wellbeing of an individual is considered as one important aspect of psychological wellbeing (Diener, 2004) and most investigations have focused on why people experience their lives in positive ways. This includes individuals' cognitive judgements about their life satisfaction and emotional reactions to their environment and circumstances that make them feel happy. Psychologists were mainly concerned with negative emotional feelings such as depression and anxiety until the 1950s when they became interested in individuals' positive emotions and feelings of wellbeing (van Hoorn, 2007). In 1969, Bradburn made a clear distinction between positive and negative affect and adopted 'happiness' as the balance between the two concepts. Bradburn argued that individuals could enhance their quality of life by trying to diminish negative affect and increase positive affect. Bradburn's early work on psychological wellbeing was heavily criticised for its "unrealised empirical translation" (Ryff, 1989, pg 1077). However, one important argument Bradburn proposed, that has been widely supported and expanded by the scholars in psychology today, was that "social relationships were one of the strongest correlates of positive emotions" (Diener, 2004, pg 6) and the lack of social support and close social relationships as pointed out by Baumeister and Leary (1995), can have negative effect on one's wellbeing.

Ryff's work on psychological wellbeing rarely used the term happiness but focused on social functioning and proposed that an important component of mental health included the: "beliefs that give one the feeling that there is purpose in and meaning to life" (1989, pg 1071). Ryff also argued from a psychological perspective that individuals who considered themselves healthier were likely to have meaningful and coherent social lives. Ryff defined wellbeing operationally as "self-acceptance,

autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relations with others and personal growth” (1989, pg 1070). The definition for self acceptance by Ryff is based on one’s positive attitude towards self by accepting both the good and bad experiences of life. It was also stated that those who feel good about themselves tend to accept both good and bad experiences in their lives and were more likely to demonstrate good mental health (Ryff, 1989).

Positive relations with others referred to one’s empathy and affection towards others which included positive reciprocity in their relationships. Autonomy is described as self-determination and ability of a person to resist social pressure and environmental mastery is considered as having the capability to make good use of the opportunities available. The purpose in life scale included one’s sense of direction about life and personal growth is defined as self growth and development including one’s ability to welcome new opportunities in their lives. In fact, all six indices are positive clusters of wellbeing which emphasised one’s ability and capacity to live a fulfilling life by taking advantages of the opportunities available to grow and have a positive view of life in general.

Ryff surveyed a sample of 321 men and women from different age groups by using these six indices of wellbeing. Ryff operationalized the six indices of wellbeing and compared it to prior indexes of wellbeing from previous research such as affect balance, life satisfaction, self-esteem, locus of control and depression (Ryff, 1989). A total of 32 question items covering both positive and negative feelings were administered to 321 participants which they rated themselves on each item by choosing from a 6 point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The study found that some of the six indices clearly indicated a link with previous indexes of wellbeing such as: affect balance, life satisfaction, self-esteem, morale, locus of control, and depressions (1989, pg 1071). For example, self-acceptance and environmental mastery were considered as closely linked to measures of life satisfaction, affect balance, self-esteem and morale. There was no clear link identified between positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life and personal growth and previous indexes of wellbeing.

While there are different emphases in theoretical ideas about wellbeing across the social sciences, theories from psychology have been fundamental, and dominant, in understanding this concept. Theories of wellbeing can be divided into two main groups; one is those theories that embrace a holistic and socially oriented approach and one is those that focus mainly on the individual's subjective evaluation of their lives. A review of the literature reveals that subjective wellbeing is now the focus of intense research in psychology (Diener & Diener, 2009). In recent years, the study of subjective wellbeing has given rise to the wide-spread movement of positive psychology. Fischer (2009, pg 5) argued that "subjective wellbeing is a new social indicator and it is another expression for the perceived quality of life one leads and the positive emotions one experiences". Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) introduced two perspectives which became the main activities of positive psychology. The hedonic perspective focused on studies that evaluate one's emotions and feelings (Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz, 1999), and the eudaimonic perspective focused mainly on the analysis of individual life satisfaction (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). There is substantial literature on subjective wellbeing with detailed explanation on ideas and methods on how it was theorised and measured and some of these works are presented below.

The subjective wellbeing as a social indicator has been theorised in various ways. For example, Frederick and Loewenstein's (1999) theoretical idea of subjective wellbeing is adaptation. They argued that people tend to adapt to both good and bad events in their lives and adapting to these conditions and circumstances no longer influenced their subjective wellbeing. Another theoretical idea on subjective wellbeing was the importance of goals and values (Diener & Diener, 2000). The argument in this idea emphasised the fact that different people would have different goals and desires in life and this would determine what makes them happy. Oishi, Diener, Suh, and Lucas (1999) agreed by arguing that what made people happy depended on their values in life. For example, they found that students with a high expectation to get good grades and who highly valued achievement were extrapolative of their satisfaction compared to those students who considered family harmony as most important to their life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 2000). Another theoretical idea introduced is social comparison between two groups of people (Veenhoven, 2006). That is, those who considered themselves as better off than those around them were considered as happy

and would be unhappy if they felt that they were worse off than others around them. Diener and Fujita (1997) argued against this idea by stating that being around those who were either worse off or better off would not necessarily have any impact on whether others feel good or bad about themselves.

One other theoretical idea of subjective wellbeing within the field of social psychology, and a key interest for this study, is understanding the cultural dimensions that moderate the variables that influence subjective wellbeing for other societies (Diener & Diener, 2000). This idea acknowledged the contrast between individualistic and collectivistic cultures where people are embedded in social groups and organisations which defined their existence and who they really are (Oishi & Diener, 2000). This idea also recognised the fact that those from individualistic cultures were more likely to evaluate their life by judging their happiness and life satisfaction based on their own benefits and feelings. However, those from collectivistic cultures were more likely to consider the wellbeing of the whole family or groups when deciding whether they were happy and satisfied with their lives. In fact, indicators for measuring collective wellbeing will have to reflect what is culturally normative for these groups as aspects of their collective wellbeing. The review of the literature generally reveals that many scholars acknowledge the importance of measuring wellbeing of other ethnic groups based on their culturally explicit and collective approach about health and wellbeing. However, most research used existent mainstream measures (Black, Dubowitz & Starr, 1999) while others (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine & Broadnax, 1994) slightly modified the wording of questions of other measures to assess the wellbeing specifically with regards to participants' race. Therefore, using these mainstream and modified measures to assess aspects of wellbeing for these groups could produce results that are not culturally and collectively appropriate but rather based on normative individualistic desires.

Measuring Subjective Wellbeing

Many researchers conducted studies to investigate different levels of wellbeing among various groups. In the literature most studies often report measuring wellbeing but in fact most only assess a single domain or indicator of wellbeing (Pollard & Lee, 2003). Different measures were also developed to test the level of happiness and life

satisfaction of different groups of people. There are numerous studies in psychology investigating various elements of subjective wellbeing. However, the main works that I wish to summarise to get some clarity of how subjective wellbeing was measured are those from Ryff (1989) and Diener (1994; 2009). According to Diener (2009) subjective wellbeing includes both negative and positive indices of wellbeing because both aspects are embedded within the experiences of the individual. Diener (2009) also argued that the relationship between the two indices is not clearly understood in the arena of psychology. Subjective wellbeing measures included several elements of an individual's global assessment of all aspects of their lives.

An increasing number of scales and instruments have been developed to assess how life is going for individual participants. These scales have been modified and refined throughout the years in various social science disciplines. Many psychologists have attempted to theorize about and define positive psychological functioning of an individual person (see Ryff, 1989; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992) which reflect the assumptions on what wellbeing is. The main method for measuring subjective wellbeing is through self-report surveys in which the respondent reports on his/her life satisfaction, the frequency and occurrence of positive or pleasant emotions and unpleasant feelings (Diener, 1997). This study acknowledges the existence of other scales in the discipline of psychology but there are three well known scales of wellbeing commonly used to determine one's quality of life and level of satisfaction. These are the Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), the Purpose in Life Scale (Ryff 1989; Keyes, 1998) and Bradburn's Affect Balance Scale (Harding, 1982; Pollard & Lee, 2003). These measures have been used widely by researchers in psychology to determine the level of subjective wellbeing for their studied groups. Below is a brief snapshot as to what these scales entail.

Satisfaction with Life Scale

The Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener, et al. 1985) was designed to measure subjective life satisfaction by measuring individual's own judgement of his or her quality of life (Pavot & Diener, 2009). It is a five item instrument designed to measure an individual's judgements about his/her life and how satisfied they were with their lives (Pavot, Diener, Colvin & Sandvik, 1991). The instrument included questions with

regards to an ideal life, conditions about life, satisfaction and whether one has everything they require or want in life. The advantage of such measure is that it can be easily done either on paper or by telephone and it can be used by focusing on any activities in one's life at any point in time.

Purpose in Life Scale

The Purpose in Life scale was designed to measure an individual's experience of meaning and purpose in life (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). The work of Victor Frankl in the 1960's proposed that life has meaning under any conditions but this was later reviewed by many psychologists (Ryff, 1989; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). However the most recent version of the Purpose in Life scale is the one by Ryff and colleagues (Ryff, 1989; Keyes, 1998). Ryff tested this model of psychological wellbeing and suggested that one critical component of mental health includes the beliefs that give one the feeling that there is a purpose in and meaning to life. As discussed earlier in this chapter the scale includes six dimensions of wellness and one which includes purpose in life. This scale was derived from theories about positive psychological health and lifespan development. In her own work, Ryff made a distinction between moods and feelings and factors such as purpose in life, personal growth and development and good relationships with others.

Affect Balance Scale

This scale was developed based on Bradburn's notion that psychological wellbeing is very much depending on the absence of negative mental affect (Harding, 1982). Being lonely, restless, moody and worrying is considered as negative mental affect and being excited and happy as positive affect. In this scale, Bradburn (1969) pointed out that the two dimensions of wellbeing were independent of each other (Harding, 1982) and operationalizes the word 'happiness' as the balance between positive and negative affect. The scale has a ten item measure with five items focused on positive aspects of wellbeing and five focusing on negative aspects of wellbeing. This ten item scale was widely used to determine how individuals felt at any given time period. In fact, Bradburn (1969) argued that an individual with high levels of positive mental affect over negative were more likely to be positively related to greater happiness and satisfaction with life than those with excess levels of negative mental affect.

Paradigms of Wellbeing in Sociology

Sociology differs from psychology in the description of wellbeing. The review of sociology literature reveals that wellbeing is a “social construct and can be redefined, refined and reinterpreted at any place and time” (Manderson & Nile, 2005, pg 4). Humans are regarded as social beings and sociologists contested that as human social beings we behave and do things in our lives in the company of other people and the social settings we live in (Jones, 2003, Veenhoven, 2006). Therefore, sociologists’ conceptualisation of wellbeing is based on the interaction between human beings and their surroundings where human behaviour and action are influenced by social systems. Manderson and Nile (2005, pg 4) described wellbeing as more than physical and mental health and argued that “wellbeing incorporates a sense of satisfaction, contentment, personal fulfilment and existential calm, much more so than health”. The word ‘happiness’ is one key concept used by the psychology discipline to conceptualise wellbeing. Sociology on the other hand focuses primarily on the process of the development of relationships between people and society. In fact, the word happiness is barely mentioned in sociology textbooks and published articles (Veenhoven, 2006). Veenhoven (2006, pg 3) argued that sociologists view happiness as “a cognitive construct shaped by collective notions of the good life and as the result of comparisons, social comparison in particular”.

A review of the sociology social sciences textbooks and journal articles shows that the word ‘wellbeing’ is used in connection with various social concepts. For example, the work by Nolan and Lensky (2004) introduced the macro-sociology and happiness is discussed in the context of social progress. Nolan and Lensky (2009) examined the affect of technological advances on the quality of human life and whether this technological progress has brought happiness to human life. The authors considered happiness as one possible measure of progress and they argued that happiness is very much influenced by the quality of interpersonal relationships. Nolan and Lensky (2004) further argued that technological progress is relevant to happiness by proposing that the increased life span recently has contributed to human happiness today. They also discussed the contribution of health to happiness by stating that the

improvements of sanitation and medicine have significantly improved the physical wellbeing of members in many societies.

Ward and Meyer (2009) used social quality theory in connection to wellbeing. Ward and Meyer considered wellbeing and quality of life as synonyms, and argued that in order to research and promote wellbeing in society, social quality theories should be used. The main focus of their work was addressing the social determinants of wellbeing and social quality. This social quality theory presents a multi-level approach and social science research continues to discuss and report on the ongoing links between individuals and systems. Ward and Meyer (2009) referred to the definition of social quality by acknowledging Beck below:

‘the extents to which people are able to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of their communities under conditions which enhance their wellbeing and individual potential’. (Beck et al., 2001 as cited in Ward & Meyer 2009 pg 340)

According to Ward and Meyer (2009, pg 340) “theory of social quality mainly deals with the in-built relationships that exist between the social factors and related systems that impact on wellbeing”. Through examining these relationships Ward and Meyer argued that trust is vitally important to one’s wellbeing and social quality. Therefore, trust underpins a number of social systems that tend to influence “the development and maintenance of social quality” (p 340). In the discipline of sociology, public health and political science there is a substantial body of the literature on trust (Mollering, 2001; Ward & Coates, 2006) which suggests that trust is important in maintaining and sustaining the social quality of people’s lives. That is the ability to develop and maintain social quality or wellbeing of the society is based on the level of trust between individuals and these social systems. Ward and Meyer (2009, pg 352) discussed the current social quality theory as having four main domains and these are: socioeconomic security, social cohesion, social inclusion, and social empowerment. They argued that in this current theory of social quality, trust is considered as located within the domain of social cohesion and it was not seen as important to the development of the other three domains. After extensive research work in this area, Ward and Meyer counter-argued that trust is in fact embedded in each of the four domains above. Therefore, all four domains are interrelated; their descriptions

emphasised the importance of access to resources, sharing values and norms, feeling inclusive as part of the society at all levels and that personal capabilities are enhanced and empowered by their social relationships with others within the structure of the society.

Veenhoven (2009) used quality of life in relation to wellbeing. Veenhoven (1999) argued that subjective wellbeing is rarely discussed in sociology research because sociologists tend to be more concerned with what people do rather than how they feel. However, it was argued that the idea of subjective wellbeing is not completely absent from sociology today due to increased interests in variables such as job and marital satisfaction and life satisfaction with regards to social gerontology. Veenhoven (2000) analysed notions of quality of life and identified four different kinds of individual wellbeing as presented below.

Table 1: Four kinds of Individual Wellbeing

	External	Internal
Chances	Liveability of environment	Life ability of the person
Outcomes	Utility of life	Long and happy life

Extracted from Veenhoven, 2009, pg 3

The four aspects of wellbeing outlined here by Veenhoven are focus on one’s life in terms of living a quality life with regards to good lifestyles, opportunity to improve life, capability to live a great life and the chance to live a long healthy and happy life. According to Veenhoven, the liveability of environment signifies: “the meaning of good living conditions and the life ability of the person denotes inner life chances such as having the ability to cope with challenges and problems affecting lives” (2009, pg 3). The utility of life, also known as meaning of life signifies that a good life must be better and presume higher values and expectations and the long and happy life is also known as the continuation of good life. A good life and feeling great about life are considered as embodying both subjective and objective wellbeing. Veenhoven also stated that for individuals “internal outcomes of life manifest not only in how long one lives but also how happy they are with their lives” (2009, pg 5).

Keyes (1998, pg 122) social wellbeing scale for measuring the nature of social wellness proposed five social challenges and these are: social acceptance, social integration, social contribution, social actualisation and social coherence. The descriptions of these dimensions of social wellbeing relates to one's overall evaluations of themselves through their interactions with others and their roles and functions in the society they live in. The theoretical stance that underpins sociology research on wellbeing is based on one's "appraisal of one's circumstances and functioning in the society" (Keyes, 1998, pg 122). Keyes described social integration as an evaluation of one's relationships to the community and society where a sense of belonging in that society and community is important. This sociological concept has been widely used in the literature to explain issues such as mental illness, mortality and suicide. The work of Durkheim (cited in Berkham, Glass, Brissette & Seeman, 2000) on suicide, pointed to the causes of suicide as 'the erosion of the society's capacity for integration' (Berkham et al. 2000, pg 844) and also considered the parent-child relationship as a source of social integration (Umberson, 1987).

Social acceptance referred to people feeling good about themselves and having high levels of trust towards others in society (Keyes, 1998). Social contribution is based on one's social value considered as their contribution of efficacy and responsibilities towards the society whereas social actualisation is described as the potential of society with regards to social growth and social development. The social coherence dimension refers to people's perception and awareness of the world they live in and the ability for them to make sense of their surroundings. Keyes (1998) concluded that humans are embedded in social structures and communities therefore their interaction with others and society as a whole continues to define their levels of wellbeing in various ways. In fact, all five dimensions emphasised the fact that having a strong sense of belonging in society gives people good feelings about themselves and they tend to have high levels of trust towards others. Furthermore, they become valued members of the society where each has a responsibility that contributes towards the growth and development of the society. Thus, as individuals they have the ability to grow and adapt well to society.

Measuring Wellbeing

Veenhoven (2009) argued that wellbeing is commonly measured using indexes that involve indicators of both objective and subjective wellbeing and/or quality of life. The objective indicators observe environmental conditions such as income, employment and satisfaction in marital relationships are often used by sociologists to determine wellbeing. Furthermore, the subjective indicators focus on feelings by measuring feelings of satisfaction, sadness and happiness. These indicators are being devised, modified and used by scholars throughout social science literature. In sociology the quality of life scale is used widely to determine the level of satisfaction people have with aspects of their social lives and to determine one's objective wellbeing. The current quality of life and wellbeing are sometimes used interchangeably (Schuessler & Fisher, 1985). Diener and Suh (1997) responded to the need for a conceptual framework for selected quality of life measures by developing an index combining economic, social and subjective indicators. By using the United Nations Social Statistics and Indicators Reports and World Bank Development Reports, Diener and his colleague developed the 'Basic Quality of Life Index' and the 'Advanced Quality of Life Index'. This is considered as a global index for measuring the quality of life of nations.

Sāmoan Models of Wellbeing

The following poem by Tui Atua Tupua Efi Tamasese, the current Head of State for Sāmoa, (Tamasese, Peteru & Waldegrave, 2005) highlighted the importance of the role and obligation of an individual family member towards the wellbeing of the āiga as a collective group. It also provides an idea of how wellbeing is defined and viewed by Sāmoan people based on their Sāmoan culture.

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, my nation.
I belong to my family and my family belongs to me.
I belong to a 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 belonging.

(Tamasese, Peteru & Waldegrave, 2005)

The Sāmoan definition of wellbeing focuses on a collective approach which embraces a holistic perspective about culture, health and life around family, village, church, society and communities. Macpherson & Macpherson (1990) explored the views of Sāmoan people about illness and health in their work on 'Sāmoan: Medical Belief and Practice'. They argued that the Sāmoan conception of health and wellbeing are influenced by their relationships with their natural, social and spiritual worlds. The Sāmoan view of health and wellbeing reflect a broader and holistic view which emphasised the interconnectedness and balance between their relationships with these worlds. Health and wellbeing for Sāmoan are broadly defined as including physical, mental, emotional, family, cultural, community and spiritual wellbeing. In fact, wellbeing for Sāmoan people is stated to be achieved if the relationships with these worlds are well balanced, stable and highly respected by all family members (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1990). Therefore, wellbeing or soifua māloloina for the āiga is collectively high and illness is perceived as the consequences of disharmony and disequilibrium in these relationships. This concept of soifua māloloina is generally translated as living a good life and/or wellbeing and having good health. The Sāmoan-English and English-Sāmoan Dictionary (Milner, 2001) defines soifua as live and māloloina as health and/or healthy. In fact, balance between the families' physical, mental, emotional, cultural, community and spiritual lives means equilibrium and stability is maintained.

There are no studies that specifically measure elements and levels of Sāmoan wellbeing. However, important explanations of how Sāmoan people /culture view wellbeing are readily available. Sāmoan theories of wellbeing are embedded in their ongoing collective interactions and obligations towards their families, village and church groups (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1997, Anae, Moewaka-Barnes, McCreanor & Watson, 2002, Tamasese et al. 2005). It is also through their collective decision making processes in the families, in their holistic traditional healing practices, in the practice of restorative justice through ifoga⁷ and their models of health service delivery where numerous models of health have been developed with the hope to achieve better health outcomes for Sāmoan families. A presentation by Tamasese

⁷ A traditional way to restore peace and justice between two families

(2008) outlined various and many elements of wellbeing for Sāmoan people. Tamasese argued that wellbeing for Sāmoan is about: reciprocity and mutuality, maintaining close relationships and having a good sense of belonging, fulfilling one's role and obligations, providing moral support towards each other, maintaining stability and harmony within the extended families, having good education, ability to provide, living safe and when one's aiga are all well and healthy. Maintaining and sustaining stability and harmony in these relationships create a great sense of belonging for all family members. Moreover fulfilling one's role and obligations towards the āiga, the church and village, strengthening family ties and creating support networks in the family are all considered as positive elements of wellbeing for Sāmoan families.

The Sāmoan ideologies of wellbeing are similar to that of tāngata whenua⁸ in Aotearoa-New Zealand. A study by Durie (2006) provides important information on how tangata whenua conceptualised their wellbeing. Durie argued that the wellbeing of Māori people is embedded in the way a family member controls his/her destiny as an individual and as a member of a collective group such as 'iwi' and 'hapu'. The Te Whāre Tapawhā⁹ model is an holistic model of health emphasising four important aspects of health for Māori people and how these four elements are connected to each other. The model also illustrates how these four elements will not survive without each other. These elements are the tangata tinana (physical) tangata whanau (family) tangata hinengaro (emotional) and tangata wairua (spiritual) (Rochford, 2004). These four dimensions were presented in the form of a house where each of the four walls contain strength and balance that holds the house, therefore the balance between the four dimensions depicted what Māori people considered as wellbeing. Thus, Māori people's wellbeing depends on the balance between the spiritual, social, emotional and physical aspects of their lives. In fact, Māori made huge progress in this area by developing measures of wellbeing based on Māori worldviews, aspirations and social and cultural context (Durie, 2006) that are useful for measuring the wellbeing of Māori people.

⁸ People of the land referring to Maori people

⁹ Holistic model of health for Maori people emphasising four important elements of their wellbeing

In 2006, prominent Māori psychiatrist Mason Durie presented a paper on ‘Measuring Māori Wellbeing’ at the New Zealand Treasury Guest Lecture Series where he recommended a new framework for measuring Māori wellbeing. Durie argued that Māori health could be measured using several perspectives at different levels. These levels of wellbeing consist of individual wellbeing, whānau wellbeing and wellbeing of the Māori general population. The individual wellbeing takes into account the holistic viewpoint of Māori culture including the views of clinician, client and family members. This also included using a standardised scale to measure the four dimensions of wellbeing under the Te Whāre Tapawhā model discussed above. The whānau wellbeing as the second level focused mainly on the group and an important suggestion for measuring whānau wellbeing is through assessments of their collective capacity tasks within the group. Durie proposed elements of capacities for measuring as capacity to care, guardianship, to empower, for long term planning and capacity to endorse. The wellbeing of the Māori population as the third level emphasised a global measure of Māori wellbeing. Five principles for measuring Māori population wellbeing were stated as ‘connectedness, specificity, Māori focussed, commonalities and relevance’ (Durie, 2006, pg 6). Durie suggested that using the same levels of wellbeing to measure wellbeing for other indigenous cultures with similar worldviews and histories with Māori would be more valid. However, this may be difficult for other groups because these dimensions are closely linked to specific measurements that largely embody Māori world views about health and wellbeing.

Numerous health models have been developed by Pacific health professionals and academics in an effort to represent Pacific beliefs and knowledge connected to health and wellbeing. This chapter acknowledges the existence of various other models but chooses to focus on the Fonofale model (Sua’alii-Sauni, Wheeler, Saafi, Robinson, Agnew, Warren, Erick, Hingano, 2009) because of its popularity in the health service sector. The Fonofale model was developed to incorporate the values and beliefs of many Pacific people about mental health and had been re-developed to include aspects of family, culture and spirituality beliefs (Pulotu-Endemann, 2009; Anae et al. 2002). This model incorporates the metaphor of a Sāmoan house with descriptions of interactive relationships between different parts of the house. The different parts of the house represented different aspects of life where family, culture, the spiritual, physical and mental wellbeing are all interconnected. This also depicted an important

balance between these aspects of the house for the house to remain strong. The ways Māori conceptualised their wellbeing are similar to Sāmoan as portrayed in this model; that is, wellbeing is a balance between all aspects of life including, family, culture, health, work, environment and spiritual lives.

Collectivity is considered as embedded within the foundation of relationships and life in traditional Sāmoan families and social organisations. Numerous studies have explored the meaning and role of collectivity within various aspects and events of the Sāmoan life and culture. For example, an article in the *Sāmoana*¹⁰ (2005 p.12) titled: “I commit the crime: the family also does the time” is one example of how Sāmoan collectively view their overall wellbeing as a family by collectively taking responsibility for the welfare of each other. This article describes the practice of ifoga in a Sāmoan family where a formal apology by a family for the wrongdoing of its member towards another family is carried by the whole family (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2005¹¹). This practice deeply affects both families unless harmony and peace is restored in both of the families. This practice is also considered as the process for healing between the two families and once both families had forgiven and moved forward then harmony would be in place once again (Tamasese, 2008). Macpherson and Macpherson (1987) extended this discussion by examining the ideology of collective responsibility and its role in suicide in Sāmoa. Macpherson and Macpherson elaborated on Durkheim’s ideology of altruistic suicide and how it is associated with ‘shame’. In fact, suicide is commonly described as an individual act as a way out from being publicly shamed and ridiculed by others but the consequences of such an act reflects badly on the reputation of the collective āiga. In addition, Durkheim (cited in Jones, 2003) introduced the concepts of social alienation and social exclusion and its role in altruistic suicide. Durkheim (cited in Jones, 2003) posited that altruistic suicide is committed by those individuals who had violated moral norms of a group.

There have been numerous research projects conducted by Sāmoan students and researchers on Sāmoan communities with regards to health and wellbeing. Some of these projects concluded with suggestions for further investigation to identify factors

¹⁰ Samoan local community newspaper

¹¹ See Macpherson & Macpherson for a detailed description of ifoga

that are appropriate for the development of strategies and services for Sāmoan youth. For example, Tiatia (2003) explored suicidal behaviour among New Zealand-born Sāmoan young people by analysing hospital data and by interviewing twenty young people, concluding that āiga play an important role in the health and wellbeing of Sāmoan young people. She also found that the āiga environment is important and can be an initial basis for suicide prevention for young people. The thesis suggested the need for a broader investigation of suicidal behaviors among Sāmoan youth and recognized the need to go beyond the traditional Western epidemiological and mental illness approach to assess the impact of suicidal behavior on Sāmoan youth. This is an argument supported by Anae et al. (2002), recognizing the need to step outside the boundaries of Western theoretical concepts of mental illness by incorporating Pacific models of wellbeing. On the other hand, Samu (2003) examined a range of sources of stress among Sāmoan youth and suggested further investigation into the influences of family dynamics and the forms and levels of stress experienced by these young people was necessary.

Summary

This chapter outlined distinctions and parallels between psychological, sociological and Sāmoan conceptualisations of wellbeing. While these ideas of wellbeing vary in many ways this study argued that there are some consistencies across the three perspectives. It was clear from the literature that psychology, for instance, focused mainly on the individual's emotions through evaluations of their lives in terms of what makes them happy. This illustrated the fact that individuals are responsible for their own health and their happiness. Sociology's emphasis of wellbeing prioritizes what people do rather than what they actually feel but locates the sources of social satisfaction in social inclusion and stable integration in collectivities (Jones, 2003). Sāmoans conceptualise wellbeing from a holistic perspective where the balance in relationships and obligations towards the family, upholding responsibilities towards community groups and society are important aspects of their wellbeing. However, when tensions arise or illness strikes, disharmony and disequilibrium occurred which is most likely to affect the wellbeing of the whole family.

Examining theories and indices of wellbeing from both psychology and sociology yield that they both contribute useful information that are relevant to Sāmoan views of wellbeing. In fact all six dimensions of wellbeing proposed by Ryff (1989) are embedded in interactions; relationships and network support within the āiga as a group. Moreover, if family members as individuals have positive relationships with others they have a clear sense of belonging in the family and have the capacity to achieve well then these are positive contributions to the wellbeing of the āiga as a group. This could be useful in this study only if these are being viewed from Sāmoan belief systems and perspectives of wellbeing from their social and cultural context. Recently, a new development in the field of psychology that has provided important insight is the theoretical idea of “understanding the cultural dimensions that moderate the variables that influence subjective wellbeing for other societies” (Diener & Diener, 2000, pg 6). This indicates that psychology studies have recognised that there are major differences in people’s evaluation of their wellbeing, especially those with collectivist cultures.

Sociology on the other hand although not centrally interested in how people feel, have also provided important insights that closely link to aspects of Sāmoan ideas of wellbeing. In fact, there are more parallels between sociology and Sāmoan ideologies of wellbeing. Sociology’s emphasis on family as a sub-system of society where individuals have unique roles and behave according to these specific roles, are similar to that of Sāmoan people and their individual roles. For Sāmoans, these roles define their obligations and responsibilities towards their āiga, village and church groups. Collectively, fulfilling these obligations and responsibilities from each members of the āiga according to appropriate norms and values of fa’a-Sāmoa determines the overall health and wellbeing of the whole family. More importantly, fulfilling these obligations and responsibilities gives members of the family a sense of inclusion and acceptance within the family and, together, they contribute towards upholding harmony and stability within the āiga or what sociologists term equilibrium and homeostasis. One of the main functions of the family sociology pointed out is the process of socialisation. According to sociological theories one of the key functions of the family is to educate and socialise the children so they will become acceptable members of society. In fact, Durkheim (cited in Jones, 2003) posited that social solidarity is achieved through the process of socialisation whereby many individuals

learnt behaviours that are acceptable and those that are not. Therefore, solidarity is maintained when all these individuals are successfully integrated in one social group and behaved according to the set values and norms of that group. Likewise, Sāmoan parents and families educate and socialise their children with behaviour considered appropriate according to their age and gender. It is the responsibility of the parents and the extended families to make sure children and young people learnt their fa'a-Sāmoa values. For example, children and young people are taught that respecting the elderly and parents is an important value of fa'a-Sāmoa and disrespecting is not acceptable. Also in sociology, the work of Durkheim (cited in Jones, 2003) introduced the concepts of social alienation and social exclusion by those who had violated moral norms of a group by committing suicide. Macpherson and Macpherson (1987) clearly documented the effect of such a suicidal act by a Sāmoan individual and the influence to the reputation of a collective kin group. In fact, Macpherson and Macpherson argued that (1987, pg 313), “altruistic suicide frequently associated with shame” especially for those families who are highly respected by the village and committed to Sāmoan culture.

Having explored Sāmoans' ideology of wellbeing by drawing on some important descriptions and models of health in the literature, it is clear that theoretical ideas and ideologies in psychology, sociology and Sāmoan about wellbeing are interrelated at some levels. Therefore, there is an opportunity for utilizing these scales by incorporating Sāmoan viewpoints of wellbeing to measure their levels of wellbeing. In fact, if we were to utilize some dimensions of these scales it is important to incorporate Sāmoans' definitions based on their beliefs and knowledge about health and wellbeing from a collectivist and holistic perspective. In fact, my review of the literature on wellbeing identified some gaps that I believe this study will make a contribution towards filling. For example, I explored and described many dimensions of wellbeing based on Sāmoan cultural norms and beliefs about health and wellbeing. Findings could be used to develop scales appropriate to measure the wellbeing of Sāmoan families by incorporating their collective and social approach about health and wellbeing. Furthermore, this study will also contribute a great deal to the Sāmoan literature given its specific focus on Sāmoan young people. Indicators of wellbeing based on Sāmoan young people's interpretation and experience of life as Sāmoans

living in New Zealand with their families are relevant to determine their level of wellbeing.

Chapter Three: Theories of Families and Family Organisation

Introduction

This chapter reviews recent models and theories of family particularly from the disciplines of psychology and sociology. It summarises technical definitions, theories and models of family and family organisation and reports on different dimensions and various elements of family identified by these disciplines. The review of how Sāmoan families are theorised and organized summarises accounts of the traditional structure and organisation of a Sāmoan family. Numerous scholars have acknowledged some transformation of the traditional Sāmoan family structure and organisation in both Sāmoa and in the Sāmoan migrant enclaves outside Sāmoa. These changes are also discussed with the hope to provide some clarity of their effects on the lives and wellbeing of Sāmoan people.

Definition of Family

The definitions of family outlined below confirmed that in the social science literature there is no set or universal definition of family (Bray & Stanton, 2009). Defining 'family' has been an issue in social science because there are many types of family and one definition will not encompass all the differences in these family types (Popenoe, 1993). Some academic scholars argued that describing family is often dependent on the individual's interpretation of their experience based on their personal relationships and interaction with others (Diem, 1997; Bedford & Blieszner, 2000). The definition of family also depends on the purpose for defining family and how these definitions will be used. Attempts to define family, range from technical definitions to a more theoretical and/or political approach. Diem for instance, indicated that definitions "of family in various government agencies tend to be politically and legally driven and reflect the needs and objectives of the state" (1997, pg 57). The literature review reveals that social science has recognised the significance of family and attempted to define family in general terms. Various

definitions and types of family are identified in the social science literature and reflect an awareness of diversity in family forms and systems. For sociology, definition of family is based on the theoretical approach that family is a sub-system of society and the family consists of a network of people who have various social roles (Bray & Stanton, 2009). Family is a sub-system of society where one of its main functions is to contribute to the society's equilibrium, by socialising its younger members according to their social roles (Jones, 2003). Psychology on the other hand views family as a group of individuals who are "connected to each other emotionally, cognitively and usually behaviourally, regardless of legal ties and physical locations" (Bray & Stanton, 2009 pg 38).

Giddens (1989, pg 384) provided a broad definition by illustrating that the family is "a group of people directly linked by kin connection, where the adult members take responsibility for caring for children". This definition is inclusive of kinship groups and clearly highlighted the importance of parental responsibility which is extended out to the adult members of the extended family. Popenoe (2003, pg 529) defined family as: "a relatively small domestic group of kin (or people in kin-like relationships) consisting of at least one adult and one dependent person". Popenoe's definition is inclusive of all intergenerational family units and all types of family in which dependants are involved. This definition is problematic in a way that it focuses on the domestic group of kin with dependants which is exclusive of families without dependants. White (1991, pg 23) defined family as: "an intergenerational social group organised and governed by social norms regarding descent and affinity, reproduction, and the nurturant socialisation of the young". In fact, the definition by White could technically include related households which interact with each other but not necessarily living together.

Other definitions of family revealed in the literature come from the research subjects, based on their experience about their families. The idea for including these definitions is for the purpose of comparing it to the definitions provided by the young Sāmoan who participated in this current study. Garfat (2003), and Connolly, Crichton-Hill and Ward (2008), proposed that definitions of family by the research subjects tend to focus on one's experience of their relationships with others and their interpretation of what goes on within their family environments. Garfat (2003) argued

that a definition of family by his research subjects was based on their sense of belonging within their families and feelings of being protected within the environments they lived in.

Connolly et al (2008) examined family processes and argued that families have diverse organisations and the ways they communicate with each other are very different. Therefore, their definitions of family were very much driven by their experience and interpretation of their surroundings. Pryor's (2007, pg 13) definition of family is based on the experience and description of family by young New Zealanders included in her study and introduced a concept called "families of meaning". Pryor argued that these young people: "used more fictive terms to describe their families and 40% of these participants used legal, biological and cohabitation criteria for defining family". Pryor concluded that the participants' definition of family reflects the 'family of meaning' structure as legitimate and important.

In New Zealand, different government agencies employ different definitions of family which reflect their interests and concerns and the legislation under which they operate. Hodgson and Birks (2002) argued that Statistics New Zealand's definition of family was designed for the purpose of estimating demographic descriptions of families and these are mainly used for government policies and budgeting. Statistics New Zealand defined family as 'A couple, with or without child(ren), or one parent and their child(ren), all of whom have usual residence together in the same household. The children do not have partners or children of their own living in the household'. (Statistics New Zealand, 1999, pg 9). The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act definition of family incorporated cultural differences, legal and functional relationship in the families by defining family as:

'A family group including an extended family, in which there is at least one adult member with whom a child or another adult member has a biological or legal relationship; or to whom the child or other adult member has a significant psychological attachment; or that is the child's or other adult member's Whānau or other culturally recognised group'. (1989, pg 9)

The Families Commission (2006) took a much broader approach than Statistics New Zealand by acknowledging the roles and functions of the family and also recognised

the different living arrangements in these families. Its definition is “groups of people who are related by marriage, blood or adoption, extended families, two or more people living together as a family and whanau or other culturally recognised groups” (Families Commission, 2006, pg 15). Statistics New Zealand and the Families Commission restricted their definitions of family to family members living in the same household. Although the Families Commission included extended family in their definition, it was clear that these members are required to reside in the same household. Hodgson and Birks (2002) argued that these definitions often overlook the complexity of family structures. They argued that these definitions did not provide any clear distinction between the types of parents and both failed to recognise the different types of relationships parents have with their children.

This definition had also being updated to given the recognition of same sex relationships by the law. They also indicated that the definition by Statistics New Zealand focussed on one and two parent families and did not recognise or acknowledged other relationships in families such as Māori and Pacific extended families. The New Zealand Immigration Service commissioned a literature review on family and one of the key issues was to address the definition of family (Elliott & Gray, 2000). In fact, the definition of family under the immigration policy was questionable whether it recognised that the concept of family is different across cultural groups. Elliot and Gray found that all 15 people interviewed from different ethnic groups “perceived family as a social rather than a biological unit and in most cultures, the family is considered more important than the individual” (2000, pg 1). This literature review acknowledges the diversity of cultural backgrounds in New Zealand and argued that it was important to make clear distinction between household, family in a kinship unit, lineage or clan and a large network of kinsmen.

Theories of Families

Theories of families provide a general framework of ideas according to Smith, Ingoldsby, Hamon and Miller (2009). These are useful in describing and predicting events and behaviour of family members from their connection with others and to their environment (Smith, et al., 2009). A review of the literature revealed that development theories both in psychology and sociology extended their focus to

examine how, and why, family members behaved the way they do (Jacobsen, Fursman, Bryant, Claridge & Jensen, 2004). The developmental theorists explored various aspects of families in their search for an understanding of how and why families exist and behave the way they are. The literature review also illustrated that historical theories of family had been re-defined and modified in various ways by psychology and sociology disciplines. Exploring different theories of families proved to be a challenging task. Burr (1995) and Doherty (1991) argued that families are so complex that a collection of theories have been developed to investigate the ongoing changes in families. Doherty (1991) contended that each theory of family represents a “different intellectual heritage that can make communication difficult within the family science field, let alone with those researchers and scholars outside the field” (pg 2423). However, Rodgers and White (1993) demonstrated that the family development theory:

‘...has many things in common with other theoretical traditions therefore theorists working in the areas have consciously ‘borrowed’ from other theories over the years in order to glean the best of what those other theories had to offer’. (pg 225)

Turner considered theory as a “bag of principles and models” (2005, pg 26) where one can choose theoretical principles or models relevant to their subject of enquiry. In fact, what this means is that researchers can pick and choose which theory best describes and predicts the phenomenon under investigation and to avoid those ones that are not relevant. Burr (1995) concurred and argued that family theorists use many theories to explain various aspects of family life and suggested that it is important for family theorists to familiarise themselves with several aspects of family. He also argued that “families are so complex that it is impossible for any one theory to explain everything” (1995, pg 74). There is a long history of studies in families; however, given the scope of this study, it is important to focus on the more recent and common developmental theories of family both in psychology and sociology. This emphasis on dynamism is particularly relevant in light of the current transitions occurring in Sāmoan families. Mattessich and Hill (1987, pg 437) argued that family development theory:

‘...has uniquely pioneered the effort to describe and explain the processes of change in families. Family time: the sequence of stages precipitated internally by the demands of family members (e.g., biological, psychological, and social needs) and externally by the larger society (e.g., social expectations and ecological constraints) is the most significant focal point of the family development perspective.’

Both sociology and psychology have focused on studies of family issues for many years, as such measures, theories and models are frequently developed and refined to investigate these family issues. Over the past decades, a variety of social science disciplines especially developmental sociology and psychology have recognised the significance of social interaction particularly in families.

Paradigms of Family in Sociology

In the late 1930’s, the structural-functional theory emerged with great interest in the ‘functions of institutions’ such as the family (Nolan & Lenski, 2009). This theoretical perspective views the family as a central institution within the structure of society. The structural-functional theory posits that one important function of the family was to maintain ‘harmony’ and social ‘equilibrium’ within the wider society (Marsh, Eyre, Campbell & McKenzie, 1997; Giddens, 2009). In fact, the family’s function to maintain this social order and stability within society is stated to be through reproduction, child-rearing and socialisation of new family members so that they become responsible members of the society. Marsh et al., (1997, pg 412) argued that the structural-functionalists considered the family:

‘.....as the initial stable environment in which to rear children, who learn through the process of socialisation to become acceptable members of the society.’

This theoretical perspective is mainly concerned with positive functions and aspects of the family. In fact, this perspective was criticised for neglecting ‘social changes’ and ‘conflict’ within society and its impact on the family unit (Nolan & Lenski, 2009). Despite the influence of these changes in society on the family today, structural-functionalists still maintain that the family is able to adapt and accommodate these changes as part of their lives. While the structural-functional perspectives continue to maintain the view of the family as a stable institution, other

sociological theoretical perspectives evolved and examined the oppressive aspects of the family.

The Marxist and feminist also known as the radical/critical sociologists focus on changes and conflict within society and its impact on the structure of the family (Giddens, 2009). The Marxist approach considered the family an institution that encourages 'hierarchical' relationships and promotes "dominant societal values by perpetuating the exploitation of subordinate groups by upholding the norms and values of capitalist society" (Marsh et al., 1997, pg 425). On the other hand, the feminism approach challenged the 'division of labour' and highlights the issues of 'exploitation' among women in capitalist societies (Franzese, 2009). Despite the variations of assumptions and emphases by these theoretical perspectives, Marsh et al., (1997, pg 415) stated that:

'What all these approaches share in common is a focus on the more negative aspects of family life and the idea that the family may not be beneficial for all its members.'

Today, the studies of family in sociology have shifted from the focus on family functions towards the study of family practice and interactions between family members (Marsh et al., 1997). The emergence of the symbolic interactionism as a new school of thought in sociology focuses on the relationships between the individuals and society in particular the impact of this relationship on 'socialisation' and 'personality organisation' (Bengston, Acock, Allen, Dilworth-Anderson & Klein, 2005). This approach specifically explains the process of changes in human behaviour as results of their interaction with family members and within various social organisations and social structure (Nolan & Lenski, 2009). Marsh and colleagues argued that this approach:

'...focus on the individual and the process of social interaction. They examine how people are able to understand one another; how they interpret what is going on around them and then choose to behave in particular ways. They emphasise the meanings that people give to actions and to things.' (1997, pg 71).

Sociologists argued that study of family should always begin with three main questions such as the identity of family members, roles and responsibilities and how they connected to each other and other social groups (Cheal, 2002). By doing so, it should begin with the individual's understanding of family and determining how individual's personal activities and characteristics are affected by the circumstances of interacting with other family members or with other groups. Jacobsen et al. (2004) argued that sociology focuses on social systems with emphasis on social life, social change and social influence of family members' behaviour (Giddens, 1997). Therefore, sociology views family as a social exchange matrix (Cheal, 2002) and it focuses on family practice by examining the exchange of family actions and transactions that occur between family members and social groups they affiliated with.

Paradigms of Family in Psychology

The developmental theories in psychology introduced a new paradigm where most draw on the notion of "developmental continuity over the life course" (Kalil, 2003, pg 18). In traditional psychology, the focus was mainly on the individual's behaviour and how they evaluate and view their lives as an individual. Developmental theorists Goodnow (1990) acknowledged the changes in individual's behavioural development and recognised that these changes were more likely to be influenced by the individual's surroundings and environment. In fact, the importance of interaction was recognised in the field of psychology in the 1920s but there was a lack of interest at the time on interaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 2001).

The work of two well-known philosophers George Herbert Mead and James Mark Baldwin (cited in Marsh et al, 1997), revitalised this concept in psychology through their investigation of personality development in children (Bradbury & Fincham, 2001). Therefore, developmental psychologists focused on relationships between individuals and people they interacted with and what actually happened in these interactions that changed an individual's behaviour. Kaye (in L'Abate, 1985, pg 39) argued that: "a psychology of the family means a science whose unit of study is no longer the individual mind/body/person but a developing social system of physically separate people". A review of the literature reveals that an increased amount of

attention has been given to interaction in families and some of the relationships that have been widely observed are those among peers and siblings (Videon, 2002) and parent-child interaction (Updegraff, McHale, Crouter & Kupanoff, 2001).

Current Theories of Family

There are numerous current, and competing, theories about family, some of which have been heavily criticised for many years and have been re-developed. Nye (1980) stated that theory is about explaining what, how and why certain things changed from the way they used to be. Theories of family are useful in that it helps explain what goes on in families and helps to predict what is going to happen in the families. Smith et al., (2009) indicated that each theory has its own assumptions and concepts and some have very long histories in the social sciences.

In this chapter, eight theories of family widely used both in sociology and psychology are: structural-functionalism, symbolic interaction, family development, family stress theory, family systems theory, social conflict theory, social exchange and feminist family theory (Munhall & Fitzsimons, 2001) and these are briefly discussed below. This study acknowledges the existence of other theories but concentrates on these main eight theories describing what they entail, their assumptions, concepts each theory uses and the limitations and connections among them. By examining the assumptions of these theories it is clear that they all recognise and define various dimensions of family development. In fact, these theories are concerned with how family systems, family interaction, family processes and family functions influence the lives and behaviour of family members but differ in their emphases.

The Structural-Functionalism Theory

The structural functionalism theory originated from sociology and anthropology and takes a broad view of the family. This theory sees society as “a set of social institutions that perform specific functions to ensure continuity and consensus within the society” (Giddens, 2009, pg 369). The ‘family’ is considered as one institution which has an important function that contributes to society’s need to maintain social order. There is a long history behind this theory able to be traced back to the work of Comte and Durkheim (cited in Smith et al., 2009). During the 19th century and 20th

century they proposed that society is like a human body and it operates much like a human body. This theory was also associated with the work of Parson based on the 'functions of family' and the work of Merton on 'relative deprivation' (Giddens, 2009). Therefore, structural-functionalism theory focuses mainly on social systems and how they survive, change and how they operate and/or adapt or are affected by social consequences around them (Johnson, 2000).

