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**GROUNDING *MALAGA* IN ‘*AIGA* SAMOA: *ALOFA* AS  
MANIFESTED IN POPULATION MOVEMENT**

by  
Tolu Muliaina

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies

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School of Government, Development and International Affairs  
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## DECLARATION

### Statement by Author

I, Tolu Muliaina, declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published, or substantially overlapping with material submitted for the award of any other degree at any institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

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### Statement by Supervisors

The research in this thesis was performed under our supervision and to our knowledge is the sole work of Mr. Tolu Muliaina.

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Designation: Co-supervisor

## DEDICATION

Damian Fa'agalulu Mulaiaina  
November 16 2004 to 3 April 2010

you came  
that i know  
how thin  
or thick  
the line is  
between here  
and there

you asked  
why go to school if  
it is to abandon home  
killing our little games

i need to  
for you  
for our '*aiga*  
i said

now at home  
with a thesis i gain  
but only to endure the pain  
of searching for you  
remains

this is for you  
my son  
for our '*aiga*  
with *alofa*

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines manners of thinking on population movement in Development Studies with reference to that between Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Dominant perspectives on migration point to a conventional thinking and treatment of people on the move as mere classifiable economic units. A result is a marked absence, and in some cases the misinterpretation of a cultural understanding of people whose movements transcend state boundaries. I argue that a Samoan cultural thinking provides another perspective to understanding the fluid, flexible and dynamic nature of movement for people of reciprocity and care-based societies of Oceania.

How do Samoans perceive their movement? What are the implications of their movement for their *‘aiga* (extended family) and culture? These questions inform this study. Beyond the simplicity of the questions is a broader search for meanings, explanations and understandings that are often sidelined, forgotten and considered insignificant in migration research and scholarship. Drawing on the humanist approach, this study examines how cultural meanings and understandings of movement among the Samoans constitute an important part of their lived experiences. Because lived experiences are flexible and multipart, a mix-method approach was used that combined field surveys, participant observations and in-depth conversations. Adopting a two-way approach to trace the movement of *‘aiga* members in Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand offer insights into the context-specificity of meanings and understandings of movement that are rooted in a culturally defined space.

*‘Aiga* occupies the center position in this study. It is a point of reference to broaden understanding of movement. Within this frame, *‘aiga* is governed by values of *va* (social and metaphorical space between people) that foster people-based relationships. Relationships are expressed and maintained by *fa’alavelave* (cultural events of *‘aiga*). As a meeting point, *‘aiga* is where a different understanding of the reasons – social cultural, economic and spatial – and meanings for Samoan population movement can be born and nurtured. This study argues for a purposeful turn in thinking that acknowledges the persistent influence of people’s interpretation



of geographic mobility. This is a pathway to scholarship that is more inclusive of indigenous ways of interpreting experiences of population movement as a sociocultural process.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AB</b>	Account Beneficiaries
<b>ADB</b>	Asia Development Bank
<b>ANZ</b>	Australia and New Zealand Bank
<b>ATC</b>	Auckland Teachers College
<b>AUA</b>	Apia Urban Area
<b>AusAID</b>	Australian Agency for International Development
<b>BWS</b>	Bank of Western Samoa
<b>CB</b>	Cash Beneficiaries
<b>CBS</b>	Central Bank of Samoa
<b>CCS</b>	Catholic Church of Samoa
<b>CCCS</b>	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FBE</b>	Faculty of Business and Economics
<b>FDC</b>	Foundation for Development Corporation
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FGDF</b>	Focus Group Discussion Female
<b>FGDM</b>	Focus Group Discussion Male
<b>GDN</b>	Global Development Network
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GPS</b>	Geo-positioning System
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>HEC</b>	Human Ethics Committee
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INZ</b>	Immigration New Zealand
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>KB</b>	Kava Bowl
<b>LMS</b>	London Missionary Society
<b>MBBS</b>	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
<b>MCS</b>	Methodist Church of Samoa

<b>MH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MIRAB</b>	Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy
<b>MIT</b>	Manukau Institute of Technology
<b>MWCSD</b>	Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development
<b>NCD</b>	Non-communicable Diseases
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>NWU</b>	North West Upolu
<b>NZAID</b>	New Zealand Agency for International Development
<b>NZRSE</b>	New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer Scheme
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OUM</b>	Oceania University of Medicine
<b>PI</b>	Pacific Islanders
<b>PSISP</b>	Public Service Institutional Strengthening Program
<b>RC</b>	Research Committee
<b>ROU</b>	Rest of Upolu
<b>SBS</b>	Samoa Bureau of Statistics
<b>SDA</b>	Seventh Day Adventist
<b>SDS</b>	Strategy for the Development of Samoa
<b>SPC</b>	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
<b>SQ</b>	Screening Questionnaire
<b>SSFGS</b>	Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme
<b>SWP</b>	(Australian) Seasonal Worker Program
<b>ToF</b>	Treaty of Friendship
<b>TTTA</b>	Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USP</b>	University of the South Pacific
<b>VHS</b>	Video Home System
<b>WMC</b>	Wesley Methodist Church
<b>WMCNZ</b>	Wesley Methodist Church in New Zealand
<b>WMCSS</b>	Wesley Methodist Church Sinoti Samoa
<b>WB</b>	World Bank

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## **Chapter One:**

# **RE-POSITIONING POPULATION MOVEMENT IN OCEANIA**

Pacific leaders must have a sense of pride in themselves and their cultural histories in order to be able to survive the turbulences of their modern environment. This means that you must be able to find yourselves in your cultural histories and indigenous references before tackling the references of others (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi 2010:3).

This study focuses on the cultural understanding of geographic mobility of Samoans between Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand (see, Maps 1.1 and 1.2). The overall aim is to investigate the meanings of movement, and make a case for understanding population mobility from the sociocultural view of the Samoans themselves.

Dominant scholarly approaches to population movement, such as the neoclassical economics, structural and dependency twists and MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy), are historically and philosophically anchored in the idea of the migrant as a rational individual and largely understands population mobility in capitalist terms. Tied to these approaches is the unquestioned use of terms such as: migration and remittances in scholarly writing and discourses. As words of choice, they not only portray population movement (and remittances) in a narrow frame of thinking, but are "... refracted through an economistic interpretation that underlies the modernization approach to development" (Liki 2007:1).

Map 1. 1: Samoa in Oceania



(<http://www.lib.utexas.edu.maps/samoa>)

Map 1. 2: New Zealand in Oceania



( [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/new\\_zealand](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/new_zealand))

The above approaches and their packaging may have been offering analyses that are useful for specific economics purposes. However, they do not capture the complete meaning of population movement and its wider implications as understood by people in reciprocity and care-based society<sup>1</sup> such as Samoa and her neighbours in Oceania. An alternative approach based on *Fa'aSamoa* provides another view that complements what is predominantly written about population movement thus far. In its simplest meaning, *fa'aSamoa* is Samoa's lifeways; the Samoan culture generally. At the conceptual level, it is the Samoan worldview; a point of reference from which Samoans understand their world and that of others. From that standpoint, *fa'aSamoa* guides and inspires Samoans and their behaviour. It is the premise in which relationships among Samoans (and with others) are established and fostered. 'Aiga (extended family) situates at the core of *fa'aSamoa*. It is where customs and traditions play out as manifested through *alofa* (love), *tautua* (service), *fetufa'ai* (reciprocity) and participation.

Population movement therefore needs to be examined within the cultural context, values and meanings of people concerned. To sideline *fa'aSamoa* perpetuates the dominance of Euro-American perspectives in the study of population movement that does not capture the totality of the process as viewed by the movers. It comes at the expense of a culturally-rich, and meaningful understanding of movement, that if it is not recognised, current and future generations would continue to be deprived of it.

My purpose in this study is to depart from this "... scholarly impasse" (Chapman (1991:263). As a Samoan I feel obliged to explore with a more critical mind the path less travelled by migration scholars; that of a cultural meaning of Samoan mobility. Using the contextualised experiences of Samoans in this study, my situated knowledge (Haraway 1988; Saltmarsh 2001) and lived experiences, I argue that a deliberate turn to a cultural way of thinking is needed to understand a broader meaning of population movement and its wider implications for Samoa. Considered a vibrant place and culture; distinct and different, Samoa is an island, a dynamic

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<sup>1</sup> The term reciprocity and care-based society was coined by Professor Mary McDonald; used by population and feminist geographer Asenati Liki (2007:67) to refer to "societies that are primarily culturally oriented regardless of their contemporary political and economic statuses".

world in which conventional explanations should be critically examined. To hear the voices of the Samoans which may have been silenced by the meta-narratives; to let the Samoans speak of their experiences; their understanding of movement and to express this understanding in their own terms. Adopting a cultural thinking and manners of knowing in migration analysis can help to re-position this approach alongside the prevailing perspectives as their legitimate equal. Such an approach could broaden existing perspectives as Tongan cultural anthropologist, Ka'ili (2012) argues that collaboration and interweaving of different perspectives is beneficial to the researcher and the researched. It also fits David Gegeo's (1998:290) stand on indigenous epistemology as a "cultural group's way of thinking and creating, reformulating, and theorizing about knowledge via traditional discourses and media of communication, anchoring the truth of the discourse in culture".

This study then is a purposeful search to analyse, deconstruct and re-construct Samoan population movement differently. I do not claim to be the first to use this approach. In fact, its beginning is associated with the work of Samoan writer Albert Wendt that culminated in the establishment of the Creative Writing Society at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in 1970 (Wendt 1976). However, the application and adoption of a cultural perspective in the scholarly work of the wider research community in Oceania, let alone USP is particularly slow. Huffer and Qalo (2004:87) describe this point when they say:

Pacific thought is like a dormant volcano: as long as it does not erupt, no one notices it. When it does boil to the surface, it comes, to the many who would rather dismiss it, as an unpleasant reminder of its persistent existence. And when it settles again, it is easily forgotten. But we (whether researchers, educators, policymakers, donors, or others) ignore it at our peril.

For my study, I feel compelled from the outset to align my approach to that of a growing group of scholars the world over to reaffirm the indigenous approaches to migration and development. In particular, I build on the work of Oceanian scholars in various disciplines: Albert Wendt (1976); the late Epele Hau'ofa (1985, 1993, 2008); Malama Meleisea (1980, 1987a, 1987b); Konai Helu Thaman (1988, 2006,

2008); Eric Waddell (1993, 2015); the late Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa (1993); Sia Figiel (1996); the late Ropate Qalo (1997, 1998); David Welchman Gegeo (1994, 1998, 2001) and with Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo (2001); Melani Anae (1998, 2010); Teweiariki Teaero (1999, 2003); Sina Va'ai (1999); Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 2012); Richard Wah (2000); Manulani Aluli Meyer (2001); the late Teresia Teaiwa (2001, 2004, 2006); Ilaitia Tuwere (2002); Ana Taufē'ulungaki (2002); Huffer and the late Qalo (2004); Unaisi Nabobo-Baba (2006); Frederick Rohorua (2007); Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi (2008) and Vicente Diaz (2011) on Pacific theorising and manners of thinking and being.

I draw from and pay homage to the liberating work of Murray Chapman (1978, 1991, 1995); Murray Chapman and R. Mansell Prothero (1984, 1985); the late Joel Bonnemaision (1981, 1985, 1991); Raymond Young (1998, 2015); Isebong Asang (2000); Joakim Peter (2000); Damon Salesa (2003); Lola Bautista (2015); Sa'iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor (2004, 2009a, 2009b, 2015) and Asenati Liki (2001, 2007, 2015) for inspirational insights and meaningful directions. All of them insist on “a different way of knowing” population movement from a Pacific Islander viewpoint.

## 1.1 Research questions

Declaring the need for an alternative frame to understand population movement and its wider implications for society is at the heart of this study. To pursue that, I raise a simple question: *How do Samoans conceive of their movement to, from and within Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand? What are the implications of their movement for themselves and society at large?*

While it appears simple, this question demanded my full intellectual attention when looking for answers. Tracking different but connected air-land-sea routes to reach Samoans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and trace their roots, routes and residence, and back again, to their *aiga* in Samoa. The goal was to sift out cultural explanations underpinning the participants' stories and experiences. As Samoans engage in pendulous movements, the study participants' routes and cultural roots crisscross in complex and dynamic ways. This reality is often taken for granted in migration and

development work. Its complexity is commonly reduced by scholars to models, freezing flexibility of movement to limited flows and counter flows. My intention therefore is not about knowing the movement of Samoans at the surface. Rather, to delve deeper into alternative meanings and values rooted in the context of *'aiga* and *fa'aSamoa*.

I discuss in the next section what I consider as a home grown, 'coconut' frame for my study. I demonstrate how it provides different and fresher insights that can complement current approaches in migration. Presenting a culturally-inclusive perspective of population movement allows for an alternative lens to emerge; one that is more appropriate for Samoa and has a wider appeal to other reciprocity and care-based societies in Oceania.

## **1.2 Framing the study: Fa'aSamoa**

In telling their own stories, third world intellectuals are "... compelled to present their culture as their point of departure" (Dossa 1992:562). This deliberate turn to culture as a critical point of analysis in social thought is central to post-modern development discourse and certainly a crucial one for my study. As a worldview, *fa'aSamoa* is fundamental to the lives of Samoan people. It is a device through which Samoans view their world; how they interact with their kinsfolk, *lotu* (church), *nu'u* (village), *atunu'u* (country) and the rest of the world.

The core unit of *fa'aSamoa* is *'aiga*. The words 'family' or 'household' in the English language are the closest in meaning but limited in scope as both terms refer to a single unit consisting of a married couple and their children (Marsack 1961:31). That definition of a family was promoted as the ideal model for Samoa by missionaries whose ideals were based on that of the middle classes in England (Meleisea 1987a:67). In contrast, *'aiga* in Samoa encompasses a wider circle of familial ties whose members are connected through their *gafa* (genealogy; lineage) *ivi* (bones), *tino* (flesh) and *toto* (blood) but also through *fa'aipoipoga* (marriage), *vae tama* or *fa'atea* (adoption), and *fa'auo/fa'aaiga* (friendship) (Marsack 1961:32; Peteru and Percival 2010:11). Without overstating the obvious, *'aiga* has, and is always plural, multi-layered and dynamic.



*Suli* (members) of '*aiga* do not necessarily live in one village. Nor do they stay in one house or use "common eating or cooking facilities" as defined in quantitatively-driven national censuses (Kaitani et al 2011:10). Rather, they may reside in the same or other villages in Samoa and in other countries, American Samoa, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, the United States of America (USA), Fiji (Tuimaleali'ifano 1990) and the world over (Sutter 1989).

The geographical dispersal of family members strengthens rather than weakens kinship relations as Long (2014:244) and other scholars argue in the literature of people crossing geographic boundaries. With the endless shrinking of the world through advanced communication technology and social media, family members stay in touch with each other more often now than ever before. Thus, like other groups of people who move around, Samoans are well informed of issues, events and happenings in their '*aiga* irrespective of contemporary places of residence.

Social relationships lie at the heart of '*aiga*. These relationships are strengthened and reinforced by *fa'alavelave* (social cultural events of '*aiga*) and *malaga* (population movement or mobility). '*Aiga* is the point of reference of, and for all Samoans. An individual carries '*aiga*; '*aiga* carries an individual (Liki 2015:130); the unity-that-is-all (Wendt 1999). Hence, a Samoan is a two-sided self. To understand population movement, '*aiga* is the unavoidable starting point. Repositioning '*aiga* in my study would enable us to hear silent voices and appreciate hidden perspectives that are necessary for a complete and meaningful understanding of movement from within. In re-affirming '*aiga* and *fa'aSamoa* as a starting point, compels me to navigate a rough sea of prevailing explanations of movement. Despite the different shades and packaging, their orientations are economically-inspired and grounded in Euro-American manners of thought. These explanations gloss over the social and cultural meanings of movement as understood in reciprocity and care-based societies.

The primary focus of my study is to understand the cultural meaning of movement and its wider implications on society from the perspectives of Samoans. Therefore, the humanist approach provides the best fit. The humanist approach recognises the diversity of human experiences and meaning in understanding peoples' relationship

with places (Buttimer 1976; Seamon and Lundberg 2015). My lived and field experiences also reflect an important gender dimension that cannot be forgotten in understanding movement in Samoa. I acknowledge this aspect in chapters four, five and six. This perspective is closely related not only to the social reality of women but it dispels misconception about them as passive participants and simply accompanying their husbands or male folks on the move. Taken together as a bundle, these approaches relate comfortably to the social reality and lifeworlds of Samoans and they provide the best fit for my purpose.

### **1.3 The movers and shakers: co-producers of the study**

The movers and shakers of knowledge; the co-producers of this study are the study participants (Samoans) in Aotearoa/New Zealand and their '*aiga* in Samoa. Their knowledge, cultural understanding of movement and lived experiences were entrusted to me during fieldwork in 2011-2012. This forms the bedrock of this study. I discuss this point in detail in chapter three.

#### *In Aotearoa/New Zealand*

The Samoans in this study are the firsts for their families in almost everything. They were the first lot – to attend their village primary school, to achieve the highest level of education, to get married, to possess a Samoan (then a New Zealand) passport, to travel in an airplane and to set foot in and establish another home outside of Samoa (Field notes Aotearoa/New Zealand 2011 and Samoa 2012).

As pioneers, they are the base of their '*aiga* in Aotearoa/New Zealand. They travel to Samoa and back for events connected to '*aiga*. And, when they do not go to Samoa, Samoa-based relatives visit them. They facilitate and host family members' coming and going. They mobilise and (re) distribute family material *alofa* at times of *fa'alavelave*. Besides their immediate '*aiga*, they are committed members of a larger '*aiga* unit, their *lotu* and *nu'u* at Papatoetoe. In the words of one study participant (WMC3), they are, "*vae ma lima* (hands and legs), doers of the work in the *Aoga Aso Sa* (Sunday school), *Aoga Faifeau* (Pastor's school), *aufaipese* (church choir), *Komiti a Tina* (Women's committee) and *Komiti a Failauga* (Lay preachers committee)" to name a few.

### *In Samoa*

I visited homes of the relatives in villages scattered throughout the islands of Upolu and Savaii. Like their *'aiga* in Aotearoa/New Zealand, stories of population movement were just as colourful and laced with twists and turns. More importantly, visiting the same families in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa provided the valuable contexts in which stories are premised and meshed. It is in this context in which meanings of movement is anchored and from which the experiences they shared with me are understood best. For my study connecting *'aiga* members in Aotearoa/New Zealand and in Samoa complement narratives shared and provides a complete understanding of movement in the context of *'aiga*. I discuss the matching of *'aiga* for my purposes in this study at the end of this introductory chapter and in detail in chapter three.

#### **1.4 Life, stories and meaning in 1800s Samoa**

Much of what I learned of, and about life in Samoa came from stories told verbally by and heard from my parents, grandparents and older relatives who heard it from their own sources. I also learned by participation and living life in the island that involved going with my old folks to several places for *fa'alavelave*. The oral transmission of knowledge and understanding has been an important feature of the Samoan society. This defines a different way of knowing. As Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) argue, this is how knowledge is theorised and constructed, encoded, and passed on to the next generation in many societies in Oceania.

The arrival of the early Europeans, missionaries and colonial administrators brought to Samoa significant transformations. Foremost, the coconut plantation economy, a new religion, a western education system and a Western-based knowledge system that contrasted to the local, orally-based and practical ways of knowing. The early Europeans wrote about Samoa's social, cultural, economic and political life in the 1800s. The writings therefore reflect their interpretations of life in the islands (see, Turner 1884; Stair 1897). Masterman (1934:43) describes the attitude of the missionaries towards the Samoans in the following way.

His teaching was such to inspire and promote industry and application to crafts and husbandry, a lesson very distasteful to the indolent islanders. The ideal of labour, and of private property, was strongly put to the communistic native. To eradicate his communism, partially the cause of his idleness was a task ... [that] faces missionaries down to the present day. Undoubtedly this division of property is partly at the root of the laziness of these people.

The coconut plantation enterprise is another legacy and it is associated with the work of the German colonial administration. Besides the deliberate re-ordering of the coastline of villages of Mulifanua, Faleolo, Vaitele on the western side of Upolu island and Vailele on the eastern end, with coconut trees planted in straight lines, the plantation enterprise also transformed the social, cultural, economic and political landscapes of Samoa. To achieve its commercial interests, Germans recruited additional labourers from China and the Solomon Islands (Meleisea 1980). A result is a creation of a plural society through the unions of labourers and local women.

In addition, valuable practices and ceremonies that are integral to understanding social life in Samoa and the culture of the people were defied by the Europeans. Above all, feasting, *malaga*, gift exchanges and *fa'alavelave* were considered less favourably. *Malaga* for example is a necessity for survival, a meaningful undertaking that connect members of 'aiga. *Malaga* maintains and provides meaning to the notion of *Samoa uma* (all Samoa) that prevailed before the arrival of the Europeans (Salesa 2003). In contrast, the German and New Zealand governments viewed *malaga* unsympathetically. They perceived *malaga* and its associated activities as stumbling block to Samoa's progress towards sustained productivity and development. It was seen by missionaries and settlers as an avoidable waste of resources (Meleisea 1987b).

Samoaan historian Damon Salesa (2003:181) described this Eurocentric view.

Missionaries and colonial administrators were not impressed with *malaga* that would often leave a village of hosts impoverished or a village of travelers deserted. In their eyes *malaga* encouraged

laziness, communism, heathenism (through customary dances and songs) and, perhaps worst of all, a wantonness with property. An enemy of ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’, *malaga* meant that the visitors descended upon their hosts like a ‘swarm of locusts’ for reasons as varied as ‘love of change’ to local food shortages.

## 1.5 The post-independence Samoa

Although the physical occupation of Samoa by the colonial administrations ended in 1914 (for Germany) and 1962 (for New Zealand), *fa’aSamoa* and cultural practices like *malaga* continue to attract attention of western scholars. Despite this publicity, as long as there were Samoans, *malaga*, its practices and understanding of it has persisted over time. This indicates its resilience and strength in understanding Samoan’s social life and worldview. As an important aspect of culture, *malaga* has survived colonial administrative control as well as contemporary migration policies. Such controls however seem to have propelled family movements even in today’s world. Geographic mobility is indeed more than a practice; it is about people’s hearts and soul.

Samoans continue to engage in *malaga* as they always did. At independence in 1962, the Treaty of Friendship (ToF) was signed between Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand to honour the relationship between the two countries. The ToF allows for Samoans to work and reside there permanently each year. The initial quota of 1,500 was adjusted to 1,100 in 1970s and remains so today. Many Samoans took up permanent residence in Aotearoa/New Zealand over the years. Samoans visit their ‘*aiga* in two places for *fa’alavelave*, holiday, business, sports, medical check-ups and pastoral work to name a few. The number of Samoans in that country is increasing from 102,300 (1996); 115,000 (2001); 129,600 (2006) to 144,138 (2013) (Statistics New Zealand). Today, Samoans make up the largest Pacific ethnic group in Aotearoa/New Zealand and they have participated in many facets of life – education, politics and sports – in that country (Samoan New Zealanders).

Samoans maintain ties with their ‘*aiga* irrespective of where they reside. This continuity is revealed in the countless *malaga*, to and back, and the expressions of

people's *alofa* for and their *tautua* to their 'aiga by means of sharing and exchanges of their material wealth. The multi-directional flows of material wealth follow people's movements which, in turn, acknowledge and reinforce grounding in 'aiga, *nu'u* (village) and *lotu* (church). Some scholars are yet to confront this social reality that Samoans will not sever ties to their 'aiga and Samoa despite predictions (Connell 2007).

## **1.6 The current study: roots, routes and locales intertwined**

Part of the qualitative approach taken by this study is acknowledging my personal and contextual space in it. My past experiences, thoughts and belief systems do not exist in a vacuum. They intertwine and collectively, these ground truths inform, inspire and motivate this study. As Giangreco and Taylor (2003:135) have argued a researcher's worldviews shape what to study and how to go about doing research.

At the heart of this study lie three influential voices that sustain my interests in population movement and swayed my approach in this study. First, my childhood upbringing in Samoa is the platform I witnessed and experienced *fa'aSamoa* and the practice of population movement. Socialised in a nuclear family of sixteen siblings and extended families and affiliations to the church and villages I observe therein the importance of concepts such as *va fealoa'i* (social space that relate), *tautua* (service), *fetufa'ai* (reciprocity) and expressions of values such as *alofa* (love) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect) in the practice of *fa'aSamoa*. I also saw the integral place of *malaga* in life where members of my 'aiga visiting our family; some stayed on for awhile and much longer. Our family also hosted an elder brother, a church minister in the Methodist Church and members of his congregation, to attend the Methodist church Conference in the month of July of some years. We also visited our grandparents, uncles and aunties for *maliu* (funeral), *fa'aipoipoga* (wedding) and to attend a *talanoaga* (talk) on 'aiga-related *fa'alavelave* and many other reasons as discussed in later chapters. Our family took food, money, mats and other material items to and received some things or nothing from 'aiga gatherings. Discussions, disagreements and negotiations constitute 'aiga activities, practices and relationships.

This setting fashions my understanding of movement and the world of *fa'aSamoa*. Yet, years of formal education show that my understanding of them as lived and practised at home is, at best, kept at bay. There was no room in school to talk about my home experiences. Pacific educators (Konai Helu Thaman, Richard Wah, Unaisi Nabobo-Baba and 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki) have raised concerns about this de-emphasis on the culture of the students in the Pacific. These schooling experiences gave birth to my distaste in the manner in which Samoa's social realities and cultural understanding of movement and *fa'aSamoa* is modelled and squeezed in narrow frames of thought that I struggle to make sense of. Privileging what was taught in school over my lived experiences and situated knowledge did not sit well.

Secondly, is my scholarly interest in women's social position, work and movement and how these factors intersect in the context of my 'aiga and *fa'aSamoa*. In my childhood, my life and subsequent outlook evolved around influential female figures in my family. This is not to imply that their male counterparts were absent from the picture. My grandmothers, my mother and later my older sisters were directly involved in the practice of *malaga* and *fa'aSamoa* whether to prepare mats, food and related preparations for *fa'alavelave*. Besides, they were always the ones on the move to *fa'alavelave* gatherings and appeared to be running the show. In the absence of Day Care Centers in Samoa then, my twin sister and I tagged along to places my family went for *fa'alavelave*.

The place of mothers in my 'aiga, their multiple-sided selves, and their work and engagement in *fa'aSamoa* introduced me to the gender dimension of population movement and social life. In and through it, presents itself an interesting reality. Despite their engagements in/with movement and the crucial roles they play in the practice of *fa'aSamoa*, I wonder why there were not any accounts about or references made to women in the studies of population movement I learned in school (then). Because women are visible in the practice of *malaga* and *fa'aSamoa*, therefore "leaders in their own right" (Jones 2012:147), they are invisible in the literature let alone discussions in class. Women migrants are mostly seen as "accompanying their husbands as trailing spouses" (Walsh 2006:269). I acknowledge in my study women leaders in chapters four, five and six and whose stories show the meaning of movement for themselves and in their 'aiga and *fa'aSamoa*.

Finally, as a second generation Samoan of Chinese ancestry, I was drawn to the topic of population movement and particularly my interests to trace routes, roots and residence of my Chinese great grandfather. Accounts by my older relatives revealed his background as a labourer in 1890 and little more to that. This is in line with previous studies on Chinese in Samoa (see, Tom 1986, Liuaana 2004 and Noa Siaosi 2010) which highlighted that much of historical information about the early Chinese in Samoa could not be found. Thus, reconfirming Meleisea's (1987a: viii) claim that part of "Samoa's history is locked away in people's minds and notebooks". Unfortunately, my grandmother and elders who might know a missing piece of the puzzle have long gone.

Official records at the Chinese Embassy in Samoa do not help either for many reasons. Firstly, official names of the labourers are different from the Samoanised version of Chinese names which they were given and known by the families of their Samoan wives.

The former Samoa Attorney General Ming Leung Wai (2015:1) illustrates this issue with reference to his great grandfather Leung Wai who was also known as Ah Wai, Avai and other derivatives depending on who you talk to. Therefore, names that Samoans know their Chinese grandfathers by and the official record cannot be easily reconciled. In other cases, labourers are identified by their coolie numbers XXX (Leung Wai 2015:10). Being in China in 2007 hoping to find useful lead was hindered by paucity of information and challenges of language. However, visits of that nature, although unhelpful in one way have a special meaning to those who are keen to search and know more about their histories. It is more so if such pilgrimages meant progress, no matter how small it may be, towards a closure.

## **1.7 Re-colonising a colonised mind: western education and (re)-turn**

The western education system is one way in which the Europeans made inroads to the Samoan ways of life. For over sixty years of exposure to a school system grounded on imported ideologies has led to the eventual relegation of the Samoan understanding and manners of thought to the back seat. One of the legacies of this de-emphasis on local knowledge and culture in Samoa was the ban on speaking the



Samoan language in schools. It reflected an education system that did not acknowledge that students' backgrounds and manners of thinking are important to their learning. Eric Waddell (1993:28-29) summarised this state of affairs in the following terms:

I hear the same voices in the Pacific today: "It is forbidden to speak Fijian (Hindi, Cook Island Maori, Samoan, Tongan...) in the classroom and the school playground". Everything must take place in English (or French). On entering the school the child must take leave of his past, his present, and his kin. The classrooms and corridors may be decked with flowers, the teachers smiling, and the joys immense. But it is like a door which is sealed behind him, so that a new world may be designed afresh, unhindered by the weight of tradition, unmoved by the voices of the ancestors. And in this new world, each child stands alone: small, remote and ultimately helpless.

Turning to perspectives on population movement, the push-pull model was the frame in which I learned the topic in Social Studies and Geography in my formal years of education in Samoa and at USP. Totally uncritical of it myself nor was there any inclination by my teachers in the subjects that such a frame is but one of many. I was also troubled with the prevailing definition and understanding of an individual self in migration research that detached an individual from a unit. For Samoa, the individual self is situated in '*aiga* and it is relational.

Additionally, a closer look at the literature reveals that the 'migration giants' such as Bertram and Watters (1985, 1986), Betram (1986); Connell (1987, 1991); Brown (1995); Macpherson (1981, 1991, 1992), Shankman (1976; 1978) and Bedford (1993) of Oceania are white men. These may be factors influencing their views of population movement. While useful, their approaches lack the insider's point of view and they do not capture the cultural meaning of population movement that is understood by indigenous peoples.

The long winding road that led to this study provides an opportunity to express my dissatisfaction with the prevailing approaches to understanding population movement. It is part of a bigger project to reclaim invaded spaces and a response to the call by Oceanian scholars for indigenous peoples to tell their stories. In and through this study, I bring my story of movement. Its umbilical cord and seed are buried in Samoa where my interests in population movement all began and have been nourished by the evolving dynamics of my *'aiga* and lived experiences all along.

### **1.8 What is new in the current study?**

My study builds on previous work on population movement by Oceanian scholars and advocates the world over. In particular, studies by Professor Murray Chapman whose foundational work on circulation in population mobility in the Solomon Islands has inspired other studies on population movement within Oceania. In the words of Professor Richard Bedford (1999:4),

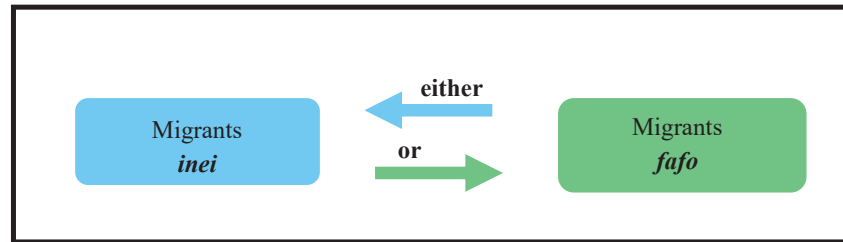
Chapman's scholarship reveal[s] some dimensions of a geographer who not only became obsessed with precision, especially with regard to conceptualizing and measuring the phenomena of mobility ... but who also became internationally recognized as one of the leading writers in the 1970s and 1980s on circulation in population movement. Chapman's 'intellectual aura' is most clearly evident in his work on mobility in Melanesia. In the lingua franca of the Solomon Islands, pidgin English, 'Murray, hemi man bilong circulation'. Chapman is the geographer whose name will always be associated with the study of circulation in population mobility, especially in the Solomon Islands but also in the wider literature on people's spatial behaviour.

I discuss in this section what I consider a path less travelled by migration scholars with regards to the methodology and methods chosen in their studies. I conceive this as an extension of scholarly attempt to understanding population movement within the cultural world of the movers. It is about bringing to the fore how "Pacific Islanders use [their] native epistemologies to construct and theorize knowledge" (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 2001:57) to understand their social reality.

### *The one-sided view of migration research*

Existing studies in Oceania and the world over appear to have been frozen in what I call the one-sided view of migration research with regards to who to interview and where. In most studies, researchers selected migrants either *inei* (here; local) or *fafo* (there; overseas) as shown in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1. 1: The one-sided view of migration research**



In their study, Kaitani et al (2011) interviewed migrant sending and remittance receiving households in Fiji (*inei*) to assess the impacts of migration and remittances at household level. In his study of Samoan migration in Australia, Leulu Felise Va'a (2001) interviewed Samoan households in the Canterbury-Bankstown suburbs in Sydney (*fafo*) to find reasons for migration among selected households.

Selecting migrants either *inei* or *fafo* is convenient. It is also cheap. However, it raises methodological concerns. Firstly, the one-sided view undermines the diversity of perspectives and lived experiences of 'aiga *inei* and *fafo*. It also assumes that the views of respondents chosen represent that of 'aiga. Not including 'aiga *inei* and *fafo*, misses the context of 'aiga in which movement takes place. Thus, it does not provide a complete understanding of population movement in reality. At a deeper level, relying on perspectives drawn from 'aiga either *inei* or *fafo*, emphasises the supreme role of an individual in migratory decisions.

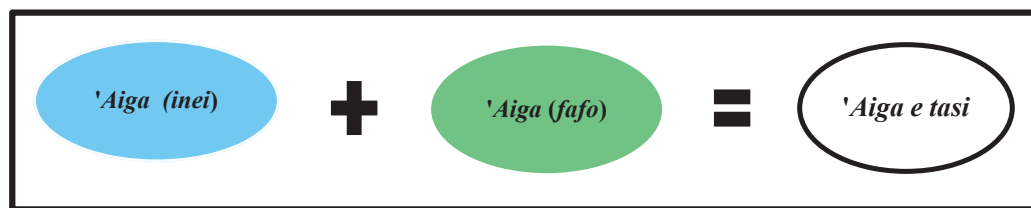
I attempted in 1998 to interview 'aiga in Samoa (*inei*) and Aotearoa/New Zealand (*fafo*) for my Master of Arts research (Muliaina 1999). However, time, financial and logistical reasons did not allow me to do so. Therefore, I chose different 'aiga in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa in that study. While views of Samoans either *inei*

or fafo shed light into the complexities of movement, it did not provide a complete understanding of movement from the perspective of 'aiga.