The family is seen as a sub-system of society and it must function for the survival of society (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993). Its main contribution towards society is to maintain equilibrium by socialising and educating its younger members into social roles which collectively make up the family. This theory was also heavily criticised for its focus on a 'static' model and its broad analysis of large social systems especially with its assumption that maintaining such a large system is important (Chilcott, 1998). Feminist theorists also challenged this theory (Smith et al., 2009) by arguing that the status quo is dysfunctional for women and to same sex relationships. Despite the criticisms, this theory provides some strength in a way that its 'organic analogy' is widely used in research and its "family systems theory takes the basic concepts of equilibrium and roles and successfully applies them to a microanalysis of family relationships" (Smith et al., 2009, pg 47).

The Symbolic Interaction Theory

Symbolic interaction theory as articulated by Stryker and Statham (1985) is in fact the most established and influential theory which is often based on the idea that "humans construct their own reality" (Smith et al., 2009, pg 13). It is often considered as a sociological theory focused on meanings and symbols especially in the form of language (Marsh et al., 1996). The symbolic interaction theory was first developed in the 1920's by Mead (cited in LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993) who was fascinated about social behaviour and posited that the ways humans understand each other's behaviour is through the use of symbols such as language. Therefore, understanding these symbols determines a human's reaction towards another during this process of interaction. It is through this exchange interaction between humans and society that these meanings and roles existed for individuals. The ideas from this theory had been utilised as a theoretical instrument by social psychologists to examine individuals'

behaviour. Some considered this theory as a body of thought (Solomon, 1983) emphasising the process by which individuals understand and make sense of their world (Solomon, 1983). However, this theory did not escape criticism; it was criticised for its lack of interest in social structure, power and history (Marshall, 1998). In an effort to rectify this problem, Stryker, a professor whose research primarily focused on social psychology and sociology, revitalised this theory by taking considerable interest in ‘role making’ (Bray & Stanton, 2009).

The Family Development Theory

The family development theory was first developed by two well known philosophers, Duvall and Hill in the 1940s (cited in Bray & Stanton, 2009). Its main emphasis was based on transitions in the family’s life cycle and developmental tasks (Burr, 1995). Duvall and Hill both argued that families are social groups that are influenced by developmental processes and family should be examined as a dynamic unit (Smith et al., 2009). Hill and Rodgers in their article in 1964 provided a systematic statement of the family development theory by stating that “the family is composed of social roles and relationships that change with each stage of the family” (cited in White & Klein, 2008, pg 125). This theory introduced two stages of the family life cycle; one is known as expansion when children are born and raised by the parents and the other contraction when they leave home and become independent (Bray & Stanton, 2009).

In an effort to understand the process of development between these two life cycles, ‘family tasks’ were identified and grouped into eight stages of development in the family. These stages were ‘married couple, childbearing, preschool age, school age, teenage, launching centre, middle aged parents and aging family members’ (Smith et al., 2009, pg 70). White is one of the most imperative advocates for the family development theory today. White (1991) developed an interest in the concept of life cycle and theorised that family does change its form and function over time. For example, a newly married couple will eventually transition to being new parents to parents of teenagers then to parents with grown up children who then leave home. During these transitions and changes, new tasks, expectations and responsibilities are introduced for the parents and families. As articulated by White & Klein (2008) families will go through different levels of interaction, the structure of the family and

family roles will also change because no one or nothing remains the same. The primary criticism of this theory focused on the eight stages discussed earlier. In fact, the eight stages was believed to portray the nuclear family with an intact marriage throughout the life cycle (Smith et al., 2009) which excludes other family structures such as divorced, non-married couples and step families (Rodgers & White, 1993). The concepts and variables of this theory were also being criticised for not being clearly defined and because they lacked scientific testability (Smith et al., 2009). Despite the criticisms a major recent contribution to this theory was recognising the diversity in family forms (Mattessich & Hill, 1987) and functions and the changes in family processes and differential developmental stages.

The Family Stress Theory

This theory emerged in the 1930s during the Depression era (Smith et al, 2009). It has been widely used today to examine the effect of divorce and unemployment on families. The work of Angell, Cavan and Ranck in the 1930s examined ways that families dealt with stress due to income and employment loss (Smith et al, 2009). Two key concepts linked to this Depression era were integration and adaptability with Smith et al., (2009) pointing out that the Depression embodied these two things. Both integration and adaptability referred to unified families who worked together to address family stress. In fact, Angell's work found that families:

‘...who are both integrated and easily able to adapt their family roles to meet the needs of the situation are most capable of dealing with stress such as that caused by job loss during the Depression.’ (cited in Smith et al., 2009, pg 95).

In addition, the work of Cavan and Ranck (cited in Smith et al., 2009) found that families that were well organised and cohesive before the Depression were best able to deal with stress due to job and income losses after the Depression. Furthermore, for those families who were disorganised they were more likely to have more issues and face more breakdowns (Smith et al., 2009). The family stress theory has been refined and re-developed by various theorists such as Hill (1949), and McCubbin and Patterson (1982) over the years. Hill's modification of this theory introduced four stages: crisis, disorganisation, recovery and reorganisation and argued that families go

through these stages during stressful situations. Hill posited that when families are faced with a stressful event they immediately reached the crisis stage and gradually moved to the disorganisation stage and this is when the family try to cope with the situation. Once the family worked out ways to address this crisis then they reached the stage of recovery and the family will eventually arrive at a new way of organisation (Smith et al., 2009). This theory was criticised for its narrow approach as outlined below:

‘Perhaps the most well-established problem is the fact that this is a linear model trying to explain complex families and situations. In other words, it is often not one single event that causes a family to become stressed to the point of crisis but rather an accumulation of events.’ (Smith et al., 2009, pg104).

The Family Systems Theory

Over the years, this theory has emerged as a major paradigm for family studies in the disciplines of sociology and psychology, although it originally began as a framework of the family therapy movement (Mashall, 1998). It was mainly used for observations by clinical and counselling psychologists (Scabini, Marta & Lanz, 2006). Today, the social system theory is a widely used perspective and it is the most vital concept in sociology given its emphasis on how different elements of a sub-system make up a system as a whole. Other relevant concepts in this theory also include equilibrium, family cohesion, family flexibility and mutuality (Smith, et al., 2009). Marshall refers to a system as “any structured or patterned relationship between any number of elements where this system forms a whole or unity” (1998, pg 659).

The family systems theory focuses on the process of adaptation by examining how systems are organised around the changes in their circumstances (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). It also explored the interrelatedness of family members (Marshall, 1998) emphasising the importance of holism and focusing on how family members’ behaviour affect one another and the boundaries between these relationships (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Although this theory extended its focus to include these aspects of the family, the feminist theorists criticised it for its failure to view “family in their socio-cultural and historical contexts” (Osmond & Thorne, 1993, pg 603). White and Klein also pointed out that the concepts of this theory were

considered as being “too vague for scientific testing and that the theory itself was too comprehensive and abstract” (2002, pg 173). However, one of the important contributions of this theory is recognising family cohesion as an interactional process which conveys important emotional connections between family members (Walsh, 1998). In fact, the concepts in this theory are closely linked to the ecological model of family by Bronfenbrenner (1989) where he used system concepts and focused on the roles of the environment and how they influence the child’s behaviour. This theory is discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. This family systems theory seeks to explain the behaviour of these organised systems emphasising the relationships between them (Jones, 2003).

The Social Conflict Theory

This theory is rooted in sociology and it has a lengthy history which can be traced back to Marx’s work (Marshall, 1998). Although Marx was often referred to as the father of conflict theory his work primarily focused on the economic impact of this theory (Smith et al., 2009). Other sociologists such as Weber, Simmel and Coser introduced and added some interpersonal dimensions such as ‘love’, ‘ownerships’ and ‘jealousy’ to the main ideas of this theory (Smith, et al., 2009). These historical works were important in understanding how conflict is used in society at large. However, Sprey (cited in Smith et al., 2009, pg166) proposed the need for understanding conflict in families and he defined conflict as “a state of negative interdependence between the elements of a social system”. The conflict theory made certain assumptions about human nature and the nature of society and posits that disagreement in families is natural as they are all part of social life (Crosbie-Burnett & Klein, 2009). This theory was criticised because it analyses families in destructive and negative terms. It describes relationships in terms of competition, power and access to resources and does not propose how families can improve (Crosbie-Burnett & Klein, 2009).

The Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory emerged from the writings of three main philosophers namely Homans, Thibaut, Kelley and Blau (cited in Cook & Whitmeyer, 1992). Smith, et al., (2009, pg 201) contested that the primary assumption for this theory is

that, “human social relationships can be understood as revolving around the exchange of resources valued by participants”. Cook and Whitmeyer (1992) argued that the exchange theory has two main principles. One includes the interaction between two individuals being motivated by personal interests or rewards and the other interaction where valued items are being exchanged. Johnson (2000) in the Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology made a clear distinction between the American and European version of this theory. According to Johnson, the American version primarily focuses on two people participating in a rational exchange of valued resources in order for them to get what they need. This was criticised for its limited explanations of the interaction and exchange between the two people and “for relying so heavily on economic assumptions of rational calculations of self-interest in social relationships” (Johnson, 2000, pg 113).

The European version seems to be more interested in the exchange between the individuals and the social system as a whole. Key concepts used in this European version are: sharing, loyalty and mutual cooperation. A traditional exchange ritual ceremony is one important example where valuable traditional gifts are shared with loyalty, respect and mutual cooperation amongst the groups. The social exchange theory had been refined and expanded by various theorists by comparing aspects of the exchange theory with other propositions (Crosbie-Burnett & Klein, 2009). Today, the common areas of research and applications of this theory are around divorce, the mate selection process, and relationships (Smith et al., 2009).

The exchange theory is not without its critics, one criticism challenged the presumption that humans tend to act rationally during the decision making process. In fact, Smith et al., (2009, pg 210) pointed out that Beutler, Burr and Bahr criticised the theory’s focus on rationale by stating that “the rational focus of the theory makes it impossible for it to deal with love and the other emotional elements that make up family life”. Social exchange theory has been used widely by family scholars over the years. Smith et al. (2009) argued that it has been slow in moving beyond the idea of reward and cost. They also proposed that “future work would benefit from a focus on the importance of interdependence in families, that is, the model could be used to better clarify joint, rather than individual profit” (2009, pg 210).

The Feminist Theory

More than one feminist theory emerged from the women's movement for change in the 1970s with the intention of addressing issues of inequality between men and women (Bray & Stanton, 2009). This theory deals with topics important to women searching for women's rights, opportunities and identities and proposing the need for equal power between males and females (Smith et al, 2009). It also challenged the theoretical assumptions of family structure and family roles based on gender and age by 'deconstructing' the role of family (Crosbie-Burnett & Klein, 2009). The theoretical assumptions are based on the argument that women's experiences are important in understanding the families (Baca-Zinn, 2000; Sollie & Leslie, 1994). Thus, feminist theory advocates for women's perspectives and feelings towards the issues affecting them. The feminist theory challenged the status quo by empowering women and children and by challenging aspects of society that are affecting women and children (Smith et al., 2009). Osmond and Thorne (1993, pg 593) stated that:

'By making the women's experiences visible, feminist scholarship reveals gaps and distortion in knowledge that claims to be inclusive but in fact is based on the experiences of Euro-American, class-privileged, heterosexual men. Starting with the life experiences of women, in all diversity, opens new epistemologies or ways of knowing the world.'

The feminist theory is widely used today in research on division of labour (Glazer, 2006; Noonan, Estes & Glass, 2007); family violence (Mannino & Deutsch, 2007); and eating disorder (Thompson and Walker, 1995; Wood, 1998; Hines, 2007). This theory was criticised for "being oppressive to men by focusing only on issues that affect women" (Smith et al. 2009, pg 241) but feminist theorists contested that family issues important to women are also important to men.

Having examined key assumptions, concepts and common areas of research and application for the above theories it was clear that these theories are linked systematically and coherently. Each theory has its own assumptions and concepts widely used by researchers to answer specific questions that other theories may not answer. Each theory has a lengthy history, has been modified and revised over the years and have been widely used in sociology and psychology research to date to examine different aspects of family life. As these theories are being modified and

revised new concepts evolve which expanded the scope and the initial ideas of these theories. The descriptions of the theories suggested that various forms, functions and systems of the families have major impacts on the behaviour and development of family members. It also suggests that there are numerous ways of interacting with families due to the diversity and unique ways family members connect to each other. These theories each proposed different sets of general propositions and each made huge contributions to the study of family both in sociology and psychology. In fact, although the two social science disciplines have very different emphases, a combination of the two approaches could provide a fuller explanation of the process of social changes and social development of family members than either each can offer on its own (Hewston, Stroebe, & Jonas, 2008).

Models of Family Organisation

These models focus less on structure and more on internal organisation of families. There are several models of family organisation and these are ecological model, family process, family strengths, family circumplex and family resilience models. These family models have been widely used by researchers investigating family issues. Some of the best-developed and most widely used models in psychology and sociology disciplines are described below.

The Ecological Model of Family

The ecological model by Bronfenbrenner focuses on the child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment (cited in Bray & Stanton, 2009). The model located the child in three different levels of environments. The family is considered as playing a crucial part in the development of the child. This theory explored the effect of these three environments on the child's development. Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1988) introduced four layers of these social settings. The micro-system layer represents the family and is considered closest to the child and this includes the relationships and interactions between the child and their family in their immediate surroundings (Berk, 2000). The meso-system focused more on the extra-familial structures and the connection between the child and community, church and school. The exo-system is considered as a larger social system with which the child has no direct interaction and the macro-system which is

comprised of cultural values, customs and laws. The key concept for this theory is adaptation. Bronfenbrenner contended that each of the three environments has a different impact on the child because the child goes through a process of adapting to the changes from these environments. One of the main criticisms for this theory was the inability to provide an explanation of the impact of a larger system on the child and family (Bray & Stanton, 2009).

The Family Process Model

This model is considered as a major paradigm for family analysis both in sociology and psychology and is also known as part of the family system theory (Broderick, 1993). Thornton (1994) defined family processes as patterns of interaction (behaviour) and emotion (affection, attitudes, expectations and obligations) occurring within a family unit.

An American study by Landsford et al., (2001) compared the quality of family relationships across five different household structures (adoptive, two-parent biological, single mother, stepfather and stepmother households) and concluded that processes occurring in all types of families are more important than family structure in predicting well-being and relationship quality in families. A study by Kelley (1994) on stepfamilies concluded that positive processes included having clear communication by having regular family meetings and agreeing to the same family decisions and boundaries.

The Family Strengths Model

The Family Strengths Model focuses on generic family strengths which are stated to contribute to positive interactions and behaviours of family members (Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985). The authors defined six general characteristics of strong families in the United States. These are: commitment, appreciation and affection, positive communication, spiritual well-being, quality time together and the ability to cope with stress and crisis, which together shape positive interaction and behaviour within families. The descriptions of these characteristics emphasised how commitment by each family member towards the family unit is valued, appreciated and supported. The family members have a sense of family identity and unity, and were willing to

make sacrifices to overcome any crisis that could threaten their family unity and preserve their family wellbeing. There may however be culturally-defined variants of these strengths as cross-national studies show.

Geggie, DeFrain, Hitchcock and Silberberg (2000) utilised the family strengths model to investigate families in an Australian study on the perceptions of family strengths done in 1985. The study found that elements of family strengths identified by the participants were somewhat similar, but not identical, to the elements of this model. Communication was seen as a strength and a coping strategy, and tolerating each others differences and giving each other space were considered as ways of accepting each other. The family's togetherness was seen as teamwork and availability and involvement in family activities as well as sharing values were seen as other family strengths. Being affectionate, sharing activities and expressing affection towards each other including commitment and support through dedication and loyalty were also considered as valuable and positive strengths for these families.

The Family Circumplex Model

The family circumplex model is considered by Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) to be similar to the family strengths model. Developed primarily with Caucasian and intact two parent families, this model focused on cohesion, flexibility and communication as three important dimensions of family functioning. Olson (1996) pointed out that this model could be used with other ethnic groups as long as cultural consideration and proper interpretation are used. The concept of cohesion in this model represents a sense of togetherness or closeness in the family with flexibility included as the ability to change with changing life circumstances. The process of communication is stated to help families increase their feelings of closeness and strengthen the ways families' deals with family problems. Kelley (1994) studied stepfamilies and concluded that clear communication and having regular family meetings were important.

The Family Resilience Model

The family resilience model is relatively a new idea that "describes how family adapt to stress and bounced back from adversity" (Hawley & DeHaan, 2003, pg 57). The

key constructs for this model are: adaptation and adjustment (Hawley & DeHaan, 2003). Hawley and DeHaan (2003) proposed that the family resilience model is primarily an extension of the family stress conceptual framework and it simply expands on the idea of adaptation:

‘...family resilience model primarily represents a refinement of the family stress and family strengths literature. Perhaps the most distinct conceptual contribution in the budding family resilience literature has been the development of a family ethos (that is schema, world view, sense of coherence.’ (2003, pg 63)

Kalil (2003) contested that family resilience is also strengthened by positive parenting styles and by positive relationships with the wider kin network and the community. Kalil (2003) further argued that having supportive family and a positive relationship with at least one parent or other relative and the availability of social support from extended family and adults outside of the family, fosters positive ties to the wider community.

The review of these models revealed that these models expand on the ideas of the eight family theories discussed earlier. Some of these family models focused on positive development and positive interaction and behaviour. What these models shared in common was the fact that living in a positive family environment influenced the ways families interact well with others and the ability to adapt and adjust to changes and are more likely to have cohesive and flexible relationships.

Fa’a Sāmoa and Sāmoan Families

Taule’ale’ausumai (1997) posits that a family, for Sāmoan people, includes those who are connected by blood and/or those affiliated with families either through marriage, adoption and connection. Lui (2003) also argued that the āiga or family for Sāmoans is made up of individual family members who are held together by clearly defined roles and relationships to one another. The concept of family for Sāmoans extends beyond immediate household families where sharing and support are important elements of family life (fuaifale), to larger dispersed kinship units (āiga potopoto) which may meet only occasionally to select leaders. Vaila’au (2005, pg 16) argued

that “within immediate and extended families people nurture and sustain these human relationships as significant values of their existence and survival”.

Fa’a-Sāmoa is a complex form of social organisation which has been studied and analysed by historians, anthropologists and sociologists interested in the tradition and history of the Sāmoan people. Some of these researchers (Va’ai, 1999; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998) have outlined what constitutes a traditional Sāmoan family. The traditional Sāmoan family or āiga consists of a kin group whose members are connected to its communal land and chiefly titles. This kin group is comprised of related family members under the guidance and leadership of a selected chief known as the sa’o. It is the responsibility of the sa’o to look after the kin group’s properties. The sa’o lives in the kin group’s house called the māota o le sa’o¹² with a series of related households who live nearby and serve (tautua) their elected leader. All these family members have responsibilities and obligations to the āiga as a collective group. This collective group or āiga has many chiefly titles and these titles are “passed down from one generation to the next and they infer genealogical connection, rank and status” (Suaalii-Sauni, 2007, pg 35).

The kin group is centred upon around the village and each village consists of five distinct groups with each having an important function towards the village. Va’ai (1999, pg 39) indicated that these groups consisted of the “tama’ita’i or daughters of the village matai group, faletua ma tausi or wives of matai, aumaga or sons of matai, tamaiti or young children and saofaiga or matai council”. Each of the groups had designated tasks which depicted a hierarchical relationship between the groups and towards each other (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998). For example, in the tāmā’ita’i group, it is the daughter of the highest and most prestigious chief in the village that leads the group and she is considered as the sao tāmā’ita’i. The high chief/s who holds the highest rank title heads the village council. In addition, the Sāmoan church community also consists of these distinct groups and each hold an important function towards the survival of the church. These included youth group, Sunday school group, choir group, men and women’s group.

¹² The house for the chief who is the sa’o or the head of a kin group

In fa'a-Sāmoa recognising these genealogical connections and maintaining these affiliations are reflected in the periodic practice of fa'alavelave fa'a-Sāmoa¹³ in which individual members support the kin group. The family fa'alavelave once brought all members of the kin group together to help and to support each other during these cultural activities. Macpherson (1974) stated that in fa'alavelave, such as a family funeral, the āiga reunites as its members contribute labour and material resources to assist collectively. The family members also provide moral support for each other at times of crises and sadness. This shares consistency with Yuen-Tsang's¹⁴ (2001) statement that families in China relied heavily on their own family networks for support during time of adversity.

The traditional structure and organisation of the Sāmoan kin group has been challenged in many ways as Sāmoa is increasingly exposed to the social and economic consequences of globalisation. So'o (2007) documented various accounts of the experiences of some Sāmoan professionals on the changes of fa'a-mātai and in the changes of āiga organisation in contemporary Sāmoa. Some of the changes Chan Mow (in So'o, 2007) noted included difficulties within kin groups in arriving at consensus decisions about succession to mātai titles and rights to lands. The lands and titles in Sāmoan families are usually passed down from generation to generation with consensus agreement from the kin group. However, a significant change to this traditional practice was documented by contributors to this volume by So'o (2007) and was seen as the increasing number of holders of one title. This is done through a process of fa'asafua le suafa¹⁵ or the splitting of titles formerly held by one person among numerous claimants. The splitting of these mātai titles proved to be problematic for some kin groups where in some cases the heirs to the titles were no longer the ones to receive the titles as it used to be the case in traditional Sāmoan (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1983).

¹³ Sāmoan cultural activities

¹⁴ Qualitative study conducted with 27 Chinese women from various social and economic backgrounds, exploring their views of communal support network for Chinese working mothers.

¹⁵ Fa'asafua le suafa refers to the process where a mātai title is split between more holders not only in one family but also to members of the extended family in other villages.

In traditional practice where disputes arose, they were usually settled in the āiga where a fa'afaletui¹⁶ to address and resolve these issues would normally have taken place. Unfortunately, this is no longer the practice in some kin groups and is stated to create a lot of issues between family members of these kin groups. These disputes, which were traditionally solved within the āiga, have now become more complex and difficult because of the increasing number of competing claimants. Some kin groups' cases, which they would once have been resolved internally, are now ending up in the Land and Titles Court where they are considered by judges. In one example known from a personal experience, one particular family sa'o, who was supposed to be the respected head of the kin group, ended up in the Land and Titles Court fighting for the land and properties of the family because other mātai who shared the same title claimed that these properties belonged to their family line (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1999).

Macpherson and Macpherson (2009) outlined factors which had produced these changes in the traditional ways of bestowing titles among kin groups. They also discussed why these changes occurred. They noticed that the increased number of migrants and remittances which they sent from overseas brought more issues, which in turn affected the very organisation of Sāmoan kinship. The traditional organisation of kinship required all family members to work together and share with each other for their collective socio-political benefit. This often has not been the case due to the increase of monetary support from relatives abroad, causing this attitude to sharing within the kin group to become changed somewhat. Macpherson & Macpherson (2009) stated that remittances from family members abroad were increasingly regarded as personal property of individual households and the sharing of these remittances were confined to these households. These changes and many others transformed the collective structure of the kin group in various ways in Sāmoa. And these changes are influencing the ways family are organised among Sāmoan families in the migrant enclave.

¹⁶ Refer to both informal and formal discussion or talk in families. Detailed description of this method can be found in Tamasese et al.2005.

Fa'a-Sāmoa and the Family in the Migrant Enclave

The concept of āiga has been widely explored by researchers and scholars among Sāmoan families especially in New Zealand (Taulealeausumai 1990; Anae, 1998; Alefaio, 1999; Macpherson, 2001; Samu, 2003; Suaalii-Sauni, 2006). Some studies investigated the importance of Sāmoan values and the influence of fa'a Sāmoa (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996; Macpherson & Macpherson, 1999; Anae, et al., 2002) from the perspectives of Sāmoan adults and young people, and other studies examined family relationships between parents and young people (Alefaio, 1999; Tiatia, 2003).

Parents are considered central to the family especially the lives and the wellbeing of children and young people and for most Sāmoan families parents are the main caregivers and providers (Fa'alau & Jensen, 2006). Alefaio (2007) illustrated that the parent-child relationship is an important feature of cohesiveness in the Sāmoan family environment. For Sāmoans, the concepts of fa'aaloalo (respect), ālofa (love), and usita'i (obedience) are the foundation of good relationships between parents and children and these values are embedded in the health of kinship. Tamasese (2007) in his keynote address to the Pasifika Medical Association in Auckland stated that ālofa is fundamental to the relationship between parent and child and that ālofa emphasised the commitment between parents and their children and with the āiga.

Numerous authors addressed the concept of ālofa and spoke of the value of ālofa in various relationships within a Sāmoan āiga (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000, Suaalii-Sauni, 2006). These authors shared that the concept of ālofa has various meanings and principles and it is a concept that has a much wider scope of relationships and connection between members of the āiga. Ālofa in these family relationships emphasised the significance of sharing as well as committing towards others and looking after one another.

Mulitalo-Lautā (2000, pg 22) on the other hand indicated that ālofa is “more than just the expression of love and compassion; it is also a committed and selfless act of showing this love and compassion”. In fact, inherent in this value of ālofa are codes of conduct governing interaction with each other. For most Sāmoan families in the enclaves these values remain the foundations of these relationships however, the

commitments to conform to these values are hindered by the ways families are organised. For example, some Sāmoan families utilised rest homes for their elderly parents due to the fact that family members are no longer able to look after them because of employment commitments. There is often a conflict between the obligation and commitment to look after the elderly and financial survival of the family.

Collectivism and cohesion are two themes commonly used to define and describe the structure of a Sāmoan family in the migrant enclave. Collectively family kin members take care of each other; each family member has an obligation and responsibility towards their āiga. It is the extended families' responsibilities to make sure family members especially children, young people and elderly are well looked after. This is reflected in Turner's (2001, pg 34) argument that, "the formation, structure and bonding of the family are strongly knitted together in that when one member is affected the whole family is affected".

Alefaio's (2007) study on the wellbeing of Sāmoan youth supports this argument, concluding that collectivism and cohesion in Pacific families has significant impact on Sāmoan youths' wellbeing. In addition, the term cohesion refers to a strong collective family structure and positive relationship among family members and kin groups. The central importance of kinship and kinship relationships, which form the basis of fa'a-Sāmoa lies behind the continued importance of the family among migrant Sāmoan families (Pitt & Macpherson, 1974). However, traditional kinship beliefs and practices are changing among Sāmoans abroad. Some of these transformations weaken family relationships by undermining beliefs and practices which were protective. Certain elements of kinship practice produced social and psychological stress for those who were born and raised abroad. However, there are possibilities that these transformations may strengthen relationships if oppressive elements are removed by making practices more acceptable to New Zealand-resident Sāmoans, particularly the young people.

These transformations are reflected in family relationships. Some Sāmoan parents have expressed concern about whether or not their children will choose to or are able to maintain the fa'a-Sāmoa cultural values relating to family (Barwick, 2002). Anae, (2001) and Suaalii-Sauni (2001) argued that the core cultural values of fa'a-Sāmoa

will continue to be strong among Sāmoan families in New Zealand because these values continued to be valued by young people today. However, Macpherson (2001, pg 15) reported that “New Zealand-born generation’s world views; lifestyles and identities have been constructed in very different social and economic circumstances”. These circumstances have encouraged them to question their cultures and identities. Elliot and Gray’s (2000) review on family structure supported this argument by concluding that participants from different immigrant groups reported that their traditional obligations and responsibilities remained important in their lives although their sense of ethnic identity and commitment to cultural values did change over time.

Many studies reported that relationships between parents and young people are still strongly influenced by fa’a-Sāmoa values and family structure (Alefaio, 1999; Anae et al. 2002; Tiatia, 2003). However, these are also changing as educational achievements, socio-economic status and individual obligations have a major impact on responsibilities within these expatriate family structures. Fa’alau and Jensen (2006) supported and elaborated on these insights from analyses of quantitative and qualitative data on family relationships gathered from young Sāmoans in South Auckland. The researchers found that Sāmoan young people and their families were creating new ways of connecting with their fa’a-Sāmoa and with each other. These changes presented various beliefs and attitudes about āiga, and the role of fa’a-Sāmoa in the lives of Sāmoan young people and their families today.

The transformation of the Sāmoan family in the migrant enclave occurs in part, because of significant changes in the environment in which the family now exists. From personal experience working in a Pacific family violence service highlights the many challenges that Sāmoan families in New Zealand are facing especially between parents and their children. These often include deeper issues which relate to upbringing and expectations which can be conflicting when living with other cultures. Many families referred to the service have disciplined their children according to their cultural norms which do not necessarily align with their current cultural context and beliefs on how to bring up children. However, many young people report they are finding themselves challenged growing up in a strongly European influenced based cultural context but brought up by parents with Sāmoan cultural expectations and

beliefs. Despite these issues, Sāmoan families' especially young people continue to value their families and their fa'a-Sāmoa in various ways.

Summary

This chapter concluded that there is not one theory but rather many theories and models of family available in the literature which focus on and emphasise different dimensions of family. This review set out to provide a general review of the family specifically from sociology and psychology viewpoints on what they considered as family and how they studied family. Psychology developed family theories that continue to focus on the individual and his/her behaviour with the exception that the individual's behaviour goes through life changes as a result of their interaction with others. While the theories in psychology focused on the effect of family interaction to individual's behaviour sociologists were more interested in how people adapt and cope with the influences of these social structures and social systems.

This chapter recognised that philosophies in both psychology and sociology had significantly shifted in ways that different dimensions of families are explored. The theories and models of family both in sociology and psychology will continue to evolve, be refined and re-developed over the years. The theories of family each dealt with different propositions relevant to the studies of family as a system, the theories also shared similar concepts and agreed on various dimensions of family development. These dimensions included the changes and cycle of development family members experienced as results of their interactions with other family members and social groups that they are part of. In fact, there are changes and transitions families go through due to internal and external factors and circumstances that could both strengthen family cohesion and/or weaken family ties.

The perspectives and ideologies about Sāmoan families are also presented and links are drawn between the ideas and philosophies of family from all three perspectives. This chapter examined the organisation of traditional Sāmoan families and identified the changes and how these affect the lives and wellbeing of Sāmoan young people in New Zealand. The definitions of Sāmoan families suggests that Sāmoans defined family based on their collective responsibilities, however, there have been changes to

how these kin groups are organised which have had a major impact on the collective notion of family relationships and the traditional ideology of a Sāmoan family.

The analysis of the Sāmoan family suggests that there are important links between the ideas of families within sociology, psychology and Sāmoan culture. Some of the important links between sociology, psychology and Sāmoan ideologies of family this chapter reveals are those based on the traditional functions of the family, its role in society, the changes in these roles and functions and transitions families go through to adapt to these changes. The family is part of a system according to sociology and it has an important function to the survival of that system.

The Sāmoan family unit is part of the extended kin groups which also are part of the villages in Sāmoa. One important function of the family for the survival of the society was to socialise the young members according to their social roles. In doing so, equilibrium and social order in society are more likely to be maintained if these young members learnt and accepted behaviour that are appropriate to become good members of society. Likewise, in Sāmoan families, one of its important roles is to pass on the knowledge to their children by teaching them the importance of cultural values and customs of fa'a-Sāmoa. By learning these values young members learnt about the boundaries not only in their relationships with family members but also those in the village and in wider society. Therefore, young members learnt how to behave accordingly towards these other families and village people and society. If there is a huge breakdown in these relationships then the consequences of disharmony and disequilibrium are more likely to occur within families. These expectations about relationships and boundaries have changed and Sāmoan families are finding new ways of adapting to these changes and at the same time trying to hold on to these relationships.

The function of society depends very much on the contributions of the sub-systems such as the family according to sociology. This is similar to the Sāmoan village setting where each sub-group that make up the structure of the village has a function towards the village. The same applies to the church in both Sāmoa and outside Sāmoa. The church has many sub-groups and they each have functions and purposes that contribute to the survival of the church. In fact, consensus decisions and cohesive

responsibilities between these subgroups strengthen relationships and maintain spiritual harmony in the church. At the family level, the survival of the Sāmoan family depends on the members of the family where each member has commitment, responsibility and obligations towards each other and the family. These commitment and obligations can weaken when some Sāmoan families are isolated from their extended family support network or others purposely decided to isolate themselves due to lifestyle choices.

In both psychology and sociology there has been a huge shift of interest to interaction between humans and their environments. This focus on interaction helps explain why some changes in society affect some people more than others. It also explains how some behaviour exists, why some people react differently to these changes and why others can easily adapt to these changes. The review of Sāmoan literature emphasises that there are changes to the structure and traditional role of a Sāmoan family both in Sāmoa and outside Sāmoa. Family relationships have been transformed and families are finding new ways to respond and adapt to these transformation while others continue to resist accepting the reality of these transformations and how it is affecting their families.

Chapter Four: Linking Wellbeing and Family Organisation

Introduction

This chapter presents key debates and analysis from literature on how adolescent wellbeing has been linked to different aspects of family structure and family organisation. As shown in the literature, individual indices of wellbeing are related to various aspects of family structure, family function and family relationships. The review confirms that there are both positive and negative links between wellbeing and various aspects of family structure and organisation. It also explores similarities and differences between Sāmoan and European views on wellbeing and family organisation. This chapter also looks at the breakdown of family connections and the various explanations offered for this.

Western Conceptualisations of Wellbeing and Family

There are significant discussions on family functioning and forms of family organisation that contribute to positive relationships among family members. In addition, there are family functions and family practices that are more likely to have a negative impact and unpleasant effects on relationships in other families. Several studies examined the connection between wellbeing and different types of family structures: specifically two parent, single parent and step-parent families (Harvey & Byrd, 2000; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Buist, Dekovic, Meeus & Van Aken, 2003; Crosnoe, 2004). There had been earlier research which focused on divorced families and cohabiting families and their findings provided many insights into how these family types influence youth's behaviour, health status and educational achievements (Amato & Keith, 1991; Demo & Acock, 1988; Emery, 1988). Heiland and Liu (2006) commented that most studies of children with single mother families find that they fare worse in areas such as health status, educational achievements due to lack of resources than children from married intact families. Other scholars such as Deleire & Kalil, 2002; and Hamilton, 2005 were interested in augmented families,

also known as family groups or extended families, particularly elements of relationships between grandparents and siblings. For example, Deleire and Kalil (2002) found that children from single mothers' households with the presence of a grandparent often show comparable achievements in school as children in married two-parent families. Brown (2004) examined the roles of economic and parental resources on the adolescents' emotional problems and school engagement among cohabiting biological parents, cohabiting stepfamilies and married stepfamilies. Brown (2004) found that there was no significant difference to the wellbeing of adolescents from cohabiting biological parents, cohabiting stepfamilies and married stepfamilies.

There are large amounts of literature highlighting the importance of family relationships (Resnick, Harris & Blum, 1993; O'Connor, Hetherington & Reiss, 1998). Within this literature, much attention is focused on the positive nature of family relationships. One of the main general conclusions drawn from the literature indicated that positive, happy and loving relationships between youth and family members have positive impacts on their self-esteem, self-confidence and their overall sense of wellbeing. Moreover, unpleasant and negative relationships between parents and children associated with bad and risky behaviour contributed to young people's acting out and violent behaviour, substance and tobacco consumptions and their low levels of wellbeing (Resnick et al, 1993; O'Connor et al., 1998). Call (2002) also stated that adolescents' positive interactions with their environments, their family members, people and surroundings determined the level of their wellbeing. Salmon and Todd (2008) on the other hand, reported that family relationships tended to control the level of happiness or causes of pain for family members. Similarly, Libbey et al., (2002) argued that young people with strong, close relationships with family members were less likely to engage in risky health behaviours. It is essential to note here that the studies presented below use different indices of wellbeing and family to determine how the two are correlated. These two studies concur that two parent families are more stable than single parent and step-parent families. Moreover, they report that positive family relationships influence protective outcomes and a high level of wellbeing for children and adolescents.

Linking Wellbeing and Family Structure

The majority of research on wellbeing and family structure found that on average adolescents raised by two married biological parents were most likely to do well in life (Barnes, 1984; Dornbusch et al., 1985). Those raised by single parent and step-parent households were more likely to experience a high level of teenage problematic behaviour (Steinberg, 1987). The evidence across literature was that the two parent family was a more solid and strong family structure for the wellbeing of both children and adolescents (Heiland & Liu, 2006; Brown, 2004; Deleire & Kalil, 2002). These children and adolescents were more likely to have appropriate behaviour, better health and high achievement in life than those from single parent and or step-parents' households because of financial support and resources and better role models for both boys and girls. A study by Griffin, Botvin, Scheier, Diaz and Miller (2000) supported this theory, arguing that boys in their study who engaged in the highest rates of problem behaviour were from single parent family structures.

Dornbusch and colleagues (1985) investigated the relationships between the patterns of decision making and deviant behaviour among adolescents in three family structures: 'the mother-only household', 'two natural parents household' and 'mother-only household with an additional adult'. The study used interview data collected from individual adolescents from a representative national sample of the Cycle III National Health Examination Survey from 1966 to 1970. During this examination survey extensive data was collected from both adolescents and their families. Information on health history and behaviour of the adolescent was collected from the parents. Adolescents were also asked to provide information from their perspectives of their health history, and a "variety of other behavioural habits, attitudes and beliefs" (Dornbusch et al., 1985, pg 328). The deviant behaviour was defined as being arrested, in trouble and contact with the law; smoking, truancy and discipline in schools. The decision making was described as choosing own clothes, ways of spending own money, choices of friends and how late they were able to stay out. The main findings of this research suggested that the adolescents in mother-only households are more likely to make their own decisions without parental help and are more likely to exhibit deviant behaviour when compared to adolescents from two natural parent households. However, adolescents from mother-only households with

the presence of an additional adult suggested that there was a “reduction in various forms of adolescent deviant behaviour and increased parental control” (Dornbusch, 1985, pg 326). It was suggested that the main reason for the greater number of deviants among youth in mother-only household was due to the absence of the second adult. In fact, the involvement of the second adult in the lives of young people reduces deviance.

A similar study by Brown in 2004 used data collected from 1,322 children residing with a cohabiting parent or with one biological parent and a cohabiting partner and those children living with two cohabiting parents. The 1,322 sample was selected from a total sample of 35,938 families and their children who participated in the 1999 National Survey of America’s Families. Brown (2004, pg 351) investigated the relationship between family structure and wellbeing of children from “two biological married parents, two biological cohabiting parents, married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, single mother only, single father only and no parent i.e. other families”. Brown examined the role of economic and parental resources on the children’s behavioural and emotional problems and their participation in school. The behavioural and emotional problems were described as lack of concentration, not getting along with other children and feelings of being sad or depressed. Additional indicators included the child’s sense of being useless and inferior, nervousness, having trouble sleeping, telling lies and performing poorly at school. Engagement with school was described as caring about school work, doing school work only when told and consistency with doing homework. The parental psychological wellbeing included being scared, relaxed and happy whereas aggravation referred to parents’ feelings towards how much they gave up to care and support for the needs of their child and the parent feeling angry towards the child. The result of the descriptive analysis suggested that the wellbeing outcomes for children and adolescents varied across family structures. The children and youth living apart from their two biological parents reported more behavioural and emotional problems and less school participation. On the other hand, the multivariate analysis result implied that children and youth living in married stepfamilies, single mother or without parents reported higher levels of behavioural and emotional problems than those living in two biological married parent households.

Heiland and Liu (2006) used longitudinal data from a total of 2,331 children born to unmarried parents from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS) that examined the effect of status and transitions of parental relationships on children's wellbeing. The parental relationships were defined as cohabitation relationships, visiting parent and no romantic involvement. The transitions referred to changes to the parents' relationships one year after the child's birth and when the child was three years old. Interviews with parents were conducted after childbirth, when the child was one year old and at three years. Measures of children's wellbeing focused on health and behavioural outcomes. Health focused on the child's overall health with regards to the child having asthma. The behavioural indicators referred to whether the child was shy, fussy, cried often, was upset easily and, whether the child was friendly to strangers (Heiland & Liu, 2006). The results indicated that relationships and collaboration between two biological parents which eventually ended up in a marriage were considered beneficial to the child's development and wellbeing. In addition, children born to cohabiting biological parents were less likely to have asthma than those children from mothers who had little involvement with the child's biological father. These young people are more likely to live in poorer housing and have less money for doctor's visit due to the lack of involvement and financial support by the child's father.

Furthermore, there was no significant difference in outcomes for children of married biological parents after one year of childbirth and those children from cohabiting parents. While Heiland and Liu (2006) focused on two biological and cohabiting parents, Carlson (2006) observed two main independent variables, the father's involvement in the lives of adolescents and how this related to adolescents externalising (aggressions) and internalising (depression, anxiety, low self esteem) problematic behaviours. This study tested a hypothesis that a father's involvement in family life "mediates the impact of family structure and adolescent behaviour" (2006, pg 23) using control variables such as age, sex and gender of the adolescent. The results suggested the father's involvement to be strongly associated with less problem behaviour of these adolescents than those who have less involvement with their fathers because of the lack of role model in their lives.

The research on African-American adolescents presented some interesting findings on the influence of family structure on the life and wellbeing of adolescents. These findings slightly differed from the results of studies discussed above. There appeared to be no significant variation across different family structures and problem behaviour among the African American adolescents. For example, Zimmerman, Salem and Maton, (1995) studied 254 African American adolescents who did not finish high school and compared the substance use, delinquency and social support of adolescents from, “single mother, stepparent, both parents, mother with extended family and extended family only households” (pg 1600). The substance use and delinquency was measured using a 7 point Likert Scale (Newcomb & Harlow, 1986) which measured the frequency of use and whether they were in trouble with the police in the previous year. This research found that alcohol and substance use and delinquency was the same for adolescents from these different household types. It was also found that there was more parental support for adolescents from single-mother households for African American adolescents than those from two parent or step parent households.

Similarly, a more recent cross-sectional study by DeBaryshe, Yuen and Nakamura (2006) examined the effect of parenting practices and family commitment on behavioural adjustment and chronic health problems such as asthma, allergies and other health problems for 155 young Native Hawaiians. The participants were from two types of households, one headed by single mothers only and the other by mothers who are either married or cohabiting with a male partner respectively. The use of positive reinforcement, monitoring, strict consequences, harsh discipline and problem solving were five key aspects of parenting practices examined. The youth respect and youth support for other family members were crucial aspects of family responsibility measured. The results suggested parenting practices, specifically harsh punishment, to be strongly connected with problem behaviour among adolescents from these two different family structures. Moreover, positive reinforcement, monitoring and problem solving along with youth respect and support towards other family members was strongly correlated with behavioural adjustment and physical wellbeing for these adolescents in these two households.

Linking Wellbeing and Family Relationships

The literature reviewed consistently find that loving and caring relationships among family members are positive factors strongly correlated with a high level of wellbeing. The studies reviewed below examined various aspects of family relationships and functions to determine the link between adolescent wellbeing and family. Some of these included parent-child relationships, marital relationships, caring adult, kinship support, family closeness and adolescent attachment, feeling love, close relationships, parents' presence in the homes and participation in family activities.

Dekovic and Buist (2005) examined the relationship between parent-adolescent relationships, marital relationships and sibling relationships and adolescent adjustment among 288 two parent household families. The youth adjustment was defined as the formation of identity which was measured by examining its impact on externalizing problems (aggression, delinquency, social problems) and internalizing problematic behaviour (withdrawal and depression). This study used a round-robin design to gather information from all family members. A series of questionnaires was completed by all family members. A modified version of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) with 10 items rated on a 5 point scale (1=completely untrue to 5=completely true) was used to determine indices of the relationships between family members. The Utrecht-Groningen Identity Development Scale (U-GIDS) reported by Meeus (1996) was used to measure identity development. The Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) (Achenbach, 1991; Verhulst, van Der Ende & Koot, 1996) was utilized to measure adolescent problem behaviour. The study found the quality of all family relations was significantly related to the adolescents' identity formation and problem behaviour. It was also stated that the quality of parent-siblings relationships was highly associated with the adolescent's adjustment.

Dekovic (1999) examined multiple risk and protective factors and how these contributed to the development of both externalising and internalising problems during adolescence. Dekovic expanded on the ecological model by Bronfenbrenner. About 53% of families selected from a larger sample of 10,000 families participated in this study, representing different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The

adolescents, their fathers and mothers all completed a questionnaire as part of the study. It was found that low level of parental support and participation increased the probability of problem behaviour for these adolescents. The study results also showed that “attachment to parents and peers are the most important predictors of externalising behaviour” (Dekovic, 1999, pg 677). Buist, Dekovic, Meeus and van Aken, (2004) conducted a subsequent longitudinal study with 288 adolescents from two parent household families examining the relationships between parental attachment, internalising (withdrawn, anxiety/depressions) and externalising (delinquent, aggressive behaviour) problem behaviour. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment sub-scales of communication trust, and alienation was used to assess the quality of parental attachment. The findings showed that there were significant negative correlations between attachment and internalising problem behaviour and attachment and externalising problem behaviour at each measurement time. Buist et al. (2004, pg 262) also found that:

‘Adolescents who report higher quality of attachment show less internalising problem behaviour 1 year later. Conversely, adolescents who show more internalising problem behaviour report a lower quality of attachment 1 year later.’

O’Connor (1998), used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health in USA conducted in 1995 to examine the influence of family, school and individual attributes on adolescent wellbeing. Close to 20,000 young participants who were in grades 7 to 12 from a total of 80 high schools completed a questionnaire on drug and alcohol use, sexual behaviour, family dynamics and peer relationships. Participants from grades 9-12 were interviewed as part of this study. O’Connor found that parents’ close relationships with adolescents were associated with lower levels of substance use and that adolescents had fewer chances of engaging in risky behaviour. The findings also illustrated that both the presence of parents in the homes and their active participation in activities with the adolescents does have a protective effect on youth’s lives. Other studies also argued that positive family interaction for example, communication and interaction between family members was strongly associated with a high level of adolescent self-esteem and teenage adjustment. In another study Hauser, Powers & Noam (1991) observed how family members interacted and communicated with each other. Questionnaires were completed by 133 young people

and their family members, mainly the parents. The study reported that family interaction was one prominent aspect of family relationships and that positive family interaction has a major impact on adolescent ego development. Examining the level of interaction between family members provided valuable information as to how these interactions influenced family members and family systems.