#### *A contribution to knowledge*

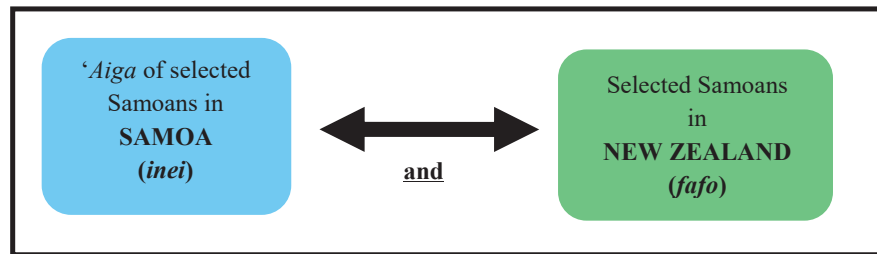
Despite the growing literature on migration, there has not been any attempt to move beyond the one-sided view. My study brings to the table an attempt to include migrants and their 'aiga *inei* and *fafo* because both sides constitute a complete migration experience from the perspective of 'aiga. Including migrants and 'aiga *inei* and *fafo* therefore, constitute one *talanoaga* (interview) (see, Figure 1.2). In and through it, the cultural context of 'aiga is given justice it deserves in migration research and our understanding is enlightened of what may be called a truly, inclusive and culturally-sensitive study of population movement.

**Figure 1. 2: A two-sided approach to *talanoaga*: 'aiga (*inei*) and 'aiga (*fafo*)**



I use the term tracer study for my purpose as it encapsulates the process and method to trace and connect the stories of Aotearoa/New Zealand-based Samoans and their Samoa-based 'aiga. Tracer studies are used in the field of Education to assess the effectiveness of an educational programme on participants during and after a particular course (Cohen 2004). Thinking in terms of tracer study has not been explored in migration studies but it could provide fresher and contextualised understanding of population movement as a dynamic process. Figure 1.3 conceptualises the matching and tracing of Samoans *inei* and *fafo* in my study. For my study, *talanoaga* began with fifty Aotearoa/New Zealand-based Samoans and followed by *talanoaga* with members of their 'aiga in Samoa. Connecting *inei* and *fafo* provides a contextual understanding of movement from the eyes of Samoans.

**Figure 1. 3: Tracer study; matching two-sides, *inei* and *fafo***



A detailed discussion of tracer study as an alternative method is provided in chapter three. Suffice to say at this point, tracer study offers an opportunity to enrich our search for a complete meaning of population movement that acknowledge lived experiences that are grounded in island soil and new locations. I attempt in my study to begin a conversation in this direction.

### **1.9 Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues are important concerns that need to be addressed adequately in any research and more so in studies that involve human subjects (Burns 1997:17). Konai Helu Thaman (2006:176) advocates for a particular kind of inquiry in researches that involved Pacific peoples. For her,

ethics are values, principles, intentions, or beliefs that guide our behavior (practices and actions) towards others. However, because we all come from different cultures it follows that the interpretation of ethics in one society may not necessarily be the same in another, particularly one with a different worldview. This aspect of ethics is crucial in our understanding of how ethics impact upon the education and knowledge production (research) process and products.

From previous field experiences in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Samoans viewed the subject of or discussion connected to immigration or migration with great caution and associated any researcher with Immigration New Zealand. Understandably, such perception exists due to the dawn raid on Samoans and Tongans in the 1970s. As a result, I took the necessary steps to satisfy USP's research requirements and adhere

to the principles of informed consent and confidentiality in all facets of field work. I also relied on my siblings and co-researchers in Auckland to ‘stand in’ for me in relation to the Samoan community there. Using family network worked out to be the most effective and an appropriate way for my study. It would have been a different experience if I did not have siblings in that country. Their ‘network club’ in the Samoan community was, and is my power base. While some may raise issues regarding the robustness and validity of using family network in research, I felt this was the most appropriate pathway to my study.

The University of the South Pacific (USP) has research protocols in place. I submitted a research proposal that was approved by the Research Committee (RC) in the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE). Thereafter, a separate application was made to the Human Ethics Committee (HEC), which had its own assessment criteria. My application to HEC included a completed Screening Questionnaire (SQ) and copies of the approved research proposal, questionnaire and interview schedules. Although my research proposal was approved at the faculty level, HEC’s consent meant research funds for fieldwork could only be secured when its decision was made. The HEC also required a written assurance for the confidentiality of responses given that my research would involve interviews with people. The confidentiality of information is a priority in this study with respect to data collection, data management and reporting of findings.

The need to obtain informed consent from Samoans was important. They were presented with a consent form which satisfied USP’s ethical guidelines. As discussed in chapter three however, this best practice did not appear to matter in my study. Samoans did not feel the need for this consent. Asking participants for their consent before *talanoaga* was slightly offensive, if not culturally inappropriate. For me, it raised issues of trust and about *va fealoa’i* (social space that relate) between study participants on the one hand and myself as a researcher and my co-researchers on the other. To the Samoans, their agreement when first approached by my co-researchers to participate implied they had consented already to participate in the study. Samoans in the study saw the re-enforcement of consent before the start of *talanoaga* as “being too polite and very *palagi* (European)”. However, participants were re-assured that it was part of the required, scientific way of conducting research

and they may withdraw their participation at any stage. Participants re-committed their consent verbally rather than signing the consent forms.

Confidentiality is also an important research principle during *talanoaga*. I took the necessary steps to protect the anonymity of Samoans in the study. Because the request to participate in the study went through a church minister who later informed the congregation, confidentiality was irrelevant. Members of the congregation knew that everyone would be interviewed at some point. However, the confidentiality of responses is guaranteed. I assured the respondents that their personal details would not be shown on the questionnaires and interview schedules. I used codes in the discussion and reporting of research findings which were relayed to the study participants (and HEC) to ensure confidentiality is achieved. Chapter three will discuss this aspect further.

### **1.10 Chapter summary**

I introduce the overall aim of my study in this introductory chapter and argue for an alternative perspective to understand population movement and its wider implications to society through the lived experiences of Samoans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa. This study responds to the call by indigenous scholars worldwide and from Oceania in particular to look within ourselves for culturally appropriate approaches and manners of thinking to understand social processes that are anchored in our social realities. I use *fa'aSamoa* as a frame to understand population movement. I insist for an alternative approach to value movement based on my experiences as a student, a product of a dual education system, a member of *'aiga* and a firm believer and practitioner of *fa'aSamoa* and population movement.

### **1.11 Outline of the thesis**

This first chapter sets out my argument for a cultural approach to understand movement in and from the eyes of the Samoans. It calls for a rethinking of commonly used concepts through the framework of *fa'aSamoa*. This approach weaves into my own experiences of growing up and travels in and out of Samoa.

I review the literature in the next chapter, a process I associate with making an *ula*, (garland) prepared specifically for a special occasion (my study). The process involves a collection of suitable sweet smelling ‘flowers’ and ‘leaves’ in order to make an *ula*, to fit the occasion. I present *fa’aSamoa* as a frame for this study. An understanding of the Samoan culture and ways of thinking provides an alternative approach to understand population movement and its wider implications in reciprocity and care-based societies like Samoa. I also draw on the humanist perspective to provide the necessary ‘flowers’ and ‘leaves’ for my garland. As reinforcement to my argument, I use other suitable ‘leaves’ in the form of views and approaches by scholars in Oceania. In the processes of making my garland, I also identify gaps in the current scholarship that my study aims to fill.

Chapter three explains the tasks involved in the collection of information needed for my study. I adopted an ethnographic approach but also collected demographic data through semi-structured *talanoaga* with selected Aotearoa/New Zealand-based Samoans in South Auckland and their ‘*aiga*’ in Samoa. As an important research tool, my personal experiences as a scholar and member of ‘*aiga*’ are also woven into my study. They also form the basis of my field experiences and reflections before, during and after field encounters.

I discuss in the fourth chapter ways in which movement of Samoans refashions their place in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa as they travel between and within these places. I maintain that the social cultural understanding of Samoans cannot be separated from how they understand their lives in the two countries where their stories are grounded. I use the concept of *fa’asinomaga* as a way of thinking that better reflects the refashioned experiences of Samoans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa. This problematises the use of dichotomies to represent experiences that are fluid, multiple and flexible.

I argue in chapter five that the reasons Samoans move evolved around their ‘*aiga*’ as manifested in the array and persistence of *fa’alavelave*. The social cultural world of Samoans defines the complexity and relatedness of their lived experiences. Like their refashioning of places, Samoans’ social-cultural world adds value to their places of residence that constantly constitute their stories and memories that not only



reside in specific places but travel with them. Their travels to and back transformed places and created landscapes made of stories of themselves, their children and *'aiga*.

Chapter six discusses the experiences of the children of Samoans in the study who were mostly born and raised in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Like their folks, children conceived their movement broadly and culturally. Their own pursuit to know their roots better takes them into a path of self (re) discovery and fulfilment through commitments to *fa'alavelave* and family reunions. Smart technology and social media in particular have enabled the younger generation to connect and reconnect to their island-based relatives. In this day and age, culturally-inspired immigration policies are needed to reflect the globalised and connected nature of peoples and places.

To conclude in chapter seven, I emphasise the place of a cultural thinking as another perspective to explain movement experiences of Samoans. In and through it provides a complete picture that is meaningful to those who practise it. As a way of life and thinking, *fa'aSamoa* fills that gap for this study and our existing understanding of population movement can be enhanced.

## Chapter Two:

# RECONCILING PERSPECTIVES ON POPULATION MOVEMENT

If we are condemned to tell stories we cannot control, may we not, at least, tell stories we believe to be true (Clifford 1986:121).

When we tell a story we open ourselves up to the world, in relationship, communicating our history, our values, our joys and sorrows. Telling stories allows us to be seen and to feel connected to the whole. Stories provide others a window into our soul. Telling our stories helps us heal (Sillari 2013:3).

I argued in the previous chapter for a culturally-based explanation to understand population movement and its wider implications in Samoa. Seen as an extension of a cultural approach to study population movement, I also pointed out that researchers need to break away from the confines of a conventional one-sided view to interview (*talanoaga*). Rather, to include Samoans residing overseas (*fafo*) and in Samoa (*inei*) in a study. A two-sided approach brings the cultural context of ‘*aiga* to the fore; to add to existing understanding of population movement. This approach is the point of departure for this study. Chapter three will revisit this point in more detail.

This chapter examines the current approaches on population movement to understand how they are incomplete for a comprehensive understanding of Samoan population movement. To do this task, I consider myself metaphorically in the process of making an *ula* (garland). I conceive of my role as a *taulealea* (an untitled man) whose domain in the Samoan society is *fai feau* (do the work) as his *tautua* (service) to his ‘*aiga*. The task at hand is multi-faceted; *su’e*, (searching; and may mean travelling far and wide to find appropriate leaves and flowers), *toli* (picking; involves climbing trees and slippery mountains to pull useful ferns), *tufi* (collecting; taking extra care not to ruin flowers and leaves) and *tui* (stitching; (re) arranging flowers

and leaves in their right places) in order to make an *ula* befitting an occasion. Finally, it is given way; gifting someone with this garland.

I draw on some personal experiences to start my search for usable ‘flowers’ and ‘leaves’ for my *ula*. These experiences testify that *fa’aSamoa* (‘*aiga* in particular) is the lens through which the geographic mobility of Samoans and their lifeways can be understood best. Experiences also speak of the conflicting nature of conventional approaches to population movement and development on the one hand, and cultural interpretations of mobility, exchanges of material wealth and living of *fa’aSamoa* on the other. Next, I provide a brief discussion of perspectives that constitute dominant approaches to population movement. I argue that these may have advanced our understanding of Samoan population movement to an extent, but are not satisfactory and are incomplete. There remains unsuitable ‘leaves’ for my garland. I then discuss the relevance of the humanist approach as sweet smelling ‘flowers’ and appropriate ‘leaves’ for my *ula* that ‘fit in place’ with *fa’aSamoa* and Samoa’s lifeways. At the end, the chapter draws on Oceania’s metaphorical ‘ethno-biodiversity’ of culturally-inclusive approaches to provide the necessary ‘bark of trees’ as reinforcement for my island-made garland.

## **2.1 An early recognition of cultural meanings of mobility**

Before commencing undergraduate studies at USP, I worked at the Bank of Western Samoa (BWS), now called the ANZ Bank, as a part-timer during the busy Christmas and New Year holiday. For three months in three years, November to January 1993, 1994 and 1996, I was assigned to the International and Treasury Department to support permanent staff. My specific tasks were to prepare the paperwork to disburse money from Samoans residing abroad for their relatives. Money was also received from overseas charitable associations, churches and companies for their local counterparts. My second task was to sort the statistical information by currencies and source countries and filing them whenever practical. ANZ keeps these statistics for its internal control and audit procedures but more to comply with the Central Bank of Samoa (CBS) Act 1984 that requires financial institutions to keep and submit remittances statistics at the end of each month.

To disburse money involves interlinked steps. First, my task was to examine a list (can be more than one) of beneficiaries from ANZ Melbourne, Australia and other overseas banks. More importantly, I was to find specific instructions and messages from the senders to beneficiaries about the disbursement and use of money. It was a crucial step to be taken seriously for if there were problems, these would have had bad implications for me. There were two ways to pay out money. Firstly, to pay out by cash, cash beneficiaries (CB) and secondly, through direct deposit into a nominated bank account, account beneficiaries (AB) with ANZ or other banks. Beneficiaries were sorted thereafter based on the method of disbursement and also whether money was sent for individuals, companies, churches and other organisations as different charges apply. Bank charges, (include but not limited to, the costs to inform beneficiaries through Radio 2AP), were calculated while preparing individual invoices. Finally, a business day did not end until a list of beneficiaries was compiled, typed, scrutinised and sent to the Radio 2AP that broadcasted it live thrice in the evening – an important hour of listening for expectant individuals, families and other interested parties.

Samoans also sent messages with the remitted money to their relatives. For my study, these messages unmask the human face of population movement. They bring to life the persistent role of *fa'aSamoa* and *'aiga* in people's movements. This cultural understanding is often ignored by migration scholars. Messages speak of a different language that is anchored in people's cultural understanding and they can only be understood therein. I read and recorded messages on invoices for the beneficiaries and at times when filing remittances statistics in the strong room.

For ease, I grouped these messages in two broad categories that basically overlapped. The first one related to redistribution of money if there were other beneficiaries besides the principal one. In this case a share of each recipient was specified and disbursed accordingly. The second was an assortment of messages that varied in length and depth that, for my study are fundamental to a cultural understanding of movement and reinforce the role of *fa'aSamoa*. These messages speak of two things. First, those that expressed the senders' best wishes and blessings, for example for a good Christmas and New Year season to their *'aiga*; and second, some specific directives by the senders on how to spend the money. The usual things the money

was to be spent on included *maliu* (funeral), *fa'aulufalega* (dedication of a new home or church), a loan repayment, legal fees for child adoption, to pay someone's airfare to take a child or parents for medical treatment in New Zealand, to pay for *aitalafu* (credit) at a village store, or purchase of food for the family.

I pondered on the meanings of these messages sent to relatives in Samoa. What do they reveal about Samoan migrants overseas and their families in the Islands? Do the messages tell a different story about Samoan movement, 'aiga connection and re-connection over time and space? To me, deeper meanings of these narratives are buried in the worldview of Samoans, their 'aiga and *fa'aSamoa*. Meanings for remitted money are more than quantifying them in dollars and cents. As McCathy (1994:5) points out, "a narrative analysis examines the use of language beyond the sentence level". Written texts, messages and other written forms contain beliefs, values and ideas of the writer. To understand these fully, a reader or user needs to know and understand the contexts in which messages take place. In narrative analysis, "the meaning is ascribed to a phenomenon when it is experienced and we know something about people's experiences from the expressions through texts and other forms that they give to them" (Eastmond 2007:249).

Irrespective of the amounts sent and how the money ought to be used, the practice of remittance is simply *fa'aSamoa* in action. In this case it is an expression of migrants' *alofa* (love) and *tautua* (service) for their 'aiga. Therein embedded the cultural meaning of movement and the uses of money are also informed by a cultural understanding. Money is seldom saved as investment as the conventional understanding would dictate (Connell 1997). As renowned Oceanian scholar, the late Teresia Teaiwa (2004:220) puts it plainly: "I don't know of a single Pacific Islander who saved. As a general rule, we liked to spend our money".

However, it does not mean Samoans do not understand what it means to save money or invest it in a business. Rather, Samoans define saving differently. Samoans save and invest by spending on their 'aiga and *fa'alavelave* which they have "reasons to value" (Sen 1999:291). Obviously, this cultural understanding goes beyond the economic rationale informing conventional perspectives on migration.

Migration experiences speak of the persistence of *fa'aSamoa* in people's understanding of why they move and to sustain their 'aiga relations through exchanges that involve money and other material goods. Principles and values such as *alofa* and *tautua*, for instance, sit at the core of *fa'aSamoa* and underpin messages sent back and forth among relatives. On a deeper level, these messages revealed much more about the complex web of social veins imbedded in people's movements. These go beyond the narrow confine of theories and administrative paperwork through which these fluid processes passed through and were viewed at ANZ Bank at the time.

Besides money being received from overseas, Samoans in Samoa also came to ANZ Bank to send money to their relatives overseas and sometimes to buy foreign currencies when they were travelling abroad. This experience defies what previous studies assume to be a one-directional flow of money from developed to developing countries. Rather, Samoans are also active senders of money to their relatives in New Zealand and elsewhere for reasons connected to 'aiga *fa'alavelave*. The flow of money, food and other material wealth from the Pacific islands to countries where islanders live is a vibrant feature of island life. As Hess et al (2001) show, the Marshall Islanders send money to their relatives in Hawai'i and California, USA. Alexeyeff (2004), Macpherson (1992; 1994) and Yamamoto (1990; 1997) found flows and counter flows of food stuff, handicrafts and other island-made goods among the Cook Islanders and Samoans at home and overseas. James (1997), Goss and Lindquist (2000), Addo (2004) and Lee (2003) discuss a two-way flows of money, *tapa* and other material wealth among Tongans in the islands and abroad.