In New Zealand, a study by Harvey and Byrd (2000) investigated the relationships between young people's patterns of emotional attachment and ability to cope with different situations in their family environment. A total of 95 participants from Canterbury University participated by completing a questionnaire. This study used various scales to measure the relationships between these variables. For example, the Adult Attachment Scale was used to measure and identify patterns of attachment. The Family Environment Scale (FES) was utilised to determine family environment in terms of family relationships. The Family Sense of Coherence Scale was used to assess participants' perceptions of their families. The results showed that individuals with high levels of secure attachment perceived themselves as having harmonious relationships with their families. On the other hand, participants with a high level of anxious attachment reported having problems with authority and conflict with family members.

The roles of grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins in the lives of adolescents were also considered essential. The effect of living and interacting with extended families has been examined by many scholars such as Bengston, (2001) and Hamilton, (2005). These studies focused primarily on the roles and contributions of grandparents as caregivers (Cherlin & Furstenburg, 1986; Tomlin, 1998). Some scholars stated that grandparents as caregivers tended to become sources of support for family members, providers of knowledge and history, teachers, nurturers and mentors for the grandchildren and sometimes their parents (Hanks, 1998; Goodfellow & Lavery, 2003).

Other scholars focused on the characteristics of a caring adult and the influence on the adolescent's life. For example, Laursen and Birmingham's (2003) ethnographic study assessed the perceptions of 23 youths about the behaviour of a caring adult, by using open-ended questions. The participants were observed during interactions with their family members. The caring adult was described by participants as someone who was

trustworthy, paid close attention to their needs, showed empathy, was available to them at all times, provided affirmation, showed respect by including them in family decisions and was a good role model. These attributes of a caring adult were reported to contribute to positive relationships with the adolescents.

Some scholars (Lamborn & Nguyen, 2004; Demo and Cox, 2000) examined family and kinship support among African-American young people. Lamborn and Nguyen (2004) studied 158 African-American adolescents from the 9th and 10th grades. They examined the adolescents' perceptions of family interactions in terms of kinship support in regards to their socialisation, advice available to them and problem solving. The study discovered that kinship support was positively associated with adolescent adjustment. The adolescents' attachment was described as a sense of belonging to their ethnic groups, active participation in family events and their sense of control over the activities in their lives. The findings indicated that high kinship support correlated with stronger ethnic identity and higher self-reliance for these adolescents. The findings also implied that kinship support was closely correlated with adolescent adjustment from both single and two parent households. Hamilton (2005) examined the relationship between adolescent well-being and the presence of non-parental adults in the household. Using the sample from a National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health conducted in 1995, Hamilton found the presence of grandparents in the lives of African-American young people to be correlated with fewer deviant behaviour and depressive symptoms. However, the presence of non-parental adults was considered to be associated with greater depressive symptoms but lower levels of abnormal behaviour among young people living with a large number of siblings. This study concluded that the connection between extended families and adolescent well-being varied and required attention when examining the "benefits of such families as their impact varies with the outcome of interest, the relationship to the child, and other characteristics within the family" (Hamilton, 2005, pg 260). Recommendations from this study suggested more in-depth analyses was required to assess the risks and benefits of relationships with extended families and the relationship to health and behaviour among children and adolescents.

These studies and many others suggested that there were both positive and negative links between wellbeing and different aspects of family relationships. Many

researchers arrived at this assumption by measuring and comparing different indices of wellbeing and family relationships. Similarly a review of several Sāmoan studies (Tiatia, 2003; Samu, 2003) illustrates that there is a relationship between wellbeing and family that is consistent with the results of the studies discussed above. Therefore, it is necessary to examine these issues from the perspectives of Sāmoan in particular the adolescents to identify the crucial connections.

Sāmoan theorising of wellbeing and families

There have been many studies examining various and important aspects of a Sāmoan āiga (family) both in and outside Samoa (Macpherson, 1974, 1978, 2004; Macpherson & Macpherson, 1987, 1990, 1999; Anae, 1995; Shoeffel & Meleisea, 1998; Tiatia, 1998; Alefai, 1999; McCallin et al., 2001; Samu, 2003; Anae, 2004; Suaalii-Sauni 2006). These studies acknowledged the importance of family relationships between young Sāmoans and their parents and were embedded in, and defined by, the concept of āiga and are strongly influenced by fa'a-Sāmoa values. That is, the relationship between parents and children were, for example, very much driven by the values and practices of fa'a-Sāmoa. Fa'a-Sāmoa, or the Sāmoan way, is a form of social organisation where upholding kinship values and maintaining kinship relationships is important. Traditional fa'a-Sāmoa is a complex form of social organisation that defines and organises many areas of family relationships. At a family household level, values such as alofa (love); fa'aaloalo (respect); usita'i (discipline); feagaiga (a covenant between siblings and others) and tautua (service) define and structure aspects of relationships between grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings living together in the same household and the extended families (Aiono, 1986; Va'a, 1988; Mulitalo-Lauta, 1998; Maiava, 2001; Vailaau, 2005). These same values also apply to kinship relationships between different households of an extended āiga also known as pui-āiga or au āiga (extended kin family) (Ngan-Woo, 1985; O'Meara, 1990; Utumapu, 1992; Tiatia, 2003). The central importance of kinship and kinship relationships, which form the basis of fa'a-Sāmoa, lies behind the continued importance of reciprocity of moral, social and psychological support towards family members. Inherent in fa'a-Sāmoa are principles and values that govern these relationships and protect the va-tāpuia (relationships of mutual respect) of the collective āiga (Jensen, 2006; Anae, 1998).

Sāmoan people view health and wellbeing from a holistic perspective. This means a strong connection to identity and culture, maintaining cohesive relationships and fulfilling obligations towards the āiga contributes to high levels of positive health and wellbeing for the family (McAdoo, 1993). Jensen (2006, pg 58) examined young Sāmoan women's experiences about their families and concluded that: "wellbeing for Sāmoan young women is crucially impacted by the quality of their family relationships, and their ability to perform their reciprocal obligations within these relationships". Tamasese and colleagues (1997, pg 83) posited that their findings pointed to "the Sāmoan conception of persona or self as a total being, comprising the Spiritual, Mental (psychological) and Physical elements, the whole person exists, not as an individual, but in relationship with other people". In a personal communication with two grandparents (T. Tanuvasa, June 16, 2007; M. Lemanu, July 25, 2007) discussion included defining important principles underpinning fa'a-Sāmoa and described positive family relationships by referring to concepts such as: āiga e fealofani (harmony), āiga e loto fesoasoani (help and support others), āiga e fiafia (happy family), āiga e malolosi ma maloloina lelei (strong and healthy family), āiga e fai fai mea fa'atasi ma autasi (family working together and consensus), āiga e mau le moe ma le tofa (strong wisdom), āiga e felagolagoma'i (family supporting each other) āiga e alolofa (love), and āiga e fa'aaloalo le tasi i le tasi (family respecting one another). These descriptions are embedded in the concepts of family collectivism and family cohesion which define the collective responsibilities and obligations of members of the whole āiga (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1997; Alefaio, 2007).

Maintaining and sustaining family relationships based on these values are considered the key determinants of the level of wellbeing for family members. Tanuvasa (2007) further commented that Sāmoan families that do not uphold all of the above values are likely to have no support network and to experience ongoing disagreements and arguments that could lead to serious consequences for their individual members. It was suggested that families who continue to have disagreements are more likely to have negative impacts on their health and wellbeing as a family. Lemanu (2007) supported this notion by adding that if families continued to uphold these good relationships then the younger generation would continue practising these values and enjoy the benefits that follow from membership of a united family. Both Tanuvasa

and Lemanu, who are Sāmoan elders, noticed that both in Sāmoa and New Zealand today there were many families who had moved away from these values and ended up being on their own trying to bring up their children without the support of families. According to Lemanu (2007), some young couples and their children are no longer part of an extended family; they prefer to do things on their own stating they no longer needed the support of extended families. Other Sāmoan households continue to be part of extended family units but limit contact to family activities such as weddings and funerals. One consequence reported is that their children were growing up with little or no contact or close connection to their extended families.

The values articulated by Lemanu and Tanuvasa (2007) remain important but there are changes to how these kinship relationships and organisational structures operate today. The historical changes in the political economy of Sāmoa introduced major changes as to how kinship groups are structured and organised. These changes continue to impact today both inside and outside Sāmoa. In particular, it has been stated Sāmoan families in New Zealand are struggling to maintain their collective responsibilities towards their āiga. Some families are struggling to adapt to the New Zealand lifestyle and environment that requires or rewards different values for family survival (Jensen, 2006). These challenges strongly affect the structure and organisation of Sāmoan families in New Zealand (Pitt & Macpherson, 1974; Le Tagaloa, 1997; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998).

Linking Wellbeing and Family Structure and Organisations

For many reasons, the traditional structure and organisation of Sāmoan kinship or āiga has changed (kinship and āiga are used interchangeably in this chapter). Many scholars and their colleagues discuss the traditional and social organisational structure of Sāmoan families within Sāmoan society documenting historical, economic and political factors and the ideas and systems that changed the traditional structure and organisation of kinships or āiga among Sāmoan people (Pitt and Macpherson, 1974; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1983; Meleisea, 1987; Meleisea, 1992; Schoeffel, 1996; Fairburn-Dunlop, 1996; So'o, 2000; Jensen, 2006). Macpherson and Macpherson (1999) examined the impact of social and economic development in Sāmoa on kinship organisation. In their study, Macpherson and Macpherson (1999) track the changes in

the political economy of Sāmoa over the years and how it has affected the structure and organisation of kinship. They noted that in pre-European society, during early European contact and up to the time of independence, the transformations of kinship have emerged due to the introduction and acceptance of four factors in the political economy of Sāmoa. The four factors are:

‘a new electoral system, the growth of a wage economy in Samoa, changes in land tenure, and labour migration have produced significant changes in the nature of both relationships between branches within aiga and between individuals and their aiga in the period since independence’. (Macpherson & Macpherson 1999, pg 82)

As discussed in earlier chapters, the collective structure and organisation of kinships were vitally important for the survival of the āiga and the villages. Inherent in these structures are roles and obligations that clearly defined responsibilities for each individual member towards the āiga and rules and boundaries that govern these various relationships. The emergence of the economic and political factors outlined above introduced significant changes to this collective structure of Sāmoan kinship groups. Today it is recognised that kinship groups continue to struggle to hold on to their collective responsibilities. In saying that, other kinship groups are slowly adapting to these changes but these often generate more issues for the āiga. Some noticeable changes are in the ways that disputes concerning rights to family land and titles are being sought in court rather than within the collective āiga, the way it was previously settled. The changes in land tenure, and introduction of a new electoral system requires more mātai titles hence, new titles were created and the splitting of more mātai titles took place. These changes weaken the authority of the chosen sa’o in the kinship group over the use and allocation of land to the families. The splitting of mātai titles means there are more individuals who hold the same title and same level of authority therefore, decision making can be difficult to achieve. The wages from labour also transforms relationships not only between individuals but also towards kinship members (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1999). The wage earners were more likely to leave families in rural areas and re-locate themselves in urban areas to obtain wage work. For the majority of workers who have settled and live in urban areas family members were no longer needed in the same way and the migrants’ obligation towards their kinship groups was no longer always a top priority (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1999).

Macpherson (1997) indicated that a large number of Sāmoans migrated to New Zealand from the 1950s to 1970s mainly as labour. The New Zealand government policy for immigration during this period gave priority to young and single Sāmoan people whom were considered as “least expensive migrants and most able and likely to adapt to New Zealand society” (Macpherson, 1997, pg 81). The migrants continued to provide financial assistance to their families in Sāmoa by sponsoring other siblings’ and relatives’ migration. The sponsorship of these relatives was seen as their way of acknowledging their sense of obligation to their wider āiga by helping them out.

The migration factor had introduced major changes due to the “redistribution of resources and the demonstration of alternative forms of kinship organisation” (Macpherson 1999, pg 87). Macpherson pointed out that the remittances from relatives overseas are considered as personal and confined to the immediate families. Those who migrated to New Zealand and other countries were frequently sending remittances to their families in Sāmoa, in fact, the more relatives one has overseas the better off the family is, in terms of lifestyle and money, than other households without overseas relatives. For some families, the remittances are sometimes used for big projects such as building a big house, purchasing a fishing boat or a new car. These new additions to the families’ personal property help accumulate more capital for the families. The more capital the families have the more powerful and well respected they become by other families in the villages. Thus, the control over families’ property and the economy are no longer a collective concern but the control and responsibilities of the immediate family households.

Sāmoan migrants in New Zealand recreated and adapted Sāmoan ways of life by establishing church groups which functioned as a new form of the village in Sāmoa (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1998). Participation in these church groups provided families with a sense of belonging. Some extended families attended the same church as their way of connecting with each other on a regular basis (Fa’alau & Jensen, 2006). While some families continued to attend the same church as ways of re-connecting with their extended families, others have moved away to join other church groups due to geographical distance. Some families moved away because of the ongoing conflict and the level of church politics which divided the church as a group as well as the families attending the same church, as in the case of the Westmere Congregational

Christian Church of Sāmoa (Samoa Time, 2011). This type of conflict has been an ongoing issue for many Sāmoan church groups in New Zealand.

The family dispersal, employment commitments and lifestyle choices influenced how families are organised and is blamed for weakening the collectivist structure of Sāmoan families in New Zealand. Family dispersal affected how families make decisions because quite often, the decision making process is now being made by one or two people causing tension for some families. Often the two people could be retired and elderly, or they could be two people sharing the same mātai title or two adult members who have no mātai titles but can afford to contribute more to decision making activities. The decisions are most often made through telephone calls rather than the face to face interactive process that often took place. While some households are beginning to adapt to these new creative ways of family decision making others are struggling to accept the ways these decisions are being made. This type of issue is enough for some families to withdraw from these kinships activities causing a distancing among kin.

Geographical distance also made it difficult for families to socialise and quite often these families only got to see each other during large cultural activities such as funerals and weddings. One of the main issues experienced working in a Pacific agency is that often Sāmoan families opted to seek support from agencies instead of their extended families, even though some families could seek support from their relatives. This is an indicator that the collective support network has become weakened. Many families seem reluctant to seek help from their extended families in their new environment. Three main reasons were cited as to why these families did not have or seek extended family support. These reasons include: some families have no relatives in Auckland and the families who have relatives have disconnected themselves from the families' mafutaga (family gathering). There are stated to be few families who have no relatives in Auckland. These families have re-created connections with agencies and church families whom they use as their support network and these connections provide them with a sense of belonging to a group. There are also families who refuse to seek support from their extended families because some have voluntarily distanced themselves from their extended families while others do not participated in their extended families activities. Some family

members have walked away due to past disagreements concerning the ways their extended families affairs were taken care of by other relatives. Other family members have avoided contributing to family activities. Many refuse to return to the extended family if help is needed. Often families are more comfortable in seeking food parcels from agencies rather than asking extended families for help. For most, it is simply about shame as well as pride; families who are in need refuse to let their extended relatives know that they need help. In fact, these families are struggling and the collective extended family that was once a group of family members with defined obligations towards the welfare of the whole āiga no longer exists for many Sāmoan families.

The commitment to employment for both parents also affected how families are structured and organised given the lifestyle in New Zealand. Parents often struggle with their commitment to the financial needs of the family and their obligations and responsibilities as parents. Quite often, with both parents working full time, grandparents take over the duties of the parents. In fact this can be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the bonds between grandparents and their grandchildren. As for other families the young people are more likely to take over the duties and responsibilities of parents. The young people often have the responsibility for making sure the younger siblings are bathed and fed. These extra responsibilities generate issues for young people especially in relation to their academic performance as time is spent elsewhere.

Linking Wellbeing and Family Relationships

It was encouraging to note that numerous studies have explored various aspects and functions of the Sāmoan family in migrant enclaves. (Tiatia, 1998, 2003; Fairburn-Dunlop, 2002; Samu, 2003; Cowley-Malcolm, 2005; Tunufa'i, 2005; Fa'alau & Jensen, 2006; Alefaio, 2007). Some of the studies suggested that positive family relationships and connections influenced the wellbeing of Sāmoan adolescents. Likewise some authors also recognised that these relationships could also have a negative effect on adolescents' health and wellbeing. A study by Edwards and colleagues (2003) explored themes and accounts of wellbeing among 87 young Maori, Pakeha and Sāmoans in South Auckland. They found that these young people viewed

their family relationships as providing great opportunities for positive interaction with their family members. Moreover, they also recognised the pressures the young people felt as a result of a breakdown in relationships with family members.

An article published by Fa'alau and Jensen (2006) combined data from two independent studies and reported on family relationships among Sāmoan adolescents and members of their nuclear and extended families. It was argued that “strong connections to family both nuclear and extended have been described as impacting positively on the wellbeing of young Sāmoan in this data” (2006, pg 23). Fa'alau and Jensen reported the negative factors young people considered as adversely affecting their relationships with their parents. For example, young people referred to parental control in terms of educational aspirations, choices of friends, not being given the opportunity to have a say in decisions affecting them and how lack of communication created major upheaval in their relationships with their parents. Factors affecting their relationships with extended families were the pressure for financial obligation towards big fa'alavelave (cultural activities) and the lack of connection and interaction due to geographical distance. This aligns with Cowley-Malcolm's (2005) findings that family dispersal in New Zealand has resulted in the lack of support structures for some parents compared to the traditional living arrangements in Sāmoa.

Fa'alau and Jensen (2006) illustrated that there were transitions in practices and behaviour of Sāmoan young people and their families in New Zealand. These transitions included various beliefs and attitudes about aiga, and the place of fa'a-Sāmoan and family relationships in the lives of Sāmoan young people and their families today. Some of these transitions may weaken family relationships by undermining beliefs and practices but it may also strengthen relationships by removing oppressive elements and making these practices more acceptable to New Zealand-raised Sāmoans (Tiatia, 1997; Anae, 1998; Taule'le'ausumai, 2001). Several studies by Tiatia (2003) argued that family relationships weakened when young people chose other alternative lifestyles such as staying out all Saturday night and not attending church on a Sunday. Such choices were stated to have increased tension in the relationship between parents and the young people. Another factor which produced tension within families was due to the parents' expectations for the young people to get involved in all church activities. Another tension was in regard to older

siblings' decisions to attend alternative church groups rather than their traditional denominations. The decision by these young people affected their relationships with parents and families which led to relationship breakdowns. Tiatia (2001) argued that further investigation into elements of family relationships was important to improve understanding of how the dynamics of the Sāmoan family contributed to the wellbeing of Sāmoan young people. This was similar to a study by Samu (2003) who recognised the role of the family in generating stress for Sāmoan adolescents and suggested further investigation into the influences of family dynamics and forms and levels of stresses experienced by New Zealand-born Sāmoans.

Similarities and Differences

This literature review illustrated that there are similarities and differences between the views of sociology, psychology and Sāmoan scholars concerning the link between wellbeing and different aspects of family organisations. Sociology and psychology studies selected different indices of wellbeing and measured these against various aspects of family structure and organisation. It was evident that two parent families were considered more stable and able to provide good and positive relationships that contributed to a high level of wellbeing for adolescents from these families. It was also argued that these positive relationships reduced the possibility of adolescents engaging in risky behaviour such as abusive alcohol and drug use and sexual behaviour. Most of these studies found that adolescents from single parent and step parent families were more likely to have a high level of problem behaviour, low school achievements and poor health compared to those from two biological parents' households.

While sociology and psychology research has compared and tested different types of family structures, Sāmoan scholars focused on the importance of family collectivism and cohesion in family relationships and the family support system embedded in fa'a-Sāmoa. The perspectives of Sāmoan scholars illustrated that examining different types of family is not important because what is significant to Sāmoan families is the quality and regularity of the support network from family and how this support influences the wellbeing of all family members. Therefore, a breakdown to this collective relationship and support network is suggested to be more likely to cause a

loss of cohesion and support between family members. This argument concurs with findings by other scholars who have examined the links between wellbeing and family among African-Americans (Zimmerman, Salem & Maton, 1995).

Sociology, psychology and Sāmoan studies discussed earlier agreed that positive family relationships correlated with a high level of wellbeing. However, the themes and concepts used to measure and describe these positive relationships varies. From the Sāmoan studies, positive relationships were based on familial and cultural obligations where upholding family values such as love and respect among extended family members were part and parcel of developing and maintaining positive relationships. By upholding these collective values and obligations, families were able to provide financial and moral support for one another during family activities and their day to day lives. In fact this strengthened family relations and the support network that was important to achieve cohesion and harmony in the families. However, many factors have been identified and discussed in this chapter as weakening these collective relationships thereby influencing the ways families are structured and organised.

Summary

This chapter indicated that there were important links between wellbeing and family structure and organisation. The summary of the literature discussed in this chapter identified some of the key studies that examined these issues. The selected research allowed this chapter to demonstrate that wellbeing is being explored and measured by examining different aspects of family. For instance, different family structures were investigated to determine the impact of these family types on children and adolescents' health and behavioural outcomes. Scholars who tested this hypothesis demonstrated that there were huge differences between families of two biological parents, single parent and step parent families. They argued that children and adolescents from two biological parents were more likely to have better health outcomes, high school achievement and less likely to engage in risky behaviour such as high use of alcohol and drug and sexual behaviour.

The findings from this chapter provided an important conceptual framework for this thesis: how young Sāmoans, raised and educated in New Zealand, view the connection between their wellbeing and family as opposed to the perspectives of older Sāmoans, born and educated abroad. Many researchers and scholars examined the collective and holistic functions of an extended family where cultural responsibilities and obligations of family members were important to the welfare of the whole family. The extended family was responsible for developing and maintaining harmony and positive relationships for the benefit of all family members. In particular, it was the responsibility of the whole family to raise the children by providing for their needs and teaching them Sāmoan values. It was evident that these values were being challenged due to social and lifestyle issues, family expectations and geographical isolation of family members living in New Zealand. These isolating factors create serious problems for many families and it has affected the collective structure of the āiga. Therefore it is important for this study to divulge what Sāmoan adolescents considered as positive aspects of their family relationships and to then look at how these are connected to their wellbeing. Likewise identifying relationship factors which affect their wellbeing adversely are also important as only then can appropriate protective measures be designed to cater for the health and wellbeing of these adolescents and their families for the future.

Chapter Five: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter introduces the research design and methods used in this study. It begins by discussing the rationale for, and the strengths and weaknesses of the mixed methods approach adopted for this study; details of the 'Youth 2000' social survey from which baseline data was drawn; and a description of the qualitative methods used in this study to further explore the main themes of the survey results. The process of consultation, data collection and analysis are outlined below with the discussion of various ethical and research issues which were important in the course of the study.

Methodology: 'O le tele o sulu e maua ai figota'

O le tele o sulu e maua ai figota is a Sāmoan proverb, literally translated as: 'the more torches used the better the catch of shellfish'. This fishing is done at night and more lights used make a huge difference to visibility and to discovering more shellfish. This proverb is commonly used by Sāmoans to refer to different views and perspectives shared during family and/or community discussion. Radio Sāmoa, 1593AM in Auckland, initiated a programme on Tuesday nights under the leadership of well-known mātai or chiefs, to discuss various issues about the Sāmoan language and culture. It is a talkback radio programme called 'o le tele o sulu e maua ai figota'; where Sāmoan people share their views on cultural and language issues. Sāmoan listeners of all ages and genders can ring in and give their translation and understanding of Sāmoan proverbs and Sāmoan terms on air. The proverb has also been used elsewhere by Tunufa'i (2004); he provided a Sāmoan-born perspective on the issue of Sāmoan identity based on the work of two New Zealand-born Sāmoans Anae (1995) and Tiatia, (2003). Tunufa'i (2004) claims that opportunities to view the same issues from various perspectives are very important and used this proverb to refer to his and others' points of view on Sāmoan identity. It is important to note here that there are various ways to translate this proverb but its meaning remains the same.

I have used this proverb: 'o le tele o sulu e maua ai figota' to design the methodological framework for this study. As mentioned above this proverb is literally translated as: 'o le tele o sulu meaning 'more torches' and 'e maua ai figota' is 'will assure a larger catch of shellfish'. The preferred translation of 'o le tele o sulu e maua ai figota' for the purpose of this study is 'the more torches used the more shellfish found'. In this study 'o le tele o sulu' refers to range of different strategies, perspectives, frameworks and methods used and 'e maua ai figota' refers to the knowledge and understanding able to be gained from employing the widest possible range of theoretical perspectives and research methods in this research project. More specifically, 'o le tele o sulu e maua ai figota' in this context refers to the belief that there are significant gains to be made from combination of perspectives and cultural practices from both social science and Pacific theoretical and research paradigms (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldergrave & Bush, 1997; Maua-Hodges, 2000; Thaman, 2002; Health Research Council, 2005; Otsuka, 2006; Vaioleti, 2006; Gegeo, 1998).

This study acknowledges the value of a range of Pacific protocols, methods and various processes pertinent to this study. These were used to augment those available in social science to ensure that this study had the very best chance of accurately reflecting and comprehending the Pacific, in this case Sāmoan, worldview which underpins social action. Specifically, it reflects elements of cultural knowledge which are essential to an understanding of the Sāmoan construction of reality, and practices which are essential to the development of an effective and productive research relationship between researchers and participants in Sāmoan settings.

More specifically, as a mature Sāmoan woman, raised in the Sāmoan culture and fluent in the Sāmoan language, I was able to use accumulated cultural knowledge to comprehend the ways in which Sāmoans constructed and understood concepts at the centre of this project and to understand the ways in which these were linked constructed and understood. Thus, I had no difficulty in understanding the concept of gerontocracy which lies at the basis of the distribution of power and authority in Sāmoan society and which structures the relationships between social roles in Sāmoan society. The values and reasoning which underlie both the concept and social practice,

and the language in which it is constructed, are an integral part of my own experience and being.

At the same time, as a Sāmoan who has lived in New Zealand and associated with Sāmoan-born and raised in New Zealand in a variety of contexts, I am also aware that their realities differ in various ways from those of their Sāmoan-raised parents. I was able to draw on both my own experience, and that of younger New Zealand-raised kin and associates, to attempt to understand their conceptions of the foundations of power and authority and the ways in which they are constructed.

Furthermore, as a student of social science, I am able to draw on the literature of social science for various disciplinary models of the origins and foundations of power and authority in society and of models which show how these are employed and structure social relationships.

Similarly with approaches to research design and practice. As one familiar with Sāmoan cultural protocols, I was able to incorporate into the research design features and practices which I knew would be central to the effective engagement with those who chose to participate in the study. These included an acceptance of the necessity of extended preliminary consultation and reciprocity with Pacific communities, the use of different methods to gain the perspectives of various people from different age groups and genders and utilising a range of analytical processes to analyse data.

Therefore, I argue that in this case, 'o le tele o sulu e maua ai figota' refers to the belief that social action is likely to be most comprehensively explained when it draws on and is informed by multiple cultural paradigms, and where it uses multiple research protocols and practices to ensure that participants' views and expectations of a research relationships are acknowledged and embodied in such a way that participants are more likely to engage fully and productively. It allows the use of more than one cultural perspective and research process to achieve the best outcome for this study.

These considerations led to the adoption of a methodology which most closely approximated that outlined above: one which accepted the value of employing

multiple approaches to the nature, gathering and interpretation of research data: the mixed method approach. The findings from this approach will hopefully add both to existing knowledge of appropriate practices for conducting research with Pacific people and gaining more understanding about issues affecting family relationships for Sāmoan young people and their families.

Mixed Methods Approach (MMA)

The mixed methods approach (MMA) has been considered as the third methodological movement in social and behavioural research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). It has been broadly and formally defined by various scholars (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Goodrick & Emmerson, 2007; Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Creswell and Tashakkori (2007, pg 4) broadly define it “as a research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry”. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, pg 17) on the other hand formally defines it as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts and language into a single study”. For example, interviews and/or focus groups may be conducted in a quantitative survey-based study to gain an understanding of the survey response. Recently scholars such as Murray (2003) Elliot (2005) Creswell and Tashakkori (2005), and Bryman (2007) generated more debate on various aspects of mixed methods and provided examples and descriptions of different ways to blend qualitative and quantitative methods to answer a particular research question.

While these scholars focused mainly at bridging the gap between qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Elliot, 2005; Murray, 2003) others criticised it in regards to the boundaries and distinctions between the two methods (Cumming, 2007). Newman, Ridenour, Newman and DeMarco, (2003) reviewed Murray’s (2003) book on blending qualitative and quantitative methods and raised important issues around consistency. They concluded that one of the important factors in mixed methods approach is the ability of the researcher to clearly explain how the two methods are being mixed or blended to achieve one’s research purpose.

Other scholars, who have used mixed methods in their work, shared experiences in relation to the benefits and drawbacks of this approach. Shih (1998), Thurmond, (2001) and Freshwater (2007) agreed that the mixed methods approach does bring different perspectives together but the problem lies in the lack of interpretations between the two methods. Some scholars agreed that the criticisms seem to focus on the inconsistencies and disagreements emerging when a scholar integrates the two methods (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). The review of the literature showed a number of scholars have conducted studies considered mixed because they utilised qualitative and quantitative approaches in either the way they developed questions, the use of different sampling techniques and or using different kinds of data collection procedures. Others claimed the use of mixed methods based on the types of data used and the kind of data analysis conducted (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007).

The mixed method approach is still developing and I believe it will be for many years to come. My intention here is to gain a general understanding of how this method works and to provide an explanation of how the two methods are being mixed to achieve the objectives of this study.

Strengths and Weaknesses of MMA

There are potential weaknesses and limitations of both qualitative and quantitative methods as individual paradigms. Qualitative in-depth interviews can elicit a great deal of detail about a person's perspective on a topic but do not generally provide sufficient breadth to allow for a claim that the findings from these interviews are generalisable to a wider group. However, the information collected provides in-depth information on reasons and explanation as to why, what and how certain behaviours occurred. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, offer both useful descriptions, if limited and descriptive generalisations of the measures studied (Williams & Monge, 2001).

There has been debate in the literature with regards to mixing the two methods, some argued that there are weaknesses when the two methods are integrated into one study while others suggested there is a position of strength (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Freshwater, 2007; Morgan, 2007). Some argued that it would be difficult for a single

researcher to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research and this kind of research tends to be time consuming (Bryman, 2007; Freshwater, 2007). However, the advantage of using both qualitative and quantitative methods is the ability to address a range of questions not otherwise possible with a single method. It provides researchers with a method to generate and test a grounded theory and narrative or text can be used to add meaning to numbers provided by a survey (Goodrick & Emmerson, 2007).

Methodology

Description of Youth 2000 Survey:

Before I embark on the components of the mixed method utilised for this study it is important to briefly explain the different approaches used in this study and the reason this study utilised these sources of data. Using the Youth 2000 survey data as the big picture was ideal for this study. The ‘family section’ in the survey was used as main themes and the interviews with individual students helped narrow down these themes into their specific experiences with their families. The common themes that emerged from these individual interviews were then used as topic of discussion for focus groups with other students. The same themes were used to collate the perspectives and views of key informants on how they interpreted these themes as professionals working with Sāmoan young people.

The Youth 2000 survey was the first social survey in Aotearoa New Zealand to collect comprehensive health and wellbeing information from a large representative group of young people who attended secondary school at the time of the survey (Adolescent Health Research Group (AHRG), 2003). It was a cross-sectional anonymous self-reported survey that incorporated a total of 523 questions about health and wellbeing. The questions were asked using a Multi-media computer assisted self-administered survey instrument (M-CASI). This innovative computerised instrument allowed young people to share their private information in an anonymous and more fun way. In addition it allowed young people with literacy difficulties to participate in the survey as the questions were read out to them by the computer (AHRG, 2003).

The Youth 2000 survey was developed in consultation with young people, their families, various education, welfare and health professionals and the wider community. The results from international surveys were also reviewed and suggested ideas were followed on what was important to include in the survey. With the combined effort of various people and institutions it became clear to the research group that the survey was required to have a broader rather than focus on one or few specific issues. It was also important for the research groups to develop and include questions that are ethnically and culturally specific to reflect the diversity of the New Zealand population (AHRG, 2003).

The survey comprised a sample of 133 randomly selected secondary schools across New Zealand in the year 2001 (AHRG, 2003). The participants were recruited using a clustered sample design with unequal probabilities of selection (AHRG, 2003). A total of 12, 934 Year 9 to 13 young people participated in the survey and 646 of the total sample self-identified as Sāmoan.

As a research assistant, and a former member of the AHRG research group, I have developed substantial interest in the range of topic domains in the survey. Most challenging were the questions asked by Pacific participants about the survey questions, their interpretation of questions and the response items available for each question. These queries encouraged me to examine the questions asked, the wording of questions and explore the results of the survey questions. In doing so it generated some issues that were of interest to me and some of which I wished to investigate further in this study.

Analysis of Youth 2000 Survey data

The AHRG group granted me permission to access Youth 2000 survey data. This was followed by two meetings with members of the AHRG group to discuss this further. The initial request was to access data from Sāmoan participants in Auckland. The rationale for this request was the opportunity to identify any significant socio-demographic differences between Sāmoan communities in Auckland and other centres by comparing communities to control for that possibility. The request to use Auckland base data raised some issues for AHRG in regards to the statistical

consequence of a reduced sample size confined to Sāmoan participants in Auckland. The Auckland sample was too small and from a statistical analysis perspective the numbers were unlikely to be sufficient to allow for any useful comparative analyses. At a meeting with a member of AHRG these issues were considered and a decision was made to use the national Sāmoan data.

The analysis of the survey data was done using SAS version 8.2. For the purpose of this study, a broader-based descriptive analysis is used to present survey results and complement this to the qualitative findings in the hope to discover how qualitative findings sit alongside those from the Youth 2000 results. A review of this data and a review of the literature informed the development of a guideline for interviews that seek to describe, predict and explain aspects of cultural relations that are positively or negatively impact on family relationships for Sāmoan young people and their families.

Methodology for this Study

In this study, the Youth 2000 survey data was used to develop a conceptual framework for qualitative interviews. Interviews and focus groups with young people and key informants were conducted to explore issues that emerged from survey results and literature reviews. The strengths of using survey data in this study is generalisability and for identifying broader ideas about family and wellbeing. Its weaknesses, however, were the limitations of the questions asked about families and the lack of questions that capture and reflect Pacific people's views of family and wellbeing.

A literature review was undertaken to examine results of previous studies exploring how aspects of family and wellbeing were being defined and studied. The advantage of exploring the literature was the opportunity to extend an understanding on how these two concepts were conceptualised by other scholars. However, the review revealed that many studies are euro-centrally oriented and that most scholars recognised and studied mainly three types of families: the nuclear family, step parent family and augmented family. Others tend to take one aspect of family and measure it against one variable of wellbeing. The concepts of family and wellbeing vary widely

in Western and indigenous worldviews. Many theories and models of family and wellbeing embedded in the literature are compatible to the views of Western scholars and their concepts on family and wellbeing. This study embodies the worldviews of Sāmoan people and their perspectives on family and wellbeing and adds questions that reflect these views with hope to gain more ideas on how family organisation connects to wellbeing.

Qualitative Methods

The qualitative method is an academic tradition in social science widely used in anthropology, sociology, history and geography disciplines. Local and international research has demonstrated the value of qualitative methods for understanding the social and psychological dimensions of health and well-being. These methods are widely used to explore depth and context and to scope issues (Grbich, 1999; Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). The advantages include the capturing of different experiences and discovering meanings and understandings that people ascribe to certain practices and to their social environment. Qualitative approaches are also valuable for understanding the range of opinions, beliefs or practices in communities and how they relate to social, economic, political or organisational processes (Tolich & Davidson 1999).

In the past ten years, some Pacific researchers (Tupuola, 1993; Finau, 1995; Anae, 1995) had presented their views on appropriate research methods for the Pacific community. For instance, Tupuola (1993), in her study among young Sāmoans, suggested that Sāmoan research must be embedded within a culturally appropriate framework. Finau (1995, pg 24) likewise stated that Pacific people should be the “custodians of knowledge” and information about themselves if they are to be self-determining. Vaioleti (2006) contributes by arguing that Pacific knowledge and Pacific ways have unique epistemologies and therefore that using dominant cultures’ methodologies are inappropriate in searching solutions for Pacific people.

Qualitative methods have been taken a step further by Pacific researchers who are increasingly using Pacific terms to describe research methods appropriate in conducting research with Pacific communities. For example, Sāmoan researchers

used a Sāmoan term ‘fa’afaletui’ and translated it as, “a critical process of weaving together all the different levels of knowledge frames” (Anae et al., 2002, pg 11). This term simply refers to a formal discussion between two or more people exchanging ideas on an important issue. This approach has proved appropriate for data gathering for interviews and group discussion (Tamasese et al, 1997). Tongan researchers Manuatu, (2000) and Vaioleti, (2006) used the concept of ‘talanoa’ which requires the researcher to be actively involved in the research experience rather than standing back and analysing it. Vaioleti (2006) argued that talanoa is a subjective, mostly oral and collaborative approach where participants and researchers interactively engage without any rigid framework involved. This is described as an informal, friendly conversation between two people who take the time to listen and respond to each other (Vaioleti, 2006). Otsuka (2006) who is Fijian by descent, also considered talanoa as the most culturally appropriate research method to use in the Fijian community. According to Otsuka good interpersonal relationships and rapport helps to bridge any gaps between participants and researchers. Those participating should feel at ease and be comfortable to have an open, trusted conversation with researchers.

There are other theoretical frameworks, such as the ‘metaphor of Kakala’ by Thaman (2002); the ‘Tivaevae model’ by Maua-Hodges (2000); and ‘fa’amanataaga’ a Solomon Island concept outlined by Gegeo (1998). Gegeo described fa’amanata’aga from its cultural context and claimed that fa’amanata’aga is an epistemology, a methodology and pedagogy. Similar to the concepts of fa’afaletui and talanoa, faamanata’aga also has cultural protocols and processes that need to be upheld prior and during communication and interaction with Solomon Island participants.

In 2005, the Health Research Council (HRC) Pacific team published a guideline for Pacific Health Research. The guideline acknowledges these emerging Pacific theoretical frameworks. It was written as a guide to assist research funded by the HRC and made available to Pacific and non-Pacific researchers undertaking research projects on the health of Pacific peoples (Guidelines for Pacific Research, 2005). The guidelines documented the diversity of Pacific peoples and concluded that it “is important that the differences amongst Pacific Island groups are recognised and honoured” (2005, pg 4). It outlined some ethical principles appropriate for Pacific research with its main emphasis on relationships. Building and maintaining

relationships is considered the overarching principle and foundation for all ethical research conducted for Pacific peoples (Health Research Council, 2005). The research principles such as respect, cultural competency, meaningful engagement, reciprocity, utility, rights, balance and protection were identified as guiding principles for conducting and maintaining these ethical relationships in research for Pacific communities in New Zealand (Health Research Council, 2005).

This PhD study acknowledges these Pacific theoretical frameworks and argues that protocols and processes described by these researchers and ethical principles provided by the HRC guideline were used to guide the interview phase of this study.

Research Process

The research process began with multiple consultations with various people followed by schools and participants selection and sampling.

Consultation Process

The consultation process has proved its importance in Pacific research. The overarching ethical principles by the HRC Guidelines for Pacific Health Research included relationships, respect and meaningful engagement (Health Research Council, 2005). These principles emphasised the importance of effective consultation with the right people at the beginning of research projects. Through early consultation, relationships are established, objectives and research questions are formulated and based on mutual respect and understanding between the researcher and people consulted.

There were three levels of informal consultation undertaken prior to the field work of this study. The people chosen for consultation are well-grounded in their knowledge of their communities, academic and work backgrounds. Two informal meetings were held with senior Pacific colleagues at the beginning of the research. The meetings provided a meaningful forum to share and reflect on cultural issues pertinent to the study and discussed issues that were culturally relevant in framing research topics and research methods. The first meeting discussed ideas on the value of the research to Sāmoan and other Pacific communities and explored the rationale for choosing

Sāmoan participants only. The second meeting focused on the development of themes for interviews and clarified issues in relation to the sampling and selection process. During the three years of this study, the cultural and academic expertise of these colleagues became pertinent to all aspects of this study.

The second form of consultation was with Sāmoan school teachers. After selecting four schools for the study, I used my Pacific network to identify Sāmoan teachers within these schools. The teachers were contacted by email asking for permission to meet. These informal consultation meetings were used as ways to gain internal support from the selected schools. These teachers were later appointed by the school principals and board of trustees as the school liaison and contact person for me. At these early meetings the teachers were introduced to the study and discussion was based around the value of the research to Sāmoan young people and schools in general.

Another form of consultation included PhD student colleagues. It started as a get-together-for-lunch and later was used as an informal forum to provide support and advice for each other's work. The discussion focused mainly on validating and discussing interview guidelines and sharing experiences about interview styles. These colleagues offered great advice on the wording and order of questions and suggested various ways to engage with participants from different ethnic and age groups.

These early consultations were the beginning of an on-going dialogue during the three years of the project. Indeed it provided me with knowledge and understanding of the importance of developing and maintaining respectful relationships with participants and communities. It also prepared me with confidence to conduct the study and to address challenges that emerged during the course of this study.

Selection of Schools and Research Participants

Four secondary schools in Auckland were selected for this study. Two categories of research participants were interviewed: Sāmoan secondary schools students and Sāmoan key informants from various government sectors, organisations and community groups.

School Selection

Four co-educational secondary schools in the Auckland region were selected. The schools were chosen to represent a range of different socio-economic backgrounds to control for the effects of income and social capital that reflects the distribution of Sāmoan families within the income distribution of the Pacific population in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). For the purpose of this study school deciles 1 to 10 are divided into three decile groupings. Two secondary schools were selected from deciles 1-3 and one school each from deciles 4-6 and 7-10. Participants for individual interviews and focus groups were recruited from these school decile groups.

A letter was sent to the Board of Trustees and school principals of the selected schools requesting access approval (see Appendix D). I invited the Boards to appoint a school representative to oversee the work. Upon receiving approval I contacted the school representative and organised the first formal meeting. Information about the study and sampling requirements were discussed during this meeting. The school representatives agreed to the criteria and they made the initial approach to potential participants from the selected schools. Information sheets and signed consent forms were returned to me prior to setting up interview schedules.

Selection of Interviews and Focus Group Participants

Participants for individual interviews and focus groups were selected from across the school deciles selected for this study. The selection criteria were: participants who self identify as of Sāmoan heritage and born in Sāmoa or New Zealand. Male and female relate differently to their family and they fulfil different roles therefore within each of the chosen schools equal numbers of males and females were selected from each of the designated age groups. Participants were selected from Year 9 to Year 13 and represented the age group of 12 to 18 years old. The school representative appointed by the Board of Trustees made first contact by approaching the selected participants and asking if they were willing to participate in the study. I provided participants with information about the study, and the terms of consent and participation.

Selection of Key Informants

The key informants' interviews were important because they provided additional light on findings and their expertise and knowledge helped to ensure that this study is of some practical relevance to those who actually work with Sāmoan young people at the ground level. The key informants were recruited from within the researcher's personal, community and professional networks. The participants selected were mainly Sāmoans and they included social workers; family counsellors; youth mentors; researchers; church ministers and school teachers (see Appendix A).

It was important for me to communicate face-to-face with key informants. Being 'informed' by way of communication is widely acceptable and culturally important rather than being informed via information on papers. I contacted the selected key informants by telephone to introduce the study and to establish a relationship with me. The selected participants agreed to participate then the information sheet was sent out and a date for an interview was organised.

Sampling

Qualitative research does not aim for a representative sample but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues (Grbich, 1999). Sample size was not precisely fixed, but sampling continued until the data became saturated, that is, no new themes, issues or topics emerged from the participants. Once the data became saturated the number of participants for the study was finalised. A total of 70 students participated in interviews and focus groups.

Table 2: Study Sample

Secondary Schools:	4		
Total Participants:	75		
Individual Interviews		Males:	22
		Females:	23
Focus Groups		Males:	14
		Females:	16
Key Informants: 10			

Informed Consent

The school participants selected represent the age group of 13-18. For the participants under the age of 16 consent was required from their parents or caregivers.

Information Sheets and Consent Forms were both available in the Sāmoan and English language and were given to the participants to give to their parents and/or caregivers (see Appendix I). The signed consent forms were returned by the parents of the selected participants.

The Information Sheets and Consent forms were given out to participants in the 16-18 year old group (see Appendix G & I). These participants had the legal right to consent to take part in this study without their parents consent. However from a cultural perspective it was important that the parents may have a say towards these young people's involvement in the research as they would any other schools activities. An article by Suaalii-Sauni and Mavoa explored the rights of Pacific children to consent and participation in research; they argued that "Pacific children's rights are determined by the wider family group and that the rights and responsibilities of Pacific children in extended families are likely to be collectively framed" (2001, pg 12). Therefore taking these cultural views into consideration young people between the ages of 16 to 18 were given the choice to talk to their parents about their participation. The information about the study was made available for them to take home should they wish to inform their parents of their participation.

I made myself available to discuss the project and participation with the parents at any time should they indicated this was required. Few parents took the opportunity and

contacted me wanting more information about the study and what was included in the interviews. The parents were happy with the information provided and granted full approval for these students to participate in the study.

Ethical Considerations

At a very early stage of this project, a number of ethical and cultural concerns had to be considered for the research to reach a successful conclusion. In this chapter, I have outlined some of the processes undertaken to reassure that this research not only contributed positively to Sāmoan young people and their families but also to ensure the safety of those who were involved in the study. In the process of developing an ethics protocol I was guided by advice from a previous chairperson of Massey Albany Ethics Committee and various Sāmoan colleagues. I have also relied on a range of publications and policies developed to assist researchers in managing ethical and cultural issues raised in Pacific research and in particular research with children (Guidelines on Pacific Health Research, 2005; Suaalii-Sauni & Mavoa 2001).

Equally important was previous work completed by Pacific and Sāmoan colleagues who documented their experiences when researching Pacific communities as well as offering great insights to some of these issues, possible solutions were suggested (Anae, 1995; Tiatia, 2003; Samu, 2003; Tupuola, 1993; Taulealeausumai, 1997). I also used my own experience as a former member of the Ministry of Health Ethics Committee in Auckland to help me through this process. This previous work and ongoing dialogue with supervisors, Pacific colleagues and friends helped me to conduct this research with confidence.

The ethics committee had asked why this study chose to focus on Sāmoan youth only. Choosing Sāmoan people as an ethnic group was important as this allowed me who is also Sāmoan to do this study by getting alongside with confidence and to explore an issue that concerned my cultural community. The study represented a great opportunity for me to develop a template that could be transferable for a study for other cultural populations such as Māori, other Pacific groups or other migrant groups.