For Samoans, money (and material wealth) sent and received are connected, through *fa'alavelave*, to the three pillars of *fa'aSamoa*: 'aiga (extended family), *nu'u* (village) and *lotu* (church). Before I elaborate on this view I discuss in the next section perspectives that constitute prevailing approaches to Samoan migration.

## **2.2 Approaches to population movement**

Several views constitute the dominant approaches to population movement in the Pacific. I draw on the main arguments in these to show why they cannot be suitable

‘leaves’ for my garland. At the end I highlight the humanist approach as the most suitable for the purpose of this study.

### *Neoclassical economics and Push-pull theory*

The neo-classical approach emphasises differential in wages and employment opportunities between places or countries as key reasons why people migrate from one place to another (Massey et al 1993:432). It is rooted in the work of 19<sup>th</sup> century English-German Geographer Ernst Ravenstein (1885; 1889) and his *Laws of Migration* which suggest that people are pushed and pulled from places of low to high income levels. Thus, people seek better economic opportunities by moving from places that lack to those perceived to have plenty. In this case, migration is seen as self-correcting and it leads to a state of spatial-economic equilibrium (Connell 2015).

The push-pull view perpetuates the privileging of one place or country over another and it may lead to a situation of discontentment among people of what they have to what they should have. Neo-classical approaches privilege the economic over social-cultural-political explanations and that led Samers (2010:55-56) to conclude that such views are “economically deterministic, methodologically individualist and dreadfully antiquated”.

At the micro-level, migration is conceived of as the result of decisions by an individual; a rational actor who is informed by a cost-benefit consideration of whether to migrate or not. Sjaastad (1962) explains that this cost-benefit analysis is based on an individual’s investment in their human capital. And, because migration is driven by rationalising economic forces, a proponent of this view would conclude that it can be statistically modelled and migratory behaviour can be predicted (see, Brown and Connell 2004a, Brown and Poirine 2005). These standpoints offer little to our understanding of movement that also takes place within the social cultural milieu of peoples. When migration is viewed as the result of individual decision, the implications of this process for families and society are ignored.

Studies in the Pacific up to 1960s typically reflect the push-pull tradition. This has been the launch pad of Australian geographer John Connell’s works on migration in

the Pacific islands (see, Connell 1983: a to f). This view dwells on the narrow economic base, fragmented transportation network and resource endowments of varying economic value of the Pacific. When taken together, these factors are the cause of a depressing level of economic development in the islands. And because of people's exposure to outside influences through colonisation, globalisation and a western education system, meant new attitudes, aspirations and demands for a materialistic lifestyle emerge. Therefore, seeing Pacific islands in terms of 'deficit' creates a sense of hopelessness and discontentment among people with what they have. To improve their lot and access to modern-day goods and services, people are without a choice but to migrate to urban areas or overseas where opportunities are perceived to be in abundance (Connell 2003). This push-pull situation has fuelled waves of out-migration analyses where many commentators saw to be causing the depopulation of rural areas and outer islands, loss of labour and potential neglect of farm lands (Connell 2003). Furthermore, as urban areas gain more migrants, consistent development and upgrading of essential services (housing, education, health and provision of clean water) was needed. Increased migration flows also call for national efforts to manage emerging social, cultural, economic and political challenges in society generally and urban areas in particular.

#### *Migration, transitions and development*

In contrast to the individual-based rational choice decisions of the neoclassic approach, Wilbur Zelinsky (1971:221) hypothesises about the "mobility transition". He argues that there are, "patterned regularities in the growth of personal mobility through space-time during recent history, and these regularities comprise an essential component of the modernization process". King (2012:15) describes Zelinsky's attempt as "theorizing on a grand scale, linking changes in migration and mobility behavior to different stages in the modernization process". Informed by experiences in Europe, Zelinsky argues that patterns of migration and mobility can be explained in five stages that parallel Rostow's model of development. Countries are seen to follow these stages as rites of passage to economic development. Table 2.1 summarises the two models.



**Table 2. 1: Zelinsky's transition model and Rostow's model of development**

Zelinsky's mobility in transition model	Rostow's model of development
STAGE 1	
<b><i>Pre-modern traditional society</i></b> * limited migration, local movement related to marriage, marketing agricultural produce	<b><i>Traditional society</i></b> * subsistence agriculture, barter system
STAGE 2	
<b><i>Early transitional society</i></b> * mass rural-urban migration; emigration to attractive oversea destinations for settlement and colonization	<b><i>Transitional stage</i></b> * specialization, surpluses, infrastructure
STAGE 3	
<b><i>Late transitional society</i></b> * rural-urban migration and emigration slowing down. Growth in various forms of circulation such as commuting	<b><i>Take off</i></b> * industrialization, investment, regional growth, political change
STAGE 4	
<b><i>Advanced society</i></b> * rural-urban replaced by inter-urban migration, mass immigration of low skilled workers from less developed countries; international migration of skilled workers; advanced circulation drive by economic and pleasure motives	<b><i>Drive to maturity</i></b> * diversification, innovation, decrease dependence on imports, investment
STAGE 5	
<b><i>Future superadvanced society</i></b> * better communication and delivery systems may lead to decline in some forms of circulation; internal migration is inter or intra urban, continued immigration of low-skilled labor from less developed countries; controls over immigration	<b><i>High mass consumption</i></b> * consumer oriented, durable goods flourish, service sector dominate economic activities

(King 2012:15)

Piche (2013:144) describes “Zelinsky’s western-centric approach as evolutionist and it is based on the theory of modernization”. It assumes that societies need to adopt western values and structures in order to develop. This implies that societies will follow a linear progression from a traditional to an advanced, developed stage. For non-European societies, they need to replace their internal social structures including their cultures with values deemed conducive to facilitating this pathway to development.

The above models emphasise a step by step progression of development. Different forms of migration and intensity occur at different stages. At one point, people view migration as problematic and detrimental to both sending and receiving countries. But by the year 2000, people's attitudes were celebratory for two reasons. Firstly, because of the enormous volume of remittances recorded worldwide, people are convinced that migration (and remittances) is an agent to bring about development widely and more effectively than aid (Faist 2008). Remittances, in the view of many people, will reduce the levels of poverty. Secondly, migration is no longer perceived in terms of "permanent rupture" (Piche 2013:150), but rather on enduring connections and ties that migrants overseas maintain with their relatives at home. I shall return to this point at the end of this chapter.

This development perspective gathers momentum quickly. International organisations involved in development work such as the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and think-tank organisations the world over propel the adoption of the development view of migration (and remittances) by funding international research collaborations. The result, a tidal wave of research outputs on migration, remittances and development (see, de Haas 2001a, 2001b, 2005, 2008, 2010; Stark 2003; Sriskandarajah 2005; Maclellan and Mares 2006; Ratha 2007; Schiller and Faist 2009; Schiller 2009; Wise and Covarrubias 2009; Massey et al 1998; Portes 1999, 2009; Puentes et al 2010; Ratha and Silwal 2012; Piche 2013). Oceania is no exception (see, Connell and Conway 2000; Foundation for Development Corporation (FDC) 2005; Connell and Brown 2005; Connell 2006; World Bank 2006; Brown 2008; Connell 2008; Chappell et al 2010; Kaitani et al 2011; Jimenez and Brown 2013). And, numerous workshops and conferences were organised bearing themes and catchy words such as Migration, Development and Remittances.

These studies emphasise the economic value of migration, particularly remittances to development. They are framed in economic terms that ignore the cultural values in which movement and remittances are understood in reciprocity and care-based Samoa. Studies with orientation of this nature place emphasis on the quantification of the impact and patterns of remittances. And, because these impacts can be

modelled, it was possible to predict movement and remittances behaviour and/or their (un) sustainability.

The developmentalist view of migration and remittances is insufficient to provide a full understanding of movement as a social and cultural act. Economics and money blind people from a holistic view to understanding movement as fluid, flexible and dynamic processes. The cultural understanding of movement has not been given a fair chance in many studies to show how it could compliment our understanding of population movement.

#### *Historical-structural approach*

Three models lay at the heart of the historical-structural approach to migration: the dual and segmented labour markets, dependency theory and world systems theory (King 2012). Inspired by the Marxist school of thought, these models as Morawska (2012:55) describes, situate the causes of migration within “the realm of historically formed macro-structural forces, and stress the inherently exploitative and disequilibrating nature of the economic power shaping global capitalism”.

In favour of the historical-structural approach, Piore (1979) argues that international migration is driven by pull *not* push factors. The structural pull (demand) for cheap labour in advanced countries spark migration streams from less advanced nations as a natural response to a *dual labor market* that exists there. A primary labour market consists of well-paid and secured jobs which are filled by the local population; and a secondary labour market characterised by low-skill levels, insecure work and low wages. Foreign workers fill the labour demand in the secondary sector as local workers turn away from these jobs. The presence of foreign workers also reinforces the lack of appeal of job in the secondary sector to the local population and it empowers employers to offer lower wages and working conditions for foreign workers (King 2012:16). Occupying a vulnerable position, foreign workers accept working conditions on offer, seeing them as a means to earn wages. When assessed by standards of wages at home, bottom-level jobs at destination countries compare favourably to wage earnings at home (Morawska 2007:3). The secondary sector labour market may split in employment subsections based on distinct characteristics such as race, gender and nationality (King 2012:16). The labour market becomes

*segregated* when this situation occurs and migrant labourers then constitute the ‘under class’.

The structural pull (demand) for cheap labour and the necessity of that labour in the development of economically advanced countries is the premise of *dependency theory*. The neoclassic approach conceives of migration as self-correcting that leads to a state of equilibrium when wage differentials equalise, migration ceases. In contrast, dependency theory views migration as self-perpetuating and it reproduces inequality in society through *cumulative causation* (Petra 1981). The success of developed economies is due to the flows of labour and capital from developing countries (Myrdal 1957). The flows are seen as the dependency of these countries on the global political and economic systems controlled by developed countries. As a result, developing countries are trapped in a state of underdevelopment because of their disadvantaged position (de Haas 2010).

Dependency theory is tied to the *world systems theory* in that the economic inequalities are seen as inherent between the core (developed) and periphery (developing) countries. However world systems theory does not accommodate migration since it focuses on unequal relations between countries rather than on socioeconomic inequality within countries due to migration. In his work in South America, Frank (1970) argued that the world is dominated by a single economy and countries are integrated in capitalist production. The entire system is linked by a series of chains between the metropolitan centers and satellite peripherals drawing surpluses from production to the core. Tellingly, the core gains and grows at the expense of peripheral satellites.

While migration is linked to development (de Haas 2005; 2008), dependency theory perceives migration as part of the global division of labour and the historical process of subordinate incorporation of the underdeveloped world into the major capitalist economies (Morawska 2012:60). It follows then that labour flows from rural to urban areas or internationally, dislocate millions of people in poor countries from their traditional ways of life. Frank (1970:8) concludes that it is “the integration of poor countries in the global capitalist system that results in the development of underdevelopment”.

The historical structural approach is weak on several fronts. First, the dependency theory is insufficient to explain the situation of underdevelopment in Latin America despite its natural resource endowments. Poverty levels follow an upward turn instead. Next, migrants are considered as, “passive pawns in the play of great powers and world processes presided over by the logic capital accumulation” (Arango 2004:27). It fails to recognise the autonomy of third economies with their own histories and processes of class formation. When compared to Rostow’s five stage model and Zelinsky’s mobility transition, dependency and world systems theories are similar. However, the latter have their own versions of historical determinism, “univocal, reductionist interpretations of history in which all countries pass through as if following a grand script” (Arango 2004:27).

Studies on Polynesian migration by Connell (1983a to f; 1987) are based primarily on the dependency model. These studies hold that the incorporation of Pacific island migrants into the world economy through cash cropping leads to monetisation and internal growth of the industry (Hayes 1992). Such a view also assumes that internal social organisation particularly traditional leadership could become weak resulting in a state of individualism among family members. Therefore, as individuals detach themselves from families and communities, they migrate in search of material prosperity and to be free from the cultural traps. Migration is seen as a process of change for a better life for migrants and their families. Culture, however is seen to be in the way to achieving this perceived change (Hayes 1992). This view of dependency theory does not help our understanding of movement as an inherently part and parcel of Island people’s life. Movement is portrayed in a negative light and disassociated from migrants’ social and cultural lives. This assertion is ahistorical and incomplete when applying to Samoan movement.

The 1976 study of *Migration and Underdevelopment: The Case of Western Samoa* by Paul Shankman proposes structural and dependency views. Concerned with the relationship between migration, remittances and development, the study describes the nature of ties that migrants maintain with their relatives who stay at home. Shankman argues that migration drains labour resources away from the village thus undermining its economic development prospects. Dependence on remittances he

adds is risky if receiving countries tighten their immigration policies further, restricting migration.

Shankman's assumptions of development being universal and homogeneous cannot be applied meaningfully to Samoa. Although Shankman made reference to the Samoan culture in his analysis, it does not fully explain the Samoan story of movement. In fact, it was his interpretation of the meaning of movement rather than what Samoans understood of this practice. Shankman's predictions that remittances would decline over time when migrants establish themselves abroad may be true to an extent. But, despite economic challenges the world over remittance continues to flow to Samoa. There may be periods of highs and lows from year to year but remittances did not stop completely as evident in Table 2.2 below.

**Table 2. 2: Gross private remittances (in million *tala*)**

2010				2011								
Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
28.0	27.0	28.0	48.0	26.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	32.0	31.0	32.0	32.0	24.0

(Central Bank of Samoa 2011:5)

This speaks of the obvious that there are other factors besides deterministic, economic views that are equally robust in our understanding of movement in the islands. The social cultural context and the culture of people practicing the practice cannot be ignored.

#### *The MIRAB model*

The concept of MIRAB economy was developed by an economist Geoffrey Betram and geographer Ray Watters (1985) to describe the characteristics of small island economies of the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Kiribati and Tuvalu. In these countries, the interplay between Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy characterise development activities. The thrust of the MIRAB approach is, first, that for these countries, the current account transfer payments (remittances, dividends, interest earnings and aid) and non-tangible production, mostly by government are the lifeline of the economy (Betram 1999). When islands are viewed as dependent on

these factors (particularly migration and remittances) it ignores the role of subsistence agriculture in sustaining these economies. While performance of the agricultural sector has fluctuated in the past, it does not mean people have abandoned it entirely. The MIRAB is mute on the role of reciprocity and material exchange in the daily lives on the islands. Different kinds of *fa'alavelave* as noted in Table 2.6 are repeated events that require agricultural production for exchange and consumption. However, this is less true today than in the past as most of the reciprocal gifts can now be bought instead.

Next, although the MIRAB approach may seem undesirable because of the external reliance implication, the economic behaviour of people is rational (Betram 1999). The assumption of economic rationality embedded in the neoclassical, structuralist and dependency approaches is similar to MIRAB, however it is perceived that when the economies of Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America experience hard times, the level of remittances is expected to fall. While predictions by John Connell, Cluny Macpherson and others about declining remittances happened in Samoa at times of recession the world over, the flow of remittances did not stop. In the wake of natural disasters in Samoa in the last decades, remittances from relatives abroad became the fastest form of support to families (van Zijl de Jong et al 2011). Additionally, people do not express their *alofa* in monetary terms alone but more so in material wealth that to date, remains a challenge to put a monetary value on social remittances (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010).

The MIRAB model also fails to recognise that people move back and forth between their home in the islands and where relatives reside overseas. Movement is but a normal part of life. Remittances (cash and in-kind) flow in the same fashion, thus the notion that recipients of remittances depend on senders needs rethinking (Luthria 2006) as discussed at the start of this chapter. During field work, a study participant (CN2) who runs a sewing business from her home in Auckland said that, "I travelled to Samoa regularly to replenish my stock or to get specific materials for my business". She also took clothes, confectionary and goodies for her *'aiga* in Samoa. On her return, she had with her not just the supplies for her business but *umu* (cooked foodstuff) and sometimes a cooler of fresh fish for her family. She also took to or brought from Samoa letters or parcels for other people who she may not know or

relate to. Many more people who travel between the Pacific Islands and Pacific-rim developed countries are engaged in transactions of this nature that may go unnoticed and receive no recognition. I discuss in the next four chapters stories and observations during field work of this reality.

Let Epeli Hau'ofa (2008:39-39) have the final say on this;

At the Honolulu Airport, while waiting for my flight back to Fiji, I met an old friend, a Tongan who is twice my size and lives in Berkeley, California. He is not an educated man. He works on people's yards, trimming hedges and trees, and laying driveways and footpaths. But every three months or so he flies to Fiji, buys \$8,000 to \$10,000 worth of *kava*, takes it on the plane flying him back to California, and sells it from his home. He has never heard of dependency; if he were told of it, it would hold no real meaning for him. He told me in Honolulu that he was bringing a cooler full of T-shirts, some for the students at the university with whom he often stays when he comes to Suva, and the rest for his relatives in Tonga, where he goes for a week or so while his *kava* is gathered, pounded, and bagged in Fiji. He later fills the cooler with seafood to take back home to California, where he has two sons he wants to put through college. On one of his trips he helped me renovate a house that I had just bought. We like him because he is a good storyteller and is generous with his money and time, but mostly because he is one of us.

### *Transnationalism*

Transnationalism refers to a scholarly research agenda that was born out of the collapse of boundaries among nation states. Portes (1999:463) defines transnationalism to involve activities "that take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants. These activities are not limited to economic enterprises but include political, cultural and religious activities as well". In the Pacific, Betram and Watters (1985) referred to this notion as the transnational corporation of kin in



their MIRAB model simply because people seek to maximise income across different continents.

Although the term transnationalism may have roots elsewhere and the literature makes us believe it to be the case, I conceive of the concept as being a defining character of and already an inbuilt device in Oceania lifeworld, way before it was thought of by Glick Schiller et al (1992); Basch et al (1994); Portes (1999) and Vertovec (1999, 2004). The first two publications are championed as the foundational studies for the transnational paradigm based on King's (2012:25) evaluation. Lee (2009a:1) describes a multiple-authored publication she co-edited with Francis as, "this book provides, for the first time, a collection of papers that unite Pacific migration studies with the field of transnational studies".

In the world of *fa'aSamoa* and Oceania, movement is part of life. The accounts by Albert Wendt, the late Epeli Hau'ofa and scholars and advocates of Oceania I referred to earlier speak of this ancient truth. That the living and expressions of what has been given an identity called transnationalism (Portes 1999) and transnational corporation of kin (Betram and Watters 1985) has been and is, in and with us. In the pre-colonial Pacific, peoples have always moved within the vast area of Oceania to trade and exchange goods and to fight at times. Hau'ofa's (1993) notion of our sea of islands captures the very essence of life of the peoples. This reality was reframed following the occupation of the region by the colonial powers which emphasised the vastness of the ocean and smallness and isolation of islands within it (Lee 2009b). Rather, the ocean connects people and their homelands, not a barrier to their movements and enduring ties.

Indirectly related to movement but suffice to illustrate the same point, buzz words such as (sustainable) development in the Pacific has a similar history. The west gives it an identity; a name to an ancient practice making it look as if such an understanding does not exist in Oceania. David Gegeo (1998) presents a compelling case based over years of living and research in his West Kwara'ae community, Malaita, Solomon Islands to illustrate my point. He found that while *diflopmen* (development) "as a word, as concept and practice" (1998:300) became part of the discourse in 1960s and 1970 it (*diflopmen*) has always been part of the

Kwara'ae culture. In his interviews with the Kwara'ae community in 1990, the villagers provided him “with more than thirty local words – all of them rhetoric – that embrace the concept and practice of *diflopmen*” (Ibid). Tellingly, this reinforces the fact that local people have some ideas of what *diflopmen* is for them.

Before closing this section, my purpose in the last approach on transnationalism is to highlight how identity and ideologies imposed on Samoa in particular and Oceania in general from outside have been taken as being locally-constructed. This is a central theme in this study that necessitated the choice of the humanist approach I discuss at the end of this chapter, as the appropriate one for my study. As Micronesian historian Vicente Diaz (1996) says, and I say with him, that stories of self and suffering of the self allows colonised people to think of colonisation differently. That is, not to deny its existence but a source of inspiration for a renewed life ahead for the affected.

### **2.3 The conventional markers of Samoa's development**

#### *Economic markers*

Samoa's integration into the world economy through the influence of the early European settlers, the work of the missionaries, the colonial administrations and post-independence leadership, saw the emergence of an array of descriptors to portray the country and to measure her performance against. Through a western education system and the results of Samoa fostering partnerships with financial institutions offshore have introduced new ideas and philosophies with a 'development wrapper' to move the country forward. These imply that Samoa needs to move away from an unfavourable situation to something better. For Samoa to be self-sufficient and become a part of the enlarged world economy, she needs to develop its natural resource base for export to earn income. This aim means several fundamental re-orientations in thinking and national planning.

Samoa's living base has always been subsistence agriculture. However, Samoa's Agriculture census for example suggests that Samoans plant for home consumption as well as to sell (SBS 2012). The first commercial agriculturally-

based enterprises in Samoa were the large-scale coconut plantations that the German colonial administration started. This undertaking needed labour supply that could only be sourced from offshore and it was subsequently filled by recruits from China and the Solomon Islands (Meleisea 1980). Understandably, copra became Samoa's important export commodity especially in the lead up to her political independence in 1962 (Department of Island Territories, 1957). Besides copra, bananas and cocoa were other exportable crops of significant value. These crops were cultivated almost entirely along semi-subsistence lines by individual farmers and their families. This speaks of the resilience of Samoans who were seen as lazy natives by the early Europeans (Meleisea 1987a).

Post-independence policies were directed to strengthening and diversifying Samoa's agricultural base to cater for local as well as export needs. This desire was a matter of government priority given a noticeable growth in Samoa's population; on average of 3.8 percent between 1961 and 1966 when compared to 1.2 percent for the 1945-1956 period (Amosa 2012:10). Further, the diversification of agricultural products and import substitution were high on the government agenda. Part of this ambitious approach was to develop the manufacturing and tourism sectors and to create a favourable environment to attract foreign investment.

As a new nation and a young player in the global economic sphere, Samoa faced challenges in the first decade of political independence. The government's expansionary expenditure policies that aimed to grow the country's agricultural base were constrained by limited investment. These constraints ushered in budget deficits, credit expansion and inflation. The impacts of the first round of the oil crisis in 1973, the knock-on effect of import prices and declining prices of Samoa's main exports did not help. Corrective measures came in the form of the IMF's structural adjustment programs. Despite the government's intentions, expected outcomes were not forthcoming (Browne and Scott 1989).

The early years of the 1980s were marked with high inflation and deficit balance of payments. According to Browne and Scott (1989), this was the result of several factors. Prices for copra hit the lowest in years while the total costs to

import could not be sustained without interventions. Less favourable weather conditions did not support export crops hence, intended outcomes remained a dream. Bananas, once an export commodity eventually fell off the radar completely during this time. In addition, fiscal and monetary measures introduced to discourage demand on imports, energy and capital equipment did not deliver anticipated results (Browne and Scott 1989).

In Samoa's Fifth Development Plan (DP5) 1985-1987, the government directed its attention to stimulate outputs in the agriculture, forestry, fishery sectors and to promote light industries related to these sectors and the tourism industry (Government of Samoa 1984). Several strategies were put in place to,

- create joint venture with foreign investors for commercial farming;
- improve exports for agricultural products;
- increase the supply of agricultural products to displace imports;
- upgrade of Faleolo International Airport and invest in more hotels; and
- strengthen the private sector to encourage investment.

Aggressive measures were taken to improve balance of payment results and overall performance. Government spending were tightened, private consumption restricted, domestic savings re-aligned to effect growth and credit was reduced. Gradual recovery in the international commodity prices led to the resurgence in copra prices and brought much relief and hope (Browne and Scott 1989).

Samoa was kept busy from the start of the 1990s when it came under the wrath of back-to-back natural events. First, came Cyclone Ofa in February 1990 then Cyclone Valerie, December 1991; and together, left behind in their trails enough reconstruction works for Samoa in millions of *tala* and rough roads to recovery. Then there was the *taro* leaf blight. The result of the blight saw annual earnings from *taro* export since 1970 in the tune of 18 million *tala* disappeared quietly (Government of Samoa 1995). At '*aiga*' level, the blight did not mean people had no food to eat. Rather, it encouraged them to use other readily available food substitutes that have been ignored. A study by Naidu and Mohammed (2003)

confirmed that *taro* leaf blight has led to the popularity of alternative starchy food crops such as *taamu* (giant *taro*) (*alocasia macrophiza*), *taro palagi* (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*), yams (*Dioscoria alta*), *ulu* (breadfruit) (*Artocarpus altilis*) and bananas (*Musa spp*) in cultural exchanges and for income.

Since the turn of the century in 2000, the government continued with its reforms from the previous decade. Efforts were consolidated to build on achievements gained and to effect sustainable growth and resilience in the economy. Several sectors continue to be the target for accelerated growth such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, private and public sectors such as tourism. The country continued to face natural disasters such as cyclones, flooding and *tsunami*. Yet, during all these calamities and economic struggles, Samoans residing overseas demonstrated their *alofa* through remittances. In fact, monetary and in-kind support for individual ‘*aiga*, *nu’u* (village) *lotu* (church) and the nation as a whole, remained strong. This *alofa*, a narrative of love is twisted in the language of development economics, as simply remittances.

Like all the other major natural disasters, Samoans overseas stood by their ‘*aiga* through their unfailing *alofa* expressed, both in food and non-food and a strong moral support base. At the time of fieldwork in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa, study participants made repeated references to donating tinned foodstuff, money, clothes and whatever else they could afford during national donation drives for the affected communities. Although they are not related to the people, to the study participants, such is the “nature of a Samoan; you give from your heart. It does not matter if you know them” (Field notes Aotearoa/New Zealand 2011 and Samoa 2012).

Samoa’s population is growing: 176,710 (2001), 180,741 (2006) and 187,820 (2011) according to Samoa’s Bureau of Statistics (SBS) (2006). The country’s low population growth rates are attributed to high out-migration and decreased fertility rates (SBS 2011:15). Although Samoans move to neighbouring American Samoa, Australia, Fiji and the United States of America and other countries, the highest numbers move to New Zealand. Hence, there are more than 100,000

Samoans residing there and an emerging generation of New Zealand-born and based Samoans (Auckland Council 2013).

As discussed in chapter one, the signing of the Treaty of Friendship (ToF) in 1962 cemented historical relationship between Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand. The ToF facilitates movement and it has since been the main pathway that Samoans enter and find work in that country. ToF is the social, cultural, economic and political link between the two countries and Samoans residing in both places.

In addition, there are temporary labour mobility schemes: New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer (NZRSE) Scheme and Australia's Seasonal Worker Program (SWP). They provide avenues for Samoans to move overseas on a short-term basis. These work schemes target the horticultural sectors. Samoans also find work in various regional organisations based in Fiji and other Pacific Island countries.

The *alofa* of overseas-based Samoans in the form of remittances supplement family resources, keep *fa'aSamoa* kicking and sustain national coffer (see, Table 2.3). In good and in challenging times, this *alofa* makes the greatest difference to recovery and the overall well-being at the family and national levels (Central Bank of Samoa Annual Report 2011/2012).

**Table 2. 3: Remittances (in million *tala*)**

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
<b>Remittances</b>	91.9	86.9	152.8	277.7	390.0	418.6

(Central Bank of Samoa Annual Reports 1990; 1995; 2000; 2005; 2010; 2016).

At the national level, remittances averaged 20% of GDP in 1990-2003 (Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2008-2012). The values captured in Table 2.3 came from banks and private money transfer companies. It is likely that these figures are lower than the actual values since remittances are not just cash but also in-kind. They also flow through other means beside the official banking system. Remittances are also viewed in the form of new skills, ideas, information and training brought to Samoa

when people return or visit. This ‘soft’ aspect of remittances is yet to receive greater attention.

### *Social markers*

In the language of the Human Development Index (HDI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2013) described Samoa as achieving an acceptable placing in 2012 and 2013 in relation to her Pacific island neighbours. HDI is “a summary measure to assess long-term progress in the three dimensions of human development – long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standing of living” (UNDP 2015:2). In 2013, Samoa scored a HDI value of 0.694 which is in the medium human development category and placed Samoa in the 106<sup>th</sup> position of 187 countries and territories. Given the shortcomings of the per capita GDP to measure development, HDI became the acceptable alternative worldwide. The use of social indicators such as life expectancy, literacy and access to water and health services improve Samoa’s ranking when compared to per capita GDP indicator.

In the education sector, Samoa is doing well in some areas (Amosa 2012; PIFS 2015). It has achieved over 98 percent in adult literacy overall since 2001 and in 2012 achieved 99 percent for male and female. The 2012 performance compares Samoa well with countries of Oceania and some countries in the higher income group where adult literacy rate is 90.3 percent (Amosa 2012:16). There are contributing factors to this performance. The church, especially *Aoga Faifeau* (Pastor’s school) deserves credit as it is one of the forces behind the teaching of children to read, write and do basic numeracy (Silipa 2003).

School enrolments fluctuate however. Enrolments at primary school recorded the highest of 90 percent, secondary school of 70 percent and 10 percent for tertiary for 2012. This has been the pattern since the late 1998 (Amosa 2012:17). This being the case, Samoa has done well at the primary level but more work is needed to maintain this performance at the secondary and tertiary levels. Enrolment in the primary level speaks of a successful partnership between the government of Samoa and AusAID and NZAid through the Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme (SSFSGS) since 2010 (Chan Tung 2012). Through this scheme, primary school students in government and

mission schools pay subsidised tuition and enrolment fees. However, parents still pay for lunch, school uniforms and other related expenses. Parents' support to encourage their children to stay in school is also needed.

The health sector remains a priority area for Samoa. The government is committed to improving the delivery of clinical services in the country and strengthening its policy and legislation arm. Through the Public Service Institutional Strengthening Program (PSISP) in 1998, the Ministry of Health implemented a restructure that divided the ministry in two linked entities – the Ministry of Health (MH) arm tasked with the development of legislation and policy directions and the National Health Services (NHS) division to oversee the provision of clinical services from government-owned health facilities (Government of Samoa 2008).

A new national hospital at Moto'otua was opened in July 2013. This was the first phase of a two-phase multi-million project financed through a loan from the Chinese government (Tupuola 2013). The final phase was completed in 2015. It includes a three storey building to house the Emergency, General and Outpatient units, specialist clinics and a learning center. The learning center facility supports the clinical component of the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree programme of the Oceania University of Medicine (OUM) that was established at Moto'otua in 2002 and it is now the medical faculty of the National University of Samoa. To the Prime Minister of Samoa, investment in the new hospital re-affirms his government's vision to achieve a quality life for all Samoans (Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2012-2016).

While health indicators suggest that Samoa is progressing well, more work is still needed. Life expectancy figures are consistent for males and females as Table 2.4 shows. Females continue to outlive their male counterparts since 2009.



**Table 2. 4: Health indicators**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Life expectancy at birth					
• Male	69	69	70	70	70
• Female	75	76	76	76	77
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	16	16	16	16	16
Immunisation					
• DPT (% of children aged 12-23 months)	72	87	91	92	95
• Measles (% of children aged 12-23 months)	49	61	67	85	99

*DPT*: stands for diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus. A child is immunised adequately after receiving all three doses of vaccine. *Measles*: a child is immunised adequately after receiving one dose of vaccine.

(World Bank 2012)

Infant mortality rate has not changed since 2009 although efforts remain to reduce this number further. Immunisation in the five year period reported shows reasonable results however it is an area that significant improvements can be made.

Non-communicable diseases (NCD) are a concern for the health ministry. Cases of high blood and diabetes are high for Samoa; and together absorb a sizeable proportion of government budget (Amosa 2012:18). Statistics available on NCD in Table 2.5 shows a consistently high number of diabetes cases recorded.

**Table 2. 5: Cases of Non-communicable Diseases**

	Diabetes Mellitus	Respiratory/cardiovascular disorders specific to perinatal period	Malignant neoplasms (cancers)
2001/2002	283	258	-
2002/2003	248	266	200
2003/2004	259	261	239
2004/2005	222	202	-
2005/2006	264	232	182
2006/2007	511	-	-

(Government of Samoa 2014).

While this pattern parallel neighbouring island countries, it speaks of an ongoing issue that needs turning on its head. It is an unintended outcome of Samoans changing eating habits based on processed food items. NCD overall is the main cause of mortality of a relatively young population.

Since the 1998 restructure, the Ministry of Health is content of a renewed development in the health sector. It is by way of its health promotion and preventative health initiatives that aimed to control and reduce NCD cases nationwide. While success is possible, it remains to be seen in the future. It also requires an entire overhaul of established attitudes in other areas of life such as education and lifestyle choices for instance besides health.

#### *Migration-development marker*

Given the attention on the conventional markers of Samoa, it is not surprising that it has perpetuated the thinking that migration is the main driver and the ‘new development mantra’ (Kapur 2004; Ratha 2007; de Haas 2001a; 2001b; 2005; 2008; 2010) of, and for society. Along this vein, migration is seen as an economic ‘panadol’. This economic view is supported by the development giants of the world such as the IMF (Jones 2012) and World Bank (2006). These institutions have committed funding to produce research that supports this perspective the world over. Many publications have emerged as a result (see, Brown and Connell 1995; Brown and Connell 2004a, 2004b; Sriskandarajah 2005; Brown and Connell 2006a, 2006b; Brown 2008; Chappell et al 2010; Kaitani et al 2011; Ratha and Silwal 2012; Jimenez and Brown 2013; Brown et al 2014). The de-emphasis of other aspects of migration does not help our understanding. Neglecting the social cultural meaning of migration and/or giving it a broad brush trapped us in the confines of narrow frames.

My personal experiences as a researcher in two Global Development Network (GDN) projects, the Impact of Rich Countries Policies, 2004 to 2007 and the Development on the Movement, 2008 to 2011 showed that the cultural dimension of movement is given a broad brush. Because the cultural understanding of movement is largely ignored in current migration analyses, little of it is appreciated in or applied to policy formulation. Its status is inferior when compared to the robust and quantifiable econometrics used in most migration studies. The development-migration nexus that dominates our thinking should not be taken without critique. A culturally-sensitive approach is a framework that can contribute to this in order to broaden the scholarly conversation on meanings of Samoan population movement. I discuss this cultural perspective, *fa’aSamoa*, in the next section. The cultural view

constitutes a large part of the humanist perspective that this study adopts. An attempt to link the two is presented towards the end of the chapter.