Interviews as Means of Collecting Data

Interviewing involves a variety of forms. The most common form of interviewing is the individual, face to face interviews. Interviews range from a structured interview to a more informal conversational style interview (Patton, 2002). Interviews for this study were conducted mainly in English, though some students and key informants used a mixture of Sāmoan and English. Interviews and focus groups were tape recorded (with permission) and transcribed by me.

Interview Transcripts

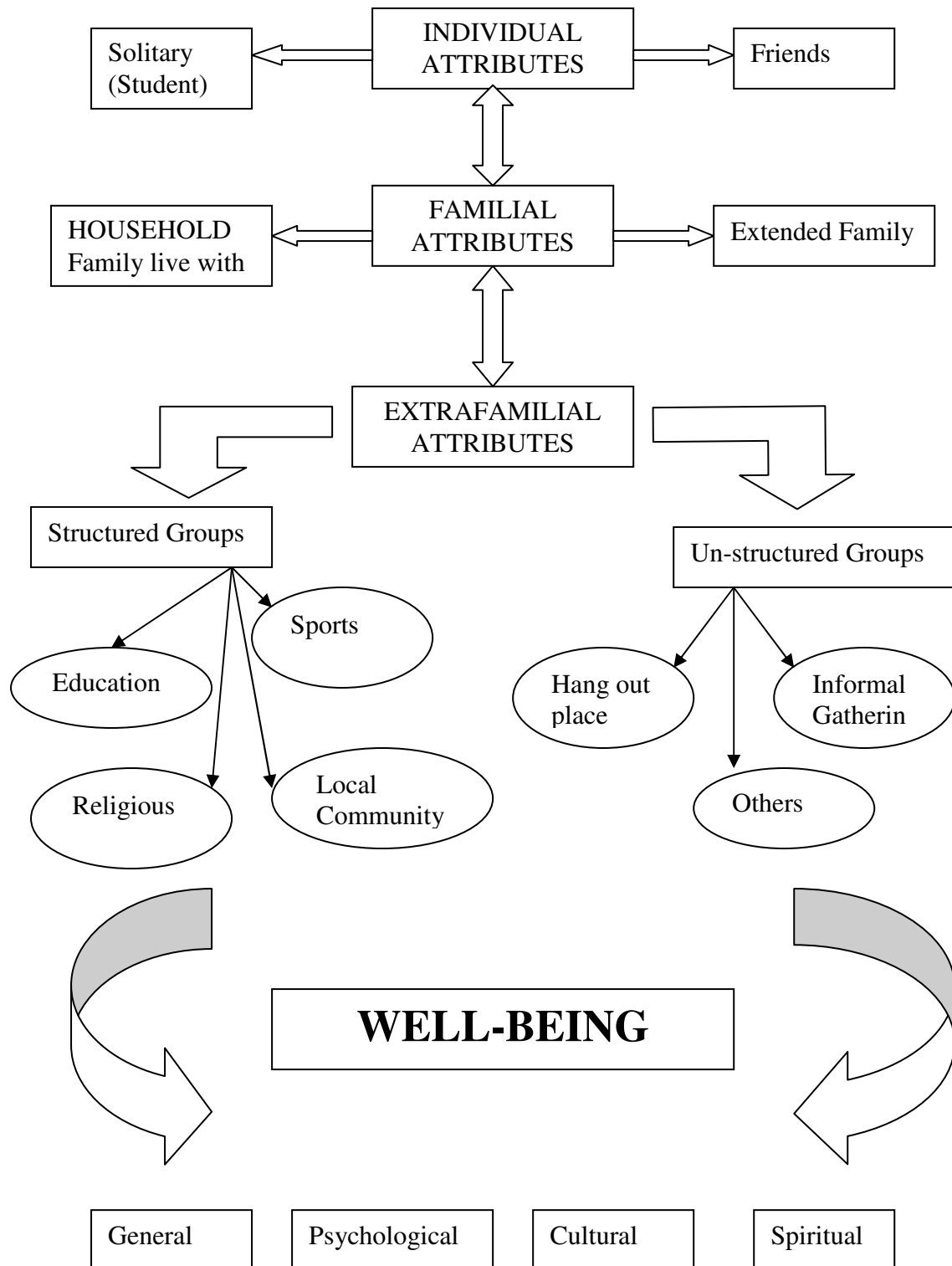
All the interviews with young participants were transcribed by me and were entered into the QSR NVivo data management program, then coded and analysed using thematic and discursive approaches (Patton, 1990; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). All the individual interviews were transcribed without pause and speech effects.

Interviews by key informants were transcribed by two colleagues and were double checked by me before coding and loading it into QSR NVivo 7. The two transcribers were required to sign a transcriber confidentiality form to ensure the confidentiality of all information transcribed (see Appendix C).

Phase 1: Individual Interviews

The reviews of the Youth 2000 survey, literature and the inclusion of Sāmoan worldviews of family and wellbeing informed the development of a conceptual framework (see Table 3) of information needed for the interviews. The primary interest of this study was the ways in which the structure and organisation of the Sāmoan family affect youth well-being, but to identify these, it became necessary to document relationships with other communities to which youth belong. The interview schedule consisted of a range of open ended questions that were developed using the conceptual framework below. The questions were constructed specifically using a focused life-story model (Olson & Shopes, 1991; Anae, 1997). The participants were asked to construct a biographical account of different activities they participated in two weeks prior to the interviews paying special attention to family, school, community and other social and cultural activities.

Table 3: The Conceptual Framework used for PhD



The questions sought to cover variables on individual attributes, determining the student's sense of self, demographic details and interests and activities participated in two weeks prior to the interview. More questions that included variables about friends, familial and extra familial attributes were also asked (see Appendix K)

The interview schedule was devised and piloted on a number of young people from family and church to ascertain its effectiveness and appropriateness. Minor amendments were made to the schedule so that it could be administered more easily at the interviews. All participants were asked the same questions with little variation in question wording and order. After each interview I wrote brief notes about each interview and the main issues discussed. After each day of interviews I contacted two colleagues for debriefing talking about the themes commonly discussed by the students interviewed on that day. A preliminary analysis of the interviews was undertaken prior to focus groups. The common themes that emerged from the interviews were the focus of discussion for the focus groups.

Phase 2 - Focus Group Discussion

A total of seven focus groups with students from four schools were conducted after the individual interviews; four focus groups with females and three with male students. Focus groups have proved their value in health research (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). They are especially well-designed to elicit information of a normative type on sensitive issues, as well as to explore how members perceive deviations from the norms expressed. The focus groups participants clarified and elaborated on themes and findings that emerged from interviews. This was particularly useful to determine how different groups of males and females from similar age groups approached these main themes. Morgan (1988) argued that one of the advantages of a focus group is the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on a topic in a limited period of time.

The sizes of the focus groups varied. The recommended number of people per focus group is between five and ten (Morgan, 1988; Grbich, 1999). From past experience, I found focus groups of five to six participants to be a manageable number. The reason for choosing this number is that it is a small enough number to allow for comfortable

discussion and an adequate number of people to encompass a range of view points. This number is generally thought to be manageable and allowed all participants to express individual opinions and to contribute adequately in the focus group discussions.

Phase 3 - Key Informant Interviews

The schedule for key informant interviews was constructed based on the common themes and important information from individual interviews and focus groups with the young participants. These interviews are important to a study like this because they can throw additional light on findings and help to ensure that the study is of some practical relevance to those who actually work with Sāmoan young people at the ground level and others who may also be interested.

Ten interviews (males=5, females=5) were conducted with key informants and these are Sāmoan people who are currently working for/with Sāmoan young people (see Appendix A). Participants were selected from the education sector, church, family and general counselling, social work and youth mentoring sectors. The interviews took place at the key informants' work place as agreed by them.

Data Analysis

Themes from the Youth 2000 survey findings, prior research findings in the literature, and findings from individual interviews, focus group interviews, and key informant interviews directed the analysis of the data. The findings of the analyses will be used through synthesis and conceptual work to develop theoretical framing for the better understanding of the issues in the area of health and wellbeing for young Sāmoan people in New Zealand.

Thematic Analysis

There are multiple discourse analytical approaches for examining qualitative data (Stubbe, Lane, Hilder, Vine, Vine, Marra, Holmes & Weatherall, 2003). Stoekoe and Weatherall (2002) discusses two different styles of discursive psychology analysis. One style considered most suitable for analysis of interview and focus group data,

examines the various and contradictory ‘interpretive repertoires’ or discourses used in descriptions. Thematic analysis on the other hand is a method for “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns and/or themes within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pg 79). Braun and Clarke (2006) explored and explained the vital role of thematic analysis in social research and offered insights into the clarity of process and practice of this method. They argued that interpretation of the transcript data should be consistent with the research framework.

Thematic analysis requires “extensive careful reading and re-reading of transcripts by the researcher to identify themes that emerged from the data” (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, pg 258). Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that this form of thematic analysis bears some similarity to grounded theory of Glaser (1992). Grounded theory suggests there are three levels of coding. The step-by-step process of coding, from a grounded theory approach, is described as open, axial and selective coding. This process allows the researcher to first examine and categorise data by reading and re-reading transcripts, connecting and grouping categories, followed by validating and refining the core categories for the main analysis (Dey, 1999; Tunufa’i, 2005). Braun and Clarke (2006) outlined four levels of process in coding and analysing qualitative data. The four levels were described as “familiarising self with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the final report” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pg 87). Wolcott (1994) on the other hand suggested three sub-categories: description, analysis and interpretation which were considered important in analysing data. The processes described by these authors are similar in many ways; the first priority being the identification of codes through careful reading and re-reading of the data. This is followed by close examination of emerging themes by interpreting and articulating how these themes became the core categories of analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

For this study analysis of the coded data used the form of general discursive and thematic analysis (Patton, 2002). Coding and analysis of interviews, focus groups and key informant data was done both manually and by using QSR NVivo software package. An inductive approach, which is a bottom up approach through close observation of the data within their own context, was used to identify important themes and patterns that emerged from interview data (Patton, 1990, 2003). The

themes identified, coded and analysed are an accurate reflection of the content of my entire data set. They are strongly linked to the interviews, focus groups and key informant data rather than my theoretical and analytical preconceptions.

Three levels of analysis were undertaken during the coding and analysis of data for this study. These were extremely important because they demonstrate transparency and consistency of how each theme was identified and formulated. It was equally important to ensure data interpretation for this study remained linked to the views of the participants.

First level analysis: Familiarising with data

Braun and Clarke (2006), Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2004) and Kvale (1996) discussed the importance of engaging and familiarising self with qualitative data. The reading and re-reading of interview transcripts provided an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the material and consider how these relate to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It enabled the researcher to develop an understanding of the common themes, the patterns and the variations in the language used by different participants in talking about particular issues (Kvale, 1996). The researcher spent substantial time with interview transcripts trying to elicit ideas from the depth and breadth of the data. During this process the researcher read all the transcripts, took notes and highlighted key ideas that emerged from the transcripts (Kvale, 1996).

After multiple reading of the interview and focus group transcripts to ensure accuracy, and consistency, they were then manually coded. At this level of analysis one goal is to ensure that the voices of the participants are being heard in the analysis. The emerging themes identified through multiple readings of scripts were used as the basis for coding all of the interview transcripts.

Second level analysis: Descriptive

Multiple readings of the transcripts generated ideas that described and produced the initial codes from the data. During this process I identified the initial codes from each of the transcripts and wrote these in the columns beside the text. These codes were also listed on the Microsoft excel sheet programme. The excel worksheet provided a

flexible structure for recording both notes and keywords from the interview data. Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed the use of matrix displays to organise and depict qualitative research findings. During this level of analysis an excel worksheet was used to record and sort initial codes with a brief description for each code from all the individual transcripts. At the completion of this process the manually coded transcripts were then coded using the QSR NVivo software programme. This computer programme was particularly useful in managing the data for this study because of the multiple methods used and the number of participants participating in the study. The list of codes on the excel worksheet was then examined closely by grouping similar ideas and experiences into categories, themes and sub-themes. This process of coding is an important aspect of analysis where the researcher organises data into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005). This involved the sorting of different codes into potential themes that captured something important about the data and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.91) argued that with this process the researcher is required to do a lot of thinking around the “relationships between these codes or units, between the main themes and between different levels of themes”.

Third level analysis: Interpretative

This third level of analysis Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to as an intensive process where further defining and refining of themes is required. This involves identifying the essence of each theme and determining the aspect of data that each theme captures. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised the importance of asking questions about the importance of each theme by detailing each individual theme and its relevance to the analysis. The defining and refining of themes were displayed using a mind map. This was particularly useful as various themes begin to emerge. Maxwell (2005) suggested the use of a concept map as a visual display for the phenomena studied. This is useful for contextualising themes and exploring relationships among these themes. At this stage of the analysis the researcher worked through the themes determining whether the themes and categories listed appeared to form a coherent pattern across other themes. During this process some themes formed coherent patterns and others did not. These themes were then examined some more by creating new themes, others were disregarded from the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This

process continued until all the themes identified had generated coherent patterns from all the codes. Previous research reported that several themes and sub themes emerged during the analysis and what was considered exciting by these researchers was the discovery of new themes and concepts embedded throughout the interview data during the course of analysis (Singer & Hunter, 1999; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

The Triangulation Process

In social science research, “triangulation refers to the strategies used to overcome the potential bias arising from using a single method, single data source or single theoretical base of the research topic” (Goodrick & Emmerson, 2006, pg 46).

Triangulation provides an opportunity for different people to formally or informally contribute their views and understandings to different aspects of the research project. Triangulation can also be regarded as an opportunity to demonstrate rigor in a research project (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This study used various strategies to prevent potential bias and challenges to the project

One type of triangulation was the consultation process undertaken with Pacific colleagues, Pacific school teachers and counsellors to address cultural issues that emerged from this study. These people brought different perspectives to the issues discussed then agreed on appropriate ways to overcome these problems. At the beginning of the first year of study student colleagues commented on the ethical complication of the study in regards to the various methods used and the different age groups involved.

Another type of triangulation undertaken was presenting preliminary data interpretation at local seminars and conferences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this process as member checking, where themes derived from data are checked by research participants. This study utilised participants from local seminars and conferences instead to check preliminary interpretation of themes. The questions and clarification requested by the audience about data interpretation had raised important issues that were taken into consideration during the final analysis of data. These types of triangulation contributed positively to the process and progress of the project that guided the researcher to finalise analysis with confidence.

Information Dissemination

The HRC guideline for Pacific Research emphasised the importance of reciprocity. This involves informing the participants and communities about the progress of the research by reporting back the research results in an appropriate and accessible way (HRC Guidelines on Pacific Health Research, 2005). According to these guidelines, the dissemination phase of the research findings is a significant part of that ongoing relationship of respect and reciprocation between me and participants and the Pacific communities. There are different ways of disseminating information and this study chooses to use appropriate forms of dissemination that are accessible to Pacific communities, to young participants and academic institutions.

For the young participants, a webpage was made available for students to have access to updated information about the study. Business cards were provided with my email and contact details were given out to students to make contact if they wished to discuss the progress of the study. Ongoing dialogue and email correspondence with the school liaison people was maintained throughout the study.

Draft findings of the study have been presented at Massey University and other Universities' seminar sessions as a work in progress. Preliminary findings and methodology have been presented at an international conference, the Pacific Medical Association conference held in Sāmoa in 2007. The findings will be presented to Sāmoan church groups and organisations, and will continue to be presented at appropriate local and international conferences in the future.

The final draft will be presented formally to Massey University's School of Social and Cultural Studies and Social and Health Outcome Research and Evaluation (SHORE) departments respectively. The School of Social and Cultural Studies and SHORE will each receive a bound copy of the finished thesis. Summaries of the findings will be made available to those participants and key informants who wish to have one. Articles containing findings and policy implications will be prepared and submitted for publication in relevant professional and academic journals.

Participants and key informants will be invited to attend presentations at all conferences and seminars. Representatives from the Health Research Council will also be invited to attend.

Research Limitations

Limitations occur for all studies and tend to include issues in relation to methodology, sampling and analysis. Like any other project this study does have its own limitation issues.

One of the limitation issues for this study was the sampling in four schools. In each of the four schools there was a set sample but many more students spoke with their friends and then they too wanted to participate in the interviews and focus groups. These students asked to be interviewed but, given the timeframe of the project and the set number of students requested, the researcher was unable to include these students in the study.

The second issue was conducting the coding process alone. Due to the nature of a doctoral study and the need to protect the data the data was coded by me only. For validity purposes ideally two or more people should undertake this coding process given the mixed method approach used in this study but all efforts were made to check validity through triangulation (Goorick & Emmerson, 2007).

The third limitation for this study was based on the fact that this data represents the views and perspectives of Sāmoan young people attending four selected secondary schools only in the Auckland area. Therefore, the assumptions and conclusions for this study are based on the perspectives of the young Sāmoan students in these schools and the demographic area they represent which may not be generalisable to other areas. Despite these limitations the study results provided significant information and insights into understanding family organisation and how it contributes to the well being of Sāmoan young people and their families.

Reporting Findings

The qualitative data was used to explore and expand on the survey results. The findings will be presented in each chapter by reporting the appropriate quantitative descriptive statistics generated from the Youth 2000 survey data to illustrate key features and trends in the survey results. Quotes from the interviews and focus groups transcripts are used to illustrate points of discussion throughout the report.

In order to protect the real identity of participants and key informants participated in this research each participant is given an English name.

Summary

This chapter outlined and defined the research approach and various methods used in this research study. It uses a mixed method approach by incorporating Youth 2000 survey questions and results to formulate the questions for this study. Three types of data collection were used to collate data for this PhD study. The advantages and disadvantages were outlined for using the mixed methods approach in this study. One important aspect for mixing the two methods was the opportunity to include the Sāmoan worldviews about family and wellbeing alongside the Youth 2000 survey results, and post interview survey and literature to inform the questions that needed to be explored in this study.

Chapter Six: Family Structure and Wellbeing

Introduction

This chapter discusses the link between family structure and wellbeing among the study sample of 45 interviewed adolescent Sāmoans in New Zealand. Numerous studies in social science have examined links between different forms of family structure and wellbeing, demonstrating that children from families with two married parents were more likely to have better health and wellbeing outcomes than those from other family structures such as single parent and couples which included step parents. This chapter begins with a discussion on how these young people describe their family in their own terms focussing on family structures the young people themselves articulated. When talking about family structures, in terms of family size and family composition, all young people spoke about household units and extended family units. The chapter examines data from interviews and focus groups, a wellbeing survey and key informant interviews, to report findings on the effects of household units and extended family units on the wellbeing of these young people. There was, unfortunately, no question in the Youth 2000 Survey that could provide background data from a larger national sample relevant for this chapter.

Participants' Descriptions of Family

One of the specific questions included in the interview was: 'Do you think your family is the same as other Sāmoan families'? All 45 participants interviewed, and 30 who discussed the question in focus groups, agreed that Sāmoan families are very different in terms of family structure and organisation. The participants acknowledged that they came from very diverse family types of various sizes and had very different interpretations of family values and different ideas of what were considered norms in their families as illustrated below:

'We all have different families and there are families that share similar values and that depends on how families value their kids and value their time spent with their kids. In saying that it will be the same with fa'a-Sāmoa values, we

all have different experiences about that and it really depends on how us young people or kids were introduced to these values and interacted with our families. I live with my grandparents; always have and I love my life, my grandparents did a great job bringing us up in a normal way, we did not have much but we have each other and we have everything we needed.’ (Frolina, 17 years old female, 2008)

In order to get an idea of how these young Sāmoan people describe their families, one question asked in the interview was: ‘How would you describe your family’? All 45 participants drew on life experience and observation of their day to day interactions, with both family members living in the same household and with their extended family units, in order to describe their families. There was a general sense that these descriptions were also based on the experience of adolescents from their exposure to non-traditional lifestyles which opened up new socialisation opportunities for them. Coding the participants’ terms and descriptions of their household families revealed three distinct types. I re-labelled these three types which align with the description of family provided by participants as: Struggling family, Adapting Family and Stable Family. Participants used core concepts such as: loving and caring, understanding, open-mindedness, communication, supportiveness and trust to describe what they meant by struggling, adapting and stable family. Different levels of each of these dimensions were associated with the various types of families.

Table 1 below summarises what these three types meant for these young people. It describes the different levels of relationships which participants associated with the three types of families. While some were present in all types, others varied between the family types. While high levels of ‘love and care’ were reported in all types, levels of other dimensions varied independently. For example, all the participants reported having loving and caring families, yet not all families were considered equally open-minded and communicating well as outlined in the table below.

Table 3: Describing Family

	Struggling	Adapting	Stable
Loving & Caring	High	High	High
Trust	Low	Medium	High
Supportive	Low	Medium	High
Open-Minded	Low	Medium	High
Understanding	Low	Medium	High
Communication	Low	Medium	High

This table indicates that, for the Sāmoan adolescents that participated in the study, a ‘stable family’ exhibited high levels of trust and support; communicated well, its members had high levels of understanding and were highly open-minded when compared to the ‘adapting’ and ‘struggling’ family. Below is an analysis of these three types and how, based on the experience of these adolescents, each family type was characterised.

The Struggling Family

Based on the descriptions by the young adolescents interviewed and those who participated in focus groups there was a general sense that these adolescents think of family in different ways from that of their parents. The struggling families were more likely to produce low levels of happiness for these young people. A struggling family was portrayed as family members struggling to understand and trust each other; having low levels of communication and parents not being open minded. There was also a general sense that parents in struggling families also have difficulties to accept changes that they may not familiar with or understand and were less likely to negotiate ways to adapt or address these changes. Key informants made reference to the ways parents were socialised and brought up in the fa’a-Sāmoa compared to the ways their children socialised and understand the New Zealand lifestyle and culture. Most key informants commented on how some Sāmoan parents struggled to relate, accept and adapt to the values and ways children are socialised in the New Zealand

culture. Therefore, parents and adolescents are more likely to have different levels of experience and adjustment to the New Zealand lifestyle and culture:

‘It is difficult for some parents to welcome the changes they experienced, especially when parents are only aware of what they know best based on their cultural beliefs to ensure their young people are provided for and they are safe. Parents need to accept that these young people are being exposed to different values and different ways of learning and that to explore is the only way they learn between right and wrong. It is not easy for Sāmoan parents to adapt to these changes and for most of them they tend to feel powerless by accepting these other ways rather than their Sāmoan ways.’ (Sally, 57 year old female, educator 2009)

The adolescents interviewed voiced concern that their families may be physically together but often members are very isolated from each other emotionally. The participants’ interpretation was that their families’ love and care about each other, yet adults show low levels of trust and communication, lack of support and understanding and not being open minded towards the needs of the young people. The lack of trust from adults was specifically reported by females and it was mainly about parents’ lack of understanding of what young females considered as having their freedom. These young females argued that this was a sign of adults’ lack of trust and this caused over-protectiveness of the girls. Some young females questioned why adults did not trust them but trusted their brothers as articulated by Karlene below:

‘My family don’t trust me to go out; they are very protective of us girls. We often talk about this with my friends. The boys can wander around without them asking questions, so the boys do get the freedom to wander but not us.’ (Karlene, 18 years old female, 2008)

It appears that the lack of trust from adults is based on a combination of many things. According to the participants it is based on parents’ struggle to accept the fact that the young people are capable of looking after themselves if given the freedom to do so. There was also a conflict between adolescents’ perception of individual ‘rights’ at the age of 18 and parents’ beliefs that they are responsible for their children’s safety and wellbeing no matter how old they were. The parents believe that it is their responsibility as parents to protect their children. It is this duty to protect that females perceived as overprotective and this was a reason suggested for the lack of trust by the parents. Some young females, blamed the behaviour of their older siblings as one

factor preventing their parents from trusting them. Linda, 15 years old who lived with both parents described her family based on her experience as the youngest daughter. Linda felt she was been punished because of her older siblings' misfortune at school. As a consequence, her parents were very over-protective of her and her younger siblings by denying them the freedom to go places and not letting them participate in after hours school activities. She also felt her parents' fear that she might end up like the older sibling who failed to complete secondary school or the older sibling who became pregnant. Despite having feelings of being loved and cared for by her family, there was huge pressure on her because her parents did not trust her.

'How would I describe my family, strict and forever protective of us girls, why? Because I think when my sister got pregnant they were not happy at all and now we get that pressure from them, they don't let us go places because they don't trust us. So my family think we might end up like my older sister that got pregnant when she was young. Sometimes I try to talk to my dad but he does not seem to care what I said many times.' (Linda, 15 years old female 2008)

The participants also talked about the lack of communication and understanding from these adults about their needs as young people. As discussed in chapter four, positive communication is important to the relationship between parents and young people. For these participants, communication is stated to be very poor in their households and it is said that the adults do not talk with young people in an interactive manner. There was also a lack of input from parents into their school activities and decisions they have to make about their schools. Other participants claimed that their parents struggled to commit themselves in supporting them at school activities due to their employment responsibilities.

Some participants raised concern about the ongoing fights and the lack of effort by parents to negotiate and compromise when it comes to responsibilities. For example, Roy (a 14 year old male), and Sam (a 17 year old male) talked about the ongoing fights and disagreements between their mums and dads about their responsibilities in the family. In fact, the adolescents perceived these ongoing fights and disagreements as signs of their parents' lack of understanding towards each other. Both adolescents accepted that, despite these family fights, their family 'got through it all' and continued to live as a family.

‘One of those typical Sāmoan family, my parents have fights, arguments and disagreements on little things like who was supposed to do the grocery shopping and who was supposed to pick up the children from school and things like that, but then we say that we do love and care about each other which is true you know. We fought then we are okay until we argue again, that’s the usual thing with my family.’ (Roy, 14 years old male 2008)

‘We do have ups and downs and sometimes we do not trust each other, but we are a family and we get through it all. I have a loving and caring family they care about me and I know that but things can change just like that.’ (Sam, 17 years old male, 2008)

These adolescents believed their families overcame obstacles very quickly but denied the long term effect of these incidents to themselves and their parents. However, as Sam indicated things can change in a heartbeat and what unfolds is the fact that these fights and disagreements becomes a cycle that negatively affect these families especially the adolescents. In fact, other participants did recognise the long term effect of these disagreements to adolescents and their families. Penelope, 18 years old who was born in Sāmoa, and lived with her extended family stated that some young people are more likely to be affected by these issues. Penelope argued that although some participants claimed that they got over family disagreements and moved on, these ongoing fights would probably forever remain in these young people’s hearts. Penelope’s experience and interpretation of this situation is better understood in a Sāmoan proverb, “O le fua e te luluina, e te toe selesele”, which is translated as what you sow is what you reap:

‘You know what our families need to know is that every seed they plant in their kids at a young age it will grow. Sometimes when it grows it might be a blessing to some families or it might be hell for others. Some kids may turn out okay but others may be affected by it and end up doing things not only behind their families’ back but beyond their families’ imagination. I can see that now with some students you know.’ (Penelope, 18 year old female 2008)

The Adapting Family

The second type of family is considered as ‘the adapting family’. The adapting families were more likely to make an effort to accept the changes in their family situations and try to adapt to these changes. This family type portrays loving and

caring relationships between parents and adolescents and it also shows that families go through a process of adapting to the changes affecting their relationships. Some participants described having loving and caring relationships with both parents but it was mainly mum who was more open-minded to adolescents' needs when compared to dad. Lance, a 14 year old male who was New Zealand-born and raised, gave an example by stating that while both dad and mum love him, mum has always been the person who was more flexible with him; often dad did not seem too keen to recognise what he actually needed. Although mum is quite open minded and flexible Lance stated he would like to see his dad making an effort to be more attentive and flexible in their relationship. The experience of adolescents in this family type indicated that mothers do have a better understanding and are very open minded towards the adolescents' needs. It was evident that fathers need time to adapt and accept the idea that as children developed and become teenagers their needs change and they have different understandings and expectations of these needs.

Similarly, Heremia (14 year old male, 2008) stated having a loving and caring family, but the communication between himself and his dad could be improved. There was a general sense that limitations in the communication were due to the fathers' status in the families. The key informants shared their opinion on why the communication between fathers and sons were somehow weak in some families. Most key informants made reference to the fathers' status as *mātai* and the general expectations of the *āiga* and of the boundaries in their relationships with others. These boundaries determined the kind of communication between them and members of the *āiga* which included their sons. It also determined how they behaved towards others. The key informants shared that in some families fathers with *mātai* titles communicated well with their sons but there are fathers who need to accept that their roles as fathers is vitally important to connect with their sons. Some key informants also commented on how the observations of other family members reinforce how these fathers interact or communicate with their sons. For example, sons are not expected to respond or answer back and/or show any disrespectful behaviour towards their fathers. According to Jacob, these expectations tend to limit any interaction between fathers and their sons:

‘I would suspect that the communication between fathers and their sons would be quite hard especially for the fathers with mātai titles, it is not an interactive communication per se, it is more like a one way communication if you like, and having that mātai title automatically creates a gap between them and members of the āiga. These are reasons why fathers with titles are finding it difficult to talk to their sons and it will take time for these fathers to get their heads around it.’ (Jacob, 49 year old male, counsellor, 2009)

The descriptions of the adapting families indicated that there are indeed some levels of communication, trust, support and understanding between parents and adolescents. This signifies that these families are slowly working out ways of improving their relationships with their adolescents. Adolescents talked about their parents’ participation in their school activities and how parents do not always attend all their activities due to their availability. The adolescents acknowledged the effort their parents made to attend when they could and at the same time accepted their parents other commitments prevented them from actively participating in the school activities.

‘What I like about my parents is the fact that they make the effort when they are able to come and support me and my sister at these sport activities. It is hard when both of my parents do shift work so sometimes they both work on a Saturday and most of my games are on Saturday, so they miss out.’ (Flo, 16 year old female, 2008)

The adolescents also talked about the level of trust their parents have towards them. In fact, parents and adolescents have different ways and expectations of what this trust relationship entails. Compared to the struggling families, these adolescents do have some level of trust from their parents. It was mentioned earlier that female participants argued that they should be getting the same trust their brothers received from their parents. Sue felt that things at home were slowly changing; her parents were more interactive than they were before and have been very flexible. In fact, Sue believed that she earned her parents trust by working hard and proving to them that she is a capable young woman:

‘Honestly I think my parents are starting to trust me now, I stay around school late and they do not mind, I did not do that before, they would not let me and I think it was more about my safety. But I stay late around school for a reason and my parents understand that. It is a good feeling, to go about my day and do things that I have to do without that feeling that I need to rush home in case my parents are not happy with me.’ (Sue, 17 year old female 2008)

Despite the difference between females and males understanding when it comes to parents' trust, Sue and other females acknowledged that their parents are beginning to trust them by giving them some more responsibility for their safety. The key informants were asked to share why these families appeared to give some level of trust to these young people. Megan shared that it was important for families to trust these young people but as parents they are still accountable for the safety and welfare of their children. There is also pressure from the extended āiga and when these adolescents get themselves into trouble parents will be blamed by the āiga. Megan felt that giving these young people trust gives them some sense of responsibility by learning to be responsible for themselves. Therefore, it is a reciprocal relationship between parents and adolescents. Megan's thoughts are best understood in a Sāmoan proverb: 'E togi le moa ae u'u lona afa' which is translated as, you release the chicken but you hold on to the string:

'Trust is a huge thing to our Sāmoan parents and young people know they have to earn that trust. Our kids come from very different families, some families do care but others are too busy to notice anything. But for these families, parents give these young people their trust but prefer to have some control over that trust. And that is important, because parents do need to be part of that. The parents give them a taste of that trust and these young people will need to prove that they can be trusted and they have to work hard to earn that trust. It is all about responsibility and being mature.' (Megan, 60 year old female, retired counsellor, 2009)

The Stable Family

A total of 14 participants described their families as stable families. Stable families were more likely to produce higher levels of physical, emotional and spiritual happiness for the young people. The adolescents' description of stable families indicated that these families are well adapted and adjusted in their lives. The descriptions by the adolescents indicated that there is a high level of stability and cohesiveness in the households. Analysis of the data revealed that the description of a stable family was associated with the family having regular routines, well-organised structures, having excellent communication between adults and adolescents, spending quality time together, and showing high levels of trust and respect towards each other. Tim, a 16 year old male, described his family as a stable and normal family referring

to all the positive characteristics such as being loving and caring, supportive, trusting and an open-minded family:

‘I am not showing off or anything but I am telling you the truth. My family is excellent; I love my family, man. We are a perfect family, we love each other, and we understand each other’s weaknesses and strengths. We don’t fight but we debate with humour. We do things together and we enjoy doing these things together. I am very blessed to have such a loving and supportive family.’ (Tim, 16 year old male, 2008)

Alphonso’s experience also portrayed a stable and cohesive family. Alphonso lives with both of his parents and three siblings. In fact, Alphonso’s family not only have high levels of love and care, as well as trust and understanding in the relationship but the parents continued to use positive language to motivate and encourage him when he did well:

‘My family are loving and caring and very supportive and they always give me positive words about my school and school reports. As a family we do normal things, we help each other and we there for each other, we are a happy family, we enjoy each other’s company and we do things together all the time.’ (Alphonso, 15 years old male, 2008)

Other features of a stable family are discussed by Zora, a 15 year old female who lives with her mum and step dad. Zora talked about her families’ compromise to acknowledge that she needed time out. Zora and her parents seem to have similar views about what they meant by time out; they understand and adhere to Zora’s needs. This provides both Zora and her parents a feeling of satisfaction because they felt comfortable with this arrangement:

‘My family is very loving and understanding so it’s quite good in a way because I do have curfews and routines and then again I have time on my own and my mum and dad will not force me to go out with them if I don’t feel like it because some times we teenagers just want to stay home while mum and dad go out shopping with the young ones.’ (Zora, 15 year old female, 2008)

The adolescents provided descriptions of both positive and negative features of these three family types. The key informants were asked to comment on the ways these young people described their families and categorised them into three apparently distinctive types. They also accepted that these descriptions were the young people’s

true analysis of how they see and interact with their families and how they fit in those interactions. Gary, a pastor illustrated that using specific terms to describe their family indicated how these young people really think about their families:

‘I am not at all surprised about that, young people tend to say things as they are, and they are telling us what they think. Some kids are very happy with their families and others tend to accuse their families as being old fashioned like being strict on their relationships and too much fa’a-Sāmoa and that. Then, there are those who need to work at improving things in their families.’
(Gary, 43 year old male, pastor, 2009)

Other key informants pointed out that adults would have very different ideas of what constitutes a stable family. In fact adolescents’ conceptions of these families have been formed in their cultural environment in New Zealand; therefore they have very different expectations of what their families entail. With the descriptions of struggling and adapting families, there is a general sense that parents would need to negotiate, sacrifice and compromise in order to adapt to changes affecting their families and their relationships with their children. Furthermore, the parents’ conceptions of a stable family were more likely to have been formed in many cases in Sāmoa based on their values of fa’a-Sāmoa. Therefore, their expectations of a stable family would very much be driven by their obligations towards their fa’a-Sāmoa.

Post-Interview Survey Data

All 45 participants interviewed were given an opportunity to complete a wellbeing survey at the end of each interview. This brief survey asked four questions to examine the level of young people’s overall feelings after talking specifically about their own families. The questions were used to determine whether there was a vast difference between the young people’s descriptions and what they really felt about their families in general by selecting one response item to these questions. All three questions asked shared the same meaning although it used three different words: happy, satisfied and positive. The idea of asking three questions using different words was to see whether there is a vast difference to the participants’ responses. There was no huge difference to the responses and these are reported in Table 4. The results provide some clarity of how the 45 participants felt after talking about their families. Below are the three questions asked and the response items participants selected.

Table 4: Participants Responses to post survey questions

Q3. I feel very positive with my life	0	5	25	15
Q2. I feel very satisfied with my life	0	4	27	14
Q1. I feel very happy with my life	0	5	26	14
	Not at all	Somewhat	Just	Very

Out of 45 participants, 14 participants indicated that they were very happy, 26 were generally happy and five were somewhat happy with their lives and no one reported being unhappy with their lives. It was evident that the participants who described their families as stable family were the same young people who reported that they were very happy with their lives by matching and coding their interviews scripts using Excel. The number of participants who talked about adapting families were the same young people who reported being generally happy and five students who identified with struggling families were the same one who reported being somewhat happy with their lives. The responses to the second and third questions identified some slight movements from one of the participants as shown by the arrows above.

Data from individual interviews and the post interview survey were used to frame issues which were then discussed in focus groups. It was hoped that the focus groups might elaborate on these issues. In the focus groups, participants were asked to comment on the differences between the three family types from their perspectives. Focus groups from four different schools shared very similar views. The responses indicated that stable families are associated with well grounded, physically and emotionally happy young people. As one male participant summarised it in the excerpt below:

‘It’s quite simple, normal family, normal kids and very happy family. It’s about families that are together, well organised, having clear routines, spending quality time together, trusting and respecting each other despite the age gap, no hidings, no yelling and doing normal things, and physically and emotionally very happy.’ (Jay, 17 year old male, 2008)

Focus groups considered the adapting families' as those who are caring and loving but often they do not spend quality time together due to other commitments and other social factors. These factors could be parents' employment where they were expected to work long hours, or parents' commitment to church activities during the weekend and some week nights. Douglas, a youth worker who works in secondary schools spoke of how important it is for parents and families to spend quality time with their children and having the opportunity to bond and do things together:

'Frequency of time spent together as a family is very important for these kids, I mean they all come from different families and you can tell the ones that are really happy here at school and happy to work hard. I don't think the family size is an issue it's about love and support and spending time as a family that makes a huge difference to these young people.' (Douglas, 29 year old male, youth mentor worker, 2009)

Family Structure and Wellbeing

The findings cited in the literature review chapters found that intact nuclear families were the most stable and protective family structure for children and young people. The literature review also found that data from high quality longitudinal surveys, provided substantial evidence that growing up in a single parent family or step family is associated with lower levels of wellbeing and poorer life outcomes than living in a two biological parent family (Cherlin, 1999). Numerous studies have outlined connections between aspects of family structure and wellbeing (Fallon & Bowles, 1997; Kidwell, 1981). Some examined variables such as family size, birth order and sibling spacing to measure the connection to wellbeing. The main arguments from the literature were that children with two married parents were better off than those from single or step parent families. They also predicted that children from larger families are found to have worse educational and health outcomes than children from smaller families.

Participants interviewed for this study lived in different family structures including some with two married biological parents, with biological and step parent(s), single parents, adoptive parents and extended families as caregivers. When talking about family members and family activities all participants made reference to only two

structures. The first one was the household family unit, i.e. family members they live with in the same household, and extended family unit referring to a kin group with multiple households. The size and composition of these two family types was explored for a connection with reported wellbeing.

Household Unit

Out of 45 participants interviewed, a total of 12 participants lived with both of their parents and siblings and some members of their extended families. Twenty participants lived with only their parents and siblings. A small number of participants lived as blended families, step families, adopted families or as a single parent with some having members of their extended families. Unlike the findings from studies carried out primarily in North America and Europe, no major distinction was made by participants between those who live with blended families, single parent or both parents and extended families. However, what they did share was the different experience and expectations of living in these types of households. The levels of obligations and responsibilities were similar in all the households. Children and young people all have shared responsibilities in these households whether they were from step families, single parent or both parent households.

All children had chores that they were expected to do in their homes. In particular, the first born or the eldest child has the responsibility of looking after the younger siblings and the younger siblings were expected to listen and respect the older siblings. The participants expressed mixed feelings as they struggled to normalise these responsibilities as their duties especially when they compared themselves to their friends from other ethnic groups. The participants talked about the responsibilities to play 'parents' towards their younger siblings. While some participants eventually accepted these responsibilities as their contribution to their households, others talked about the effect of these responsibilities on their ability to participate in other school and sport activities and not having enough time to do homework:

'I have not been able to spend much time on my own for a long time, I babysit my younger siblings a lot after school and sometimes on the weekend especially when my parents work. It's funny but I do have friends that do the

same thing. Both my parents work and my aunt works too and I don't have any other relatives here so I ended up being the one to baby sit the young ones after school until they come home. I don't mind, but it's getting too much for me, I can't do anything else at school apart from going there then come home and bring the kids home.' (Viv, 17 year old female, 2008)

These obligations continue to one's adult life as part of the collective responsibility towards the āiga and parents have a full understanding of these responsibilities towards the āiga. However, young New Zealand-raised Sāmoan adolescents constructed their views of these responsibilities based on their exposure to the New Zealand lifestyle and through their interaction with friends from other ethnic cultures. In discussion, the participants revealed some differences in their expectations and the pressure on them to fulfil these responsibilities by being good role models for their younger siblings as illustrated by the excerpt below:

'I am the eldest of the family of 5 and I have more responsibilities and I don't like it at all. I mean it is hard for me, like my dad always say show some examples to the little ones, I mean being the role model for them. I make mistakes too like if I do something wrong then the kids will know about it and my dad will get upset. I just said to him I am not perfect, I am allowed to make mistakes and learn from it.' (Carter, 15 year old male, 2008)

Alongside these responsibilities participants were also expected by parents to do well at school. Most of the time these participants struggled to find the balance between their duties to look after their siblings and spending time to do school work. This has been a struggle and for most of them it affected their academic performance:

'You know we will come home with homework and then the family expect us to come home and babysit. I do that but by the time I get to do my homework I will be too tired. I mean I come home straight from school and then baby sit. So I have to try and come early to school to catch up with my homework but I am finding it really hard to catch up. I get really annoyed because they wanted me to do my homework and then they give me their children to look after so how can I do my homework.' (Sue, 17 year old female, 2008)

There is a general sense that these participants also experienced some challenges from the younger siblings that they looked after. There were references made that the younger siblings were spoiled and were considered as the 'lot' that tend to get away with everything. This caused tension between siblings especially with the older siblings taking the collective responsibility for their youngest sibling's misbehaviour.

The older siblings are held responsible because it was their responsibility to look after the youngest siblings. Quite often these situations created rivalries where younger siblings often disrespected the older siblings:

‘My youngest brother is a b---- you know I get into trouble because of him and my parents never seem to blame him, they blame me for what he did. If he broke something I got the blame because I was the one that was supposed to look after him. I get really angry when they do that, what am I supposed to do to stop them anyway, it’s not fair sometimes.’ (Susan, 18 year old female, 2008)

While these arguments and conflicts between siblings tend to get out of hand in their homes it was interesting to notice that when it comes to being in the community the siblings behaved accordingly. With Lois, the younger sister, she prioritised the importance of keeping the family’s reputation intact in the community and chose not to respond towards her sister’s behaviour. Lois was well aware that the community expected her to obey her sister which was a sign of a well-organised and respected Sāmoan family:

‘My eldest sister, she has no respect for the elders and that’s what I said to my mum. We went to choir practice at church and she actually told me to shut up in front of the whole lot of people and I actually shut up. And I can see other parents look at us like they can see her attitude. If we were at home I would say to her shut up but at church it is not good to let other people think that we were like that at home. So when mum growls at her and then she ended up growling at me too and that is why I get really mad some times because it was her fault but I ended up getting it too.’ (Lois, 16 year old female, 2008)

While these participants shared some negative experience of being the older sibling, participants as the only children in the family talked about the advantages and disadvantages of living in these households. It was evident that there were some benefits for these adolescents than those from a larger sized family. For example, two participants talked about having their own room, access to internet, enough space for their belongings and spending quality time with parents. There was also a sense of high levels of trust and support between adults and these young people:

‘I enjoy being the only child especially the time I spend with mum and the fact that she trust me and she supports me in anything and everything at school. Even my uncles and aunties they love me and they treat me well. If my mum

needs to go somewhere then she will ring my uncle to come and stay with me until she comes back.’ (Lance, 14 year old male, 2008)

Extended Family Unit

This family unit comprised of multiple households who interacted and supported each other during family fa’alavelave (cultural activities). Participants interviewed explored various elements of their interactions with extended family and how it impacted on their lives. It was evident from the perspectives of the participants that there were different levels of interaction between themselves and their extended families and these levels of interactions indicated both positive and negative links to their wellbeing. More than half of the interviewed participants indicated they spent more time with their extended families during weekends by attending the same church and having a big family to’onai. The participants also spent time with their families during their family fa’alavelave. It was interesting to note that six participants from these families stated that it was their grandparents who made the decision for the whole family to attend one church even though they all lived in different geographical areas. The grandparents utilized the church as an organization for their children to connect and maintain cohesive and harmonious relationships:

‘Actually it is quite nice that my whole āiga attended my grandparent’s church they wanted all of us to go to the same church. My grandmother always said that as long they live they have to keep us together. And it is really good for us to stay in touch with my whole family and the fact that we go to the same church it is really good.’ (Karen, 15 year old female, 2008)

One of the significant aspects of attending the same church was stated to be the level of family support and the ability to maintain and generate social cohesion by participating in all the church activities. Some said they enjoyed the attention during White Sunday where the adults served the children and made sure they arrived at the service on time and wearing new white clothes and shoes.

The participants also talked about the moral and financial support their families provided for each other during bad times such as losing someone they love. As a collective kin, they come together and support each other as their way of coping with the grieving process. They also supported each other by contributing material goods

for the fa'alavelave. These were considered positive elements of having a united extended family that was able to interact regularly and to provide unconditional support towards each other at all times:

'We have gone through funerals, weddings and more funerals and for me; it is really good to see how the extended family fit into that. One of the great things about my family is that we all go to the same church, and that was my grandmother's idea. We have regular fundraising things on the weekends and this was for family stuff. So when there is a fa'alavelave the elders talked and decided then we contribute a little because we already have money in the bank account to spend on that. Not only that the best thing for me is the spiritual support we provided for each other when we lost someone special to us, and oh, am sorry tears.....we lost our nana three months ago and that was a huge loss for all of us.' (Virginia, 18 year old female, 2008)

While the participants spoke of the positive effect of the family support around them, other participants voiced concern about the negative effect of pressure that extended families put on their parents to contribute to this fa'alavelave. They indicated that the ways their extended families practiced these fa'alavelave were unrealistic. The obligations to contribute put pressure on their parents to prioritize the extended families' fa'alavelave over their own educational needs:

'The sad thing about the extended families stuff is the expectation put on our parents to contribute to these things. I know the whole family contribute but it really puts stress on our parents, and sometimes we don't have the money then they go and loan money to do that. Then it will take my parents years to pay that back and during that time we the children suffer, not being able to buy things we need for school and that. I mean it is great to have such a huge extended family but it's the way they do things.' (Tom, 18 year old male, 2008)

Other participants felt they were very isolated from their extended families and they only saw them when there was a family fa'alavelave. The participants felt that they had very strange relationships with their cousins because there had been a lack of opportunity to get to know each other. Some commented that when they finally got together they acted like strangers towards each other rather than cousins. Some tried to get their parents to visit their extended families regularly so they could catch up with their cousins. Anbi below lived in West Auckland and expressed a desire to experience and be part of his family and the wider community in South Auckland. Anbi felt more at home when he was with families in South Auckland:

‘First time I saw my cousins was last year and most of them are the same age as me. Every weekend I ask my parents to go and spend the weekends with them so I can see them more often. Being on this side of Auckland doesn’t feel right and when I go and spend the weekends with my cousin on the South side I feel at home kind a thing, it is like being in Sāmoa. I mean in South side it is full of Sāmoan and Tongan but here on the west side there are hardly any island people living around here.’ (Anbi, 16 year old male, 2008)

Household Size

The household size is one of the significant variables participants talked about as having an influence on their lives and living arrangements. The table below outlined the household size for 45 participants interviewed. The household size is presented in three different groups: small, medium and large sizes.

Table 5: Household size

	Small size (up to 4 members)	Medium size (up to 6 members)	Large size (6 members and above)
Number of Participants	13	19	13

It was evident that there were advantages and disadvantages of living with a large size family as opposed to a small family. When participants talked about household family size, they discussed household chores, level of support they received from adults and resources that were available to them. The effect of large households was experienced differently by males and females. More female participants appreciated living in large households than their male counterparts. According to the female participants the advantages were the collective responsibilities to share the chores around the household and looking after the children and the elderly:

‘I like big families even though there is not many chores to do but when you have so many aunties and cousins, things get done. I like the idea of sharing chores and taking turn to cook and clean. At least, you get to have a break from the chores and looking after the young ones. I don’t mind having many people in my home as long as we get along and take turns to do these things.’ (Gabe, 15 year old female, 2008)

The benefits of a large household were offset by some disadvantages. While Gabe expressed her positive feelings of having a large family living together and sharing responsibilities, others talked about the negative effect of having such a large family living together. The participants referred to the large households as complicated and more hassle when it came to financial responsibilities. According to the participants some family members refused to contribute and they tended to be selective in what they would contribute towards. Denzel shared his experience that a small size household was easy to control because it required fewer chores:

‘I live with my mum and dad and one sister so we are a small family with only four people. Some times we decided not to cook dinner but to go to KFC instead and we can do that knowing it’s only four of us; it would be different if we have four other family members with us. The worst thing about a big family and family members living with other family members is the constant debate who is going to buy this and who was going to pay this, you know like some of my extended families living together. They keep on ringing my dad because they had fights over this and that.’ (Denzel, 16 year old male, 2008)

One other factor that differentiates a small household from a large household was space for young people to do homework and have time out. The participants with a small size family talked about the advantages of having their own rooms and own space:

‘I have my own room so I get to do my homework at any time. It’s good to have a small size family because you have your own space, so if you don’t want to hang out with the adults in the sitting room then you can go to your room and read a book or listen to music.’ (Karla, 17 year old female, 2008)

Most key informants supported what these young people shared about the advantages and disadvantages of living in a different sized household. They also argued that the decision to live in small or large size households for most Sāmoan families was to do with obligations to the āiga rather than individual choices. Although some families are aware of the benefits of living in smaller households, they came under pressure to house kin who needed a place to stay. Sally commented that parents tend to make sacrifices to accommodate these kin and in most situations the bedrooms are given to them and the kids ended up sharing with their parents:

‘It is hard for our families here to say no to our relatives especially those ones that are coming here to stay. They have nothing, and given that they are your relatives you ended up being the person responsible for them. You ended up prioritising their needs over the children. If we say no to them, it is going to be difficult because you will be living with guilt.’ (Sally, 57 year old female, educator, 2009)

The key informants also shared that not all families would have gone through happy and great experiences living and sharing together. Some would have had bad experiences and would have gone through some tensions and conflicts. Some key informants argued that the expectations from these living arrangements were quite different from that of a traditional Sāmoan village. However these living arrangements in traditional Sāmoan were more communal and harmonious than they are now given the availability of purchased land:

‘We have gone through a lot of changes, some extended families don’t live as they used to in Sāmoa. Nowadays in some extended families it is the sa’o and his kids who are living on the extended family’s land and some have moved and lived somewhere else, but they still come together when they have extended family meetings. It’s the same here, families tend to live separately from each other but they come together during extended family meetings.’ (Alex, 47 year old male, researcher, 2009)

Summary

Exploring the adolescents’ descriptions of family indicated that they view family differently from their parents. Based on their interviews and experiences, there is a general sense that their conceptions of family are constructed based on their exposure to New Zealand lifestyles, socialisation and interactions with friends from other ethnic groups. The participants clearly identified two main family structures: the household unit and the extended family unit. A summary of these descriptions shows that having a caring, trusting, loving and supportive family provides consistency and stability that makes a huge difference to the lives of these young people. The descriptions of families by the participants were divided into three distinct types which shared some common characteristics but differed in others. The ‘stable family’ was considered as having high levels of communication with trusting and loving relationships among adults and young people. The family members in this type of family were more likely to be highly open-minded and had no difficulty trusting the young people to live their

lives. The 'adapting family' type appeared to have some positive attributes and connections but needed improvement in some areas. For example, loving and caring for the children involved, not only providing for their material needs but also allowing them time and reassurance that they can be trusted and supported. The 'struggling family' type was interesting because some young people believed their families continued to be strict with some traditional practices such as being overprotective towards the females. It was confirmed by the participants who had described their families as struggling, that these families had very low levels of self motivation and self esteem due to poor communication and lack of trust in the relationships within their families.

It was evident that there were positive as well as negative effects of these family structures on the lives and wellbeing of the young people. The experience of the young people demonstrated that the expectations for older siblings to look after the younger siblings and to be good role models indicated some negative effects. The significant effects on these adolescents are based on them taking the responsibility for the misbehaviour of younger siblings and the difficulty to balance these responsibilities with academic performance. It was evident that the participants' view of these responsibilities and who is responsible for what and who should obey who is formed in a different cultural context from that of their parents.

The literature indicated that children from larger families are considered as doing far worse in educational outcomes than those from smaller families (Iacovou, 2001). This chapter clearly demonstrated some positive and negative effect of family size on these young people's lives. There is a strong indication that family size for some of these households was often determined by the parents' collective obligation towards the *āiga* rather than personal choice. While some participants stated some positive aspects of a large size family including the sharing of responsibilities, others were more concerned about personal space and internal disagreements between family members. The interaction between multiple households of an extended family group also revealed some positive and negative connections to young people's lives and wellbeing. The cohesive and moral support by the extended families during the time of family crisis was one significant aspect of the extended family.

Chapter Seven: Family Relationships and Wellbeing

Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which the 45 participating Sāmoan adolescents in this study describe and evaluate relations within their families, and compares these with the findings of studies of family relationships presented in chapter 3. The main findings from the literature indicated that loving and caring family relationships are protective factors that are more likely to improve the level of wellbeing for young people. The Youth 2000 survey data also indicated that the majority of Sāmoan participants reported that they enjoy loving and caring relationships with their families. This study interviewed young Sāmoans about these relationships in the hope of identifying, more specifically, which elements of these relationships are positive, and negative, and how these influence the level of wellbeing.

Data drawn from the Youth 2000 survey included specific questions about relationships with parents, with one question about family and one about other relatives. One of the limitations in the Youth 2000 questions was the use of the terms 'family' and 'relatives' with less information of which family members these referred to. However, in this chapter the Youth 2000 questions on family and relatives were interpreted as followed. The questions that used the term 'family' are considered as inclusive of siblings, and the question on other 'relatives' refers to extended families including grandparents. Therefore, the main relationships explored in this study were those between young people and their parents, extended families, mainly grandparents, and their siblings. The main indices used by the Youth 2000 survey to determine the relationships between young people and parents were: loving and caring, feeling close to and spending quality time together. These elements were also explored in more depth in the interviews and focus groups and the interviews with key informants for this study.

Family Relationships

One of the general questions the Youth 2000 survey asked to determine how well young people get on with their families was: “How do you view your relationships with your family? Participants answered this question by choosing from three response items and these were: ‘I am happy about how we get on’, ‘my family relationships are neither good nor bad’ and ‘getting on with my family is causing me problems’. Of the 646 surveyed participants 56% reported that they were happy, 35% were neutral and 9% indicated that there were problems. The 45 participants interviewed for this study were also asked, ‘Are you happy with your relationships with your family members?’. It is important to point out that some students could indicate that they were not happy with their relationships and there was an opportunity for them to expand on their answers in more depth. All 45 participants in these interviews reported that they were happy with their relationships with parents, siblings and extended families, despite family disagreements within their own households at times. All 30 students who participated in focus groups for this study also shared that they were happy with their family relationships.

The interviewed participants for this study were then asked to describe elements of these family relationships. Most of them used concepts of ‘loving’, ‘caring’, ‘respect’, ‘trust’ and ‘supportive’ to describe their general relationships with family members. They also referred to ongoing conflict with siblings and disagreements with parents. Some also reflected on the collective responsibilities of the whole family to support its members, and even those that got themselves into trouble as illustrated in the excerpts below:

‘Families give you support and love and we respect each other. There are times when we disagree about things but at the end of the day your family provides you that love that no one else does. For most of us Sāmoan family, we have the love and support of our families and we are happy to be with families.’ (Samuel, 19 year old male, 2008)

We are a very close family, we love each other and we support each other. When one of us is up to no good, the whole family will come together to talk about it and trying to sort it out, sometimes when my parents are not available to come to school to sort me out, my aunty or uncle will definitely come, and to me that is good because I know I have many people who care about me and can look after me.’ (Don, 16 year old male, 2008)

The central element in the Sāmoan culture is the āiga (family) and the āiga extends to aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1997). The Sāmoan values of tautua (service), fa'aaloalo (respect), alofa (love), and usita'i (obedience) are crucial and embedded in the Sāmoan family social relations. The descriptions of positive relationships provided by participants about their families reflect the traditional role of a Sāmoan āiga (family) and can be best understood in the concepts which reflect the values of collectivity, family support and family cohesiveness. The three concepts are clearly interrelated and depict the essence of a Sāmoan āiga as a collective and a supportive network unit for all family members. The āiga members have a duty to provide support and attend to each other's needs: they maintain kinship linkages through family activities and it is the responsibility of all family members to protect and live in harmony with each other. For it to be effective in this role, it must also be cohesive which leads to emphasis on the value of maintaining family harmony.

For instance, when a family member gets into conflict with others, or gets into trouble with the law, the family comes together and supports each other if harmony and family cohesiveness are to be maintained. This is also demonstrated in the practice of fa'alavelave¹⁷ such as weddings and funerals where all household units that belong to an extended family unit come together to support each other during these occasions. This is supported by insights from key informants who emphasised the importance of family as a collective unit that provides the core support for young people they work with in their various professional support roles. The perspectives from the key informants was similar to one of the participants above acknowledging the collective responsibilities of different members of the aiga to step in and support each other in times of needs as illustrated in the excerpt below:

'It is having the support of other family members so when they (parents/caregivers) are not available to attend a school meeting or parent meeting they will send one of the aunts or uncles to attend, and that is very important, because it is having that support in place that makes things easier not only for us, but for the student and the families.' (George, 38 year old male, educator, 2009)

¹⁷ Sāmoan term used to describe cultural and traditional activities in Sāmoan families

Most key informants working with young people indicated that it was really important for them to gain the support of the āiga when there are problems experienced by a young person that needs to be addressed. The informants emphasised the importance of working with the whole āiga as a group and re-establishing the support network around the at risk young person. Some key informants believe that it is the absence or failure of that kinship support network that explains why young people are at risk and are more likely to get into trouble and tend to run away from home. This belief drives social work practice which focuses on replacing support networks as the following statements shows.

‘We try to rekindle that family support for these young people; I do believe that is why some kids run away and get into trouble, so what we do here we work with family members, parents, extended families and the church if we have to, to try and address those issues and we have to make sure all people involved are aware of how important it is to have that support.’ (Sally, 57 year old female, educator, 2009)

In New Zealand’s diverse, multicultural society the range of lifestyles, cultural and social identities and expectations, cultural values and beliefs and socio-economic status presents Sāmoan families with many challenges in maintaining and nurturing important support networks and relationships. It is these challenges faced by many Sāmoan families in New Zealand, which are said to break families up and are more likely to have a negative impact on these collective support networks. The challenges, from competing models of family, provide the potential to transform the characteristics of the relationships between young people and their family members, and lead them, in some cases, to question the Sāmoan traditional ways of maintaining these relationships. Therefore, the relationships that are crucial to examine here are the relationships between participants and parent(s), siblings and extended families primarily grandparents.

Relationships with Parents

‘O au o mātua fānau¹⁸’ is a proverb well known to Sāmoan people. It describes the desirability of close relationships between parents and children. It is literally translated as ‘our children are our treasures’ emphasising the roles of parents as caregivers and providers of love, care and safety. Alofa (love) and tausi (care) are two Sāmoan central concepts that help us understand the roles and responsibilities of Sāmoan parents towards their children. The parents demonstrate their alofa by providing and caring for their needs and children express their alofa towards their parents through obedience and respect by behaving accordingly and appropriately (Fa’alau & Jensen, 2006).

The Youth 2000 survey asked three main questions to determine the kind of relationships between young people and their parents. These questions focused mainly on three elements: loving and caring relationships, spending quality time, and feeling close to parents. The 45 participants interviewed for this study also discussed these three elements in more details. The description and information based on these young people’s experience seems to divide participants into two distinct groups: one group with a high level of wellbeing and the other with a low level of wellbeing. The positive and negative effects of these three elements of relationships are discussed in more detail below.

Loving and caring relationship

The Youth 2000 survey asked participants whether: “Most of the time, your mum or dad (or someone who acts as your mum/dad) is warm and loving towards you”. The participants answered the question by choosing from four response items. These were: ‘most of the time’, ‘sometimes’, ‘hardly ever’ and ‘does not apply to me’. These response items were combined into two groups: ‘most of the time/sometimes’ and ‘hardly ever/does not apply to me’. Of the 646 surveyed participants, about 75% reported that one parent (or someone acting as mum or dad) at least is mostly loving and warm towards them and about 25% of participants reported ‘hardly ever’ or ‘did not apply’ to them. The participants in qualitative interviews for this study had an opportunity to expand on these relationships and spoke of having loving and caring

¹⁸ This is a Sāmoan saying that literally explains the parents duty towards their children

parents by describing three main aspects of these relationships: trust, support and communication. While elaborating on these three elements a range became apparent: there were participants who enjoyed high levels of communication, trust and support with families and others who did not. Participants with high levels of communication, trust and support described their parents as being ‘excellent providers’, ‘highly supportive’, ‘having a better understanding of them’ and were ‘very open-minded’ as illustrated in the excerpt below:

‘They are very supportive in the things we do; they try their best to do everything for us kids. I have good parents they look after us well, they understand our needs, and are willing to do everything they can to make sure we are well.’ (Dan, 15 year old male, 2008)

Some of these participants also talked about sacrifices in relation to parents working long hours in low-paid work to make sure they have food on the family table. They appreciated the fact that, despite the long hours their parents worked to get a bit of extra money for the family they managed to spend time doing things with their children. According to these participants these sacrifices were a sign of their parents’ love and care and that they wanted to provide the best for them. In return, they believed it was their responsibility to reciprocate by contributing to the chores around home and by respecting their parents.

These observations correlated with participants’ levels of self-esteem and high motivation to achieve well at school for their parents and their families. They also used the thought of sacrifice the parents made as a way to build self-motivation to do well at school, setting personal goals with positive attitudes and believing that hard work led to high achievement. These positive and high achievements would be their contribution and gift towards their parents and families:

‘When I come to think of it my parents sacrifice a lot for us kids, they work hard and work long hours just for us to get by, for us to have food on the table and to go to school every day, and for me that is my main motivation to do good things and listen to my parents.’ (Dean, 15 year old male, 2008)

‘Seeing my parents go off to work every day and work long hours is something that I think of everyday, I can see they are really tired but still they go to work every morning, so I have to do my part by contributing to the chores around home and do my best at school for them and for my family.’ (Sue, 17 year old female, 2008)

Participants engaged in focus groups for this study shared similar views. They talked about parents' hard work to make sure they were well provided for. Most of these participants referred to parents as providers who worked hard to provide for their needs. For most of them, observing their parents getting up before 6 o'clock in the morning, especially during winter time, was something that they would never take for granted.

'I feel sorry for my parents. They go to work and they basically spend most of their time at work more than at home, especially when they get extra shifts. I really do feel for them you know, and I guess that's why I can't wait till I can work and help them out.' (Anbi, 16 year old male, Focus Group 3, 2008)

One of the key informants used different scenarios to discuss the diversity of families her students came from and claimed that what took place in the homes did reflect in the students' behaviour. She pointed out that children were the mirrors of their parents, that is, if parents set good examples kids will follow by learning and behaving accordingly, and if they set bad ones this will reflect in students' behaviour. Furthermore, if these students were not loved or cared for by parents and have no close connection or relationships then they tend to get lost and are more likely to retaliate and create issues in the classroom or withdraw from class activities altogether. In addition, other students may respond differently, that is, experiencing different effects such as being emotionally depressed and more likely to be suicidal:

'When I think about that, it is very true that children are the mirrors of parents, because what goes on in the homes reflects in the behaviour of the kid. If they argued 24/7 it affects the kids' concentration, temper and self esteem etc. If they set good examples right from the beginning the kids will learn, and they will learn well.' (Megan, 60 years old female, retired counsellor, 2009)

Another key informant articulated the same issue by sharing his experience when counselling young people in a refuge home. He claims that most of these young people have chosen to live in the refuge for safety reasons. It is the disruption caused by parents fighting with each other that has a negative effect on these young people. These young people go through emotional issues much deeper and on many occasions find it rather painful to talk about it with the counsellor and other young people:

‘It was really good for me because when I ran the programme I put questions on the board and I said I want you to answer this question, who am I? I can see they get very emotional when they talk about it, and it’s very deep inside you know, my sympathy is for these kids.’ (Jacob, 49 year old male counsellor, 2009)

Close Connection with Dad and Mum

The participants surveyed in the Youth 2000 study were asked whether they agreed with the statement: “Most of the time you feel close to your dad or mum (or someone who acts as your dad/mum)”. There were four response items for this question: ‘most of the time’, ‘sometimes’, ‘hardly ever’ and ‘does not apply to me’, and these items were combined into two groups: ‘most of the time/sometimes’ and ‘hardly ever/does not apply to me’. Of the 646 participants more than 70% reported that they felt closer to their mums than their dads. The interviewed participants who claimed to have good and open communication with parents were more likely to be happy and have close relationships with both dads and mums. Open communication by way of family frequent talk was perceived as a way of bringing family members closer together. These family talks allowed young people to get involved and contribute to family discussion. Most participants described open communication as the ability to share everything and talked about problems they experienced either outside or inside their families. Talking about problems was commonly portrayed as the opportunity to raise deep feelings not only about family affairs but also issues facing young people today. In addition participants spoke of the language and tone their parents use to communicate to them as reflected in the experience of two participants below:

‘It’s the way they talk to me, they do not yell at me they talk to me nicely and even when they want me to do something, they do not order me to do it, but they will say, son, would you be able to do this for us, please? (Curtis, 16 year old male, 2008)

‘They talk with respect to us, you know what I mean, it’s the way they approach us, and we do the same to them, you know there is no screaming or swearing etc, so I think that way of communication is more peaceful and understanding.’ (Lois, 16 year old female, 2008)

The participants also talked about freedom of speech not as a way of outweighing the views of their parents but as an opportunity to voice their personal views and most importantly they considered it as positive to their social and psychological development. According to some participants, being able to do this at home is a good start for them to learn how to voice their views which in turn helps them gain confidence to publicly speak and share their thoughts:

‘It’s a good practice for us, if we are given the opportunity to do that at home then it’s a good thing for us when we are at school you know, it means we are not scared to talk or ask the teacher questions or share with them what we think of the subjects taught. So for me it’s a good example and I do that in school and it feels good.’ (Denzel, 16 year old male, 2008)

‘It really helps me to think out loud, having that opportunity help me to share everything with my family, my parents, nana and my siblings, so what goes on in my life my family gets to hear about it, and its good socially and mentally.’ (Lu, 16 year old female, 2008)

Being able to talk about anything is all part and parcel of good and open communication. Participants emphasised the importance of being able to share their feelings with parents, whether these were personal feelings about teenage issues, general feelings about family issues or thoughts and dreams about their educational aspirations in the future. For these participants, having the opportunity to share with parents who are willing to listen made a huge difference to their health and wellbeing. Teenage issues were described as personal feelings and challenges which emerged as a result of good or bad things that happened in young people’s lives. The bad things referred to were bullying at school, being dumped by boyfriends and girlfriends and being backstabbed by other friends. Moreover the good things included that they can share their dreams and educational aspirations that they want to pursue after secondary school:

‘You know sometimes they say us Sāmoan people are not really good at sharing our feelings especially Sāmoan men, but I do share my feelings with my parents and mostly mum though, because she is always home. So for me it is much healthier to be able to off load when you have these feelings.’ (David, 17 year old male, 2008)

‘Its nice being able to do that, your communication and how you communicate with your parents makes a huge difference to us young people; I do feel sorry

for some of my friends who can not do that at home, because I will be devastated if I am unable to do this. For some of my friends they keep things inside and sometimes I can tell they are going through tough times.’ (Liz, 16 year old female, 2008)

The lack of communication on the other hand affected the relationship between parents and other young participants. For some participants, communication with parents was problematic due to various factors. Some participants considered that their communication was one way communication where kids do what they are told. Hence, some participants stated that because they were young their views were not considered important. The limitation on communication led some young people to believe that their parents were too impatient to listen, they had become judgemental and quick to judge because they were either too tired to listen or had no time at all. Therefore most participants tended to keep things until they found the right time to confide in their friends. At home they felt that they are not given the opportunity to share and enjoy the freedom and opportunity of sharing their feelings with their parents and families:

‘They do not have the time and if they are at home they are too tired so most of the time I talk to my friends at school we seem to share the same issues with my other friends so we tend to talk and help each other. And sometimes I think it’s our age group too, I mean who wants to listen to some kids.’
(Caroline, 14 year old female, 2008)

The lack of family communication was also considered by two participants as the main causes for family arguments between dad and mum with their ongoing fights causing dad to drink alcohol regularly. This ongoing disruption in the family created a great distance between some participants and their parents:

‘It depresses me when they fight, they always fight. When they do that dad will go out and drink with his friends, they fight about anything, little things like who is going to put petrol in the car etc, those little things and I know that is not why they fight. I just wish they get a divorce if all they do is fight.’
(Carter, 15 year old male, 2008)

While some participants wished they could have the opportunity to really communicate with their families, three others did not seem to have any issues for not having the time to get involved in any family talk. About four participants in the focus

groups also shared similar views. Family talk for some of these participants was associated with family fa'alavelave, that is; adult talk when there are family cultural occasions that need to be taken care of. Therefore, they have no interest in contributing to family issues as these are seen as the responsibility of parents and adults in the family. More importantly, they are too young to contribute financially to the family and therefore considered unable to have any right to voice their opinions on family issues. However, they claim that there are issues concerning the children and the family will talk but mainly parents and adults do all the talking:

'I am not interested in family talk. My family do talk but I am not part of that, and even if we have family talks my parents do all the talking and we listen, so there is no point in that. I guess when I grow up and am able to work and contribute to family stuff then I may be able to do that but for now my parents do all that.' (Kaylene, 17 year old female, 2008)

'My family have talks now and then but it's mainly the adults, when they talk we either spend time in our rooms on play station or running around doing the cups of tea for them. And if it's something about us then parents tend to do all the talking.' (Derek, 15 year old male, Focus Group 5, 2008)

All participants were then asked to talk about their specific relationships with dad and mum and it was clear that the majority of participants spoke of feeling closest to their mums than their dads. The fathers' absence from home due to long hours of work was reported to affect relationships with some of the young participants. Most male and female participants interviewed spoke of a special connection they established with their mum. Some female participants talked about a special bond they have with their mum, and this was considered more like a relationship between sisters rather than between mother and daughter:

'I do feel that I am closer to my mum than my dad. Mum and I have a good relationship. We forever talk about intimate things like sisters and I know most of my friends they do not talk to their mothers about boyfriends and female staff but I do that with my mum, and having that close relationship helps me to share some intimate things in my life with my mum.' (Sophie, 15 year old female, 2008)

'I talk to mum I wonder about her reaction about some things and when we really talk it is good for me and I feel good about it because she will give me wise advice and not yell at me I think mum and I are quite open when we talk about things especially with girls and the age group I am in now, so I need that

talk with her because it gives me that faith that there is someone to talk to about a lot of things.’ (Penelope, 18 year old female, 2008)

Other female participants reported being close to mum but that communication in terms of sharing intimate details about life was very poor. It is clear that being close to someone does not really mean they are able to talk with them. Some felt close to mum, because she is home most of the time, but they are more likely to talk to their friends and other relatives about personal issues rather than their mums. Lack of trust and being judgemental were the main reasons for not sharing and talking with mums:

‘I am closer to my mum but I don’t share everything with my mum. I don’t share private things with her like boys and that, in saying that I do believe I feel closer to mum than other members of my family.’ (Sarah, 16 year old female, 2008)

‘It is funny I do feel I am closer to my mum but when it comes to intimate details about my love life I tend to share it with my aunt. She is young and she listens to me. I mean she does not live with me, she lives somewhere else, but I can share these things with her rather than me sharing it with mum.’ (Frolina, 17 year old female, 2008)

Some male participants also expressed views on why they felt closer to their mums than their dads and for them it’s about mum’s ability to listen to them. They felt at ease talking to mum and most importantly they are able to confide in her rather than their dads. For some participants they use mum to communicate information through to their dads:

‘My mum, she is all good, she supports me with whatever I want to do and especially with my music. I can tell her anything about my music and if I don’t want to tell my dad then I will tell my mum then my mum tells my dad.’ (Jay, 17 year old male, 2008)

A couple of participants spoke of feeling distant from mum because of a new addition to the family such as new partners or the arrival of a new baby. Having a new addition to the family was stated to take over quality times participants used to have with mums. Some participants were brought up and looked after by grandparents, aunties or uncles in Sāmoa at a young age and have moved in with their parent/parents more recently. Spending most of their young lives with these relatives had an emotional

effect on them and although they live apart, participants still sense a feeling of closeness towards them:

‘I was brought up by my aunt and uncle in Sāmoa and now I am with my mother and step father and I am not close to either of them, I feel close to my aunt and uncle and I do miss them both.’ (Roy, 14 year old male, 2008)

‘I am close to my grandparents I lived with them all my life and it is only recently that I have to move back to my mum, so for me I will always feel close to my grandparents although they live in Sāmoa and I live here.’ (Grace, 15 year old female, 2008)

Spending time together

While the Youth 2000 survey determined the amount of time participants spent with their parents, the interviewed participants for this study talked about trust and support and how these two concepts associated with quality time they spent with their parents. Surveyed participants were asked whether: “Most weeks you get enough time to spend with your dad/mum.” The response items for this question were combined in two groups: ‘always/sometimes’ and ‘hardly ever/almost never’. Of 646 participants, only 58% reported that they always or sometimes spend most time with at least one parent and 42% said they hardly ever/almost never

The interview data from participants for this study showed that most spoke highly of the support and trust they have with parents. High levels of trust associated with the quantity and quality of time they spent together in family activities. These household activities are known as family time where regular family fono¹⁹ are held: family members having dinner together and doing shopping together as a family. Most participants spoke of the positive effect of these household domestic activities on their relationships by sharing jokes over dinner, talking regularly, watching rugby games on television and doing outdoor activities. Therefore doing things together was stated to contribute to the quality of their relationships and spending more time was stated to improve their communication and increase the level of trust among them:

¹⁹ Fono is a Sāmoan term used to describe a family, village or church meeting

‘I spend quality time with my family. We all have our own things to do and attend to, like my parents at work and us at school then we come home we do things as a family. Dinner time is my family time, we sit down eat and make jokes, we talk about our day at school and what happened at my parents work; for me that is family time.’ (Tom, 18 year old male, 2008)

‘When we spend more time together we tend to do family things together like having regular fono; it’s just us in the family and I find it really rewarding to have family talk, we get the opportunity to talk and my parents give us that chance to contribute to family stuff.’ (Viv, 17 year old female, 2008)

For some participants various reasons affect the level of trust they have with parents. A few participants blamed their older siblings for not setting good examples and failing to succeed. For these participants they spent more time on books and doing homework rather than spending it with parents or family. Older siblings were not successful at school therefore parents tended to be very strict on them. It is the older siblings’ failures to do well at school that affected their relationships:

‘My two older sisters did not do well at school, they were always in trouble and they were kicked out so many times and they did not finish 5th form. That’s why my parents did not trust me to go anywhere or do anything else apart from going to school and doing homework. I want to say to them that they can trust me but how can I do that.’ (Kogo, 16 year old female, 2008)

‘They think I am going to be like them, I mean I am doing well at school but they just don’t see that, they are so scared that I am going to do exactly what my brothers did. To be quite honest I don’t blame my parents but it’s affecting me in a way because they do not trust me enough to let me do things.’ (Tania, 15 year old female, 2008)

This has a major impact on these young participants despite the fact that they are doing very well at school. Therefore these participants could have an increased risk of hiding things from parents while also not being able to confide in their siblings:

‘I hide things from them, I don’t talk about stuff with my mum or dad, and if I tell my younger siblings I am sure they will tell my parents. So I don’t talk about things because they might find out and give me a hiding, I just don’t trust my own parents you know, it’s sad but that’s the way it is for me.’ (Lavina, 16 year old female, 2008)

When some participants talked about the time they spend with dads and mums, it was no surprise to discover that most of them spend more time with mums than dads. For

most families dads are the main breadwinner for the family and work long hours. Others talked about dad's responsibilities and involvement with the church which takes most of his time including the weekends:

'It is hard when your dad works late and does not get home till late. We don't get to see him in the morning because he needs his sleep and when we get home from school he has left for work.' (Fraser, 13 year old male, 2008)

'Dad works all the time so I don't really get to spend much time with him during the week. But when it comes to the weekend its church but I do treasure the time I get to spend with him.' (Linda, 15 year old female, 2008)

A few students talked about stepfathers and the difficulty they have connecting with them, and that they are unable to spend much time with them:

'My dad is not my real dad, so I don't really know him and we don't really spend that much time together, he does his things and I do my own things.' (Tim, 16 year old male, 2008)

For many of the participants interviewed, mum's presence at home when kids left for school in the morning and arrived home from school was one reason they spent more time with mums than their dads. Therefore their orientation around home in terms of roles and responsibilities seemed to focus on mum rather than dad:

'Mum is home 24/7, she is there when I leave for school and she is there after school so I feel very close to mum than my other family members.' (Lance, 14 year old male, 2008)

'Dad works hard for the family and he does different shifts, and sometimes when we finally have time together it is not really rewarding because dad tends to do other things or is busy with other people.' (Flo, 16 year old female, 2008)

Most participants also talked about the supportive roles of parents. They spoke of the support by parents in relation to their personal choices and school activities. About 70% of interviewed participants are very satisfied with the support shown by parents during school activities. The participants stated that they are happy that parents made time to attend their social and sport activities and most importantly the parents' meetings at school. For most of them this highlights parents' unconditional love for them because they made the time to support them in these activities. Most

participants shared stories of the emotional feelings they experienced seeing parents supporting their school cultural activities and sports:

‘I played for the First 15 rugby team and ever since I played my parents are always there, supporting me bringing me drinks and oranges, and when I run out on the field I will stop and look around to see where they are. It makes me so happy to see them and I play my best to make them proud of me.’ (Michael, 17 year old male, 2008)

‘The first time I performed in front of a crowd I was so nervous standing in front of so many people but to be honest I felt okay after I see my dad’s head first then my mum and my younger siblings. When I saw dad nodding his head then I knew I was going to be fine, because I can see my family is there to support me and cheer me up.’ (Sarah, 15 year old female, 2008)

While some participants were very positive about parents attending school activities, other participants had slightly different experiences. About 20% of interviewed participants and 15% of the focus group participants shared that parents never attended their school or sporting activities. The reasons for parents’ non-attendance varied from parents not having time because of work and being too busy with church commitments during the week:

‘Even since I have attended this school I never see my parents there. Sometimes my older sister from the 6th form attends but not my parents; they work long hours and they have church stuff too.’ (Rihana, 14 year old female, 2008)

‘It will be nice to see them make an effort now and then but I try to understand I am not complaining because I know they have to provide for the family but I am just saying it would be nice to see them there.’ (Lupeez, 15 year old female, 2008)

The key informants confirmed the parents’ commitment to employment, and that some of them spent most of their free time during the week attending church-related activities, especially when the parents were members of other small groups such as choir group and women and men’s groups. All key informants agreed that spending quality time with children benefited both the young people and their families. Fewer key informants also shared that not all families took the opportunities to attend their children’s school activities. It was also acknowledged that some parents who worked full time, never missed any school activities their children participated in outside of

school hours. If these parents were not available then other members of their family would be there. According to key informants, these are the best family times because parents get to see what their children did at school and at the same time they received feedback on how they were doing. Very few families never attended their children's school activities and one key informant commented that this shows a lack of interest and support from these families:

'We have parents that come straight from work to make sure they attend our after hours school activities. It is really good to see that, we don't have these activities everyday, and this is the best time to get to know what their kids have been doing in the school. Through these activities, parents get to spend time with their kids and get to see some amazing talents. Then you have families that you don't see here at all; the kids get dropped off and they will come back and pick them up.' (Sally, 57 year old female, educator, 2009)

Relationships with extended families

There was no question in the Youth 2000 survey that specifically asked about the relationships between young people and their grandparents. However, one question asked participants about 'relatives' they do not live with: "How much do you feel your relatives care about you." Participants answered this question by choosing from four response items: 'a lot', 'some', 'a little', 'not at all' and 'does not apply to me'. These four items were combined in two groups: a lot and some/a little/not at all and does not apply to me. Of 646 participants, 60% reported a lot and 40% said some/a little/not at all and did not apply. During the interviews for this study, participants were given the opportunity to talk about their relationships with extended family members with whom they live and those with whom they do not live. Most participants claimed that they had close relationships with their extended families especially their cousins despite not seeing them on a regular basis. This was mainly because they lived in different geographical areas and attended different churches when compared to participants who get to see their extended families regularly because they attended the same church.

The relationship which is critical to discuss here is that between participants and their grandparents. Grandparents play an important supportive role in Sāmoan families. The participants in the interviews and focus groups discussed how highly they

regarded their personal relationships with grandparents explaining it was an emotional and spiritual bond. For some participants who no longer lived with grandparents, they reflected on the feelings and memories of their upbringings. They reported holding on to some traditions in order to maintain this special connection with their grandparents. The relationship denotes closeness and was described as very important in many ways because grandparents are not only considered good caregivers but also providers of life and knowledge. Some grandparents were considered as the main providers for material things like food and money and others mainly for knowledge and wisdom that helped young participants learn about one's identity, belonging and culture:

'Here I try to go to church when I can. It is very important to my upbringing in Sāmoa and my grandparents always take me to church every Sunday so it's very important to me to go to church. I mean that is another connection I have with my grandparents.' (Jan, 15 year old female, 2008)

'I can not imagine being without my grandmother, she has taught me so much about life and I do love her so much.' (Karla, 17 year old female, 2008)

'I believe in God but my family does not go to church but my nana in Wellington goes to church so that's when I go to church, when I am down there visiting my nana.' (Heremia, 14 year old male, 2008)

Those who had lived with grandparents as their main caregivers at a young age have good memories of their relationships. Two of the participants were adamant that family activity and fun for them remains within the connection they once had with grandparents, therefore they are left out from their current family activities. They talked about fun things they used to do and the simple things they learnt to do while with grandparents. For those who migrated to New Zealand they maintained a distant relationship, communicating mainly through letters and/or phone calls once or twice a year:

I have a great relationship with my nana in Sāmoa and I get to see her every day when I was in Sāmoa. Now it's just letter and phone calls now and then; I miss her so much.' (Rob, 17 year old male, 2008)

I was brought up by my grandparents and everything I did was basically spending most of my time and having fun with them. So family fun thing for me remains within that connection I have with my grandparents.' (Zora, 15 year old female, 2008)

While two participants refused to be part of any family fun, the others continued to uphold various traditions such as attending church as a means of connecting with grandparents who lived afar. For example one participant maintains her spiritual connection with grandparents through early morning prayers at six o'clock every morning:

'I get very emotional time when I think about my grandparents. When I was young we would sit up early in the morning and my granddad would pray and ask for a blessing for all my family members. So every morning here at 6am I will wake up every morning and say my prayers knowing that my grandparents are praying at the same time.' (Karen, 15 year old female, 2008)

'My grandparents are the most important people in my life even though we don't live together. I love them with all my heart and I always love seeing them and spending time with them.' (John, 16 year old male, 2008)

For the participants who have access to one or both grandparents they spoke about quality time, happier times and the advantages of spending most time with grandparents. They all shared positive attitudes about the level of communication and the freedom they have to express their feelings and explained how and why they feel in certain ways. Grandparents were considered as having the patience to listen, provide advice with *mana*²⁰ and by using the right words to convey advice. One of the participants reflected on how he had been in trouble at school many times but it was the kind words and ongoing advice of his grandmother that helped him through his troubles:

'My nana has been there for me I mean she is 75 years old now and she always says good things to me. I am very close to my nana more so than any other members of my family, she goes to me all the time, 'do something for me while I am still alive son' so I have to stay out of trouble and do something good for my life and for my nana.' (Peter, 19 year old male, 2008)

'I talked to my grandmother all the time I talk to her about school, the future, my friends and boyfriends.' (Lyka, 16 year old female, 2008)

Most participants in the focus groups also talked about their relationships with their grandparents. In fact, the relationship with their grandparents was considered very special, more than their relationships with other members of their families. For most

²⁰ Translated as sacred and respectful

of the participants grandparents were said not to be judgemental, they provided positive encouragement and showed affection and appreciation towards their achievements:

‘I spend more time with my grandmother and I spend more time talking with her than the others. I do talk to my aunt and sisters but I really talk to my grandmother, I love talking to her because she always gives me good advice.’ (Chris, 14 year old male, Focus Group 2, 2008)

‘I always feel happy to talk to my grandmother, knowing that she won’t tell me off but she would give me advice like with the boys she will say to me, ‘play with your mind but don’t play with your heart’, so I always remember that, she is like my best friend, I will tell her anything and she does not judge me.’ (Vicki, 16 year old female, Focus Group 1, 2008)

Grandparents as Knowledge Providers

Grandparents provide knowledge that most young people claimed they required in life in regards to their identity, survival and family history. The knowledge about life centred on survival and sacrifices grandparents went through to support their families. Some participants shared stories about grandparents leaving their homelands and migrating to a foreign country searching for a future, providing their children with opportunities to attend school in New Zealand. They shared past experiences with their grandchildren about the many challenges they faced when they arrived in New Zealand. They shared stories about factory work and the long hours they worked just to get enough to live. Learning about grandparents’ past experiences encouraged some participants to do well at school as this was the opportunity for them to survive and help their families:

‘My grandparents came here in the 1960’s I think and they had gone through a lot then, they migrated here to give their children a better education and now us grandchildren are doing the same thing, in a way they had suffered a lot for my parents and for us and they survived it all.’ (Virginia, 19 year old female, 2008)

‘My grandfather worked hard for all of us, he is a hard working man. We often talked about the sacrifices they had to make for our family. He told me about his first job in those days, the hard labour he had to do to earn money and just bringing the kids up. It opens my eyes big time never to take

anything for granted you know, we have the chance to make something for ourselves and our family they did not.’ (TK, 19 year old male, 2008)

The participants also appreciated stories about their family history in relation to family generations and family lands in Sāmoa. Some participants spoke of the origins of family names and the importance of family matai names and details about rights to certain family names and to family properties. Some participants learnt about the meaning behind their names and where it originated from and why it was important to the family. These participants claimed that the information they learnt from their grandparents is important to pass on to the next new generation.

‘I know my parents knew about these things but we do not talk about it as such. I always wonder why I have such a long name and teachers have problems pronouncing it. I have no idea what it meant until my grandfather explained my name is from Lefaga [name of village in Sāmoa] and it was one of our ancestor’s name; isn’t that cool.’ (Sean, 16 year old male, 2008)

‘For me it was more like an identity and knowing my roots so to speak, if nana did not tell me I would probably never learnt that my name is special. I owe this to my nana and now any conversation we have it’s become a special one and one that I will never forget as long as I live – and I will tell these stories to my kids too.’ (Leanne, 17 year old female, 2008)

‘I know now that my family has three mountains and I went to Sāmoa last year my uncle took me there and it was such a beautiful place. I wandered around like I have been there before; I felt like somebody and all I could think of this belongs to me and it belongs to my family.’ (Dean, 15 year old male, 2008)

The interviews with key informants provided important insights on why grandparents have such high level of connection with young people today. They argued that the change in roles from being parents to grandparents makes a huge difference to their relationship with the young generation. They claim that grandparents spend more time with grandchildren, they communicate well and the level of trust is very high. Most importantly the young participants discussed that the grandparents have more time to share their knowledge and wisdom about fa’a-Sāmoa and life in general. Most participants had high levels of respect and love for their grandparents. According to key informants, grandparents are no longer the main providers for family households therefore they are more likely to have more time to spend with their grandchildren. Hence, in some families grandparents are more likely to take the responsibility of

looking after their grandchildren while the parents are at work. It is this time they spend together that provides the opportunity for them to bond with the children, improve their communication, build trust and teach them about culture and most importantly grandchildren develop a strong sense of attachment towards their grandparents:

‘Grandparents are no longer the main income earner of the families and they have all the time in the world to spend with their grandchildren, and all that time will be spent with grandchildren - they basically taking over parent’s responsibilities by looking after the kids, being there for them, when the kids want to talk they are there ready to listen and kids are not stupid, they become so attached to them. Some kids will only talk to their grandparents and not the parents.’ (Gary, 43 year old male, pastor, 2009)

Relationships with siblings

The Youth 2000 survey asked one question to determine the relationships between young participants and family including siblings. The question asked was: “How much do you feel your family cares about your feelings?”. The response items were combined in the following groups: ‘a lot’ and ‘some/a little/not at all/does not apply to me’. Out of 646 participants 42% reported a lot and 58% said some/a little/not at all and did not apply to them.

The interviews and focus groups for this current study explored aspects of relationships between siblings with emphasis on the level of communication, interaction between siblings, time they spend together and how they generally feel about each other. Almost all of the participants reported that they have close relationships with other siblings and most talked about caring, respectful, close bonds, responsible and mature relationships. When participants explored further on these elements of their relationships, issues of gender and age emerged. The coded data highlighted two kinds of relationships between siblings that most participants reflect on: and these are relationships between a brother and sister and between older and younger siblings.

Few studies completed by Pacific, and especially Sāmoan scholars, as mentioned in earlier chapters, explored a feagaiga (covenant) between brothers and sisters from a

Sāmoan perspective. The word feagaiga signifies a mutual and traditional relationship between brothers and sisters where much respectful behaviour are adhered to (Vailaau 2005; Gershon, 2007). More importantly, the brothers are responsible for their sisters' welfare. The female participants aged between 15 to 18 years who were born in Sāmoa and migrated to New Zealand have a clear understanding of the feagaiga between brothers and sisters. They talked about boundaries in terms of language used to communicate with brothers and how to dress and behave appropriately around brothers. These participants were well aware that boundaries included avoiding going into brothers' rooms and touching any of their belongings like clothing etc:

‘With my siblings we are aware of our relationships when it comes to brothers and sisters. We have a special relationship where we are not to go into their rooms and go through their things so we tend to avoid doing that and also avoid using bad language when they are around. For us who are from Sāmoa that is one of the first things you know is that relationship between you and your brothers, it's more like a sacred relationship that all of us know.’ (Lyka, 16 year old female, 2008)

The male participants talked about being responsible for their sisters; they look out for them when at school making sure they are safe. According to some of them these are their main responsibilities as brothers:

‘I take that responsibility when we are at school I have to look after my two sisters, one is older than me. I feel it's my job as a brother to make sure they do not get into any trouble.’ (Lance, 14 year old male, 2008)

One female participant who was born in New Zealand talked about her older brother being the chaperon when she needs to go shopping or go out with friends. According to her, she spends most time with her brother because she needs a driver rather than spending time talking about other things. She claims that her parents expected her brother to drop and pick her up as this is his responsibility because he knows how to drive:

‘I spend most time with my brother because he is my taxi driver, he drives me to do shopping for the family and when I want to go somewhere with my friends.’ (Liz, 16 year old female, 2008)

The New Zealand-born participants had less understanding of the concept feagaiga, than their Sāmoan-born counterparts. Some talked about parents telling them not to go into their brothers' rooms and not to wear particular clothes, but were unable to provide any explanation as to why they were unable to do this:

'My mum tells me not to go to his room because I am not allowed in there and I don't know why; my friends share their clothes with their brothers and I don't see why I should not. But the thing with mum she does not explain herself she just says, don't touch your brother's stuff and you don't go into his room, understand.' (Lupez, 15 year old female, 2008)

Most of these female participants claim that parents treat them differently: they were stricter on them than on their brothers. They talked about a girl's role being confined within the home and that the brothers have freedom to do what they want such as going out with friends. The Alafou Report (2003) by the Ministry of Pacific Affairs reporting on a Fono with 700 Pacific Island young people suggested that young females claimed that they are being treated differently and did not have the same freedom as boys, and that females are more likely to end up having more responsibilities around the home than the males. Similarly, Keddell's (2006) study on identity among Sāmoan-Pakeha people in Aotearoa claimed that being a Sāmoan female and the oldest siblings meant that they had more responsibility both for younger siblings and domestic tasks.