## 2.4 The Fa'a Samoa worldview

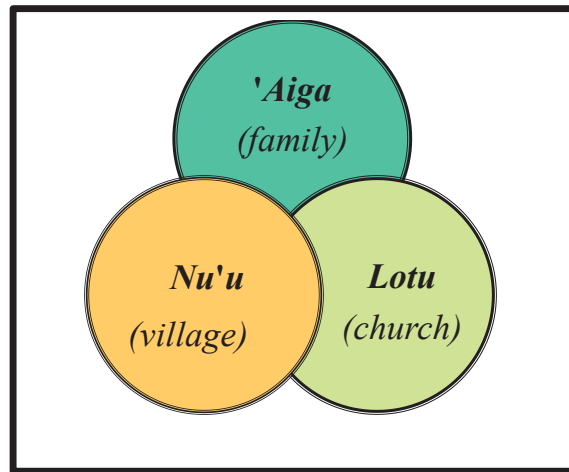
When taken at face value, *fa'aSamoa* represents a way of life and a way of knowing (Lilomaiaava-Doktor 2004:9). Accordingly, *fa'aSamoa* is a set of interpretative practices where an understanding of common practices and symbols are shared and negotiated. Therefore, differences of opinion on aspects of *fa'aSamoa* are expected. However, there is a consensus that *fa'aSamoa* is an intellectual tool to understanding the world and relationships that Samoans have with one another, the church, outsiders and the environment (Lilomaiaava-Doktor 2004).

Samoan historian Malama Meleisea (1987b:17) conceives of *fa'aSamoa* as a “framework for action based upon the social structures of ‘*aiga*, *nu'u* and the authority of *matai* (chiefs and orators) and *fono* (village council)”. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi (cited in Field 1991:20), posits that *fa'aSamoa* is more accurately defined as:

a body of custom and usage. It is a mental attitude to God, to fellow men and his surroundings. It is a distinctive lifestyle. It is not the physical makeup, the mood or passion of one man. It is a collection of spiritual and cultural values that motivates people. It is the heritage of a people. *Fa'aSamoa* provides individuals, the ‘*aiga* and the *nu'u* with an identity and a place in society with carefully defined, but unwritten roles and rules.

I attempt in Figure 2.1 to show the overlapping and interlocking relationships of three pillars of *fa'aSamoa*. Each pillar – ‘*aiga* (extended family), *nu'u* (village) and *lotu* (church) – is mutually connected to each other; collectively they keep the heart of *fa'aSamoa* beating. This attempt to show *fa'aSamoa* pictorially is in line with the late Professor Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa's (1993) conceptualisation of the concept.

**Figure 2. 1: Pillars of Fa'aSamoa**



I consider the church an important pillar of *fa'aSamoa* given its prominence in the lifeways of Samoans. More importantly, church plays spiritual and social cultural roles in Samoan communities abroad as noted by Va'ai (2012). The lives of Samoans in Samoa and overseas evolve around *fa'aSamoa*. It is where they invest their time and resources. It is a place Samoans resort for refuge in times of need. It is also through this nexus that their movements are anchored.

Like other cultures, *fa'aSamoa* is a living and evolving culture. A report by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) (2010:17) suggested that cultural differences exist in countries of Oceania because of their peoples moving overseas and back for years. As a result, cultures of Oceania evolve significantly over time, both in the islands and abroad, as people respond to changing sociocultural, political, economic and physical environment. Being responsive to contemporary demands, Samoans negotiate through and within the pillars of *fa'aSamoa* to make it relevant to their present situations (Lilomaiva-Doktor 2004:74). *Fa'aSamoa* responds strategically to challenges and opportunities associated with socioeconomic and macroeconomic changes, new ideas and innovations of the time. Thus, Toma (2001:130) concludes that some aspects of *fa'aSamoa* may change due to new ways of living. He cautions however, that these aspects do not disappear totally, because a Samoan version of the same has evolved that is suitable to circumstances of the present day. Today, *fa'aSamoa* is best described by the saying: *E tele faiga ae tasi le fa'avae*, meaning there is one foundation but many ways to express it. Restating the

same differently, a cultural expression is varied but the spirit of this expression is one and unchanging (Va'a 2006:115).

## 2.5 Pillars of *Fa'aSamoa*

Given their importance to Samoans, a discussion of three pillars of *fa'aSamoa* is necessary at this junction. I examine them because it is through these that Samoans understand and give meaning to their movements and social reality.

### *'Aiga*

As a worldview, *Fa'aSamoa* conceives that every Samoan is a *suli* (member) of *'aiga potopoto* (extended family). Every Samoan belongs to two extended *'aiga*; of *tina* (mother) and *tama* (father). Therefore, *'aiga* consists of a large clan comprising of all descendants of a common female or male ancestor. Le Tagaloa (1993:118) reaffirmed that no one is a commoner in Samoa when saying: “*e te tu fanua i lau amio, ae le o lou gafa*” (a Samoan is a commoner only in behaviour and speech). Membership in *'aiga* is for life even if an individual acts or thinks otherwise. Tarcisius Kabutaulaka (2015:198) makes similar observations in his society in the Solomon Islands. Being born into a clan, *manukiki*, he “is a *manukiki* clan for life”. A resident of Faleapuna, Samoa (WMCS9) shared his views of his *'aiga* during field work in 2012 as follows:

A Samoan is anyone that is either full or part. He/she is a *suli* of *'aiga*, a heir to a *matai* title on his/her parents' sides. Being a *suli* means he/she is a part of *'aiga* for life. Every Samoan has a *tofi* (place) and *fa'asinomaga* (roles) to play in *'aiga* and *nu'u*. *E leai se tagata e noa i Samoa* [Nobody is of no account in Samoa]. The responsibilities and obligations that come with these, though unwritten, are well defined and understood by all Samoans. These roles and expectations are learned as one grows up from observing parents and participating in activities in the community (Field notes Samoa 2012).

What underpins an individual's lifetime membership is the belief that '*aiga* is *ivi* (bones), *toto* (blood) and *aano* (flesh). *Toto e tasi* (one blood) relates to the blood connection of an individual to '*aiga*. *Tino e tasi* (one body) is *gafa* (genealogy). Blood and social links connect individuals and '*aiga* to other individuals and '*aiga*, their genealogies (past, present and future) and to the supernatural world (Ta'isi 2008). In other words, '*aiga* consists of blood and social relations that interact with other '*aiga* thus, '*aiga* relations grow in depth and breadth over time. Samoan scholar Melani Anae (1999:1) describes that "we [Samoans] are carrying out the genealogies of our ancestors ... over time and space".

It is through genealogical connections that an individual is entitled to *fanua* (land) and *suafa matai* (chief titles) of '*aiga*. The same observation holds for the Solomon Islands according to Gegeo and Gegeo-Watson (2001), Konai Thaman (2003) in Tonga and Teweiariki Teaero (1999, 2003) for Kiribati. Every '*aiga* has its own *fanua* and *suafa matai*. Such is why familial relations are not only sacred to every '*aiga* and jealously guarded by all. It explains why some families fight, take legal action and sometimes die in the name of '*aiga*, *fanua* and *suafa matai*.

In *fa'a Samoa* every Samoan is not only a *suli* of '*aiga* but an inseparable part of the whole. Therefore, an individual is never singular as Samoan novelist Sia Figiel (1996:135) emphasises in her writing.

'I' does not exist.

I am not.

My self belongs not to me because 'I' does not exist.

'I' is always 'we',  
is part of the '*aiga*.

Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi (2008:80) echoes this thinking when he says:

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* (inheritance) with my family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family and my family belongs

to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my belonging.

Every 'aiga has its own *paia ma mamalu* (sacred attributes) and *fa'alupega* (honorific salutations) that defines and differentiates one 'aiga from another. *Paia ma mamalu* and *fa'alupega* belong to each 'aiga for life and *suli* of 'aiga carry these with them. In other words, an individual is 'aiga; 'aiga is an individual; a two-sided self. Because of this understanding, it is culturally inappropriate for a Samoan to strike a conversation with another Samoan whom they never met before, by enquiring about names at the start. Rather, the questions are politely framed to find out about one's *nu'u* and 'aiga first and, the person's name later. Knowing *nu'u* and 'aiga of a person gives a clue to the background of another party and may lead to an explanation for the reason and meaning of a person's name.

In the world of *fa'aSamoa*, 'aiga motivates all behaviours, actions and events (Maiava 1998:120). The status of 'aiga is dependent on behaviour, actions and interactions of its members and their leader, *matai*. Therefore, *fa'aSamoa* aims at improving and enhancing all aspects of 'aiga, economically, socially and culturally (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2004:172). Samoans derive a great deal of identity from their 'aiga (Macpherson and Macpherson 2000:30). It is taken then that self-esteem of a Samoan is related to the place of one's 'aiga within the wider community and being a member of a respectable 'aiga is an important goal (Maiava 1998:120).

*Matai* is the head of each 'aiga *potopoto* (extended family) who is officially appointed by adult members of 'aiga in a ceremony called *saofai* or *nofo* (chief title investiture). *Matai* mostly a male, but not always, looks after *fanua* (land) and *suafa matai* (chief titles) and the welfare of 'aiga *potopoto*. *Fanua* and *suafa matai* belong to an extended family, not to a holder of a *matai* title. Therefore, decisions over the use of land and the bestowal of chief titles lie within 'aiga *potopoto*. *Matai* represents 'aiga in village council meeting which is made up of *matai* from other 'aiga of a village. With the authority vested in *matai*, as a group, they look after the resources of their 'aiga and the entire village. In turn they shoulder the responsibility for the welfare of all members of the community.

At the heart of ‘*aiga* and *fa’aSamoa* are values and virtues – *alofa* (love); *tautua* (service); *fa’aaloalo* (respect) and *fetufa’ai* (reciprocity) for examples. Samoans serve and respect their *matua* (parents and grandparents), *matai* and ‘*aiga*. Respect for elders is unquestioned and Samoans see them as a source of blessing or curse. This explains why Samoans are reluctant to take their elders to an old people’s home. Referring to Tonga, educationist ‘Ana Koloto (2006) argues that, children are unwilling, unless in critical situations, to put their elderly parents in an old people’s home. Like Tongans, Samoans are obliged to look after their parents. Anyone who fails to serve and show respect to their elders is considered to be *le mafaufau* (incapable of mature thought) (Macpherson and Macpherson 2000:31). Children from their young age are conditioned to listen attentively and to obey and respect their parents and elders. Failure to do so invites discipline.

Respect can be illustrated through *feagaiga* (sacred covenant) that governs relationship between brothers and sisters and male and female relations. Brothers have a sacred and special respect for their sisters, their *feagaiga*. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi (2008:110-111) explains that “*feagaiga* is both status and covenant”. It emphasises the indigenous Samoan principles of gender and the social and political organisation of an ancient Samoan society. This special relationship and respect stipulates that brothers have an obligation to provide for, and look after their sisters as well as their sister’s children.

In return, sisters are expected to play the roles of *pae ma le auli* (peace maker; mediators), family councillors to maintain peace and harmony in the family. The brother/sister, male/female relationships is at the root of the concept of *va tapuia* (social space that relate). The nature of this relationship extends to other social settings such as meetings, where people’s relationships with one another are best kept at cordial level, *ia teu le va*, (to nourish, cultivate relationship between people) even when there are disagreements.

Embedded in respect is one’s *tautua* to others, ‘*aiga*, *nu’u* and *lotu*. The essence of *tautua* is captured in the saying, *O le ala i le pule o le tautua* (The path to power/leadership is service). After years of faithful *tautua* to *matai*, untitled men may in due course earn a *matai* title in his ‘*aiga*. In the knowledge that one day they



will be rewarded with *matai* title and enjoy the respect, service and honour that come with it, untitled men serve their ‘*aiga* dutifully, come what may. It is an investment into the future. As one respondent (CNS19) during fieldwork in Samoa described, “the best way to prepare and to mold future *matai* and leaders is to serve (*tautua*) ‘*aiga* first that when the time comes, they are ready to lead ‘*aiga* with love, honour, respect and humility”.

In contemporary Samoa, one’s *tautua* is fulfilled in many ways – by monetary contributions, *poto* (intelligence) and *malosi* (strength) to ‘*aiga* (Macpherson and Macpherson 2000:31). Participating in and contributing to *fa’alavelave* is part of one’s *tautua* to ‘*aiga*, *nu’u* and *lotu*. An individual’s contributions to *fa’alavelave* include, but not limited to money, mats, flowers, food items, talent and time. A Samoan is said to be *osi* ‘*aiga* (acknowledging genealogy) when they participate in *fa’alavelave* and always willing to offer moral support. During autobiographical *talanoaga* with a *matai* at the village of Vaiafai in Savaii, he captured this notion when he said:

*O ‘aiga Samoa e matitiva fesagai. O le Samoa osi ‘aiga e le tau fesili, e le tau faatonua i taimi e tupu ai fa’alavelave. E tu ma savali e saili ma alu e fesoasoani i tapenaga o le fa’alavelave. E le faia e tagata ese ni fa’alavelave o le ‘aiga. O tino, toto ma ivi o le ‘aiga e fa’atinoina fa’alavelave o ‘aiga* (Field notes Samoa 2012).

Samoa families share their material wealth in good and bad times. A Samoan does not need to be told what to do when there is *fa’alavelave* in ‘*aiga*. When a Samoan hears of *fa’alavelave*, they should know what to do. Get up and go to *fa’alavelave*. Strangers will not come to do *fa’alavelave* for ‘*aiga*. It is the family members – blood, bones and flesh – who do *fa’alavelave* instead.

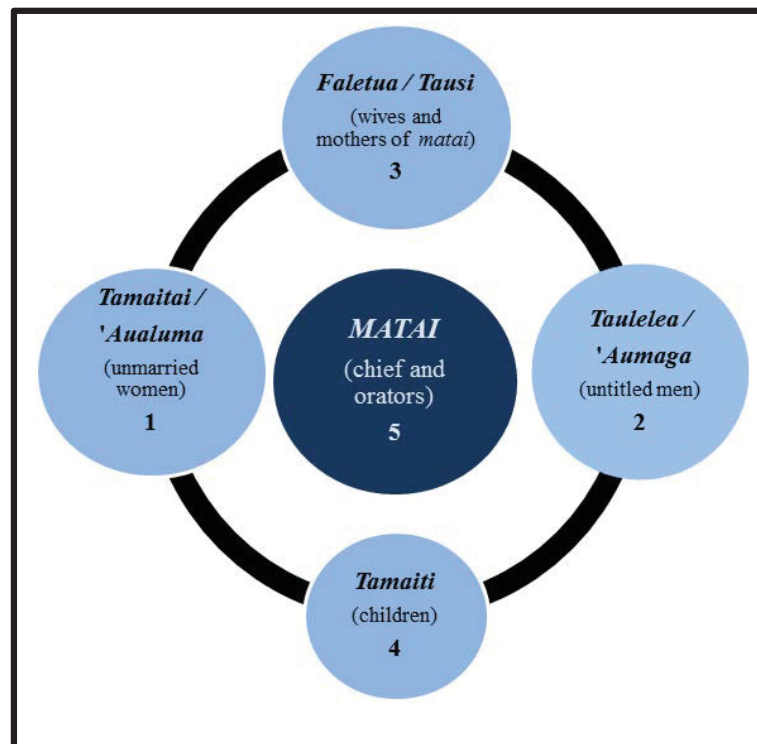
The distribution and gifting of material wealth also demonstrates values of *fa’aSamoa*. The saying, *E sili le manuia o le foai i lo le talia* (Greater are the blessings on the giver than the receiver) which originates from the Christian belief, speaks of giving and sharing of gifts as a symbol and an expression of

one's *alofa* and *tautua* at *fa'alavelave*. In gift exchange, a receiver is expected to reciprocate *alofa* in one way or the other at a later time. Reciprocation can be transferred among members of 'aiga and a recipient can be different from the family member who provided *alofa* in the first place (Macpherson and Macpherson 2000). Therefore, gift exchange is a form of social and economic security; an investment for 'aiga. For *matai*, gifting means higher status and influence of his 'aiga in the village setting. Thus, exchanges between his 'aiga and village is treated with care to nurture the *va* as well as to maintain the good name of 'aiga in the community.

### *Nu'u*

All villages in Samoa are not of the same size by population count or land area. Meleisea (1987a:29) explains that "each village has its own traditions and system of political organization". What exists in each village is a *fa'amatai* system (system of *matai*) which forms the basis of *fa'aSamoa*. Figure 2.2 illustrates this which I borrowed from Le Tagaloa's 1993 study.

**Figure 2. 2:** *Itu tino o le nu'u: clusters of a village*



Just as every Samoan is a member of an extended family, an individual also belongs to one of the five clusters of a *nu'u* as Figure 2.2 shows. The clusters can be conceived as *itu tino o le nu'u* (body parts of a village). Numbered in no particular order, each cluster has its own roles to play and responsibilities to fulfil for the general good and well-functioning of a village.

*Tamaitai/Aualuma* consists of the young daughters, married and unmarried women of a village. They are the “healers, *pae ma le auli*, teachers and *fai oa* (makers of currency and wealth)” (Le Tagaloa 1993:118); and *feagaiga*. *Feagaiga* is sacred in Samoa. It governs relationship between a brother and his sister as well as between male and female relatives in ‘*aiga*. The nature of this relationship demands that brothers and male relatives of a family look after their sisters, daughters and female relations at all costs.

*Taulelea/Aumaga* are sons and untitled men of a village. Known as the backbone of a village, they are often referred to as *malosi o le nu'u* (strength of the village). The village depends on the physical strength of this group to carry out hard work and their support in times the village needs help. Their domains consist of but not limited to the cultivation of land, collection of seafood, building houses, making tools and weapons and cook and serve food. They also protect the village from outside troubles. Their *tautua* to *matai* of their ‘*aiga* and village at large, prepares them for position of responsibilities and leadership that come with an award of a *matai* title one day.

*Faletua/Tausi* consists of wives of *matai* and mothers of the village. They play an advisory role for their husbands, brothers and sons who are *matai*. They also carry out decisions by *matai* in relation to the general hygiene and hosting *au malaga* (travelling party) and other visitors to the village. They work hand in hand with their daughters and other female members of cluster one to maintain peace and harmony in the community.

School children and toddlers form the fourth cluster. Children as long as they are in school belong to this group. Once they leave school or find employment, they join clusters one or two. As a group, their role is to assist whenever help is needed by

members of other clusters to carry out light duties such as picking up rubbish and as messengers or delivery boys and girls.

Occupying the last cluster, *matai* are decision makers. This customary political system is called *fa'amatai*. They form the village council (*fono*) under the Village Fono Act 1990. The roles of council are, but not limited to discussing emerging issues and concerns, approves requests for certain village projects and decide on rules and penalties. They administer and control internal affairs of the village. The village council makes decisions for the overall good of the village and ensures that critical decisions are implemented. The village council also maintains discipline, resolves disputes and gives out punishments to those who disregard orders and disturb peace and harmony. They liaise with the Internal Affairs division of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSO) concerning development projects and other capital work such as regular cleaning of *auala galue* (road to plantation) and carrying out *asiasiaga o maumaga* (inspections of plantations) of *taulelea/aumaga*.

#### *Lotu*

The flexibility of *fa'aSamoa* enables it to adapt to changes. The Christian missionaries brought the new religion to Samoa which became the third pillar of *fa'aSamoa*. Keesing (1934:14) notes the integrative nature of Samoans and *fa'aSamoa* to new introductions such as religion, politics, law and language. Samoans did not just accept Christianity and allowed it to remold their lives to its form. Rather, they took the new religion and adapted it to suit *fa'aSamoa*. Samoa's Constitution is clear on the central place of *lotu* in *fa'aSamoa* (Government of Samoa 1960).

In the Holy Name of God, The Almighty, The Everloving

Whereas sovereignty over the Universe belongs to the Omnipresent God alone, and the authority to be exercised by the people of Western Samoa within the limits prescribed by His commandments is a sacred heritage;

Whereas the Leaders of Western Samoa have declared the Western Samoa should be an Independent State based on Christian principles and Samoan custom and tradition;

Now, therefore, we the people of Western Samoa in our Constitutional Convention, this 28<sup>th</sup> day of October 1960, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution.

*(Preamble to the Constitution of the Independent State of Western Samoa 1960)*

The official government crest of Samoa has the motto: *Fa'avae i le Atua Samoa* (Samoa is founded on God) inscribed below it.

The *faiifeau* (church minister; missionary) is considered of equal in status to *Tamaitai/ 'Aualuma*. *Faiifeau* are referred to as *fa'afeagaiga* (covenant). In principle, it is similar to a covenant between a brother and a sister or male and female relations. Through *fa'aSamoa*, *faiifeau* are guaranteed maximum protection in villages they serve and are given privileges and rights of *tamaitai* (Le Tagaloa 1993). They are also given the best of what *'aiga* have in term of material wealth, prestige and social status.

Besides membership of *'aiga* and *nu'u*, every Samoan belongs to one Christian denomination. There are three mainstream churches – Catholic Church of Samoa (CCS), Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) and Methodist Church of Samoa (MCS). However, denominations have diversified from “six in the 1960s to almost triple in number by 2006” (Va'ai 2012:83).

An impressive imprint of church is evident on Samoa's landscape. Church buildings and homes of *faiifeau* come in large sizes and eye-catching architectural designs. It is not unusual for one village to have more than one Christian denomination. These buildings add another layer and colour to village landscape and frills to daily life. Church buildings and homes of *faiifeau* are popular meeting and socialising places for a village. Learning and teaching of *fa'aSamoa* also takes place there. Parents, in the

past used to send their children to homes of *faifeau* to learn *tu ma aga* (Samoan customs and traditions) and *gagana* (Samoan language) (Meleisea 1987a). Homes of *faifeau* are also places of refuge for children under the wrath of discipline by their parents and for some *'aiga* in times of domestic disputes.

Samoans and their lifeways evolve around the church. Samoans conceive of their *tautua* to the church in the same light as that to their *'aiga* and *nu'u*. They invest in the church where they find meaning and refuge in, and through it. Missionary work has also thrived beyond Samoa. Churches are parts of the social and cultural fabric of Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America where Samoans reside. The church does not only meet spiritual needs of Samoans there but more so a social cultural haven for migrants away from home. Churches overseas are also places where Samoan students on government scholarship or Samoans on business or personal visits go to for fellowship and to find company and support.

## **2.5 Links and Continuities of *Fa'aSamoa***

The world of *fa'aSamoa* is alive. It is practised and lived. Samoans live *fa'aSamoa* through *fa'alavelave* in their *'aiga*, *nu'u* and *lotu*. *Fa'alavelave* is a generic term given to all life events that range from an *aso fanau* (birthday), a *maliu* (funeral) or an occasion of national reach as in the case of the 1918 influenza epidemic, 2009 *tsunami* or cyclones. At the time of fieldwork in Samoa, a youth of this study participant's (CNS8) *'aiga* in the village of Leulumoega-tuai was fined by the village council for breaking village rules. The young lad, under the 'influence of happiness' insisted to walk through the village during *sa* (evening curfew). Being agitated that *aumaga* (untitled men) on duty did not allow him through had led to the drama. The village council imposed a fine of \$100 *tala* on the *matai* of the young lad's *'aiga* and required them to provide lunch for the council's next sitting. At the time of my fieldwork, the *'aiga* 'in trouble' referred to this *fa'alavelave* as their first for the year (2012).

By its very nature, *fa'alavelave* includes small and big; happy and sad events. They are 'all seasons' of Samoan lived experience. Rather than trying to be an all-encompassing, Table 2.6 shows the diversity of *fa'alavelave*. In no order of importance, Samoans at the time of fieldwork in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa referred to these events as constituting their movements to and back and reasons for sending and receiving money to/from their 'aiga.

It is through *fa'alavelave* that Samoans acknowledge and strengthen their genealogies and form new ones. Samoans participate in and contribute to *fa'alavelave* unselfishly knowing that it is through *fa'alavelave* they serve 'aiga, *nu'u* and *lotu*; hence it is a cultural investment and a social security. *Fa'alavelave* is a celebration of family bonding and relationship building that provides social and economic security while maintaining pride in one's 'aiga, genealogy and community.

**Table 2. 6: Extensions of *Fa'aSamoa*; *fa'alavelave***

Ceremonial events	Meaning/Purpose
<i>aitalafu</i>	taking goods on credit
<i>aso fanau</i>	Birthday
<i>fa'aipoipoga</i>	Wedding
<i>fa'asalaga</i>	punishment; fine
<i>fa'atasiga a aiga</i>	family reunion
<i>fa'aulufalega</i>	a dedication ceremony of a new building: church, home, school
<i>fa'auuga</i>	graduation ceremony
<i>faiga o le flea makeki</i>	things to sell at, or for the flea market
<i>Fonotaga a Malua</i>	meeting of pastors of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
<i>Fonotaga a Piula</i>	meeting of pastors of the Methodist Church of Samoa
<i>lotu fa'amanatu</i>	a family's commemoration service/day
<i>lotu talosaga</i>	a family's prayer service/day
<i>maliu</i>	funeral
<i>nofo</i>	chief investiture
<i>pasese</i>	Fare
<i>pepa malaga</i>	immigration/travel papers
<i>pepa liliu</i>	legal fees to adopt children
<i>pili aoga</i>	school fees
<i>saofai</i>	chief investiture
<i>talaga teu</i>	unveiling
<i>tausiga o matua</i>	to look after parents
<i>umusaga</i>	a dedication ceremony of a new building: church, home, school

(Field notes Aotearoa/New Zealand 2011 and Samoa 2012)

Not all *fa'alavelave* are the same. What and how much is involved depends on the nature of *fa'alavelave* and how closely related are people involved. Maiava (2001:92) offers an insight into what is involved in a *fa'alavelave*, a funeral at the time of her research on cattle farming in Samoa.

There are two groups, the host group (such as the immediate family of the deceased) and a visitor group who come to pay their last respects to the deceased. The visitors bring gifts of fine mats, cash and food to the host group. In return they receive various gifts such as fine mats, money, food, cooked pigs, cartoons of tinned fish and cooked food as take away.

Hooper (1998:27) outlines that

both men and women are involved, with the exchange of goods being gendered in two categories of *toga* (mainly fine mats, but also cloth and oils) and *oloa* (nowadays, pigs, *taro*, *ava*, cash and purchased items such as salted beef, canned herrings and biscuits). The exchange goods of each side are gathered together from 'aiga and household sources according to set levies, with all contributions recorded. The two sides meet, orators vying with one another over matters of precedence, the gifts and counter gifts are presented (again with everything being recorded by both sides) and redistributions finally made by each side amongst its 'aiga and households. Although stylized and formal, such ceremonies are not stodgy. They are crowded performances at operatic scale, full of movement, dancing, competition and humor.

## **2.6 Reactions to *Fa'aSamoa* in action**

There are as many negative as positive accounts of *fa'aSamoa* and *fa'alavelave*. Samoans and foreigners alike express their discontent with what they describe as an excessive financial obligation of *fa'alavelave*. To them, wages from hard sweat which can be used productively or saved is spent on *fa'alavelave*. Besides, attending



*fa'alavelave* disrupts business and affects farm productivity. This view is no different from the proponents of the modernisation school who suggests that culture (*fa'aSamoa*) and cultural practices such as *fa'alavelave* are a waste of time. To achieve economic progress, countries however, need to get rid of their culture.

O'Meara (1993:154) asserts that *fa'alavelave* is a living testimony of Samoa's adaptation to suit their present needs. Money from 'aiga residing overseas is used to acquire store-bought goods; they are reciprocated for the local goods. Everyone gets a share of food and money during these exchanges. The cultural meaning and practices of *fa'aSamoa* are "... constantly re-negotiated and contested by groups" (Lilomaiva-Doktor 2004:151) as they engage in reconciling and re-evaluating their beliefs and values of *fa'aSamoa* in the context of their present circumstances. Therefore, she argues that,

*fa'aSamoa* is constantly being negotiated as Samoans seek to achieve a balance between capitalist and western culture on the one hand, and its own cultural imperatives on the other. Samoans believe their culture has served them well even for the last 200 years since contact with Europeans. They uphold their culture with pride and honor (Lilomaiva-Doktor 2004:346).

## **2.7 Conventionalising a reciprocity and care-based Samoa**

I set out in this section to show how population movement and *fa'aSamoa* is portrayed in various shades in the literature. I draw on the conventional views of movement and how it is packaged in government and international donor publications and scholarly writings of individuals. My purpose is simply to illustrate how narrow the conventional view is and, for my study, strengthens its resolve to consider a cultural perspective.

Samoa is an 'aiga-based society whose membership resides in villages throughout Samoa and beyond. Rich in fertile soil resources and abundant marine life, Samoa's natural environment is her faithful lifeblood for sustenance. Samoa has developed a deep and intimate relationship with her natural environment. Not only it provides for

peoples' food and non-food needs but also presents a platform through which a rich culture, *fa'aSamoa* springs from. Samoan legends and sayings are derived from lived experiences of living and being in the environment. Two Samoan proverbs and expressions illustrate this point that I borrowed from Peteru and Percival (2010:8). First, *O Samoa o le i'a e iviivia a o le atunu'u ua uma ona tofia*. That is, Samoa "is like the deep sea fish, has a skeletal frame comprising of intertwining and interdependent fusions of flesh and bone". The second: *O Samoa ua ta'oto, a o se i'a mai moana, aua o le i'a a Samoa ua uma ona aisa*. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi (2013:5) offers a translation that the "inheritance of Samoans has been designated and preordained". These expressions are called upon in Samoan oratory to expound the complexities of the Samoan culture and it also shows the intimate link of *fa'aSamoa* and the environment. Therefore, wisdom of Samoa "sits in place" (Escobar 2001:142); buried in her soil and it is carried to places by her people.

Samoans conceive of their society beyond the biblical, historical and geological accounts of creation and island formation. Legend tells that Samoa's creation is linked to Tagaloa-a-lagi, the creator and God who resides in the *Va-nimonimo*, (open space) the Tenth Heaven, is not possible to view by the naked eye (Liki 2007). Samoan oral tradition suggests that Tagaloa-a-lagi pronounced, and Samoan people were created from within the fertile soil of Samoa (Lafai-Sauoaiga 2000; Tu'u'u 2001). Samoans also conceive of their genealogies as blood and social linkages that connect them to other divine being and other worlds, both the living and the departed. Since the arrival of Christianity, this perception has taken the back seat.

By all measures, Samoa's strength lies with *fa'aSamoa*. This cultural wealth sustains Samoa for many years before the Europeans arrived in the country (Lilomaiaava-Doktor 2004). The government of Samoa acknowledges in its Development Plans, now called the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) 2002-2004, maintains that the strength of Samoa is in its culture; *fa'aSamoa* is the premise upon which it builds the economy. In a multiple-authored UN (2002:2) report its authors agreed that "*fa'aSamoa* provides a natural social network that enabled political and social stability and a more broad-based social achievement".

Besides government publications, tourist brochures are the only other set of publication where *fa'aSamoa* is elevated as a distinctive feature of Samoa (Kennedy 2014). This speaks of the selective manner in which *fa'aSamoa* is portrayed to suit specific agendas. Casting *fa'aSamoa* in this commoditised light may lure tourists to Samoa however it will not do justice to this valuable body of knowledge to understand Samoa and its lifeworlds broader. It leads to gloss over of a much deeper meaning of, and substance about Samoa's being. The case of Hawaii comes to mind where the image of that country to the outside world is wrapped around swaying palm trees and *hula* dance. Waddell (1993:29) captures this in the following quote:

As long as we [the Hawaiians] keep the keys to the treasures of our temples, we remain spiritually rich indeed. If we give those keys to curious *haole* they will rob us of our knowledge and render us poor. What we know, and they don't know, is the only thing we have left.

The same is evident in the cultures of other countries in Oceania that were constructed in tourist brochures, the names that people bear and their land and customs (see, Hau'ofa 1985; Baba 1986; Lal 1992; Kaplan 1995; Nicole 1996; Puamau 1998). I shall return to this discussion at the end of this chapter. But suffice to make the point at this junction that I do not attempt to reconstitute this understanding of cultures in Oceania, but rather to see them as one that cannot capture the full meaning and nuances of the different cultures in Oceania generally and *fa'aSamoa* in particular.

## **2.8 The Humanist Approach: suitable 'flowers'**

It is clear from the search this far that a cultural interpretation is needed for a complete and complimentary understanding of movement and its wider implication in reciprocity and care-based Samoa. As the focus of this section shows, the humanist approach provides just that. The humanist movement began in 1970s in the social sciences (Seamon and Lundberg 2015) fuelled by the awareness that social, economic and political conditions of some countries showed worse signs than decades before despite planned interventions to reconstruct dilapidated post-war economies (Wise and Covarrubias 2009:87). It is also to do with more pressing

concerns in disciplines such as Geography about logical positivism that set geographers like Anne Buttimer (1980), Yi-Fu Tuan (1977;1980), in search for alternative perspectives. Louis Emmerij (2006:7), a former President of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) describes similar turns in development thought and practice as of 1970. This was a reaction to the tendency by neo-classical economists to apply their universal model unilaterally to all countries, neglecting the historical, institutional and cultural background of the countries in question. Unusual however, for a discipline steep in quantitative measures, this turn shows that econometric modelling breaks down in reality unless it is informed by holistic perspectives of human experiences that cannot be modelled or explained quantitatively.

The humanist approach emphasises the important place of *lived experiences* to understand the meaning of people's everyday activities (Buttimer 1980; 2003). In an interview with Maddrell (2009:751), Buttimer further argued that "one of the most important functions of humanism is to express humanity's emancipatory aims". It is the, "*cri de coeur* of humanity, voiced at times when some aspects of life and thought are ignored, oppressed or forgotten". The humanist view acknowledges that human life and experience is a "dynamic, multivalent structure that incorporates bodily, sensory, emotional, attitudinal, cognitive and transpersonal dimensions" (Seamon and Lundberg 2015:3). The lifeworld experience therefore is the sum of all; it is complex and fused with personal behaviours and activities that are locally and globally constituted (Chapman 1995).

Drawing on the lifeworld of Samoans in my study, reveals meanings of life experiences that are often given a casual, broad brush and taken for granted approach. While meta-narratives help to an extent, they tend to crowd out silent, yet legitimate voices that constitute people's diverse lived experiences and lifeways. Buttimer (1980) argues that scholarly procedures that separate subjects and objects, thoughts and actions, or people and environment are inadequate to investigate lifeworlds. But, metaphors of home and reach emphasise the rootedness of people in places despite their mobility (Lilomaiaava-Doktor 2004:34) and temporary places of residence.

It is fitting then that the humanist is the approach of choice as it acknowledges people's every day lived, complex and dynamic experiences. Movement is part and parcel of Samoans' lifeworld. It is not, as the discussion above shows, due to economic forces of modernisation and globalisation alone. The humanist approach to movement has a wider appeal in various studies to date: notable ones in continental Europe by Buttner (1980; 1985) and in the Pacific by late Bonnemaïson (1981), Chapman (1987; 1991; 1995), Chapman and Prothero (1984; 1985), Malpas (1999), Lilomaïava-Doktor (2004), Liki (2007) and Casey (2009). All insisted on the use of local metaphors and manners of thinking to understanding movement within the cultural milieu of the movers.

## **2.8 Ethno-biodiversity 'leaves' of Oceania: as reinforcement**

I draw on perspectives of indigenous scholars of Oceania to conclude this chapter. I conceive of their views as providing the necessary 'bark' of an ancient banyan tree to reinforce my garland. Their views add an 'Oceanic scent' with the good old-making-newer-again and fresher dimensions to the conventional lenses to studying population movement. The perspective they adopted reaffirms the place of a cultural understanding of movement as understood in reciprocity and care-based societies. Unfortunately, it has been viewed in narrow and suffocating frames of the west.