However, Sāmoan born females in focus groups argued that parents who are strict on girls rather than boys are good because they are considering what is happening around the neighbourhood. They talked about the notion of protection and safety as reasons for parents' overprotection of their daughters compared with their sons. Other participants too suggested that their parents now apply the same rules on their brothers given the bad things that had happened in their neighbourhood:

'We talk about this with my Sāmoan friends at school and we all share the same experience our parents being overprotective towards us and not letting us go anywhere without them knowing, but come to think of it, it is more about our safety I mean look at all the young females that get themselves killed, you look at the television news, they looking for a missing teenage girl and that, that is scary.' (Sue, 17 year old female, 2008)

‘Boys are boys but then again some Sāmoan parents do not let their sons go out these days. It is not safe anymore for anybody to be out with friends, too many bad things had happened, so I do believe that my parents are doing a great thing with us.’ (Sarah, 15 year old female, 2008)

Despite the differences in views about the brother–sister relationships, participants generally claimed that they all have close relationships with their siblings. However, describing close relationships raised issues of trust, communication and support. Most females rather than male participants talked about relationships with sisters and how communication is based on how much they trust each other. For some participants they enjoy spending time with siblings but admitted having problems sharing personal details about themselves. While some older participants felt okay to share their life stories with younger siblings some were reluctant to do so for fear of younger siblings reporting back to parents:

‘I am close to my siblings and I love them but oh no, I don’t tell them anything about my other life. You know if they are going to find out that I have a boyfriend at school I am sure my parents will hit the roof, that’s why I don’t tell anything to my younger sister.’ (Sophie, 15 year old female, 2008)

‘I am telling you there are things I can share with them but not everything. I know I will get into trouble if I reveal some of my secrets to my younger siblings. My younger sister has a big mouth that I don’t trust and I know she is only young but that does not stop her from blackmailing me if I told her something about my love life.’ (Lu, 16 year old female, 2008)

Only a small number of female participants were comfortable in sharing everything with their older sisters. Being able to share with older sisters was stated to help develop a sense of trust which then led to sisters supporting each other on various occasions:

‘I spend more time with my sister than anyone else, she is pregnant and I am there to help out about anything. And I like to do that because that is our time to share our stories. I tell her everything about me at school and about boys which is something that I will never tell my mum or my younger sister.’ (Zora, 15 year old female, 2008)

For male participants a close relationship consisted of having things in common to talk about like talking and playing sports with older brothers. For them trust is not an

issue because older brothers are considered as role models especially if they are successful at what they do:

‘I look up to my older brothers; they set a good example for me. I talk to them and they talk to me, we do not have problems talking, as a matter of fact sometimes they just cant stop talking – but I think we are different from our sisters, boys talk about anything we do not have any issue like we have to watch what we say.’ (Rob, 17 year old male, 2008)

‘I think girls make a big deal out of things, we boys do not hide things from each other, but I think girls they have too many secrets and they do not want their parents to know. I talk to my older brothers rather than talking to dad I talk to my brothers, we do not have communication problems like the girls’. (Tom, 18 year old male, 2008)

As for participants with younger brothers they talked about responsibility, spending time looking after them and having fun together like playing in the park or having a competition on play station:

‘I spend a lot of time with my brother because I have to look after him a lot. He is four years old and I take him to the park when I go play basketball, I take him everywhere I go, this was like my older brother he takes me everywhere so I am doing the same thing to my little brother.’ (Fraser, 13 year old male, 2008)

‘I have a good relationship with my little brother. Sometimes he annoys me because he talks back to me and never does anything to help me, but he is my little brother and I am supposed to be the big brother and look after him for my parents. We do a lot of fun things around the home and we get to compete on the play station.’ (Roy, 14 year old male, 2008)

Summary

The information reported in this chapter demonstrated a strong link between family relationships and wellbeing. The Youth 2000 survey used indicators of loving and caring, feeling close to and spending time to determine the level of relationships surveyed participants have with their families. Despite the fact that some responses were combined together it was clear from the data that the majority of surveyed participants reported loving and caring relationships, spending enough time with parents and they felt close to one of the parents. It was also evident from the literature

that these are protective elements of relationships that were more likely to enhance young people's wellbeing.

Analysis of the qualitative data concluded that participants both from interviews and focus groups represented two different groups: one group with a high level of wellbeing and the other with a low level of wellbeing. With three different relationships (relationships with parents, grandparents and siblings) discussed in this chapter participants spoke about loving and caring as one important indicator of relationships between themselves and parents and extended families, primarily grandparents and siblings. However, when participants involved in interviews and focus groups explored elements of loving/caring relationships the concepts of communication, trust and support were identified as key components of these relationships. While describing these three concepts participants recognised the advantages of having a high level of understanding and trust and spending quality time with parents, grandparents and siblings as positive. These three concepts were considered to be interrelated; one influenced the other and should be perceived as strengths of this loving and caring relationship. The frequency of clear and open communication was suggested to improve the understanding of each other's needs that would increase family support leading to more time spent together as a family which in turn developed a high level of trust for all family members. In addition participants who claimed to have open and frequent communication and claimed to have the support and understanding of parents and other family members showed a strong sense of trust, feeling close to families, seemed very happy and showed high levels of wellbeing.

However, there were also negative effects experienced by other participants and these were reported as lack of communication and low levels of trust and support. There were also other factors which demonstrated negative effects on some aspects of these relationships. Not all participants spend quality times with their parents. Most participants reported spending more time with their mums than their dads. This reflected findings from the literature where a study by Keddell (2006) on Sāmoan and European children found women were more confined to the home than the men, resulting in them spending more time in the home with their kids. She also argued

that fathers tend to work long hours and their children hardly see them, therefore the relationships between them were not as close.

The literature demonstrated that grandparents play vital roles in the lives of young people. They became full time caregivers and knowledge providers for these young people. This was similar to the findings from the interviews, focus groups and interviews with key informants. The descriptions by young people about these relationships indicated very special, spiritual and emotional connections. The grandparents spent quality time with these young people and were said to have the patience and time to teach and hold long conversations with these young people. Few participants had difficulties communicating with their grandparents; however, they once they motivated themselves to learn the language they were then able to understand their grandparents. These strong connections and positive relationships have demonstrated a positive effect on the lives and wellbeing of these young people.

Chapter Eight: Family Organisation and Wellbeing

Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings of the Sāmoan adolescent participants' analyses and assessment of how their families were organised. Chapter two provided some background information on research that indicated how different aspects of family organisation influenced the wellbeing of young people. These aspects of family organisation identified in chapter two included various functions of family units; the ways families interacted and the ways in which they were oriented to young people. This chapter presents five aspects of family organisation that were very common among the participants interviewed. Data from the Youth 2000 survey, interviews and focus groups with Sāmoan adolescents, wellbeing survey and interviews with key informants will be presented in this chapter.

When talking about family organisation, participants in this study spoke of the different ways their families organised their daily lives with regards to familial and extra-familial activities both indoors and outdoors. They talked about structured and unstructured routines and processes of family decision-making. They shared their feelings about their families' expectations in relation to achievement and success and their families' concern about their personal safety. They also talked about their families' encouragement for them to have their own ideas and beliefs about life. It was evident that participants who had structured routines and well-organised daily activities shared positive feelings of what family life meant for them as opposed to the experience of those participants with unstructured routines and activities in their lives. It is important to note here that some of the themes discovered during the interviews and focus groups did not emerge in the Youth 2000 survey²¹.

²¹ The Youth 2000 survey questions referred to a 'family' whereas the interviews for this study identified two main family types. Young people in this study were given the opportunity to share their experience about their household units and extended family units

Family Fun Time

The Youth 2000 survey asked one question about family fun. The question was: “How much do you and your family have fun together”? Of 646 surveyed participants 41% reported “a lot” and 59% answered either “some”, “little” or “not at all”. It was important for this study to find out more about what constituted family ‘fun time’ for these young people.

The majority of 45 participants interviewed for this study talked about having some kind of fun time with their household and extended families. Their descriptions of “fun” varied. Fun included organising and participating in both indoor and outdoor family activities. All emphasised the importance of holding these fun events every year. These events were distinguished from other ongoing family-based activities such as weddings and funerals, which were not considered as fun events as illustrated by Gabe below:

‘I think we have the usual traditional family weddings and funerals but these are events that basically controlled by the oldies, it is not really something that we young ones are really interested in. But when these happened we must take part but we don’t really consider those as fun family thing for us. It may be fun for the oldies but not us, it’s long and boring. Well, actually, that will be weddings; because funerals are definitely not fun. And the thing is if there are too many funerals and weddings during the year then there is nothing left for us to enjoy you know like going somewhere and do some fun stuff with them.’
(Gabe, 15 year old female, 2008)

Many participants spoke about the importance of quality “fun time” with families. Fun time was associated with quality time. The participants talked about a number of activities, planned activities during their school holidays, the Easter break holiday, the family birthdays and the Christmas and New Year holiday activities. The most frequently mentioned activities are those that take place during Christmas and New Year holiday. The participants felt that this is a long holiday break that they deserve after the whole year of studying. During these holiday breaks, most participants talked about indoor and outdoor activities. Most female participants spoke about indoor activities such as playing bingo and dominos at the same time sharing a barbecue in one of their relative’s homes for Christmas. For others it was the time to put on those

colourful tee-shirts and represent their church groups in the Sāmoan kilikiti²² and volleyball competitions every year. The intention for these competitions was for Sāmoan youth to connect and get to know each other while enjoying these games. Many families used these activities as times to spend with their families:

‘Every Christmas and New Year we have kilikiti competition. My dad and I play for our church team, it’s good, something to look forward to every year. My parents get to have time off work and us from school, yeah so we get to hang out there and play. It happens every year and takes about four days. It is a real competition now and every team wants to win.’ (TK, 19 year old male, 2008)

Other young people participated in the Sāmoan rugby tournaments as their family’s main activity. These rugby teams are made up of teams representing different villages in Samoa. These competitions provide young people with opportunities to connect with extended kin and get to know the people from the same village. There is a great sense of collectiveness amongst the kin group in these competitions. The competitions also provide these young people with a deep sense of belonging to the village by representing and supporting them in these games. For example, Viv shared that every year her mum’s village rugby team competed in this rugby tournament and this was something her family had taken part in for some years. Viv also indicated that this was her family’s main activity for fun:

‘I must say one of the things that we do as a family for fun is going to support our mum’s village rugby team every year. It’s becoming a norm now for my whole family and every year we got our banner and stuff ready. At first, I thought mum was getting overboard with the whole thing even though none of her sons was playing for the team but eventually we got to know some of the people from mum’s village and it was okay. Now we got to the point that it is the main event of the year and we all look forward to it, and beside most of my cousins are now compete to represent the village by playing for the team. So it’s actually turning out to be a family thing and it’s fun, unlike the usual funerals, weddings etc.’ (Viv, 17 year old female, 2008)

Viv also commented on the importance of having this event every year for her family:

²² Sāmoan cricket competitions for local church communities in Auckland and village cricket teams for national competitions.

‘One of the good things about this it happens every year so it is one event that I look forward to every year around the same time, it’s like Xmas and New Year, so in my diary of the year I marked my birthday, Xmas and New Year and the rugby tournament. It is definitely one of the main events that I can guarantee will take place no matter what, and we can do it as a family and we do it yearly. So I guess having it every year is good for us, so imagine not having that, then it’s the usual Xmas and New Year and you have to wait till the end of the year for that. So at least we have something for fun at least at beginning and towards the end of the year’.

Flo and her family also participated in this event every year and she shared her thoughts below:

‘We are part of my dad’s rugby team for the Sāmoan Auckland Rugby tournament and it’s once a year, so my aunties and mum are there every single Saturday to provide the rugby team with food and drinks and watch the games and supporting them. I am proud of my village rugby team and I love being there, it’s the whole buzz about it you know: it’s like we are back in the village in Sāmoa. One of the good things about it is both my parents come from the same village so we only there to support one village. Imagine if they come from different villages, it means we have to support two teams, that will be hard.’ (Flo, 16 year old female, 2008)

The indoor activities during Christmas and New Year were mainly discussed by female participants. For most participants it’s the season to catch up with loved ones and to reconnect with cousins and adults. It was also a time for collective fundraising activities towards the kin’s future activities. Most participants do not connect with these family members during the year and the Christmas is a special time for them to get together. Most often, participants tend to do the most of it during these activities knowing that this is the only time they are able to be themselves around their other relatives. Brenda illustrated below the level of connection they have with her uncles and aunties when they are together, and shows no matter how long it is since they have seen each other, there is always a strong sense of connection between them:

‘We play bingo; domino and chess with my uncles while we have the usual family Christmas barbecue. We do it every year and that’s fun, because we have the opportunity to catch up with all my cousins and spend quality time with all my families. I enjoyed my uncles’ company especially when we play chess and domino because they think they can beat us young ones. Sometimes we play volleyball at the back yard and it is exciting to see all your aunties and uncles making fool of themselves thinking they can still play, but it’s all about fun and having good time together.’ (Brenda, 16 year old female, 2008)

A small number of participants participated in family camps, picnics and barbecue at the beach during Christmas and New Year. Some families had the opportunities to do this on a regular basis. For most of the participants these activities took place every year. Being away from their familiar environment and spend time with families in new places are important to these young people social skills. It re-creates new experience, memories and connection with their relatives and families. These participants enjoyed these outdoor activities with their families. Many shared and described only happy and positive experiences while talking about these activities as illustrated by Jason below:

‘We go to the park during summer time and have BBQ and sometimes we go to the beach and we get to camp there. We get to go with my uncles, aunts and cousins so we do it as a family; we have been to all the beaches in Auckland. We do fishing and play sports and have a good feed. I think sometimes we do it four to five times a year especially summer time, its great when we do it as a family. We all seem to have fun doing that kind of thing, to get out of the house and do something like that; it gives you different energy and you get to be yourself around your family members.’ (Jason, 16 year old male, 2008)

Other interviewees talked about family camps and family trips during school holidays and around Christmas and New Year. Some participants took a more active part in organising these events for their families. These arrangements gave these participants space to learn and improve their planning and organisational skills. It also helped their self esteem: they felt trusted and important because they were given such responsibilities to organise these activities for their families. They also spoke about how these tasks and camps helped them learn more about life. Some participants mentioned that they had learnt more about life responsibilities and others had learnt the skills of organising and planning ahead and reaching set goals. Derek went on family camps three times a year and one of the great things about his family camps was the quality time he spent with his father and grandfather during their fishing camps which strengthened the bond between them:

‘I love fishing and I started fishing since I was 12 years old and it’s mainly when we go camping. We go three times a year and I love it; it’s one of the things I look forward to every year. Now every time we go we get ourselves in a competition to see who catches the most fish and its fun. I spend more time with my dad and granddad when we are out camping than when we are at

home because they work all the time. I am very lucky that I get to do this three times a year; most of my family live up north so we get to see them on our way there too.’ (Derek, 15 year old male, 2008)

Like Derek, David also talked about his family camps where he did a lot of fishing. David enjoyed the idea of providing food for his family and learning the responsibility and obligations of being a family man. During his family camps, David helped his father and uncle to take the nets out to catch fish for the family meals:

‘For me it’s the whole thing about nature, I mean when we are at home we go to the shop and buy fish but when we are on camp we have to go out to find fish to feed the family. For me it’s a huge lesson about being a family man you know, you have to look for food to feed your family. I just enjoy being around the bush and the sea. I must say camping and fishing are the two things I like doing with my family. My uncle has all the fishing gears you know, and all we need to do is to go there, as we don’t need to prepare a lot to go there.’ (David, 17 year old male, 2008)

The focus group participants shared similar views about family fun with those who were interviewed. They talked about indoor and outdoor activities and how important it was for family to have these activities on a regular basis because these are the one time they can actually spend and have fun with families. In the focus groups, some interesting differences emerged. One of the participants from a female focus group acknowledged that they all came from different families in terms of availability of resource, level of income and parents obligations in their church and families. Therefore, some of them were not as the others who had the opportunities to do these activities every year and given the chances to explore nature and visit other interesting places. Some participants in the same group also shared some sad feelings when they compared themselves to some of their friends who had more organised activities with their families every year as illustrated by one of the participants below:

‘We are all Sāmoan... and I think for some of us in this group we don’t get to do what probably the others do every year with their families. They go out, you know away from it all, out of Auckland and go somewhere peaceful and nice for a change. Some of us do that when the whole family go to Sāmoa for Christmas but that does not happen every year, it only happens when there is a funeral or a reunion. So when we don’t do that every year and do nothing at all, it gets really boring for some of us, something may happen this year then, come next year, nothing, so we kind a go with the flow most of the time.’ (Catherine, 14 year old female: Focus Group 2, 2008)

The male focus groups reiterated the points already raised by the female groups. One male participant in one of the focus groups noted that having regular fun activities with their families was important. These were the activities they looked forward to and, for most of them, these were the key things that helped them remain motivated to do well during the year. These focus groups emphasised the importance of collective responsibilities of each of the family members to the wellbeing of the family as a group. It also highlighted that young people too have responsibilities and obligations that can contribute positively to the wellbeing of all family members. Brian felt that they all need a good break at the end of the year when his parents took time off from work. It was apparent that there is a reciprocal relationship between Brian and his family where a reward benefits all family members at the end of year:

‘I think I know some of my friends think the same way, because we forever talked about it. I know my family is quite active when it comes to us, they put us first in many ways, I mean we don’t have much money and that. Both my parents work long hours, but they make sure we continue with our family time and family time for us means family having fun time away from Auckland. Even for my parents, they do need that family time too, you know. ... If my parents are working hard in order for us to do that every year, then the least we could do in return is to make them happy and the only way we can do that is through our school results. One of the most exciting things I like leading up to our family time is finding out the local activities they have around that time. Like when we went to Wellington I wanted to visit Te Papa.’ (Brian, 19 year old male, 2008)

One of the key informants also recognised the importance of having organised activities for the young people throughout the year. She also talked about many benefits of giving young people opportunities to plan these activities themselves. She believed that families who were more creative in organising these family activities during school holidays helped their children’s learning development and organisational skills. Likewise, it helped improve their connection and relationships with other family members. For example, one of the key informant’s students was given a task by her family to organise a family camp during the first school holiday of the year:

‘Laulu came in and asked if I could help her to find some information about Napier and that was where they planned to go. She wanted to know what

activities they had around that time and also the places they could visit. Her parents told her and her two sisters to organise what they could do, so they were given a budget for activities they could do and they had to come up with a plan. I could see how this exercise was helping her with her learning. It was great seeing her having fun surfing the internet looking for places, the costs and the types of activities they could do. She was quite excited about the whole thing.’ (Sue, 49 year old female, school teacher, 2009)

A similar argument was presented by one of the male key informants an active member of his church community who taught a class of young people at the Sunday school. He also commented on the importance of giving young people chances to plan their own activities. Alex noticed the increased level of participation and team work from the young people in organising these activities for the camp. He felt that there was strong sense of collective responsibility by the young people to step up. Working in a team and sharing strengths by strategising positive ways of achieving the groups’ goals was the main drive for these young people and they succeeded. This success is attributed to team work and the collective responsibility to fundraise for all these young people:

‘I was very surprised how well they worked as a team to do that, and I could really see an improvement to some of them in terms of communication skills. They did it themselves; they divided their little group into two groups and they each have allocated tasks, one is to fundraise and the other organises and plans the activities. I was very impressed with the fundraising group, because they needed to come up with something so they can make some money, so they came up with bonus tickets, sausage sizzle day and washing cars. At the camp they all enjoyed their activities, some did some crazy things. They thoroughly enjoyed it because they organised everything, they really showed some strengths by working and supporting each other to do what they have to do and achieved what they needed.’ (Alex, 47 year old male, researcher, 2009)

Summary

Family “fun time” was described as quality time for extended family to actively participate and engage in fun family activities. These fun activities were more likely to be social and sport activities that brought these households together every year. Through engaging in these activities young people strengthened their bond with older members of their family and spent quality time socialising with cousins and siblings. The responsibilities to actively use their own initiatives to organise these activities for their families were considered a sign of trust and respect. These positive aspects

of organising and engaging in family activities were strongly associated with high levels of positive motivation, happiness, organisational skills and learning development. However, other household units had isolated themselves from these family activities and were unable to organise these activities due to the lack of resources and availabilities. The young people from these families were more likely to have very low levels of motivation and learning development. Compared to the young people who actively participated in organising these events, these adolescents are more likely to have low level of organisational skills and lack the opportunity to enhance their skills by stepping outside their comfort zone and search important information. They are more likely to limit their learning in the classroom and not use their own initiative to up-skill or expand understanding of their surroundings.

Family Encouragement

The Youth 2000 survey asked: “Does your family encourage you to have your own ideas and beliefs”? Some 34% said “yes” and 66% reported “some/little” or “not at all”. When 45 participants in this study were asked whether their families encouraged them to have their own ideas and beliefs about life, most responded ‘no’. A total of 14 students said “yes,” two said “only sometimes” and 29 said “no”.

The participants who were encouraged by families spoke of opportunities to use their own initiative to choose what they wanted to do in the future. For those who answered “no”, some considered the lack of encouragement from families as part of their Sāmoan way of life and being a Sāmoan young person. It was also interesting to notice that these participants made clear distinctions between ideas and beliefs about their life in relation to school, hobbies and interests and their family life. Most of them acknowledged that if there were issues concerning their school, hobbies and interests then they should be encouraged to have their own ideas and beliefs of what they wanted to do in the future. This was mainly to do with career choices. For example, fewer participants were interested into singing and rapping but were encouraged to play rugby instead. In fact, there was a conflict between the financial benefit of being a rugby player compared to a rapper or a singer. Some female participants were interested in hair dressing and designing but were encouraged to “do well” so they could go to University and become lawyers.

It was evident from interviews that those who were encouraged or given the chance to have and use their own ideas and beliefs had a clearer understanding of what they wanted to do with their lives and their future. Sharon outlined her thoughts about the benefit of receiving encouragement from her parents to have her say in what she wanted to pursue in life:

‘To be honest, we are quite lucky that our parents recognised the need for us young people to have some kind of ideas about our lives and how we wanted to live in terms of school and our future. We as young people need lots of encouragements from our family especially our parents you know, especially when it comes to our schooling, the subjects that we wanted to do and what we wanted to do in the future. Some of my friends are not so lucky because they get told of what they needed to do and what they [are] supposed to be doing. Having that encouragement is important to me: not only it gives me a feeling of being important, but also it helps me as a Sāmoan daughter to set some goals for the next two years. You see next year is my final year so I have to put a plan in place for where I should go and what I should do. My parents are happy with that and they fully supported my plans and what I wanted to do, I love designing and that is where I wanted to go.’ (Sharon, 17 year old female, 2008)

Similarly, TK, a 19 year old male, spoke highly of his parents’ encouragement to him to believe in himself and do what was right for him and what he was good at. Giving TK the control and freedom to make choices strengthened their relationship in terms of trust and respect. TK appreciated this and reciprocated this by balancing his school activities and his obligations such as attending Sunday school and church service every Sunday with his family. TK also believed that he had grown into a very independent young man who had very strong ideas and beliefs about life with his family as illustrated below. In fact, the students who participated in focus groups shared similar views to those voiced by TK below and others:

‘I chose my own subjects and I told dad and mum what I chose and they just said to me, son that is your choice, you take the subjects that you feel comfortable taking and what will help you achieve what you want in life. Right from a young age, I was allowed to have choices and to make your own choices you need to have clear ideas and strong beliefs in what you do. In my case, my parents are still there 24/7 to make sure I keep going and I am enjoying my life at school and with my family. I am a head boy in my school; I go to Sunday school and church every Sunday with my parents so I am very blessed in many ways.’ (TK, 19 year old male, 2008)

Of the 30 participants in the focus groups, only one quarter indicated that they were encouraged to have their own ideas and beliefs about school, hobbies and personal interests. However, some participants spoke about the difficulties for their parents to give them that freedom and control. Again, some talked about this being the norm in their families and others spoke about the lack of trust between their parents and themselves. Susan, for instance, believed that parental encouragement was important because it was a sign of mutual respect between them. She also believed that it was important because it worked both for the young people and their families. Similarly, all key informants recognised the importance of encouraging young Sāmoans to have their own ideas and beliefs about life and their future. This was considered by Susan as opportunities for young people to use these ideas and achieve well to make their parents proud:

‘Only a handful of us are quite lucky because we do have parents that are very traditional, but they are very aware of what is best for us. But it has to work both ways you know, our parents encouraged us and give us those opportunities and they also expect us to respect that. Because some young people tend to take advantage of that then they ended up disrespecting their parents by thinking that they know it all. I do think that most of us especially Sāmoan kids, it’s a sign that our parents respect us by encouraging our ideas and what we believed in. Parents will have to respect us and encourage us to have ideas and do what we believe in and in return we maintain that and achieve good in life, respect and make our parents proud.’ (Susan, 18 year old female, 2008)

The key informants illustrated that there are long term benefits for the young people who are encouraged to be independent, make good choices and exercising their own ideas of how to succeed in life. They also acknowledged that there were parents who have difficulties relinquishing children this freedom due to many factors, such as the lack of understanding of the benefit and fear of the children disrespecting them as parents if they have too much control. Sabina, a 47 year old key informant indicated that parents should have the confidence to encourage their children and they needed to be aware of the long term advantages of doing this. It is evident that young people who have been given the freedom and are highly encouraged by families to make own decisions seems to generate positive outcomes in their lives. Consequently, there are families who are reluctant to surrender this freedom to young people due to the fear that they may be using this freedom to disrespect the adults. Furthermore, if giving

young people freedom generated poor outcomes for the young people, parents were more likely to be blamed by the extended kin for their children's behaviour:

'Honestly, I have been working here for almost ten years and I do recognise those students with maturity and sense of independence. They are not afraid to share their views about things inside and outside the classroom. Most of them ended up being prefects, head boys and head girls and they do step up to the challenge. They become good role models to the new and young students. I would encourage any parents to do that, be there and give them advice and encourage them to use those ideas because in the long run they use that in the classroom and out there to succeed.' (Sabina, 32 year old female, school liaison officer, 2009)

Furthermore, Sabina had worked in this field for a long period of time and based on her observation, had noted a huge difference in academic and leadership performance between her students. Sabina attributed these students' positive performance to the stable family home the students come from. She also felt that these young people's parents instilled in them the lesson that through hard work, family and love they can achieve anything:

'I have been working here for a long time and I can tell those students who are being heard in their homes because they do speak with respect and politeness, they tend to articulate on things, they communicate well with their mouth. And you do get some, and most of them that tend to communicate with their shoulders and you don't really get anything out of them. To tell you the truth, those students I spoke about earlier, I have no doubt in my mind when they finished here, they will succeed and they will succeed big. Their parents really helped them to become what they are today, they only needed to be encouraged not to shut them out, and the result of that tends to be a long term result.' (Sabina, 32 year old female, school liaison officer, 2009)

For the participants who had no encouragement from families it was apparent that they had very little to share during the interviews. They acknowledged that they should be encouraged to have their own ideas about matters concerning their future. Compared to those who were highly encouraged by parents and families, these participants had difficulty expressing their views during the interviews. In fact, these adolescents did not appear to have many routines and choices in their lives apart from spending most of their time in their rooms. There is also a lack of opportunities to socialise and interact with other family members. Alina, a 16 year old female interviewee did not share much during the interview and was having hard time explaining her thoughts:

‘My family is very private. We don’t have much family time, I tend to spend a lot of my time in my room listening to the music and that’s all I do most of the time.’ (Alina, 16 year old female, 2008)

Others who received little encouragement believed it was part of their Sāmoan way and was because of their age. They emphasised the fact that they were ‘too young’ and as young people they didn’t get to have a lot of say in what they were interested to do. Participants in focus groups were asked whether the lack of encouragement from families to have their own ideas and beliefs was something to do with their age and being a young Sāmoan. The participants in focus groups argued against this by saying that this was not part of their Sāmoan way and that age as such had got nothing to do with it. For them, it’s about young people’s increased level of social maturity and positive judgement than age. Therefore, these young people also believed that it was about the lack of confidence of some families to give these young people the benefit of the doubt to use their own ideas and do what was best for them and their families. Ben, a well-spoken participant in one of the focus groups observed and listened to what others had shared and then made the following points:

‘We all come from different families and we should know how to go about those things with our families. My family are quite flexible and they do listen when I express my ideas about things. All I need to do is to choose the right time and right place, if you know what I mean.’ (Ben, 19 year old male, 2008)

One of the school mentors observed that young people who were more likely to be told what to do all the time, tended to become very dependent and have no vision of where they wanted to go. This was evident when it came to sharing with others and the dependent ones tended to have a difficult time expressing themselves. They had problems fitting in to the school environment; they felt isolated; had little sense of direction and were more likely to engage in high risk behaviour:

‘I have many referrals from the 3rd and 4th forms: mainly the Sāmoan young people. And I can tell those who were having hard time to fit in the class or to make friends. I mean coming from intermediate is a huge move, so most of them struggle big time. Some just don’t have any interests of being here. It’s almost like they just come to school for the sake of coming to school, they have no sense of what they here for and what they want to achieve. I spend quite a bit of time with them to try and encourage them that this is their life and they have to take responsibility to start thinking about what they want to do in life. Some 12 and 13 years old are being sent here to see me because

they got caught by the securities smoking around the corner and they were supposed to be in the classrooms. I look at some of these young ones and they just look lost.’ (Jacob, 49 year old male, counselor, 2009)

Summary

Family encouragement to young members to hold their own beliefs and ideas was considered positive by all participants. It was evident that young people who were strongly encouraged to have their own ideas recognized that they have responsibilities and obligations towards the family as a collective unit. They developed a great sense of mutual respect and trust with their family members. These young people indicated that it was their duty to reciprocate this with best achievement in education, future career and any other hobbies they engaged in. The positive outcomes associated with encouraging these young people vary from being independent, responsible, having clear vision and sense of direction for their future and becoming good role models in their individual schools and to their younger siblings.

However, the lack of encouragement from families for other young people was strongly connected with dependency on others for direction. It also causes a lot of mistrust and disrespect between them and their parents, as well as the inability for them to do well at school.

Family Concern for Personal Safety

The Youth 2000 survey asked a question: “Does your family want to know who you are with and where you are”? About 87% reported “usually/always” and 13% said “sometimes/never”. The same question was used to elicit the perspectives of 45 participants interviewed. The majority of 45 participants indicated that members of their families such as parents, members of their extended families and older siblings expected to know where they were and who they were with at all times. Davina illustrated the extent of this surveillance on them by their families and felt that this is a norm for Sāmoan families in New Zealand:

‘My family wants to know where we are, even with my brothers. You can’t just leave the house and walk about without letting your parents and your

family know where you go. It's very normal for our families here and they expected us to tell them.' (Davina, 13 year old female, 2008)

Both interviewees and focus group participants talked about personal safety as the main purpose for their families' concern. The safety issue is a real one and arose out of the widely reported increases of crime rates, street crime and street gangs not only in secondary schools grounds, but also in their neighbourhoods. After analysing the data about these concerns the perspectives of these young participants were presented in two groups. One group consisted of those participants who were very positive about their families' concern and intention and the other comprised those who had difficulties accepting these concerns as positive.

The participants who were positive about these concerns considered these as a sign of love and of their families' commitment to the duty to protect them and make sure they were safe at all times:

'My parents trust us and they love us. They will always continue to fulfil their duty as parents to protect us and they will continue to care about our safety and wellbeing. Of course they need to know where we are and who we are with, because it's their responsibility to know. As parents they have concern and for us that is a sign of love and that they care a lot about their kids.' (Lyka, 16 year old female, 2008)

These participants also acknowledged that their families' concerns were justified: there were incidents around their neighbourhood and therefore it was important and reasonable for them to trust and respect their families' concern. They acknowledged safety measures put in place by their families. For example, some participants were happy that they got dropped off and picked up from school by their parents and/or other family members. Others took their parents advice to walk home with their friends who live around the same neighbourhood. Sean shared his family's arrangement especially after their sport training late in the evenings:

'Today, it's almost every day you see something on the news, like someone is been killed around the corner and that. And our families are worried that something may happen to us. They forever worried about us especially when we come home late from school. If we have training after school then we tell our parents that we will be late and they will tell us when we finish training we have to come home together and we have to come straight home. At winter time when it gets dark dad will come to the park and fetch us they will never

let us walk home in the dark. It's all about our safety, that's how I know they do care, they just want to protect you and make sure you are okay. I reckon it is my family's responsibility to make sure we are safe.' (Sean, 16 years old male, 2008)

Some participants in focus groups recognised the legitimacy of their families' concern about their safety but also noted that greater trust developed where their families knew their friends and their friends' families. Most of the participants interviewed, and those who participated in focus groups, shared that their families had great relationships with their friends' families. It was evident that this effectively extends the level of surveillance for these young people:

'My parents know my friend's parents and families and it work out really for them and for us. It made it easier for our parents because when I am with him his parents look after us and they will make sure I get home safe. It's the same when we spend time at my home, my parents will drop him off home.' (Jason, 16 year old male, 2008)

As for Willie he considered this as one way of reducing their families' fear for their safety when they were with friends their families know:

'You have to trust your families on this one, because they are the ones who get to blame if something happens to us. People will criticise them for, what's the word in Sāmoa, oh 'tuu fau', like letting your kids running wild. But really for us if we trust our families, then I don't think there will be any issue about this. That is why it is good for my family to know all my friends and their families, so when we hang out together they know exactly that we will be okay because we are at our friend's home.' (Willie, 19 year old male, 2008)

The second group who had difficulty understanding these parental concerns, considered this 'trust' issue from a different perspective. For most of them, their families' concerns indicated a lack of trust which, in turn, created a lot of tension between their relationships. For example, some participants reported some serious behavioural issues; some talked about circumventing their parents' supervision, by sneaking out through the window or making excuses to do one thing but then doing another. This sometimes results, ironically, in parents' efforts to ensure safety producing high risk behaviour. Grace, a 15 year old who was well known to her friends as a risk-taker shared her experience:

‘I got sick of it, and I got to the point that I pretended that I was asleep but I sneaked out the window to go and hang out with my friends and my boy friend. I have been doing that for a while, and my family has had no idea but I do sneak out because they do not allow me to go out. One thing for sure, if they find out I will be in deep trouble and I mean deep trouble.’ (Grace, 15 year old female, 2008)

While Grace continued to sneak out, Lois and other two participants in one of the focus groups were not so lucky. These participants spoke about the consequences of being caught trying to circumvent parental control and, for all of them, it was serious discipline. In an attempt to sneak back inside for the second time, Lois got caught. She shared her experience with humour.

‘I decided to sneak out one night and I came home a bit late, I tried my bed room window and it was locked, then I tried my little sister’s window, but my mum opened it. ... My parents were quite calm about it and I was warned not to do it again because I told them that I had to go and get a book from my friend, what a lame excuse. Most of my friends don’t get warnings he he. But the second time I did it, I got the biggest hiding. I have never seen my father so angry. Since that, my families do not trust me ...so now everywhere I go I will have to go with a chaperone: when I have to go to the library or even just going down the shop.’ (Lois, 16 year old female, 2008)

More than half of students interviewed continued to talk about being physically disciplined because of their disrespectful behaviour. It was interesting to note that these participants basically talked about physical discipline with humour. Some reflected on their childhood and commented that receiving physical discipline as consequences of their behaviour had helped them change. Most indicated that the discipline stopped for them since they reached a certain age as teenagers. Some participants talked about the negative effect of being physically disciplined on themselves. In fact none of them considered this as a corrective or vindictive act per se by their parents however; they discussed the negative and positive effect of being physically disciplined on them:

‘I used to get hidings and I did not really think too much about it because I only got hidings when I misbehaved. But I don’t get that now. I always believe that the hiding I used to get kind a point me to the right direction in my life. The hidings stopped me from misbehaving and when I stopped misbehaving the hidings stopped.’ (Caroline, 14 year old female, 2008)

Some participants talked about their friends who were badly affected because of the amount of physical discipline they received at home. These friends also got kicked out of school because of the ongoing fights they got themselves into. Tim talked about his experience by sharing that he received hidings because he disrespected his family's advice. In some cases, the physical discipline may have unintended consequences. Tim, for instance, was quite confused about the connection between the hidings he received and his father's explanation that he gave him hidings because he loves him. He continued to come home late every day without a good reason why he was late and the more hidings he received the more he stayed out and was beginning to become involved in petty crime. After school he went with his friends and roamed around the shopping centre meeting up with other young people from other schools. These friends used to hassle some shopkeepers by stealing lollies from the shop and for him this was all for fun.

Ironically, it may not be the physical discipline which brings about behavioural changes which are intended. The turning point for Tim was when his three school friends whom he used to hang around with in shopping centres continued to get into trouble in the school, dropped out of school a year later and joined the street gangs at such a young age:

'You know they always say that they give me a hiding because they love me and I did not understand it before. But now I do; I mean look at my friends they really change, they have no respect for teachers, smoke a lot, wearing red bandana and [are] into gangs. I got hidings when I ignored what they told me. They told me to come straight home after school and not to go anywhere else. I did not know enough about right and wrong, so I got a lot of hidings. I looked at some of my friends and I realised they are long gone: I mean at that age they are supposed to be at school during the day and at home during the evening. I don't hang around the shopping centre now. I go to school and go home and help my dad with his lawn-mowing business.' (Tim, 16 year old male, 2008)

Although some participants' friends were badly affected by physical discipline, the majority of the participants did talk about the positive effect of being disciplined. The positive effects vary from having a sense of direction in their lives to knowing what was best for them in the future. For example, Dan claimed that the physical discipline he received at a young age helped him straighten out his life:

‘When I was young I get a ‘sasa’ (hiding) sometimes from my dad, because I did some really not so good things, and now I don’t get it anymore, and for me that was good. If he did not do that to me before where would I be now, down the hood with those guys hanging around smoking weed and walking around like you are the man, scaring people away: it is sick.’ (Dan, 15 year old male, 2008)

All the key informants confirmed that concerns for the personal safety of their children are very common and very strong in families. It was evident that this concern was somehow developed as a norm for Sāmoan families in New Zealand because of the environment in which they live now. Jacob felt that most Sāmoan families living arrangement in New Zealand is one factor that influenced this concern for the parents. Compared to the Sāmoan open village living arrangement among the kin group, such concern for the children is very limited because it is not difficult to know where you are at and who you are with:

‘the fact is most of our families lived in different places and away from each other now we don’t have that close kin support we used to have in the village living environment. It is different here now and given the lifestyle in New Zealand parents became very concern with their kids’ safety.’ (Jacob, 49 year old male counsellor, 2009)

Most key informants also agreed that the ways young people reacted to these concerns really depended on how the parents conveyed the reasons for their concerns and for the surveillance which they felt was necessary. The key informants talked about communication styles: some parents communicated with patience and explained their intentions whereas other parents spoke in an authoritarian way by giving instructions without explanations. These informants also emphasised the language use and choice of words that parents used to communicate with these young people as illustrated by Natalie, a psychology student below:

‘It is quite normal for Sāmoan families to be concerned about the safety and welfare of their children. There are families that are really concerned but then there are others that don’t really take any notice of the whereabouts of their children after school. And sometimes the ways young people react to these concerns really depends on how parents conveyed the reasons for these concerns to their kids. Some families just stopped their kids from going places and did not even explain why. Then the kids started questioning their families. Some families do explain but the others don’t. And that’s when problems occurred.’ (Natalie, 28 year old female, psychology student, 2009)

Summary

The discussion around family concern for younger members' personal safety indicated that this was very common among Sāmoan families. This concern was mainly based around safety and was well-founded given the risks associated with some of the suburbs in which families lived. Many young people accepted their family's concern as positive and were happy that their families cared about them and wanting to protect them from harm. Others who had difficulties understanding it questioned their families' trust of them. Some female participants considered this as families being overprotective which overrule the issue of safety. The young people who did not accept these concerns decided to test their parental supervision by choosing to do what they desired and ended up being physically disciplined as a result. None of the participants talked about the negative effect of being physically disciplined on themselves. However, they shared experiences about their friends who engaged in much more risky behaviour as a result of being heavily disciplined at home.

Family Expectations

The Youth 2000 survey asked participants: How much do the people in your family expect of you? About 22% reported "too much", 56% said "a lot" and 21% reported "some" or "nothing". The same question was included in the interviews and all 45 participants responded that their families expected a lot from them as illustrated by one of the participants:

'I think with all of us Sāmoans we all have similar experience about our families. We come from the same culture, same expectations from our families to do well at school and not get into trouble. That is basically what is expected of us, because we have the opportunity to do this, some of our parents did not have these opportunities.' (Tyra, 16 year old female, 2008)

Having identified the level of family expectation then the participants were given the opportunity to explore what these expectations entailed. One family expectation that was very common among both the participants interviewed and in focus groups was high achievement in education.

Parents and guardians had their own dreams of the career pathways their young sons and daughters should take. Some families' preference for their young people's career pathway included attending university to become doctors and lawyers. Children's success and high achievement by the children positively reflect on the family as a collective unit. Conversely, according to the participants, their families' high expectations for them to achieve is rooted of their fear of failure. The parents' fear of failure is based on the general belief among Sāmoan families that this will not only reflect on the child but also on parents and the wider family because of the Sāmoan belief about the family's collective responsibility for both success and failure of its members.

However, these achievements are now also used as markers in competitions between families where young people are compared to other families especially when young people from these families succeed in what they do. Some participants recognised that their families' use of the achievements of others were their strategies used hoping that these would help motivate them to achieve. This also indicated that parents' fear of failure was not only about the collective responsibility of the family, but also in part, a product of this competition between families. Unfortunely, these competitions produced some negative effects for some young people.

Analyses of this theme also revealed two main groups. The first accepted and felt comfortable with their families' high expectations in terms of educational and sports achievements. These participants shared that they felt they were doing very well not only with their academic grades but also their other recreational activities such as being rugby players or performers. The second group included those who experienced high pressure and stress in trying to fulfil these expectations. This group included those participants who were expected to achieve high in education for their family and be good role models because of their status as church ministers' children.

The difference between these groups seems to be connected with the amount of support they felt they were receiving to fulfil these expectations. For the first group, participants felt comfortable with their families' expectations because they were being supported in many ways. Participants spoke about flexibilities and opportunities given by families to explore other interests apart from studying. They talked about their

parents' understanding and agreements between them which indicated the level of respect and trust that may not be forthcoming in other families. They felt that they were not alone in their battle to achieve. Davina, a 16 year old girl, reflected on some of these points:

'All my school life, my family has expected me to do well and at first it was a pressure but now at this age I do understand their fear of me failing and not going anywhere. Now I am doing 7th form, and we had an agreement with my family that they need to give me space and just to be supportive of what I choose to do. With some families, what they wanted their kids to do is one thing but it is quite another when the kids are interested in other things. And they have to support them so they do not feel alone in what they do, but unfortunately a lot of other kids are going through that. You know doing the 7th form is a huge achievement too, and what I really needed from my family is the support and flexibility. For me I do well at what I do knowing they are behind me 100%, but if they forced me to do things, then that when things tend to go wrong.' (Davina, 16 year old female, 2008)

These participants from the same group also commented that it was their responsibility to do well for the sake of their families. These participants acknowledged their families' roles as providers and also recognised their responsibilities towards the collective unit by doing well for the whole family. It was evident that the trust they received from their parents and family created these beneficial relationships which in turn increase young people's commitment towards their family as illustrated by Adrina:

'When it comes to responsibility, I can argue that it is my responsibility to do my part. My family provides for us, they look after us and make sure we have everything we need for school and that. It is important to my family for me to do well at school and that's all I think about. It is my responsibility to do well for my family. It's the least I can do for them for the support they provided for us. They are not asking for much, what they are asking is for us to go to school and aim high. At the end of it, it is for our future.' (Adrina, 15 year old female, 2008)

The second group mentioned earlier consisted of participants who experienced a lot of pressure from their families' expectations for them to do well in education. For some participants, families' expectations led to constant pressure especially when parents believed that doing homework 24 hours a day would help these young people do well. Some young people indicated that their parents put unnecessary pressure on them to constantly study without a break. These participants indicated that most of their

family members did not reach this level of education therefore they had no understanding of how stressful this was for them. Maggie spoke about this pressure to study and to become the first lawyer in the family. She indicated that her family meant well by pressuring her to study hard because none of her family had a higher qualification. However, what they did not recognise was the sign of depression that drove her to isolate herself from them:

‘It is very important for my family for me to do well at school. They tell me every day to do homework and they busy telling me to work hard to be a lawyer. You know being a lawyer is something that I don’t think I can do, but they wanted me to be the first lawyer in my family... I am trying really hard but the pressure is too much, it’s affecting my marks and I am failing. I can’t do it. I am finding myself being isolated from everybody and it’s not good; I avoided talking to my friends about my real marks. I really do need to focus on what I really want to do and what I am good at otherwise it is not going to be good.’ (Maggie, 18 year old female, 2008)

In the focus groups, some participants also talked about their families’ competitive ethos and their tendency to compare their own children’s achievements with those of other families especially those from the same church. This competitive element of family organisation proved too much for some participants such as Linda who had experienced a great deal of stress as illustrated in the following excerpt:

‘You know it is not only expecting you to be this and that and do study 24/7, it’s the constant reminder and comparing us to someone else’s kids especially the ones from church you know. If they know, well let me rephrase that, we do get to know when so and so graduated and that because they will announce it at church. Then what do you know, your family used that to keep on reminding you, like, see so and so is a good girl, she listens to her parents and see what she achieved. I know families used that thinking that will help but it is not: it gives us more stress and then we start thinking that we are stupid compared to those people.’ (Linda, 15 year old female, 2008)

There were participants both in interviews and focus groups who had spoken about the additional pressure of being the church ministers’ children. According to them the stress doubled for them with regards to their families’ expectation for high achievement and the pressure at church of being the ministers’ children. Unfortunately, these are expected from these young people because Sāmoan church ministers were considered as highly educated people in Sāmoan villages and they were highly respected. One of the main responsibilities for these ministers was to run

a pastor's school and their older children were more likely to be the teachers in this school.

These young people were also expected to be good role models for their youth groups in many ways. These included educational achievement and setting good examples by getting involved in everything and anything in the church. They have to exhibit good conduct at all time in and outside the church and they were expected to be respectful and use appropriate language when communicating with church members.

Furthermore, these young people were not expected to be seen in public social settings such as parties or pubs as illustrated by Surina and Don below:

‘Yes, at church we have a lot of pressure and the whole church always has high expectation of us to be there and get involved in everything we do at church and sometimes we don't really like being there. So they expect us to be good examples for other kids at church, so we do have a lot of pressure being minister's kids. It is not a good thing if we the minister's kids are not there, it's bad for my parents. So we have to be there even though we don't want to be there, like we physically are there but spiritually, we are not. We also have to aim high and achieve because it's expected of us.’ (Surina, 15 year old female, 2008)

‘There is a lot of expectation for us to behave and live by examples, be good role models because we are the minister's sons. The expectation from the people at church is quite high and also from my parents. We don't do anything that will affect my parents; we don't go out at all. Sometimes I do what they told me and sometimes I don't listen then I will get into trouble. So I try to listen and do it.’ (Don, 16 year old male, 2008)

All the key informants acknowledged that families have very high expectations for their children to achieve in education. This supported the argument in chapter three that one important reason for many Sāmoan parents for leaving their homelands and migrating to New Zealand was to give their children better educational opportunities than what they had. However, some key informants raised concerns about the lack of support by families for their children to achieve and live up to these expectations as indicated in this excerpt:

‘There is one thing having high expectations for your son or daughter to go to university, but there is another thing that families need to think about is how the kids get there. It is not easy for kids to achieve when they are not

supported by their families. Family support in every way is the key to their success. Some kids are quite lucky in a way that their families have clear understanding of their needs and what they needed to get there. Some kids worked hard here at school but at home there is no space for them to do work. All Sāmoan families have high expectation for their kids to achieve high but they need the help and support of their families to get there.’ (George, 38 year old male, educator, 2009)

Summary

It was evident that family expectations for young people were focused mainly around educational achievement. All participants talked about their families’ high expectation to achieve higher education. The young people that were more likely to succeed were those fully supported by their families through recognising their needs to do what they good at and making sure they have a balance between their school work, sport, family and church commitments. These young people were more likely to succeed in what they do. Other young people felt the pressure from families to do well without what they considered appropriate levels of support. The lack of support from these families was due to limited understanding on the part of their parents of what was required to achieve higher education. Therefore, their ideal expectation that pressuring young people to study all the time believing that this was the way to succeed did not help these young people. Instead, these young people felt isolated and pressured because of the unnecessary stress put on them.

Family Decision-Making Processes

There was no question in the Youth 2000 survey that asked about decision-making in the family. However, this aspect of family organisation emerged in both interviews and focus groups as one which strongly influenced the lives of all the participants. One of the main aspects of family organisation which participants talked about was how decisions in their homes were made and how the organisation of decision-making directly and indirectly affected their lives. When participants talked about family decision-making they spoke about knowing their roles when it came to extended families’ decisions with regards to cultural activities and their participation in decisions at their household level.

Three themes emerged from the analyses of participants' perspectives about family decision-making. The participants talked about their experience of the decision-making process at a household and extended family level. Despite shared Sāmoan cultural values, the decision-making process was organised in different ways in different Sāmoan families. At a household level some participants were part of the decision-making and for others decisions were made for them by their families. Furthermore, there was also a clear difference in decision-making in households headed by fathers but the organising of the household was controlled by mothers, and households controlled equally by both parents. There were further differences in the organisation of decision-making at an extended family level. All participants made clear distinction between decision-making process between their household and extended family units.

All participants agreed that matters which concerned them included anything to do with their school, sports and memberships at church such as Sunday school, youth and choir group. These were the areas that they would like to have a say as to what they wanted. While the participants were very clear about matters that they should be making decisions for themselves, they were also mindful that it depended very much on how their households were organised. It was evident that adolescents' expectations and understanding of decision-making process in the households and extended families were very different from that of their parents. For example, Leanne commented on the decision-making process in her father's extended family where she noticed that her mother never contributed or took any active role in it. This was due to her limited understanding of the different cultural dimensions between these family processes. In this case, Leanne's mother understood her role as a wife who was there to provide moral support for her husband and his extended family. In many Sāmoan families today, wives are given the opportunities to actively participate in the discussions and decision making in their husband's families:

'It's quite funny in my family. I know in some Sāmoan families, fathers make all the decisions because they are suppose to be the matai but in my family my mother takes control you know, and it's really good because my mother gives us the opportunity to have our say in things concerning us, you know. I am not quite sure how that works out if my father was the one that controls our household but it seems that my mother does her thing, she controls how our household organised including my dad. It's funny my dad does not complain

at all when my mum puts her foot down you know. In saying that, that is what we do in my household with my mum, dad and sisters and brothers, and it's quite different from when my extended family gets together especially with my dad's extended family, I can see that my mum does not have a say at all in those discussions.' (Leanne, 17 year old female, 2008)

One of the advantages of being involved in these decisions was the choice to prioritise what was important to young people. For example, Sean was given the opportunity to make a decision whether to attend church activities:

'You know in my family my dad is a matai, my mum is not a matai, she does everything for my family. My mum basically runs the household, she cooks, she cleans, she organise family stuff and when they make decisions she always included us in everything. Like if we have church activities for example, she always asks us if we are okay to do that and whether we can fit that in with our school activities and homework you know.' (Sean, 16 year old male, 2008)

While participants from homes where decisions were managed or controlled by mothers felt included and happy to be able to share their feelings about these issues, some fewer participants from households jointly controlled by both parents shared feelings of being excluded, less important and being shut out of family decisions as illustrated in excerpts from Tania and Anbi below:

'In my family, I have five other siblings, three older siblings and two younger ones. Honestly, when it comes to decision making in my family I have no idea about such thing, my parents make all the decisions, from what I have to wear to what I have to do after school. I don't have anything to say about what I wanted to do or what I enjoyed doing apart from going to school.' (Tania, 15 year old female, 2008)

'My family is a bit old fashioned you know: dad and mum they run the show. Not quite sure how that works out between the two of them given that in the Sāmoan way, dad is the boss and he makes all the decisions, but not quite sure how mum fits into that, but for me they do make all the decisions for us. When I said my family is a bit old fashion it means that any decision that needs to be made whether it is something to do with us and our school, mum and dad tend to have a final say of what we can and cannot do. So most of the time it is a one way thing you know, we just zip and do whatever you are told to do, it's quite common to us and some of our friends at school. They go through the same thing and these are some of the things we tend to share amongst ourselves.' (Anbi, 16 year old male, 2008)

John and other participants recognised that it was quite normal for their parents to make decisions for them but also recognised that some young people questioned their

parents and rebelled against these decisions. Such rebellion drove some young people out of control and they ended up doing things without their parents' knowledge or consent:

'You know for us it is quite normal that our parents make decisions for our families. For some of us it's okay, but then for others they tend to retaliate and they will do anything to question their parents' decisions. It is quite sad because these kids ended up doing bad things behind their parents because they don't have that the confidence to tell their parents what they feel because they are not given the opportunities to do so.' (John, 16 year old male, 2008)

All the key informants agreed that process of decision-making in households was very different from that followed in an extended family unit. The decision-making in the extended family is based on a hierarchical social structure where many extended family decisions are controlled by the sa'o²³ of the family. They also acknowledged that Sāmoan culture determined that young people were not part of this extended family decision-making process as illustrated by Jacob below:

'What the young people are saying is true, decision making in an extended family setting is very different from the household and kids don't get involved in that and they know that. It is a totally different structure altogether. An extended family has a sa'o and his role is to look after all the family affairs and at times he makes the final decisions for the extended family. But today, there have been changes, some extended families have many matai now and these matai are all expected to be there to discuss and make final decisions for the extended family. And each of these matai represents their household in these extended family decisions.' (Jacob, 49 year old male, counsellor, 2009)

However, they argued that young people must be part of decision-making within their households one way or the other. According to the key informants most of the decisions made in the households were to do with the children's needs in terms of their school activities, hobbies and attending church. Therefore it was very important for the children to be part of that process. They also commented on the positive aspect of greater participation in this process as illustrated by this key informant:

'When it comes to extended families decisions, the kids are quite aware of their role in to that but when it comes to households decisions these young people must be part of that process. Most of our families may not realise the

²³ A Sāmoan matai elected by consensus of extended family clan to be the head chief of the family, and he is responsible for looking after family assets such as lands.

importance of involving the kids in that process. Their learning starts from home and when kids are comfortable speaking up then they will continue to do that at school and that is a huge benefit to them and their learning. The kids who are very much parts of that process have the ability to express their views and articulated well on them, but for those who do not have that opportunity they are more likely to be quiet and kept to themselves a lot. And these kids do not achieve much because they think their ideas and views are not important compared to the other kids.' (Megan, 60 year old female, retired counsellor, 2009)

Summary

There was a clear distinction between decision making at a household unit and extended family level. All young people interviewed understood about this distinction and were very clear of their roles in these decision making processes. This section concluded with an argument that young people who were actively part of the decision making in their households were more likely to be confident in expressing their thoughts and more open minded towards others' views. Those who were not part of these family decisions were more likely to keep to themselves and lack the confidence to express their ideas in school and at home.

Conclusion

There were five main areas of family organisation discussed in this chapter that appeared to have strong links to young people's wellbeing. These five functions were interrelated in a way that portrayed the benefit for young people's voice to be heard in important aspects of their households concerning their needs. Interviewees, focus group members and key informants shared similar views on the importance for young people to be more involved in their families' organisation as discussed above.

This chapter highlighted both positive and negative effects of these functions on young people's wellbeing. It also presented a challenging debate on the reality of what once was considered collectivism. In terms of families activities it seems that collectivism is the key where all family members are included in these activities for many families. In addition, young people recognised their responsibilities and obligations towards the collective unit in exchange for the mutual respect and trust

given to them to control own destiny by having the freedom to implement their own ideas and making decisions on what was good for them.

However, when it comes to individual households there was a sense that some young people were struggling alone to live up to their family's expectation to achieve well.

Some families provided support with confidence that this would help their children achieve. However, in other families, there was no support around the young people to help them met these expectations. Some of them were not included in decisions concerning them so they could follow their dreams with the support of their families. Despite these issues, it was evident that there were families who are adapted well to changes by including their young people through prioritising their needs and interests first.

The findings from this chapter have provided vital information that could be used to develop policy level guidelines and practices for community services working with Pacific families.

Chapter Nine: Cultural Knowledge and Wellbeing

Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which Sāmoan adolescents assess and articulate what constitutes Sāmoan values and knowledge for them and how such knowledge influences their identity as Sāmoan young people living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Fa'a-Sāmoa, or the Sāmoan way of life, was constantly used by participants to refer to Sāmoan values and knowledge and therefore for the purpose of this chapter these terms are used interchangeably.

The literature review in chapter one found that when integrating fa'a-Sāmoa knowledge into health, social services and education systems for example, benefited Sāmoan young people and Sāmoan families. This chapter reports the findings from Youth 2000 survey questions on identity, understanding of cultural knowledge and participation in cultural activities. The interviews and focus groups for this study explored similar themes but in ways intended to give adolescents' voice to their understanding and experience of their Sāmoan identity and aspects of fa'a-Sāmoa. The key informants also elaborated on these themes based on their observation adding more value to the young people's experience of cultural knowledge.

Importance of Identity

The Youth 2000 Survey asked three questions that are relevant to this chapter. The questions focused mainly around identity and two specific questions about values and knowledge. The first question asked Youth 2000 participants: "Are you proud of being Sāmoan"? The students answering this question had three options: "very proud", "somewhat proud" and "not proud". The Adolescent Health Research Group's (2001) analysis of this data combined two options: "very proud" and "somewhat proud" as reported here. About 94% of Sāmoan students who participated in the survey responded that they were "very proud" and "somewhat proud" of being Sāmoan. I am unable to comment on the proportion of the 94% of students who

reported either “very proud” or “somewhat proud” given the style of analysis used to analyse this data. By comparison, a brief survey, completed at the end of each interview in my study, also asked students whether they were proud of being Sāmoan. The students chose from four response options: “very proud”, “proud”, “somewhat proud”, and “not at all proud”. Almost all 45 Sāmoan students interviewed for this study indicated that they were very proud of their identity of being Sāmoan. The results showed that 41 students reported that they were very proud of being Sāmoan; two said they were proud and two participants were somewhat proud of being Sāmoan.

Participants commonly referred to the Sāmoan way of life and fa’a-Sāmoa when they talked about Sāmoan knowledge and Sāmoan values. All the participants had clear understandings of what the Sāmoan way of life and fa’a-Sāmoa entail. Most believed that knowing the Sāmoan way of life and actively participating in all aspects of fa’a Sāmoa increases their knowledge of Sāmoan things as illustrated by Jason below.

‘It is about our culture, it’s about fa’a-Sāmoa, the way we live our lives based on our Sāmoan way. We have a Sāmoan language and we have different ways of doing our fa’alavelave, same as other groups like the Tongans and Maoris, they have their own ways of doing things. When you have an understanding of these things then you have better knowledge about your Sāmoan values and traditions.’ (Jason, 16 year old male, 2008)

More specifically, participants described important aspects of fa’a-Sāmoa such as: speaking and understanding the Sāmoan language, participation in Sāmoan traditional activities, understanding the need for respectful relationships between family members, understanding the mātai system and knowing how it works, understanding their gafa²⁴ and knowledge of their parents’ villages in Sāmoa. The young people identified these cultural values as distinguishing Sāmoan lives from those of other ethnic groups. The 45 participants reported different levels and types of experiences of each of these aspects of the Sāmoan way of life and this will be elaborated on later in this chapter. Most participants felt that they would continue to practise these aspects of the Sāmoan way of life and, indeed, some were already thinking about alternative ways to practice these occasions. For most of the Sāmoan participants

²⁴ Gafa: a Sāmoan word use to describe one’s family genealogy.

interviewed, their primary source of learning fa'a-Sāmoa was through their parents, grandparents and through their participation in Sāmoan lessons at school and church.

Fa'a-Sāmoa Values as Important Knowledge

The Youth 2000 survey asked participants: “Are Sāmoan values important to you? The response options were, “very important”, “somewhat important” and not at all important”. For reporting purposes, the first two options were combined. Some 93% of participants reported that Sāmoan values were “very important/somewhat important” to them compared to 6% who said they were “not at all important”. The brief wellbeing survey, completed at the end of interviews, indicated that out of the 45 participants, 41 reported that their fa'a-Sāmoa values were either “very important” or “important” to them. Two participants thought it was somewhat important and one participant said that it was not at all important. When it came to the level of fluency in the fa'a-Sāmoa knowledge and opportunities available to improve their knowledge there were slight differences among the participants from four different schools. In fact, two schools from South Auckland had access to Sāmoan language and culture classes and most of the students interviewed from these schools were part of these classes. One school from Central Auckland and one from West Auckland did not have any Sāmoan classes available, therefore did not provide the same opportunities as the other schools.

Chapter one explored various aspects of fa'a-Sāmoa values and the Sāmoan way of life from the literature available. One of the conclusions drawn from the literature was the three fundamental principles of fa'a-Sāmoan: are ava (respect), fa'aaloalo (reverence/humility), and alofa (love) (Ngan-Woo, 1985). Similarly, participants interviewed in this study spoke about ‘respect’ and ‘politeness’ as core values that signified loving relationships between themselves and members of their āiga. They also talked about practising, celebrating and participating in cultural activities for example funerals, weddings and birthdays and church activities as other relevant aspects of the Sāmoan way of life. Furthermore, they spoke about the importance of understanding and speaking the Sāmoan language. More than half of the participants interviewed stated that they needed to improve and learn more about the Sāmoan

language. They felt that it was important for them to speak Sāmoan and practise fa'a-Sāmoa as illustrated in the excerpt below:

'I can speak it, but not all the time, so attending the Sāmoan class is good. Some of the students in that class speak really well and they help us a lot. I like the style we use to learn it: sometimes we laugh because most of the time we pronounce the words funny. But it's cool, I like going to that class now with my friends.' (Davina, 13 year old female, 2008)

They also spoke of the importance of having a grounded knowledge of their parents' villages in Sāmoa. Knowledge of the village mātai system and its role in their families was also considered as an important part of fa'a-Sāmoa. Most participants have vague knowledge of how the fa'a-mātai system works. According to participants there were many features of fa'a-Sāmoa and these fa'a-Sāmoan values and norms were significant to them as Sāmoan young people.

Most of the participants from the Youth 2000 survey, and those interviewed for this study, believed that Sāmoan knowledge was very important to them. As part of the interviews, three scenario questions were also used to collate more information from the participants about Sāmoan knowledge. One of the questions asked was: "There are only 10 seats available in a lifeboat and you have to choose 10 people to go on the life boat, which ones would you choose and why would you choose them²⁵? Most young people chose to save their grandparents because of their Sāmoan knowledge but also they cared and respected them. This is associated highly with Sāmoan people's expectations of how they regard their elderly. That is, looking after the elderly is one of the important collective responsibilities and an obligation of the wider āiga. Likewise, there was also a sense of obligation that they have to make sure their elderly are safe and looked after first. According to these young people the survival of this knowledge was important for them as young Sāmoans. Dean, a 15 year old born in New Zealand illustrated:

'I would save my grandparents then my parents, my sisters and brothers. I want to save my grandma and grandpa from mum's side and my grandparents from dad's side. It is important for me to save my grandparents because if I

²⁵ This question was designed to get young people to think about people outside their family rather than just say my family is all equally important

want to ask them something, about my Sāmoan culture and fa'a-Sāmoa they are there to tell me. I live with my mum, dad, sisters and brothers and I want to save them all.' (Dean, 15 year old male, 2008)

Pomarie, a New Zealand-born Māori/Sāmoan felt it was important for her to save her grandparents. She preferred to save her grandfathers both from her dad's and mum's sides because they have Sāmoan and Māori knowledge that are crucial to her and her brother's lives:

'You know 10 seats is not enough, and they should build life boats to suit our forever big size families. But in saying that, I will say my little brother for the first seat because he is my little brother and he has his whole life in front of him then I will choose my dad's dad because he has knowledge of our family history that we need to learn from. Then I will want my mum's dad for the third seat because he knows the Māori language and history because it is important for me and my brother to learn these from him then I will start saving the rest of my family, but I'm not sure, I may run out of seats.'

(Pomarie, 19 year old female, 2008)

The participants acknowledged the importance of this knowledge to their identity as Sāmoan young people. Both Pomarie and Dean indicated that having grandparents with such knowledge provided them with easy access to information about their history and family roots. Some key informants acknowledged that most young people they interacted with had a great understanding of their fa'a-Sāmoa and Sāmoan way of life. They also recognised that many of these young people learnt more about these aspects of their culture especially their family histories, from their grandparents. Furthermore, some of them had opportunities to learn more about their fa'a-Sāmoa in schools and Sunday schools. While these opportunities are readily available to young people attending Sāmoan church other adolescents attending mainstream church did not have access to these opportunities. In fact, this often came down to the family's choice of choosing to attend a mainstream church for various reasons meaning the young people were more likely to miss out on these opportunities.

The key informants also acknowledged the connection between cultural knowledge and cultural identity and argued that it was important for Sāmoan young people to understand because it reaffirmed who they are. Douglas, a New Zealand-born Sāmoan, 29 years old and a youth worker, alluded to the fact that today the majority

of Sāmoan young people seem to appreciate being part of Sāmoan cultural activities in secondary schools and church:

‘The young people today are well aware of their Sāmoan life not only in the homes but in schools and church. These young people are very lucky because they do have the opportunity to learn more of that in school because Sāmoan is now part of their curriculum, because in my days Sāmoan was not taught at school. Most of the churches too: they included Sāmoan aganu’u²⁶ as part of their youth programme. So the kids do have access to that if they felt they need to learn more about their Sāmoan values. But some young people are using their grandparents, and they are asking questions which is a good thing.’ (Douglas, 29 year old male, youth mentor worker, 2009)

The key informants discussed some links between having this knowledge and wellbeing. Gary felt that having such knowledge is connected with young people’s self confidence to take part in Sāmoan events, especially during the āiga’s fa’alavelave or gatherings. Gary stated that most of the young people today attributed their minor roles in these activities to their lack of understanding of what goes on at these occasions. Fluency in this cultural knowledge is stated to reduce these feelings of discomfort in being part of these events:

‘There are young people who are not quite comfortable with their Sāmoan knowledge; some of them are lucky that they have opportunities to learn more about it. These young people will never be completely confident with that knowledge unless they improve their understanding and become actively involved in these occasions. Therefore, they will never feel comfortable to be part of those family occasions and that can be frustrating for them.’ (Gary, 43 year old male, pastor, 2009)

Importance of language

The Youth 2000 survey asked two questions with regards to the ability in understanding Sāmoan and the ability to speak Sāmoan in the home. The first question asked: “Which of the following statements best describes your ability in understanding Sāmoan”? The response options were: ‘more’, ‘on average’, ‘only greetings in Sāmoan’ and ‘none’. The options were combined in two groups, and of the 646 surveyed participants 75% of students considered their ability in understanding Sāmoan as ‘average or more’ compared to 25% as ‘none, only

²⁶ Aganuu: Samoan term for tradition or culture.

greetings in Sāmoan'. The second question asked: "Which of the following statement best describes your ability in speaking Sāmoan"? The response options to this question were the same as those discussed above. About 64% of participants described their ability in speaking Sāmoan as 'average or more', compared with 36% who chose 'none, only greetings in Sāmoan'.

The Youth 2000 survey then asked: "What is the main language spoken at home"? For this question the response options were: "English/Other", "Other Pacific languages", "Sāmoan". It was interesting to note that 61% of participants surveyed responded "English and other" as the main language, 35% said "mainly Sāmoan language" and 3% reported "other Pacific language".

The results from the Youth 2000 survey are similar to the findings presented in the Ala Fou: new pathways strategic directions for Pacific youth in new Zealand report by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (2003). As mentioned earlier in the literature review, this report found that most Pacific youth who attended this fono (meeting) considered language an important part of their identity. However, most of these young people felt they lacked the ability to speak their Pacific languages. The conclusion of the report was that most of these Pacific youth wished to learn more about their culture and how to speak their language because it was important to their identity of being Sāmoan. This is similar to Sāmoan adolescents interviewed for this study. They shared similar views of how the Sāmoan language was an important aspect of fa'a-Sāmoa and that language played a major part in their identity as Sāmoan young people. Most of this study's participants were not comfortable with their level of understanding and ability to speak the Sāmoan language.

As with the Youth 2000 results, 25 of these participants used a mixture of Sāmoan and English to communicate with parents and family members. A total of seven participants were not confident to speak Sāmoan in their homes and most times chose to avoid responding to family members, while 13 were very comfortable in speaking Sāmoan in and outside their homes. Out of 30 participants in focus groups, 16 were fluent in Sāmoan and 15 used mixed language mainly Sāmoan and English to communicate. For all those participants who used mixed language, more than half of

them claimed that most of the time it was something between 60 to 70% Sāmoan and about 30 to 40% English.

The participants who spoke fluent Sāmoan commented that the ability to converse in the Sāmoan language with parents and grandparents played a huge part in their relationship. In addition, it increased their confidence to participate in some of the cultural activities they are expected to be part of in the homes, church and school. Some of them argued that if a young person understood and had a good grasp of the Sāmoan language, being involved in these activities would not be an uncomfortable experience. For example Tom, an 18 year old male, born in Sāmoa who migrated to New Zealand at the age of eight, illustrated how fortunate he is to be able to speak and understand Sāmoan compared to some of his some of his peers:

‘When you talked about fa’a-Sāmoa or values of fa’a-Sāmoa all it is you need is being able to speak the language in order for you to understand the rest. Some of my friends do not understand the language therefore they don’t like to be part of those things because they think it’s boring. You see if I wanted to learn my gafa I can ask my grandpa and he can explain it to me because I can understand him. It makes things a lot easier for us young people to learn all aspects of our Sāmoan culture if we speak and understand the language. You learn to speak and understand then you get the rest then it’s up to you whether you go with it.’ (Tom, 18 year old male, 2008)

Tyra, a fluent speaker, enjoyed being a teacher to her friends by teaching them how to pronounce words properly and how to initiate conversations in Sāmoan. It was evident from her comments that teaching was something she wished to consider as a career:

‘Most of my friends are New Zealand-born and they do speak but not a lot. If I ask them questions in Sāmoa like – o a mai oe? (How are you?) they always replied in English, which is okay. But during our Sāmoan lesson, we are encouraged to speak Sāmoan in the classroom at all time. I enjoy teaching them I feel very special that I can share that with them.’ (Tyra, 16 year old female, 2008)

Those participants who were not confident about speaking Sāmoan in their homes wanted their own children to speak and understand the Sāmoan language. For most of the participants, the lack of opportunity to speak Sāmoan in the home was the main problem. It was very common for Sāmoan parents to expect their children to speak

English in the home. This is based on their beliefs that the only way for their children to succeed in a mainstream school is to speak English fluently. Therefore parents were more likely to prefer their children to speak English at all times. For some participants like Roy, they did not want to see their children go through the same experience as themselves of not having the opportunity to speak their language in the home. They reflected that knowing how to speak Sāmoan would help their children to communicate well with their grandparents. Roy, a New Zealand born Sāmoan / Niuean, argued that:

‘I would like my own children to learn the language because it will help them to talk to their grandparents and having that language that tells others about their culture and their identity as Sāmoan.’ (Roy, male, 14 years old, 2008)

Lyka, a New Zealand-born Sāmoan female and a fluent Sāmoan speaker, also foresaw the importance of her children learning Sāmoan because ‘knowing’ their culture and language would be important to their identity as Sāmoans. Lyka also recognised how important it was for Sāmoans and other ethnic groups to speak their own language as they are living in Aotearoa/New Zealand. According to Lyka, today it was important to speak one’s own ethnic language especially when it came to finding employment within government sectors.

‘I do want my children to learn the language but I don’t really want them to go to a hard out Sāmoan church. But I think for me it’s important for them to know their culture and learn to speak their language. It is important for them to do that because it is now important to speak our own language especially if you look for jobs in government or any other places. I don’t speak fluently but I do understand and there is a difference because I can understand but not quite know how to respond, so communication wise I would not be able to help a Sāmoan parent because I won’t be able to talk to them.’ (Lyka, 16 year old female, 2008)

Some of the participants who reported using mixed language in the home, later explained how they utilised opportunities available to them to improve their Sāmoan. A smaller number explained how these really helped them increase their level of confidence that it was okay to speak out loud as part of their learning process. Some talked about learning Sāmoan through Sunday schools, secondary schools, cousins and visiting and resident grandparents from Sāmoa. Their enthusiasm to learn came from the belief that it was important to their identity and their communication with

families especially their parents and grandparents. They reported that it was not easy but that they gradually built confidence to read and speak in Sāmoan.

Penelope, an 18 year old New Zealand-born Sāmoan/Cook Islander, started to attend Sunday school for the first time when her grandmother migrated from Sāmoa in 2006. Penelope had never attended a Sāmoan church all her life until her grandmother arrived in New Zealand. She built a very close bond with her grandmother in a short time, but Penelope and her grandmother communicated through Penelope's mum most times and the communication needed major improvement. Moreover her desire to communicate with her grandmother was another key factor in Penelope's determination to continue her learning through Sunday school. Her confidence in herself and in the Sāmoan language prior to attending Sunday school was very low; however, her determination to understand and speak Sāmoan overrode her fear of Sunday school.

Penelope's journey to learning the Sāmoan language triggered some deep issues. Penelope had never participated in any Sāmoan gatherings and therefore never had the opportunity to learn to speak Sāmoan. She felt that she had neglected this important part of her identity until her grandmother came to New Zealand to stay:

'It was embarrassing; I did not even know how to read a Sāmoan bible and knew nothing about the questions in the bible. I was not comfortable responding back in Sāmoan. I did it not only for myself but for my grandmother too; she had just come from Sāmoa and she did not speak English. She took me to church first and that was okay, but when she wanted me to go to Sunday school I did not want to go. I spoke English all my life, never really attended Sāmoan things but since my grandmother came I learnt about the other part of me that I had avoided for a long time.' (Penelope, 18 year old female, 2008)

Other participants learned Sāmoan through their cousins who were born in Sāmoa and migrated to New Zealand between ages 15 and 25. Rob and Sophie, both New Zealand-born Sāmoans, shared that socialising with cousins from Sāmoa helped them learn to speak Sāmoan. Rob and Sophie shared similar views with other participants who were not comfortable speaking in Sāmoan. These participants did not have the opportunity to speak at home as they were expected by parents to speak English. Some parents believed that speaking English at all time would help their children

succeed at school. However, having cousins from Sāmoa gave these young people the opportunity to improve their knowledge of the Sāmoan language. Rob stated that starting with single Sāmoan words helped him to compile sentences in Sāmoan. One of the key factors contributing to Rob's determination to learn were his Sāmoan friends, who accused him of *fia-palagi*²⁷ because of his inability to hold a conversation in Sāmoan:

‘My cousins speak little English so for me to speed up my learning I used my cousins to teach me Sāmoan and I taught them English. It works out well for us we talk English/Sāmoan with my parents and sisters and even though I do that but still I don't feel like I am Sāmoan because of how we talk. For me if I am good at speaking English I should be good at speaking Sāmoan too. Some of my Sāmoan friends who speak Sāmoan fluently at school sometimes call me *fia-palagi* because I can't hold a full conversation with them in Sāmoan.’ (Rob, male, 17 year old, 2008).

Sophie also learned Sāmoan through her cousins and friends from Sāmoa. Sophie shared that she was always embarrassed to talk out loud in Sāmoan and often avoided talking out loud because she did not speak like a real Sāmoan. For Sophie, speaking like a real Sāmoan meant having the ability to pronounce Sāmoan words properly and being able to hold conversation either in Sāmoan or English but not mixing the two languages at the same time:

‘I refused to talk out loud. I don't want them to make fun of me, I feel embarrassed because I am Sāmoan, full-blood Sāmoan, and I can't speak Sāmoan, how sad is that. I don't blame anyone but me, so I am glad to have my friends and cousins. They understand: they don't make fun of me when I say something wrong. I make myself believe that I can do it. If other New Zealand-born Sāmoans can do it so can I. And it feels good knowing that I can speak two languages English and my own.’ (Sophie, 15 year old female, 2008)

Most other participants improved their understanding by learning Sāmoan through secondary school where Sāmoan culture and language subjects were made available. Many participants spoke highly of their involvement in the secondary schools Polynesian Festival known as Polyfest and the Sāmoan lessons. Through participating in Sāmoan lessons, participants performed formal *lauga*²⁸ in Sāmoan and they also learnt aspects of the hierarchical structure of the *matai* system in Sāmoa. They learnt

²⁷ *fiapalagi*: this term is commonly and informally use by other Sāmoan people to refer to someone who pretended or claimed that they didn't speak Sāmoan or knew nothing about *fa'a-Sāmoa*.

²⁸ *Lauga*: formal speech or address in the Sāmoan language.

to master the skill of compiling a Sāmoan speech using everyday Sāmoan language and chiefly language. Most participants learnt that there was a difference between everyday Sāmoan language and chiefly language. Participants shared that at beginners' level they learnt to speak everyday Sāmoan prior to moving up to a more advanced level where they learned how to speak "like a real mātai".

Samuel, a Sāmoan-born 19 year old male, migrated to New Zealand at the age of six and struggled with his Sāmoan until he joined a Sāmoan class headed by a Sāmoan male teacher. Samuel represented his school twice to perform a Sāmoan lauga and he came first in one competition. This knowledge encouraged Samuel to participate in most of his church activities where his learning continued. Samuel was very excited sharing his experience and his feelings about his journey to learn and how such experiences changed his life and perspectives about himself being a young Sāmoan male:

'It's quite good now in school; they have the opportunity for us to learn our Sāmoan. I felt frustrated at times but with perseverance it paid off. I came first when I represented our schools at a lauga competition and the feeling I got like I was on cloud nine. My parents were so proud of me, and it's a good feeling knowing that it's my language, it's my culture, and I made my parents proud of me. Most importantly it's my inner feelings about me and my capability to do something so special like that. Language is such a beautiful thing. You know chief language is so special, when you speak it you can sense those values, because the words and proverbs you use somehow brings out those values we Sāmoan talk about. I do know when other people listen to it they don't get it but we do.' (Samuel, 19 year old male, 2008)

Like Samuel, Karlene a New Zealand-born Sāmoan female of 18 years also had the opportunity to represent her school in the Polyfest lauga competition. Karlene talked openly of the opportunity for females to participate in this competition knowing that in Sāmoan tradition it was usually the male talking chiefs who did the lauga for any gatherings on behalf of the high chiefs and the whole aiga:

'I am happy that I got the opportunity at school to improve my learning, not only the Sāmoan language but also my culture. Most importantly is how we females got the opportunity to do a lauga, let alone talk that language. I acknowledge the school for including Sāmoan in their programmes because we don't learn this kind a thing at home. We are supposed to learn it by observing and participating, but most time we observe we don't really get half of the things, and we don't really get an explanation either like we get from

our Sāmoan teachers here at school. I mean I do participate like taking the drink for the ‘sua²⁹, but I did not really get it why we do that. I learn a lot from school and that actually makes a big difference to our learning and being part of it.’ (Karlene, 18 year old, female, 2008)

Today, many Sāmoan students have moved on to university and polytechnic levels with the self-belief that they can be part of any cultural ceremonies and that they can speak their own language with confidence. According to this key informant, students did not only learn to speak the day-to-day language, but also learnt different levels of the Sāmoan language such as the language of respect, language of politeness and the language of love:

‘It’s about knowing that at the end of their final years here at school they can leave our school with confidence that they can speak their own language as well as English. Ever since we have started this paper, more and more students including some of those mixed ethnic students who never speak any other language apart from English at home joined in. Most of these students have never participated or taken part in any of the traditional cultural activities. I mean they may be part of weddings but not really the Sāmoan weddings if you know what I mean etc. Seeing these students for the first time and how they build their enthusiasm to learn throughout the course motivates me to be more creative about the way I teach. So we started off by teaching Sāmoan words then the day to day use of Sāmoan language... Because there is one thing telling your young one to respect so and so and be more polite blah blah and there is quite another to explain why and teach them how.’ (George, 38 year old male, educator, 2009)

Summary

In conclusion, the majority of the participants shared that Sāmoan language and fa’a-Sāmoa is important to them. The discussion also indicated the diversity of experience when talking about the importance of language and different ways participants utilised to improve their understanding of the Sāmoan language. Some participants felt that speaking the language fluently is all they needed to be able to understand other aspects of fa’a-Sāmoa. However, two distinct groups emerged when participants talked about how much they speak Sāmoan at home and the opportunities they have to improve their knowledge of the language. One group consisted of those who had the opportunities from parents, their schools and churches. The other participants did not

²⁹ Sua: is a formal Sāmoan term use when traditional goods and gifts are exchanged and reciprocated between families or groups participated in cultural activities

get these opportunities at home, school and church. Those who had the opportunities at school and church continued to access these classes to improve their knowledge and understanding. Some participants utilised the adults at home especially their grandparents during their quality time together. Being able to speak and understand gave them a feeling of self confidence to be involved and to be part of their family cultural events not only in their āiga but also in school and their church.

Roles and Participation in Sāmoan Activities

The Sāmoan term fa'alavelave refers to traditional celebration or activities that bring family members together. These activities include such events as weddings, funerals, birthdays, title bestowals and the opening of church buildings. These family activities are part of fa'a-Sāmoa: they activate the kinship support network and exhibit the practice of reciprocity between families. The exchanging of traditional measina³⁰ on these occasions maintains harmony and affirms kinship relationships.

The majority of participants both from the Youth 2000 survey and interviewees in this study had all attended and have played minor roles in some family activities. The Youth 2000 survey asked students: “Have you ever been to a Sāmoan funeral”? About 82% of surveyed students reported they had been to a Sāmoan funeral, 82% of students further responded to the question: “How much of what was going on did you understand”? The response items required the students to choose from four options: “all”, “most”, “half” and “less”. Only 46% of those who had been to a Sāmoan funeral reported that they understood all or most of what was going on, and 54% reported they only understood half or less of what was going on.

All the participants in this study had attended and participated in family funerals. They all had a clear understanding of what was considered fa'alavelave and what was involved in this cultural practice, but they had very different experiences of involvement in some of the activities. Most participants said that it was their active participation in school activities and their teachers' explanation that helped them understand the importance of these activities and why their families continued to

³⁰ Measina – refers to Sāmoan artefacts that hold significant values to the Sāmoan culture, for example fine mats, tattoos etc.

practise the way they did. Some participants agreed that it was important to continue practising these cultural practices and acknowledged the need to reconsider the ways these were being practised. Most participants spoke about exchanging gifts in these activities but did not fully explain these exchanges.

Some participants talked about taking part in weddings and funerals and talked about their roles as drivers, babysitters, dishwashers and runners. Peter, a 19 year old male student born in Sāmoa, migrated to New Zealand at the age of four and was the main driver, running errands and picking up family members during these family activities. He stated that:

‘I get really tired. The last fa’alavelave we had was a funeral for my uncle, and as usual I drove: picking up, dropping off; at the end of the day I got really exhausted. I think for most of us young ones we do all the feaus³¹ for these things, never really there even though we are there. I mean the older people do all the formal things, but we run around to do all the other things, so I know that’s our contribution in these things. I don’t know half of the things that goes on inside there, I just do what my job is and that is the driver. And even when they did a sua thing, you know you just get told give three boxes of chicken then you just run to the back and get it, so I guess that’s for us young ones.’
(Peter, 19 year old male, 2008)

Some female participants also spoke of taking part in the protocol of the sua, where they got to present the visitors with gifts. Some female students did not fully understand it, yet continued to take part in these activities. This indicated that young people require much more than the traditional learning method of observation to enable them to understand and enjoy taking part in these activities. The methods of learning for the younger generation involved more explanation as to the underlying principles of why these activities are being practised the way they are. Only then, a full understanding of the importance of these practices could increase young people’s confidence to fully participate in these activities. Kogo who attended and took part in a Sāmoan family funeral shared her experience:

‘I went to a Sāmoan funeral with my mum and it was long, like two to three days long and all these people and heaps of things to prepare, like we have to have a lot of food to give out to people attending the funeral. I took part in the sua and stuff, like taking the bottle of drink with the money in it. I just did it. I had no idea why we need to do it that way, you know the bottle and money. I

³¹ Feau is a Sāmoan word when talked about chores around the house

mean I know they will give it to the highest chief and the second important chief, but I don't get it why we have to do it that way.' (Kogo, 16 year old female, 2008)

Sue, from one of the focus groups, also shared similar views about her participation during the protocol of the 'sua' for her uncle's funeral:

'It's funny you have seen your other relatives do it and you tried it then you continue to do it, but when you take the wrong turn you get a growling big time from your female relatives. I mean they expect us to know how to do it but they don't even explain to us like, okay you walk this way and you stop and turn like this then you go down blah blah, you know how am I supposed to know I have to kneel down before. At least they should tell us, hello – I am sure if they spend that time telling and teaching us how and why we do it that way then it will be nice. At least you get an understanding that it is important to do it that way – you know the proper way.' (Sue, 17 year old female, 2008)

Amanda, one of the key informants, noted that most family tend to underestimate the fact that they need to explain these aspects of fa'a-Sāmoa to the young people. She acknowledged that the expectations for the young people to know what to do during these activities are very high. She also acknowledged that the young generation today were more into interactive learning than the older generation where observation and learning were the key means of learning to perform these protocols:

'I think in all our Sāmoan families, we have this mentality that kids know what to do, but in reality they have no idea. It worked for some of us; we did learn how to do these things by watching our mothers and grandmothers in Sāmoa, but for these kids you have to go through the process of explaining to them what they have to do and why they have to do it in certain ways.' (Amanda, 40 year old female, social worker, 2009)

Summary

The protocols for the fa'alavelave fa'a-Sāmoa are quite formal and structured in ways that young people need to learn how to understand it. Participants played minor roles in the fa'alavelave. They are expected to gain an understanding of why and how these are being practiced the way they are. However, the limited explanation by the adults was shown to affect young people's understanding of these events. This also raises questions about the survival of fa'a-Sāmoa in the future. The survival of these practices depends heavily on the continuation of transferring of the knowledge to the

next generation. This generation is struggling to understand it; therefore it may affect the survival of fa'a-Sāmoa. Parents expected young people to continue practising fa'a-Sāmoa the way they do. While a very small number of participants felt they would, the majority talked about alternative ways to practice fa'a-Sāmoa. This posed a challenge whether these alternative ways would be still considered and accepted as fa'a-Sāmoa ways.

Family Reunions

Today, family reunions are becoming one of the most important family activities for Sāmoan young people in New Zealand. Almost all of the participants had been involved in family reunions and they all shared positive energy and stories from such gatherings. The most important thing to participants of family reunions was catching up with cousins and families whom they had not seen for some time. They spoke highly of taking part in family reunions and participating in dancing competitions performed by different households. It was evident that the big difference between taking part in the family reunion and family funerals or weddings lay in the level of participation and their roles in these activities. Their participation in fa'alavelave was very minor and the protocols involved in these are more formal than being involved in family reunions. Family reunions were considered as more fun and they felt excited being part of these events. The young people enjoyed being able to be part of the celebration and the attention given to them when they performed in front of the whole family. According to Carter:

'I like the attention. I mean in the family reunion we are all part of it; we all get involved in a way that we can sit back and admire all the cousins and families. We have a family reunion every two years and I must say I look forward to that rather than us going to family weddings and funerals. I don't get the same buzz I get from being involved in a family reunion. It's like us and our extended families just enjoying each other and enjoying the performance and food.' (15 year old male, 2008)

Zeta, a participant in one of the focus groups, also shared similar views that they reconnected with all their family members during these reunions:

'I enjoyed our very first family reunion because it was an opportunity for me to meet my aunts and uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces from mum's side.

I really thought it was just another thing my family had to do, but it was good. I did ask my mum why we needed to do that, and she said it was for us young ones to get to know all our cousins so we don't ended up marrying one another. I thought that was interesting but I did understand what she was saying.' (Zeta, 15 year old female, 2008)

Fewer participants had never been involved in family reunions and they felt that their families should have reunions as family events. They stated that there were family members they had never met; therefore these reunions would give them the opportunities to meet all the members of their extended families:

'We don't have reunions. My friend had one last year and they had it in Sāmoa and he had fun. It was a week event. I wish my family will have one in Sāmoa like them; it will be so cool to go to Sāmoa and meet so many people.' (Jason, 16 year old male, 2008)

Megan, one of the key informants, indicated that one of the main reasons for family reunions was to bring all the extended families together from overseas and Sāmoa. She acknowledged the fact that many households are very isolated from each other and it was important to bring them together with the view to reconnect and strengthen their kinship support and network relationships. She noted that family reunions also provided opportunities for the young generations to get to know their roots and relatives normally in pleasant and less stressful settings than in other families' fa'alavelave:

'Young people do enjoy their family reunions because they get the chance to meet all their cousins whom they never met before and to learn more about their families. But I do think there are more important reasons than purely a get together for family members. Some families have lost those important connections that they used to have in Sāmoa, and children are growing up knowing that they have relatives in Hamilton and Wellington or overseas but never met them'. (Megan, 60 year old female, retired counsellor, 2009)

Summary

The participants who took part in family reunions enjoyed these events. One of the significant aspects of family reunions compared to more cultural traditional occasions such as weddings and funerals is not having set and formal protocols they needed to learn in order to participate. In fact, participation in family reunions was

stated to be more informal and there are no expectations from adults of how the young ones should participate and behaved at these events. Furthermore, the reunions are considered positive because they often take place in less stressful settings than other cultural fa'alavelave.

Sāmoan Cultural Groups

Participation in cultural dancing groups in schools was also considered by most participants as very much a part of their identity as Sāmoan. Moreover, performing Sāmoan dances through school cultural performances was perceived as a way of learning more about their traditional Sāmoan way of life. Jan spoke of her experience of being involved in the Polynesian secondary school festival through her participation in the Sāmoan dancing group. Some participants like Jan had never taken a lead role or performed Sāmoan dance in front of an audience, but being part of a Sāmoan dancing group gave her confidence to perform in front of a huge crowd. Jan happily shared that being part of her school's dancing group helped her 'find herself' and most importantly during the performance she felt connected to her Sāmoan peers and her Sāmoan culture:

'I refused to participate in this dancing group for years simply because I was useless at performing Sāmoan dance but this year my friends got me involved. And for the first time in my life I felt that I finally found myself and I can honestly say performing makes me feel like a real Sāmoan girl, he he. It was great; I learnt how the taupou perform a dance, the movements and what it means. I love it. I love performing with my friends and love the dance movement and the Sāmoan music and it's a blast. You know those old Sāmoan songs; the lyrics and the tunes, it's great.' (Jan, 15 year old female, 2008)

Despite taking part in these different activities, most participants felt that the survival of fa'a-Sāmoa depended on their generation. Some vouched that they would continue to practise exactly how their parents were doing it, whereas others were already thinking of alternative ways to make it easier for their generation. These participants raised concerns about the quantity of money and material goods their parents are expected to produce for the fa'alavelave. Observing what their parents went through, these participants introduced some alternatives to replace the demand for money and material goods put on their parents. More importantly, for most of them using

alternatives would ensure the continuation of these practices by them in the future.

According to Frolina who was born in Sāmoa:

‘Respect is the Sāmoan thing you have to respect your families, respect your teachers and you have to respect yourself in order for people to respect you. I think it is important to continue on from generation to generation and I think its good because if its dies, then we would not really have what we call fa’a Sāmoa and Sāmoan way of life, but by saying that, we have to tap on some alternatives in order for us to.’ (Frolina, 17 year old female, 2008)

Most of the participants in focus groups were members of their Sāmoan cultural groups in their secondary schools. While some participants considered it as an after school activity where they continued to hang out with friends, others were more enthusiastic as to why it was important for them to take part. It was evident that being part of this group strengthened their feelings of belonging to a group located within the school setting. Furthermore, it recognised their cultural identity and accepted them as who they were. Based on the collective comments from these participants, this group also provided peer support, as indicated in the excerpt below by Viv:

‘I like being in our Sāmoan group, it is something that I will continue to do if the University do have a Sāmoan group like this. I know sometimes the after school thing, it’s a bit too much for some parents especially when we come home late. But we do look out for each other you know, we learn how to perform and we have fun in trying to get those movements right. One of the best thing is we get to be ourselves; we scream and we laugh and we cry. This group is like our second family, you know we treat our Sāmoan teachers as our parents, and we treat each other like brothers and sisters.’ (Viv, 17 year old female, 2008)

All the key informants were asked to comment on the young people’s involvement with the Sāmoan cultural groups in schools. Most, and particularly the educators, who were directly involved in these cultural groups in their individual schools recognised the importance of these groups to young people’s identity as Sāmoan. The benefits for participation in these cultural groups varied from enhancing young people’s understanding of their Sāmoan culture through performing dances and oratory to creating a space where students can socialise with each other and share their learning experiences. These key informants also recognised a high level of support from parents, especially during the Polynesian Festival competition that these groups took part in. This was in fact an important opportunity for some parents to be included in

some school activities that their children participated in. It may also be great for the young peoles' sense of wellbeing to see their parents supporting them in their learning and acknowledging their growing competence:

‘As a language teacher I do see a lot of benefit for the students to join because they learnt a lot from this group. One of the things that we do in this group is to encourage these young people to use this group to form up little study groups for their other subjects, because come exam time they go through a lot. But in saying that, it is amazing to see the parents step up, so if we are able to get the parents' support through this group then it is a good thing. One thing I can tell you is through this group parents really come together and work together to prepare the uniforms for our performance, and I have never seen some of these parents before in the school.’ (Sally, 57 year old female, educator, 2009)

Summary

The participant's memberships in these cultural groups are highly connected with their level of identity and wellbeing. Taking part in these extra groups enhanced their understanding of various aspects of their fa'a-Sāmoa. It also strengthened their sense of belonging to these cultural groups and their connection with other students from the same culture. The support and approval by the parents for the participants' involvement in these groups was also strongly connected to these young people's wellbeing.

Understanding the Mātai System

The participants were also given the opportunity to discuss their thoughts about their understanding and perception of the mātai system. Most participants learnt aspects of the Sāmoan mātai system and role of the mātai at school. Most participants learnt how the mātai system operated and its hierarchical structure in schools. Prior to gaining more knowledge about the mātai system most participants knew that their fathers and grandfathers held mātai titles because they were called different names from the names they knew them by. It was clear that most of them had very little understanding of the role of a mātai apart from that they made decisions in the families and they were supposed to look after their villages.

One participant, Karla, shared her experience that her Sāmoan class helped her understand concerning her father's status as a mātai in her family. At times, especially during family fono³² held at her home, she was often baffled as to why her dad did not say much in these meetings but her uncle who is much younger than her dad seemed to do most of the talking. After receiving a session from school about the hierarchical matai system Karla learnt that there were two types of mātai. She finally learnt that her father held the ali'i³³ title and her uncle was the tulafale³⁴. Karla was dumbfounded to learn that her father was the paramount chief of the whole family:

'Honestly I have learnt a lot about Sāmoan stuff since I started attending this Sāmoan class. I often wondered about the fa'a-mātai thing especially in my family, why my extended families always refer to dad as (mātai name) and why my uncle seems to do most of the talking in their family meetings but dad does not say a lot during the meetings. For me that was bizarre. But then I learnt in class how the mātai system works that there is a high chief and a talking chief; I did not know that. So my dad holds a higher title than my uncle. Isn't that interesting and that makes me an important taupou³⁵ of the family, I mean wow! I did not realise how important I am in my family given that my dad is the big boss.' (Karla, 17 year old female, 2008)

Jay, a 17 year old New Zealand-born male, had also been involved in school festival speech competitions. He learnt how to compose a speech, and having a father who was a talking chief and learning about speeches, introduced a new chapter in their father-son relationship. According to Jay, since he got involved in the Sāmoan class at school, he learnt a lot about the role of the Sāmoan mātai and the mātai system and when he was given the opportunity to perform a speech in Sāmoan he had something to talk to his father about. Since he started talking to his father about speeches and asking him to explain Sāmoan proverbs, their level of communication had changed dramatically:

'My learning to perform a Sāmoan lauga at school has not only helped me to compete at these competitions with confidence, but it also helps me to connect with my old man as a talking chief a little bit more. We did not really have that much communication before with my dad, but since I started asking a lot of

³² Fono: was used by many students when talked about their family meetings.

³³ Ali'i: is the highest chief title in a family or a village.

³⁴ TuLancele: is the chief title for the chiefs that do the talking one behalf of the high chief or the family and they well known as talking chiefs.

³⁵ Taupou: is the name given to an official female village maid who is the head of all the females born in this village. This taupou must be of a highest ranking chief of this village.

questions with regards to words and proverbs that I used in my speech my dad has shown great interest in my learning. For me this is the bonus of me learning my Sāmoan in terms of doing a lauga I do learn at school and learn at home because dad is actually quite good at it.’ (Jay, 17 year old male, 2008)

When asked if they would like to become mātai one day, there was a mixed response amongst the participants. Some spoke about the expectation and responsibility the families would have on them if they become mātai. Others commented that it would depend very much on their understanding of these responsibilities. In general most young people did not show any confidence in becoming mātai in the future. However they seemed to enjoy their journey of learning about different aspects of fa’a-mātai and the responsibility that these titles have. As illustrated by Shaun in one of the focus groups below, most participants did not have any confidence to become mātai in the future, however as they learned more about these responsibilities there was a possibility that they may change their minds:

‘I think the matai are the ones that make decision and speak on behalf of the family; they are the ones that look after the welfare of the villages in Sāmoa. I think to be a mātai I have to be well prepared so I know how to be a mātai in terms of family expectations. So I don’t think I want to be a mātai. I don’t think any of us young ones are thinking about being a mātai. I like being part of my family stuff and I like to support my family whatever I can but I don’t think I want to be a mātai in the future.’ (Shaun, 18 year old male, 2008)

Curtis, a New Zealand-born who participated fully in school cultural activities, also acknowledged the importance of being a mātai but said he too lacked the confidence to take on such responsibility. More importantly learning about the role of the mātai had helped him understand the responsibility that his extended family put on his father who is the head of the family:

‘It’s true I am learning as much as I can about the role of the mātai in the āiga, but somehow the responsibility and expectations that comes with it is something that as a young person I am not prepared to say that I will be confident enough to say that I want to be one in the future. What I did learn is that there is pressure in there to be one and I can see that with my dad when it comes to extended family’s affair.’ (Curtis, 16 year old male, 2008)

Jacob, a key informant with two matai titles attached to his name, was more pragmatic about his views on issues raised by young people about their understanding of the

mātai system. He stated that it was important for these young people to learn aspects of the fa'a-mātai system in schools but they also needed to be exposed to how these are really practiced in the home. Jacob made a clear distinction between theory and practice by pointing out the aumaga³⁶ and how they learnt about the mātai and the roles and responsibilities that came with it:

‘It is good to hear what the young people are saying and how they learnt this from school but that really tells us something that we need to get these young ones to be involved in these things especially when it comes to the role of the matai. We have so many mātais that have names but don't do anything because they don't want the responsibility and that is really sad. These mātai never had the opportunity to actually the importance of this role because they never got involved in these things then all of a sudden they get titles.’ (Jacob, 49 year old male counsellor, 2009)

Summary

It was evident that participants who took part in school competitions performing lauga as Sāmoan orators and those who learnt the difference between the roles of the ali'i (high chief) and the tulafale (orator) were highly satisfied with this knowledge. Although these participants increase their knowledge about these aspects of fa'a-mātai the majority of them expressed no interest to be mātai. Their observations of the responsibility their fathers have as mātai influenced their decisions whether or not to be mātai in the future. In fact, this introduced yet another challenge concerning the survival of the fa'a-mātai among the younger generation in the future.

Knowledge of Village Affiliation

One aspect of Sāmoan knowledge participants alluded to during their interviews was their knowledge of their parents' villages in Sāmoa. The Youth 2000 survey asked participants: “Do you know the name of your mother or father's family village”? About 73% of participants reported yes and 27% said no. The follow up question was: “Have you visited Sāmoa since your arrival or birth in New Zealand”? A total of 51% said yes and 49% reported no. The majority of participants interviewed for this study had visited their villages in Sāmoa with families or through school and church trips.

³⁶ Aumaga: is a Sāmoan term for a group of untitled men known as 'o le malosi o le nu'u' translated as the strength of the village.

All participants indicated that as soon as they landed in Sāmoa they immediately felt at home. Sarah, a New Zealand born Sāmoan, had visited Sāmoa twice and had indicated that she was nervous at first because she was not quite sure what to expect and how she would adjust to Sāmoa. Sarah's mother came from the island of Sāvai'i³⁷ and her dad was from Upolu and she wondered about the size of the boat that travelled to the island of Sāvai'i:

'It was funny; part of me was all excited about the trip. But I was somewhat nervous about it all. I did not know what to expect. I have never been there, my mother is from the island of Sāvai'i and my dad is from Upolu. I looked at the map and Sāmoa is only a small dot but I was not quite sure why they have two islands. When I was told that we have to catch a boat and I thought, oh my gosh, how big are those boats? So really for me, I was excited but was not sure what to expect. Another thing, I had never met any of my family there so I was not sure how they will treat us.' (Sarah, 15 year old female, 2008)

Sarah learnt a great deal about her mum's family in Sāvai'i during her visits. She claimed that Sāmoans lived a simple life and that there was a sense of freedom compared to her experience living in New Zealand. In fact, this experience was the same with for other participants who had visited Sāmoa. Most spoke of how they felt connected to their family members who they met for the first time as well as their villages in Sāmoa. They spoke about the environment and how the whole extended family lived in the same village and how they socialised with cousins, uncles and aunties every day. TK was very excited while describing his feelings about his trip with his family, he claimed:

'I love being in Sāmoa. I got really attached to my grandparents, my family and my villages. Life in the village is very very simple, the support network from family members and having your whole family living on the family land, and doing things together supporting each other. Your family own a plantation, you can do whatever you like on it, you can build a house, grow taro etc. What more could you ask for? I must say I felt spiritually and physically connected to my villages in Sāmoa.' (TK, 19 year old male, 2008)

Some participants talked about their knowledge of their dads and mums' village histories. This was passed on from their grandparents. They claimed knowing such information about their village history was important because they would like to pass this on to their own children. Justin, a 19 year old Sāmoan born who migrated with his

³⁷ Savai'i: one of the islands in Sāmoa.

parents to New Zealand at the age of eight, never wanted to return to New Zealand.

When he travelled to Sāmoa he felt more connected and comfortable living in Sāmoa:

‘I never wanted to come back to New Zealand I don’t feel the same way here, being in Sāmoa doing different things in the vicinity of your own village in the company of your whole family and I am not talking about one household, the whole family, just great. One of the best things in the village, everybody looked out for each other. The village is clean, they are well organised, they are well looked after by the matais. It’s just perfect for me. I have everything I need in Sāmoa you know. The love, comfort, support, freedom and that’s basically what we young people need some times. I just love the idea that all my families live in the same village and they live next to each other and I love the feeling of going around my uncles and aunties’ homes because they are all there.’ (Justin, 19 year old male, 2008)

Justin also shared his village history passed down from his grandfather whom he spent most of his time with while in Sāmoa. Justin was taken on a tour especially by his grandfather to show him the different pieces of land and mountains that belonged to his family. The grandfather introduced Justin to a special place where his father’s umbilical cord was buried. Justin shared that he felt honoured and acknowledged the rich knowledge his grandfather had shared with him. He also learnt from his grandfather that his family name was mentioned in their village fa’alupega³⁸ (village acknowledgement). This motivated Justin to learn his village fa’alupega by heart. According to Justin, his grandfather had said that knowing the fa’alupega is important when attending Sāmoan functions as this would inform other Sāmoan people where he came from without asking questions:

‘I will never forget the stories and where I come from in terms of my family and my village. That’s why I want to learn our village fa’alupega by heart because it mentioned my grandfather’s name which for me it means that we are very important in that village. My grandfather also said that when I or my father attends Sāmoan function other Sāmoan will know where we come from by just saying our fa’alupega. It’s amazing stuff, it makes me feel kind a special.’ (Justin, 19 year old male, 2008)

A few other participants also indicated that they had learnt from school that their villages have fa’alupega. They were also told that this is a form of identity for the villages they come from. Melanie stated that this is similar to what Māori do when

³⁸ Fa’alupega: a formal Sāmoan term for the traditional village acknowledgement. Each village in Sāmoa has a formal acknowledgement that often used by chiefs to introduce themselves when they attended other villages cultural activities.

they introduce themselves including their iwi, hapu and waka³⁹ as part of the introduction telling others about themselves and which parts of New Zealand they come from. Melanie, an 18 year old New Zealand-born Sāmoan, shared that knowing this information was important especially when they became involved in Sāmoan activities because it helped young people understand some of what was being spoken about:

‘We did a lesson on our parents’ village and the teacher told us that we all have village fa’alupega. I did not know anything about that but this teacher you just tell him your mum or your dad’s village and he just says this long speech, then he said that it’s our village fa’alupega. At least now when you sit in one of those Sāmoan things you get to know what the older people especially the mātai are saying to each other. Before half of the time we don’t get it and we think it’s boring, but come to think of it, it kind a feel special knowing that your village has a special introduction.’ (Melanie, 18 year old female, 2008)

When talking about village affiliation, one of the key informants noted that some villages had well organised village associations in New Zealand. Gary acknowledged that many villages had formed rugby and kilikiti⁴⁰ teams and many young people were taking active roles in participating in these competitions. According to Gary, young people enjoyed representing their parents’ villages in these competitions although some of them had never been to Sāmoa. Through participation in these competitions they got to learn earlier on that they not only belonged to a family but they also belonged to a much larger group such as the village:

‘Already here in New Zealand there are village groups; if you listen to the radio they announced the villages and their meeting places, their rugby teams and so forth. Many of our young ones are already attached to their parents’ villages by representing them in these competitions. It is through this participation that they learned more about their dads and mums’ villages as well as meeting a whole lot of relatives.’ (Gary, 43 year old male pastor, 2009)

Conclusion

The argument presented in this chapter described aspects of cultural knowledge that are positively connected with wellbeing. The young people pointed to their sense of

³⁹ Iwi: people; hapu: tribe and waka: canoe. These are some of Maori terms used by Maori to formally introduce themselves and where they came from.

⁴⁰ Kilikiti: Sāmoan term for a Sāmoan cricket.

identity, importance of the Sāmoan language and sense of belonging and acceptance through their participation in cultural activities and understanding of their culture in their homes as important aspects of their cultural knowledge. Findings from the Youth 2000 survey, interviews, focus groups with young people, and interviews with key informants, strongly supported some findings from Chapter One as presented below.

In Chapter One, many scholars contended that cultural knowledge is learnt through observation and participation in traditional cultural activities. Today, methods of learning this knowledge are slightly different for Sāmoan young people today as opposed to the expected traditional learning method. This observation and participation method of learning was successful in Sāmoa, especially in the village settings where the young and untitled men known as aumaga groups were expected to be among the chiefs during these activities. They took active roles by physically and mentally getting involved in these activities as part of their learning. In addition the young women were expected to be part of the aualuma⁴¹ where they observed and learnt the traditional tasks of a Sāmoan woman and important roles of a tama'ita'i⁴² Sāmoa in these activities. In New Zealand, most Sāmoan young people improved their understanding and knowledge of fa'a-Sāmoa through schools, different sources of the media and through their church groups. Most young people in this study felt positive about learning this knowledge and they considered these opportunities as re-connecting them with their identities and families.

The core principles of fa'a-Sāmoa are embedded in the way kinship relationships are maintained and how Sāmoan activities are practised. Family reunions and village association group activities proved to highly influence the lives and wellbeing of these young people in many ways. Through active participation in these activities and connection to family members and people from the village of their parents the young people's sense of belonging to these groups increases dramatically.

The importance of speaking and understanding the Sāmoan language was identified as positively influencing the sense of identity for these young people. The young people

⁴¹ Aualuma: a group of unmarried women in a Sāmoan village.

⁴² Tama'ita'i: a Sāmoan woman.

who speak fluent Sāmoan reported positive feelings of pride and happiness that they are able to communicate with their parents especially their grandparents. Some young people who competed at speech competitions for their schools talked about self confidence and high levels of motivation. While these aspects of fa'a-Sāmoa cultural knowledge are considered positive and strongly connected with most young people's sense of identity and wellbeing there were a few factors that were negatively associated with some participants' low level of wellbeing. For instance, fewer participants reported that they did not speak or understand the Sāmoan language and spoke about feeling lost and left out.

This chapter also introduced some challenges with regards to young people's role in the survival of some fa'a-Sāmoa practices and the fa'a-mātai. In fact, this poses important questions that warrant future investigation such as exploring positive and negative impact of Sāmoan practices of fa'a-matai from the experiences and observations of young Sāmoan in New Zealand.

Chapter 10: Conclusions, Implications and Considerations

This chapter presents the implications and conclusions of the study. It is an opportunity to state how the findings sit alongside social science knowledge and theories about the connection between adolescent wellbeing and family. The family is one complex group social scientists have researched and theorised on in numerous ways for many years. My research explored the argument that family is pivotal and central to the lives of Sāmoan young people. The use of the term family in this chapter is inclusive of all households, extended families and family members that young people identified as their families. How important family is to these young people is reflected in my grandmother's final words before my departure to New Zealand: "without your family you are nothing". In fact, my grandmother's statement reflects the views of many young people interviewed for this study. Despite the changes and adverse factors affecting the way these young people's families are structured and organised, there was a realisation that the young people continued to value and preferred to be with their families.

It is essential to clearly outline what my intentions are for this chapter. Rather than summarising the main findings from the research, this chapter presents the following. Firstly, the chapter seeks to provide a statement of the main findings from this work and compare these with research findings from the literature discussed in this thesis. Secondly, hypotheses were set out earlier in this thesis and it is important to examine how well they stand in relation to the actual research findings. Thirdly, there are three questions used as guidelines to identify appropriate recommendations of how the findings from this thesis could be used in the future.

A number of theories of wellbeing and models of family from the disciplines of psychology, sociology and Sāmoan worldviews have been discussed. My review of the literature and discussion of research findings confirmed that there is no single theory or model of family but rather many theories and models based on different dimensions and functions of family. It was also evident from this study that these

theories and models of family will continue to be refined and re-developed to reflect the changes and transformations in family systems and sub systems due to economic and political developments.

The theories generated from studies in North America and Europe proposed that there are positive and negative links between wellbeing and family. The literature also revealed that loving and caring relationships in families are protective factors for the wellbeing of young people. This study wished to extend this notion by stating that collective and balanced relationships based on mutual understanding, respect, trust and support between adults and young people are protective factors for the wellbeing of Sāmoan youth. In addition, the lack of mutual respect, understanding, support and trust causes a breakdown in these collective and balanced relationships among family members which negatively affect the wellbeing of Sāmoan young people. In fact, the key findings from this research suggested that mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual trust and mutual support are four significant indicators of wellbeing for Sāmoan adolescents and most likely all adolescents.

The above statements of the findings already provided some key explanations to the first hypothesis outlined below. However, it is important to further examine how well these hypotheses stand in relation to the findings from this study. The hypotheses are:

- Family organisation influences young people's levels of wellbeing in both positive and negative ways.
- Europeans conceptualise 'wellbeing' and 'family' and the links between them from eurocentric perspectives.
- Do European models of 'wellbeing' and 'family' and the links between them have any relevance in understanding the wellbeing of Sāmoan youth?
- Do Sāmoan studies reveal similar connections between wellbeing and family or are they different and, if so, in what ways?

The findings from this study supported the second hypothesis by arguing that Europeans conceptualise the links between wellbeing and family from eurocentric perspectives. The individual is central to psychology and sociology investigations.

For example, the discipline of psychology focused on the individual's subjective evaluation of life with regards to life satisfaction and life quality. Definitions of life satisfaction and what constitute the quality of life are based on European beliefs and values about themselves as individuals. Psychology extended the scope of its enquiry by observing the influence of interactions between the individual and others. On the other hand sociology examines how changes in systems and sub-systems in society affect the behaviour of individuals. Hence, sociologists are interested in the individual and their role and contribution to society with the focus on how these people react to various social systems and social organisations surrounding them.

The last two hypotheses asked whether models of wellbeing and family generated from findings of European studies have any significance to the wellbeing of Sāmoan youth, and whether Sāmoan studies reveal the same connections between wellbeing and family. The connections between wellbeing and family revealed in this study hold some similarities to that of European studies but they are not the same. This is due to different definitions of wellbeing and family based on individualistic and collectivistic values and approaches. The models of wellbeing and family generated from findings of European studies do have some significance to the wellbeing of Sāmoan youth. However, the most significant and appropriate model for Sāmoan youth is the one that included their definitions and concepts of wellbeing and family.

Like Europeans, Sāmoans conceptualise wellbeing and family and the links between them from their collective perspective. For example, my research showed that family members achieved happiness and life satisfaction when they believed their obligations towards the family are fulfilled, when they achieved well for the family and maintained supportive and harmonious relationships with the whole family. In modern Sāmoa, family members achieved happiness and life satisfaction not only from what is listed above, but also when they have good jobs, happy marriages, healthy children, supportive families and an intact Christian faith. Therefore, Sāmoan people are happy and satisfied with their lives when their families are healthy and happy and have balanced collective relationships. Sāmoan young people are very happy knowing their families are happy especially if they have mutual understanding, respect, trust and support of their families. In reciprocity, young people remain happy when they achieve well in life to make their families happy. In fact, one participant from this

study proudly stated: “I am happy when my whole family is happy, and I want to make them happy” (Jason, 16 year old male, 2008).

The following questions are important to identify recommendations as to how the findings from this study could add value towards future investigations of the various aspects of wellbeing of Sāmoan families. The questions are:

- What does the findings from this research mean?
- What should be done with the data?
- What does this mean for future social policy and theory?
- What is the cultural relevance to the Sāmoan community?

There are two key benefits from the findings of this study. First, was the opportunity to put qualitative data beside the Youth 2000 survey statistics and locating the Sāmoan worldview of wellbeing and family alongside the more rigorously tested theories from disciplines such as psychology and sociology. The findings from this research indicated that it is not appropriate to use only European concepts, models and tools to examine elements and levels of wellbeing among Sāmoan youth. Rather, Sāmoan concepts and models of wellbeing and family should be used to determine how aspects of a Sāmoan family connected to culturally relevant indices of youth wellbeing. Therefore this data should be used as a starting point by operationalising key indicators of wellbeing identified to further investigate dimensions of wellbeing for Sāmoan young people. The data presented both strengths and weaknesses of family relationships as reported by Sāmoan young people interviewed for this study. The young people also reported how their family is organised highly influenced their lives and wellbeing in numerous ways. The elements of family organisations young people discussed revolved around the collective nature of the family. Young people preferred participating in fun activities and socialising with their extended families rather than being with their household only.

This data revealed important dimensions of family that is connected with youth wellbeing. These are relevant for guidelines and policy, especially those concerning family relationships between adults and youth. Based on my experience of working

and advocating for Sāmoan families in the community, the findings raised some interesting challenges with regards to departmental policies for working with Sāmoan families. The findings of this research are useful for guidelines, programmes and policy that will achieve better outcomes for Sāmoan families. Furthermore, this data is useful to develop culturally appropriate theories and models which could be used as frameworks useful to investigate the links between wellbeing and family for other ethnic groups in New Zealand with similar values and worldviews.

The cultural relevance of this research for Sāmoan people is important. With data gathered using culturally appropriate measurement tools we are in a position to develop truly relevant Sāmoan models and theories of wellbeing and family. Using the research findings to set programmes for Sāmoan families especially for young people is significant. The following are important recommendations of how this data could be used and its cultural relevance to Sāmoan young people and their families:

- A model for working with young Sāmoan people and their families from this data will need to be developed based on the strengths of family relationships identified by young people;
- This research could also benefit many others who are not Sāmoan as it provides insights that is valuable in their understanding of Sāmoan perspectives;
- Other people who work with Sāmoan youth and who are not Sāmoan could also find this research useful as it gives them more knowledge about Sāmoan families and fa'a-Sāmoa;
- Develop intervention programmes useful for working with Sāmoan families to address issues and strengthen relationships between Sāmoan parents and young people;
- Provide educational programmes by sharing the findings with parents and caregivers for the purpose of raising awareness of what young people considered as positive and negative relationships and how these influenced their wellbeing;
- Develop a framework that could be useful to examine and measure the wellbeing of youth in other ethnic groups;

- To develop appropriate models and tools for Sāmoan research surveys and other research based on Sāmoan definitions and worldviews about wellbeing and family.

The most significant contribution of this study is the opportunity to provide resources and tools grounded in Sāmoan culture and experience that are culturally appropriate to be used in the development of instruments for monitoring and enhancing the wellbeing of Sāmoan youth and their families.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of Participants and Qualifications

The following pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of key informants.

Names	Gender	Age	Professionals
Gary	Male	43	Sāmoan Church Pastor
Douglas	Male	29	Youth Mentor Worker
Jacob	Male	49	Sāmoan Counsellor
George	Male	38	Educator
Alex	Male	47	Researcher and a student
Sally	Female	57	Educator
Megan	Female	60	Retired Counsellor
Sabina	Female	32	School Liaison Officer
Amanda	Female	40	Social Worker
Natalie	Female	28	Psychology Student

Appendix B: Confidentiality Agreement

*Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and
Implications for the well-being of Sāmoan Youth.*

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I (Full Name - printed)

agree to keep confidential all information concerning the project

I will not retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

Appendix C: Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement

*Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and
Implications for the well-being of Sāmoan Youth.*

TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I (Full Name - printed)

agree to transcribe the tapes provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: **Date:**

Appendix D: Letter to Board of Trustees

(Date)

To: The School Principal

Cc: Board of Trustees

(School Name)

(School Postal Address)

Dear Sir or Madam

My name is Fuafiva Fa'alau. I am a full time PhD student in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Massey University in Albany. My research, funded by the Health Research Council, involves a study of Sāmoans between the ages of 13-18 years, attending secondary school in Auckland. To ensure that the views and experiences of the young people in the study are representative of young people, schools from across decile groupings were randomly selected, and your school was chosen as one of these.

Local and international studies have demonstrated that familial relationships and family organisation are fundamental in the development and well-being of youth. These studies found that relationships and connections affect the well being of young people in a range of ways. The aim of this project is to examine whether the factors identified in these studies affect Sāmoan youth development and well-being in the same ways. I am interested in the experiences of Sāmoan young people, their understanding and interpretation of *fa'aSamoa* values, the ways these have shaped their early relationships with their families, and ways of connecting with their families and within their general social environment.

A small number of participants will be **invited** from schools to take part in interviews and focus group discussion. After informed consent is obtained from students and in some cases their parents, interviews and focus groups discussion will be conducted at times and place convenient to participants. The findings from conversations with these young Sāmoan people will help me identify factors which could be incorporated in health promotion initiatives and educational policies and programmes for Sāmoan young people. A summary of the report will be made available for all schools participated in this study.

I would be grateful for your agreement for your school to take part in my project. Your school will not be named or identified on any documents in relation to this study. I am available to provide more information or answer any queries regarding my study. Please do not hesitate to contact me on 09 414 0800 ext 9056 or 027 4303 261. Alternatively my email address is: f.faalau@xtra.co.nz

Yours sincerely

Approved by:

F.Faalau
PhD Candidate

Date:

Appendix E: Information Sheet for Interviews 13-15 years old

Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and Implications for the well-being of Sāmoan Youth.

INFORMATION SHEET

(Individual Interviews) 13-15 years old

My name is Fuafiva Fa'alau. I am a full time student doing a PhD degree at Massey University in Albany. For my PhD, I am doing a study which focuses on Sāmoan young people's health and wellbeing.

I would like to invite you to help me with this study by allowing me to interview you at your school during the lunch break. This will take around one hour. Your participation is important to the study. You will need the consent of your parents/caregivers to take part in this study. Information Sheets and Consent Forms are available in the English and Sāmoan languages for your parents/caregivers. I am happy to talk with your parents/caregivers should they require further information.

My study focuses on young people attending Secondary Schools. I am interested in learning about your experience and participation in different activities you attended two weeks before the interview. These can be activities in your family, school, sport or church activities. I will ask you to share with me the kind of activities you attended, what you did and who you went with.

There will be no harm to you if you take part in this study however if you feel that there could be, please feel free to talk to me or my supervisors.

I would like to tape record our interviews. The tape can be turned off at any time during the interview. All the information you provide will be confidential and your name will not be used unless you specifically request it and your parents/caregivers consent to this. You may have a copy of your transcript if you wish. You may withdraw from the study at any time within *two weeks* of your interview being completed. All of the tapes, transcripts and forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years then they will be disposed of.

The information you and other students share will be used to write my PhD thesis. It will also be used to help develop education programmes and inform policies that will improve health and education services for Sāmoan young people and their families. At the end of this study, I will present the findings to everyone who took part in this research. A summary report from this study will be available at the completion of the study.

If you have any questions in relation to your participation in this study, please feel free to talk with your parents. I am available to talk with you and your parents at any time. My contact number is 09 414 0800 ext 9056 and email: f.faalau@xtra.co.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application __/__(insert application number). If you have any other concerns about this study, your parents can contact Professor Kerry Chamberlain, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 **x41226**, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Faafetai lava
Fuafiva Fa'alau
PhD Student
Massey University

Appendix F: Information Sheet for Focus Group 13-15 years old

Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and Implications for the well-being of Sāmoan Youth.

INFORMATION SHEET

(Focus Group Discussion) 13-15 years old

My name is Fuafiva Fa'alau. I am a full time student doing a PhD degree at Massey University in Albany. For my PhD, I am doing a study which focuses on Sāmoan young people, in relation to their health and wellbeing.

I would like to invite you to help me with this study by taking part in a focus group discussion with other young people. This will take around two hours and will be held after school. Your participation is important to the study. You will need the consent of your parents/caregivers to take part in this study. Information Sheets and Consent Forms are available in the English and Sāmoan languages for your parents/caregivers. I am happy to talk with your parents/caregivers should they require further information.

My study focuses on young people attending Secondary Schools. Some of the students from your school will take part and I will be interviewing him/her separately. You have been selected to take part in a focus group discussion. There will be five to six other students in this focus group including yourself. At the focus group we will talk about some of the main points that have been discussed from the interviews. We will also discuss your experience and participation in different cultural and social activities that took place two weeks before the focus group discussion.

There will be no harm to you if you take part in this study however if you feel that there could be, please feel free to talk to me.

I would like to tape record this focus group discussion. The tape can be turned off at any time during the interview. All the information you provide will be confidential and your name will not be used unless you specifically request it and your parents/caregivers consent to this. You may withdraw from the study at any time within *two weeks* of your interview being completed. All of the tapes, transcripts and forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years then they will be disposed of.

The information you and other students share will be used to write my PhD thesis. It will also be used to help develop education programmes and inform policies that will improve health and education services for Sāmoan young people and their families. At the end of this study, I will present the findings to everyone who took part in this research. A summary report from this study will be available at the completion of the study.

If you have any questions in relation to your participation in this study, please feel free to discuss this with your parents/caregivers. I am also available to talk with you and your parents. My contact number is 09 414 0800 ext 9056 and email: f.faalau@xtra.co.nz. You parents can contact one of my supervisors if they wish: Professor Cluny Macpherson 09 414 0800 ext 9057; c.macpherson@massey.ac.nz and Dr Tim McCreanor, 09 366 6136; t.n.mcCreanor@massey.ac.nz.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application __/__(insert application number). If you have any other concerns about this study, your parents can contact Professor Kerry Chamberlain, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 **x41226**, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Faafetai lava
Fuafiva Fa'alau
PhD Student
Massey University

Appendix G: Information Sheet for Interviews 16-19 years old

Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and Implications for the well-being of Sāmoan Youth.

INFORMATION SHEET

(Individual Interviews) 16-18 years old

My name is Fuafiva Fa'alau. I am a full time student doing a PhD degree at Massey University in Albany. For my PhD, I am doing a study which focuses on Sāmoan young people's health and wellbeing.

I would like to invite you to help me with this study by allowing me to interview you at your school during the lunchbreak. This will take around one hour. Your participation is important to the study. Participants aged between 16-18 years like yourself can give consent to take part in this study. I have prepared an Information Sheet for parents/caregivers and these are available for you to take home. I am happy to talk with your parents/caregivers should they require further information.

My study focuses on young people attending Secondary Schools. I am interested in learning about your experience *and participation in different activities you attended two weeks before the interview*. These can be activities in your family, school, sport or church activities. I will ask you to share with me the kind of activities you attended, *what you did and who you went with*.

There will be no harm to you if you take part in this study however if you feel that there could be, please feel free to talk to me or contact my supervisors.

I would like to tape record our interviews. The tape can be turned off at any time during the interview. All the information you provide will be confidential and your name will not be used unless you specifically request it. You may have a copy of your transcript if you wish. You may withdraw from the study at any time within *two weeks* of your interview being completed. All of the tapes, transcripts and forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years then they will be disposed of.

The information you and other students share will be used to write my PhD report. It will also be used to help develop education programmes and inform policies that will improve health and education services for Sāmoan young people and their families. At the end of this study, I will present the findings to everyone who took part in this research including your school. A summary report from this study will be available at the completion of the study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or in relation to your participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 09 414 0800 ext 9056 or email:

f.faalau@xtra.co.nz. Alternatively you can contact my supervisors: Professor Cluny Macpherson 09 414 0800 ext 9057; c.macpherson@massey.ac.nz and Dr Tim McCreanor, 09 366 6136; t.n.mcCreanor@massey.ac.nz. If you prefer to talk to my cultural advisors please feel free to ask me for their contact details at any time.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application ___/___ (insert application number). If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Kerry Chamberlain, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 **x41226**, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Faafetai lava
Fuafiva Fa'alau
PhD Student
Massey University

Appendix H: Information Sheet for Focus Groups 16-18 years old

Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and Implications for the well-being of Sāmoan Youth.

INFORMATION SHEET

(Focus Group Discussion) 16-18 years old

My name is Fuafiva Fa'alau. I am a full time student doing a PhD degree at Massey University in Albany. For my PhD, I am doing a study which focuses on Sāmoan young people's health and wellbeing.

I would like to invite you to help me with this study by taking part in a focus group discussion with other young people. This will take around two hours and will be held after school. Your participation is important to the study. Participants aged between 16-18 years like yourself can give consent to take part in this study. I have prepared an Information Sheet for parents/caregivers and these are available for you to take home. I am happy to talk with your parents/caregivers should they require further information.

My study focuses on young people attending Secondary Schools. Some of the students from your school will take part and I will be interviewing him/her separately. You have been selected to take part in a focus group discussion. There will be five to six other students in this focus group including yourself. At the focus group we will discuss some of the main themes which emerged from the interviews. We will also discuss your experience and participation in different cultural and social activities that took place two weeks before the focus group discussion.

There will be no harm to you if you take part in this study however if you feel that there could be, please feel free to talk to me.

I would like to tape record this focus group discussion. The tape can be turned off at any time during the discussion. All the information you provide will be confidential and your name will not be used unless you specifically request it. You may withdraw from the study at any time within *two weeks* of your interview being completed. All of the tapes, transcripts and forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years then they will be destroyed.

The information you and other students share will be used to write my PhD thesis. It will also be used to help develop education programmes and inform policies that will improve health and education services for Sāmoan young people and their families. At the end of this study, I will present the findings to everyone who took part in this research. A summary report from this study will be available at the completion of the study.

If you have any questions in relation to your participation in this study, please feel free to contact me. My contact number is 09 414 0800 ext 9056 and email: f.faalau@xtra.co.nz. You can contact one of my supervisors if you wish: Professor Cluny Macpherson 09 414 0800 ext 9057; c.macpherson@massey.ac.nz and Dr Tim McCreanor, 09 366 6136; t.n.mcCreanor@massey.ac.nz.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application __/__(insert application number). If you have any other concerns about this study, your parents can contact Professor Kerry Chamberlain, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 **x41226**, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Faafetai lava
Fuafiva Fa'alau
PhD Student
Massey University

Appendix I: Information Sheet for Parents/Caregivers

Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and Implications for the well-being of Sāmoan Youth.

INFORMATION SHEET

(Parents/Caregivers)

My name is Fuafiva Fa'alau. I was born and raised in the village of Vailele in Samoa. I am a full time student doing a PhD degree at Massey University in Albany. For my PhD, I am doing a study which focuses on Sāmoan young people in relation to their health and wellbeing. I am interested in learning about the experience of our Sāmoan young people, their everyday activities and especially their knowledge and understanding of the fa'aSamoa culture.

I would like to invite your son/daughter to help me with this study by allowing me to interview him/her individually or take part in a focus group discussion. The interviews will take around one hour and two hours for the focus group discussion. It is anticipated that the interview will take place during their lunch break and the focus group discussion will be held after school. Participants aged between 13-18 years will be recruited from the same school to take part in the interviews and/or focus groups. The interviews and focus groups will focus on young people's experience especially their participation in different cultural and social activities and understanding of their Sāmoan culture.

All the interviews and focus groups discussion will take place around the school campus. I will let you know the date and time that your son and daughter will be interviewed. I will provide transport for your son/daughter at the completion of the focus groups after school.

Your son/daughter will be given a small *meaalofa* for his/her participation and contribution.

The information provided by your son/daughter will be used to write my PhD thesis. It will also be used to develop education programmes, informing policies and improving services for Sāmoan young people and their families. At the end of this study, I will present the findings to everyone who took part in this research. If you wish, you may have a summary of the report at the completion of the study.

I would like to tape record the interviews and focus group discussion. The tape can be turned off at any time during the interview. All the information provide will be confidential and the name of your son/daughter will not be used unless he/she specifically requests it and you consent to this. You may withdraw your son/daughter from the study at any time within *two weeks* of the interview/focus group being completed. All of the tapes, transcripts and forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years then they will be disposed of.

It is anticipated that there will be no harm or risk to your son/daughter as a result of participation however if you are concerned that there is possible harm or risk please feel free to contact me or my supervisors.

If you have any questions regarding this study or in relation to your son/daughter's participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 09 414 0800 ext 9056 or email: f.faalau@xtra.co.nz. Alternatively you can contact my supervisors: Professor Cluny Macpherson 09 414 0800 ext 9057; c.macpherson@massey.ac.nz and Dr Tim McCreanor, 09 366 6136; t.n.mcCreanor@massey.ac.nz. If you prefer to talk to my cultural advisors please feel free to ask me for their contact details at any time.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application ___/___ (insert application number). If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Kerry Chamberlain, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 **x41226** email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Faafetai lava
Fuafiva Fa'alau
PhD Student
Massey University

Appendix J: Information Sheet for Key Informants

Organisation and Dynamics of Family Relations and Implications for the well-being of Sāmoan Youth.

INFORMATION SHEET

(Key Informants)

My name is Fuafiva Fa'alau. I am a full time student doing a PhD degree at Massey University in Albany. ***My PhD project is funded by the Health Research Council (HRC).*** For my PhD, I am doing a study which focuses on Sāmoan young people and wellbeing. I am interested in learning about the experience of Sāmoan young people especially their knowledge and understanding of their culture. The purpose of the study is to understand the cultural factors and its impact on relationships in families. I believe the views of young people are important to determine what these factors are and would like to focus the study on both Sāmoan young men and Sāmoan young women currently attending secondary schools.

I would like to invite you to help me with this study by allowing me to interview you at a time and place that suits you. This will take around one hour. You have been selected from a pool of Sāmoan people currently working with Sāmoan youth. Participants represent different organizations and agencies. Interviews with key informants will help to ensure that this study is of some practical relevance to those who actually work with Sāmoan young people at the ground level.

It is not anticipated there will be any harm or risks to you as a result of participation however if you envisage there is harm or risk from participating please feel free to talk to me or contact my supervisors.

I would like to tape record our interviews. The tape can be turned off at any time during the interview. All the information you provide will be confidential and your name will not be used unless you specifically request it. You may have a copy of your transcript if you wish. You may withdraw from the study at any time within ***two weeks*** of your interview being completed. All of the tapes, transcripts and forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years then they will be disposed of.

I will be using the results of this study to help with developing education programmes, informing policies and improving services for the Sāmoan young people and their families. At the end of this study, I will present the findings to everyone who took part in this research. If you wish, you may have a summary of the report at the completion of this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or in relation to your participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 09 414 0800 ext 9056 or email: f.faalau@xtra.co.nz. Alternatively you can contact my supervisors: Professor Cluny Macpherson 09 414 0800 ext 9057; c.macpherson@massey.ac.nz and Dr Tim

McCreanor, 09 366 6136; t.n.mcCreanor@massey.ac.nz. If you prefer to talk to my cultural advisors please feel free to ask me for their contact details at any time.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application ___/___ (insert application number). If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Kerry Chamberlain, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 **x41226**, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Faafetai lava
Fuafiva Fa'alau
PhD Student
Massey University

Appendix K: Interview Questions

INDIVIDUAL

Can you tell me a little bit about your family, where you live and who you live with?

How long have you been living there?.

Who takes care of you?

Where was your father/mother born?

Do you know the name of your father's village in Samoa?

Do you know the name of your mother's village in Samoa?

Have you visited any of these villages? (When was the last time you visited Samoa)

Will you go back and visit? Why or why not?

Has this week being a good/bad week for you? Why?

What is a good week for you?

What is a bad week for you?

INDIVIDUAL & SOLITARY (Describe and explain why?)

Do you get to spend times on your own?

How much time did you spend on your own in the last week?

What did you do?

Do you have your own room?

When you spend time in your room, what do you usually do?

How do your family feel about spending time on your own?

What things did you do on your own last week that you enjoy?

What things did you do on your own last week that you did not enjoy?

Would you spend more time on your own if you could and why?

INDIVIDUAL & FRIENDS: (Describe and explain why?)

Do you have many friends?

How many close friends do you have?

What does close friends mean for you?

How close are you to them?

Do you hang out with your close friends a lot?

How much time did you spend with your close friends last week?

What did you do?

What about other friends that you are not close to, do you hang out with them?

Why or why not?

Do your close friends have the same experience you have about their families, why?.

Do your close friends spend more time on their own?

Do you drive?

If yes, do your close friends expect you to do driving for them?

What about your family do they expect you to do a lot of driving for them?

What things you and your close friends did last week that you enjoy, why?

What things you and your close friends did last week that you didn't enjoy, why?

Would you spend more time with your close friends if you could, why?

Do your close friends have the same experience you have about their families, why?

Do your close friends spend more time on their own?

What about other friends that you are not close to, do you hang out with them?

Why or why not?

INDIVIDUAL & FAMILIAL (Describe and explain why?)

What is family to you – can you give me a definition of family?

How would you describe your family now?

What number child are you in your family?

Being the (no?) child, what sort of things your family expect of you?

How do you help out around home?

What other chores you do at home?

Do you get to be told to do that?

How much time do you spend most days doing chores?

How do you feel when you get told to do that?

Do you talk to your brothers and sisters? (and other family members)

What sort of things do you talk about?

How close are you to your brothers and sisters?

Who do you spend more time with?

Why do you spend more time with him/her?

Would you spend more time with him/her if you could and why?

What is the main language spoken at home?

How comfortable are you with the language spoken at home?

How are decisions made at home?

Are you part of the decision making at home?

What sort of things your family ask you for your input?

Do you have access to the internet? (ipods, xbox, mobile)

Are you encouraged to use the internet? Why or why not?

Do you go to the library?

Are you encouraged to go to the library after school or attend after school programmes? Why or why not?

Do you have a part time job?

What do you do with your salary?

Do you do homework at home?
How much time do you usually spend on homework at home?
Are you encouraged to do homework at home?
Do you have your own space at home for doing homework?

Does your family want to know who you are with and where you are?
Would your family get upset if you get into any trouble?

How much do you and your family have fun together?
What do you do for fun?
How many times a week you and your family do something together for fun?

Is your father or mother a matai?
What is your understanding of your father's role as a matai?
Would you like to become a matai when you older?. Why or why not?

What are the most enjoyable things about your family?
What are the most difficult things about your family?

How would you like your family to be?

Extended Family:

Do you have extended family here?
Where do they live?
How often do you get to see your extended family?

Would you live with any of your extended family if you needed to move out from home?
Who would you live with?. Why?.

When was the last time you attended a family reunion?
When was the last time you attended a family funeral?
When was the last time you attended a family wedding or birthday?
What did you do to help?
Did you have to take time of school or work to help?
How much of what was going on did you understand?

What do you enjoy about extended family activities and why?.
What don't you enjoy about extended family activities and why?.

Village Association:

Is your family participated in a village association group?
What sort of activities have they organised?
How often these were done in the last year?
What activities have you participated in?
What do you most enjoy about participating in village association activities and why?
What don't you enjoy about participating in village association activities and why?

INDIVIDUAL & EXTRAFAMILIAL: (Describe and explain?)

Structured: Religious

Do you go to church? Which church do you go to?
Do you go to church with your family as a family?
Do you go to church service every Sunday?

Are you a member of any groups in the church?
What group/groups are you part of?
What sort of activities have they organised in this group?
How often these were done in the last year?
What activities have you participated in?

How much time do you spend at a Sunday service?
How much time do you spend at church doing other activities during the week?

What is the main language used at church?
How comfortable are you with the language used at church?
How do you feel about the language used at church?

Do you give donation to church?
How much money each week would you usually give to church?
How do you feel about donating money to church?

What do you most enjoy about going to church? Why?
What don't you enjoy about going to church? Why?

School:

How long have you been attending this school?
How do you feel about school?
Do you feel safe at school?

How well do you do at school?
How important is it to your family that you do well at school?

Do you get along with your teachers?
Have any of your teachers got to know you really well?
Which teachers that you feel closest to and why?
If you had a serious problem would you feel okay to talk to this teacher?

Are you involved in any social or cultural groups at school?
What sort of activities do you participate in?
How do you feel being part of this group?

What do you plan to do when you leave secondary school?
Have you discussed these plans with anyone in your family? Why or why not?
Can you see any difficulties with your plan?

What do you most enjoy about school?
What don't you enjoy about school?

Sport

Do you play any sports & what sports do you play?

Where do you play sports?
Why did you join that team?

How much time did you spend playing sports last week?
Was it for a competition or just a social game?
How much time did you spend on practice last week?
What do you do when you are not playing?

Do you feel close to people you play with?

What do you most enjoy about playing sports?
What don't you enjoy about playing sports?

Drama-Musical things

Do you play any instrument? Which do you play?
How did you choose that instrument or activity?
Where do you play?

How much time did you spend playing last week?
Was it formal performance or just a social activity?
How much time did you spend on practice last week?
Are you part of a group?

Do you feel close to people you play with?

What do you most enjoy about playing music?
What don't you enjoy about playing music?

Neighbourhood:

How do you feel about your neighbourhood?
Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood?

What do you usually do for fun around your neighbourhood?
What sort of activities they organised in your neighbourhood?
Do you participate in any of the activities?

What do you most enjoy about your neighbourhood?
What don't you enjoy about your neighbourhood?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS (Describe & explain why?)

Do you think your family is the same as other families? If it's different – why is it different? How do you feel about it?

If you were to organise a family activity like a birthday party for your grandmother or cousin, how would you do it? Would you do this differently? Why would you do it this way? (Use range of birthdays).

When you have children of your own would you like them to learn and practice *fa'a-Samoa*? Why and why not?

When you have children of your own would you like them to learn and speak Samoan? Why and why not?

If your family decided to buy a car, will they talk to you about it?

There are only 10 seats available in a lifeboat and you have to choose 10 people to go on the life boat, which ones would you choose and why would you choose them?

Say that you win lotto next week, what would be the first thing you would think of doing with the money and who would you be thinking of first that you need to do something nice for?

Who else would you want to do things for with your winnings?

Can you think of the last problem you had – who did you go and talk to?
Did it help to talk to those people?