Samoan writer Albert Wendt's (1976) *Towards a New Oceania* piece sets the pace for a revolution in Pacific theorising and Pacific thought. It dismantles the artificial boundaries set in stone by western scholarship of a once-borderless region whose inhabitants crisis cross the vast Pacific Ocean as and when they please. It also recognises the power of knowledge in creating what has become an identity of Oceania imposed from outside. As a matter of urgency, it calls for more appropriate alternatives to recharter a course for Oceania and on terms that are anchored on their collective lived experiences and lifeways. Scholars such as Pitts and Macpherson (1974); Lieber (1977); Kaeppler (1978); Macpherson et al (1978) for example, talk of the urgency to bringing the cultural view to the fore to understanding movement of Pacific peoples.

Professor Murray Chapman's work in the Weather coast in the Solomon Islands since the 1970s shares some of Wendt's concerns for researching Oceania from within. The late Joel Bonnemaïson's (1985:30) work on the island of Tanna, Vanuatu testify to the power of local metaphor to understanding of population movement and suggested:

Can the tree, symbol of rootedness and stability, be reconciled with the canoe, symbol of journeying and unrestricted wandering? ... On the island of Tanna in Vanuatu, they say that man is a tree that must take root and stay fixed in its place. The local group, on the other hand, is a canoe that follows 'roads' and explores the wide world. For traditional society, this metaphor would not present a paradox.

Our Sea of Islands by the late Epeli Hau'ofa (1993) sent *tsunami* waves throughout the region and afar. Inclusivity is his draw card. He dispels the notion of dependency as negative and flawed. The notion of dependency and labels and descriptions, such as smallness, isolation and lacking of resources are belittling. These views instil in people a state of hopeless that cannot be broken. Hau'ofa (2008:30) maintains that seeing Oceania in deficits is an "economistic and geographic deterministic view of a narrow kind that overlooks culture, history and the contemporary process of what may be called the world enlargement". Whereas economic forces may drive people to move, others like those in Oceania on the other hand have always moved between islands to trade, to marry or to fight even before the current sea boundaries were devised by the recent arrivals who invented them (Ibid:30). To Hau'ofa (2008:35),

the islanders have broken out of their confinement, are moving around and away from their homelands, not so much because their countries are poor, but because they have been unnaturally confined and severed from any of their traditional sources of wealth, and *because it is in their blood to be mobile.*

Therefore, Oceania is not just a “sea of islands” (Hau’ofa 2008:31) but “a sea of families” (Gershon 2007:474). Oceania is diverse; it is not small. It is expanding; and it will continue to enlarge in the future.

If anything, the publication of *Our Sea of islands* has rekindled the fire among Oceania scholars to dive energetically deeper into their indigenous ways of knowing and to reclaim their validity to understanding social reality. Firstly, studies by Raymond Young in 1998 and 2015 in the island of Lakeba, Lau group, Fiji conceives population movement as always embodied and enacting connections. *Wakolo ni vanua* (pathway to land) and *wakolo ni veiwekani* (pathway to kinship) are ways to understanding the connection between places and movement in the Fijian culture. Understanding of movement and connections in the case of Lakeba, past and present, are connected to the pathways to land and kinship. Bennett (2015:16) describes that,

the essence of the Fiji culture, past and present are linked in these pathways, which can be activated in several ways but have a fluidity that can respond to changed circumstances... These metaphors of movement and connection are ideational, but in their material embodiment they are templates for action as well as reflections of social and reciprocal transactions.

Secondly, Sa’iliemanu Lilomaiaava-Doktor (2004) conceives of *malaga* of people of her village, Salelologa *iinei* and *fafo* as culturally driven. Reasons why Samoans move *iinei* and *fafo* evolve around *fa’alavelave* that strengthens familial ties and connections. In her 2015 article, *Samoan understandings of movement*, she examines “the oldest form of *malaga* that have great longevity and are deeply cultural” (2015:70). While the conventional approaches have been offering analyses for Samoa’s population movement, there exists in Samoa a culturally appropriate frame that embodies the complete story of people’s mobility and meaning to the movers.

Kalissa Alexeyeff (2009) argued that for the Cook Islanders *tere pati*, (travelling party) is an integral part of people’s lifeway prior to European contact. *Tere pati* were undertaken by people to neighbouring islands to forge and maintain social, economic and political ties. In all *tere pati*, exchange of gifts and other material

wealth is a vital part. However, this practice was banned by London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary to control island population and the colonial administrators viewed *tere pati* as “disconcerting and potentially disruptive to their governance” (Alexeyeff 2009:94).

Next, Tarcisius Kabutaulaka (2015) sees in his personal journey in the Solomon Islands Bonnemaison’s twin metaphor of rootedness to a place like a tree and mobility that is represented by the canoe. Kabutaulaka (2015:197-198) makes reference to local (Tasimauro) concepts – *lela*, *bamai*, *tuhu vera* and *oli vera* of mobility. Each concept explains movement and the reasons people of Tasimauro, Weather Coast engage in it. *Lela* for example refers to as a “journey without a particular purpose” while *bamai* is “go come” – *ba* (go) and *mai* (come). This speaks of the fact that local knowledge and understanding of movement exist already. They are deeply embedded in society’s social, cultural life and people’s daily practices for years.

And, finally, studies by Joakim Peter (2000) and Lola Bautista (2015) provide useful bark of tree from the Micronesian ethno-biodiversity. Peter presents his contribution by way of horizon, a metaphorical model of space for atoll people. As a dual concept, he argues that horizon is the “space within which the islander traveler is located that is strange and foreign” (Peter 2000:253). Horizon, he adds is also a “defined space that locates and brings those strange and foreign forces into the place of atoll residents and cross familiar boundaries”.

Bautista’s (2015:93) study on Satowan atoll, Federated States of Micronesia, examines mobility through a discussion of social space that includes emic understandings of mobility at a particular life stage and place. There are appropriate and inappropriate aspects of movement during people’s life cycle. An appropriate form of movement for the people of Satowan atoll involved a specific reason and a place that is made known to others. Movement is related to several stages of one’s life – age, marital status, gender-specific and others. Mobility is acceptable if there is a continual reciprocity (and respect) between people who stay and those away.



## 2.9 Chapter summary

I consider my task in this second chapter as making a garland. I focus on the various processes of searching, picking, collecting, stitching and (re)arranging appropriate ‘flowers’ and ‘leaves’. I bring to light my personal experiences in the process of making a garland that represent the experiences and events at changing times and locations. Careful selection of experiences and approaches to population movement was a scholarly challenge. The incompleteness of prevailing perspectives advances the call for other ways of knowing and understanding that are readily exist but have been given a blind eye. The humanist approach provides the appropriate fit that sits comfortably with the cultural understanding of movement as understood in *fa’aSamoa*. The rich ‘ethno-biodiversity’ of Oceania offers suitable reinforcement for a garland that is culturally Samoan, Oceanian scented and globally relevant.

The current chapter sets the scene for the next one which discusses my encounters in the field to collect information for my study. In particular, I present an alternative view to data collection to unfreeze the conventional approach to methodology and methods in population movement.

## Chapter Three:

# NAVIGATING THE FIELD AND PATHWAYS TO KNOWLEDGE

Local studies commenced in the 1960s and continue to be practised, *differently*. For those researchers who undertake them, it is an extended immersion (at least one year, in order to cover the cycle of the seasons) in another society, a first confrontation between ideas and the reality of “fieldwork” and often the kind of initiation. We all return from it changed, troubled, respectful of those whom we have met (Bonnemaison 1993:93).

The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationship or bridge the distance between our cosmos and us. The research that we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world. Through going forward together with open minds and good hearts we have uncovered the nature of this ceremony (Wilson 2008:144).

The process of gathering and analysing information for my study consisted of linked activities that evolved over time and space. The activities represented the dynamic circumstances of Samoans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and their ‘*aiga* in Samoa. My field experiences are presented here in terms of *waypoints*. A waypoint is a navigational concept used in GPS (geo-positioning system) technology today. Whereas the Oceanic navigators of the past were guided by stars, the mariners of present days use satellites (Hannan 2008). Waypoints are important steps of a journey where a navigator pauses to evaluate progress and, if necessary, change the course.

The waypoints metaphor also evokes collective memory (Olick 1999; O’Collins and Braithwaite 2015) which sociologist, Eviatar Zerubavel (2003:2), defines as “the

specific recollections that are commonly shared by members of a group” about them. Collective memory is useful in my study because through that, people recalled narratives and meanings of their movement and lived experiences in specific geographic contexts.

I also use the term ‘navigate’ purposefully to describe my search for the different fields of, and pathways to, relevant knowledge and information for my study; before, during and after the actual field visits. The term also reflects a critical pursuit for culturally-appropriate explanations that epitomise the forgotten voice and alternative meanings of movement as understood by Samoans. My own collective memories, experiences and understanding of artifacts in previous research encounters have been useful as well. During fieldwork I drew upon these personal experiences continuously as they also constitute part of the study context. As a Samoan, I am part of the study community – a component that continued to ‘converse’ with information that emerged from the field through the structured survey, in-depth partially-structured *talanoaga*, focus group discussions, life stories and autobiographies. Participant observations complement findings of the study.

Considered the best fit, I adopted an ethnographic approach (Johnson and Christensen 2011) of an insider navigator “to writing about people” (Burns 1997:297). My personal knowledge and experiences of the ethnographic sites is useful to understanding the broader contexts for the narratives and lived experiences of the Samoans in the study. They also guided my *talanoaga* with participants and provided focus for field observations.

However, Taylor and Bogdan (1998) warned researchers not to conduct research on subjects familiar to them, for this would compromise the rigour of a study. Albeit its usefulness, Taylor and Bogdan’s position is tied to the old objectivity-subjectivity dichotomy. Such a position has its days. I argue that my involvement in this study is necessary. My aim is to expose the voices, a cultural meaning of movement and the lived experiences of Samoans. From the *fa’aSamoa* standpoint, my *tulaga* (place) and *tofi* (role) validate my position to study and speak on issues about Samoa without justification and apology. I appreciate Michele Moffat’s (2016:752) argument about positionality when she says,

Understanding that all things in life begin with self, it seems appropriate to start [my] research with a deeper explanation of who I am personally, professionally, emotionally, and spiritually. I want to highlight that there are obvious aspects of myself that are publically known and easy to share; however, there are also aspects of my being that are sacred and personal to me and not publically visible”.

An understanding of the targeted community is also “imperative if researchers are going to do more good than harm” (Bishop, Higgins et al 2002:611). To late Bonnemaison (1981:15) “geographers should try and understand the conception of the world that is at the core of the group or society they are studying”. Therefore, “research involving Indigenous communities [need to] be conducted respectfully, from an Indigenous point of view and that the research has meaning that contributes to the community” (Louis 2007:131).

Presented in this chapter are my travels before, during and after field work, parts of which led me to the homes and knowledge spaces of Samoans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and their *aiga* in Samoa. In the next section, I discuss how I situate myself within the research process. Next, I discuss the conceptual frame that was briefly introduced in chapters one and two. Thirdly, I discuss the different pathways taken to obtain relevant knowledge and information needed for the study. While navigating the field, my links to the study, to the lives of Samoans I engaged with and to the places I visited, do overlap and, to some extent, entangle. It points to a blurring of boundaries between the field and me as the researcher. It speaks of the inseparable ties I have with the people and the study itself. It is a reality of doing fieldwork in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa that I could not ignore. Through this, my world, networks and connections have expanded above and beyond my immediate location. In closing, I show how the body of knowledge and information gifted to me was treated and analysed for discussion and interpretation in chapters four, five and six of the thesis.

**Fitting in: who am I?**

'I' does not exist.

I am not.

My self belongs not to me because 'I' does not exist.

'I' is always 'we',

is a part of the '*aiga* ...

a part of the Aoga Faifeau,

a part of the Aoga Aso Sa,

a part of the Church,

a part of the *nu'u*

a part of Samoa.

(Figiel 1996:135)

Samoaan poet Sia Figiel captured my inseparable link to my '*aiga* and study. Having been born and raised in a family of sixteen children on the island of Upolu, Samoa, is a blessing. The first ten of my siblings were born between the late 1940s and mid-1960s. They grew up in Fusi, my father's village on the eastern coast of Upolu; about 30 kilometers outside of Apia, the capital of Samoa (see, Map 3.1). I belong to the last six in my family and I am the second youngest of the pack and younger of a twin. We were born in the late 1960s to the mid-1970s and grew up in my mother's village, Vaimoso, which is located immediately outside of Apia. Vaimoso was also the headquarters of the pro-independence *Mau* Movement that fought for Samoa's independence from New Zealand (Field 2006:98).

In 1988, my family bought an acre of freehold land at Vaivase-uta; a village located within the township of Apia, and has since been my family base. Map 3.1 shows the points of reference and movement of my family in Samoa. Since the 1980s, some of my siblings had moved to live in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia and American Samoa while others had found work and stayed in Samoa. My initial association with Fiji came through a NZAID scholarship to study at USP's Laucala campus. Later, I found work, married to a Rotuman with four children and now live in Fiji. This connection adds another layer of the dynamic experience and meaning of movement for me and my family.

Members of my immediate *'aiga* reside in Aotearoa/New Zealand, American Samoa, Australia, Fiji and Samoa. I visit them in these countries from time to time for a holiday and *fa'alavelave*. The Facebook, email and telecommunication connect us faster and more frequent. Being physically away from Samoa does not diminish the sense of belonging to Samoa, a place I call home. When discussing the Kawara'e conception of place in the Solomon Islands, Gegeo (2001:495) say, "it is portable – it is in our blood". Since 2009, my nuclear family has held a reunion in Samoa every three years. Our movements and the family reunions are special for us and especially important for the younger generation who were born and raised outside of Samoa.

**Map 3. 1: Points of reference of my 'aiga**



Source: [https://www.google.com/?gws\\_rd=ssl#q=maps+of+samoa](https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=maps+of+samoa)

Place is conceived of as our *fa'asinomaga* (a point of reference; heritage) in *fa'aSamoa*. When considered in this light, we know our *fa'asinomaga* irrespective of where we physically reside. In our case, *fa'asinomaga* is our *'aiga* where we belong to an extended network of *'aiga* (extended family), *fanua* (land), *suafa matai* (chief titles), *nu'u* (village), *lotu* (church) and *atunu'u* (country), Samoa as discussed in chapter two. This conception of place is not solely based on geographical location but also grounded in social relations that define people's identities and rooted in place.

While my nuclear family is based in Vaivase-uta, a suburb of Apia township, our lives and movement revolve around our '*aiga* in the villages of Fusi, a rural village, and Vaimoso, a village on the outskirts of Apia as well. Like my older siblings, I attended primary school at my mother's village, Vaimoso. My mother was also buried there in January 1979. I have friends and relatives who still live there today. My father's village, Fusi, is also an important part of us especially for my older siblings who have stronger ties there through their childhood experiences. It was the village where my parents lived off the plantation to support our education and to meet the many cultural *fa'alavelave*. To this day landmarks of my family's imprints on the landscape such as the remains of the stone foundation of our home on the farm and overgrown fruit trees are still there. In addition, some of my older siblings now hold *matai* titles at Fusi, and operate a small cattle farm and plant food crops to supplement their daily subsistence.

With these interconnections to families in the villages of Fusi and Vaimoso, my interests as a researcher are tied to these places. Informed by personal knowledge of the two villages, my initial preference was to understand the movement of the villagers to and fro Aotearoa/New Zealand. Over the years, I have seen the coming and going of overseas-based village relatives. Such pendulum movements resulted in gradual and significant changes in the physical landscape of the two villages and people's lives. The once-dominant spread of thatched-roof and open *fale* (house) in the villages slowly began to change. These airy dwellings soon fell out of favour and have been replaced by corrugated iron-roof houses, compact and closed homes in the name of convenience and alternative living. However some families, in both Fusi and Vaimoso, have open walled *fale talimalo* (guest house) used for meeting and for guests. The change parallels to what Professor Vijay Naidu (2010:27) observes that

in much of Micronesia and Polynesia buildings, including family homes, have been constructed with concrete and/or wood in the western style. Corrugated iron has largely replaced thatch. Pacific style architecture such as the neo-traditional *fale* and the *bure* has been retained. In Samoa family homes, meeting places and public buildings display this architecture.

Change is also evident in the ways *fa'alavelave* (cultural events of 'aiga), at the village and family levels have opened up opportunities for both relatives at home (*iinei*) and overseas (*fafo*) to maintain closer connections. A case in point was the renovation of the church buildings at Vaimoso and Fusi in 1980s. The villagers, *iinei* and *fafo* fundraised and contributed to these projects. A delegation from *fafo* attended in numbers at the dedication ceremonies that included stylish exchanges of material wealth, displays of talents and much celebration. At the family level, *fa'alavelave* became elaborate too with the popular use of modern goods such as cans of soda drink for *niu* (green coconut), imported fabric material for *siapo* or *tapa* (barkcloth) and money. Evidently, attendants at *fa'alavelave* have become more diverse than before. Some villagers returned with non-Samoan spouses and an emerging generation of children of mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Witnessing movement and associated changes propelled an initial desire to understand my communities better. I intended to understand the meaning of movement as perceived by the villagers and their 'aiga in Samoa and abroad. I knew the support of the villagers would not be a problem if I chose to study either of the two villages (Fusi and Vaimoso) community.

Although I have not lived in the villages long enough for people to know me personally as an adult, the communities knew my parents and older siblings. Besides it is not easy to forget a family of sixteen children, the marker of our family in the village, church and the school I attended. Despite residing at Vaivase-uta, my family remained connected to our 'aiga in the villages and engage with the communities there at large. Our relatives from the villages also visit us at Vaivase-uta for family meetings, family reunion, *fa'alavelave* and village functions. They often also stay on for awhile.

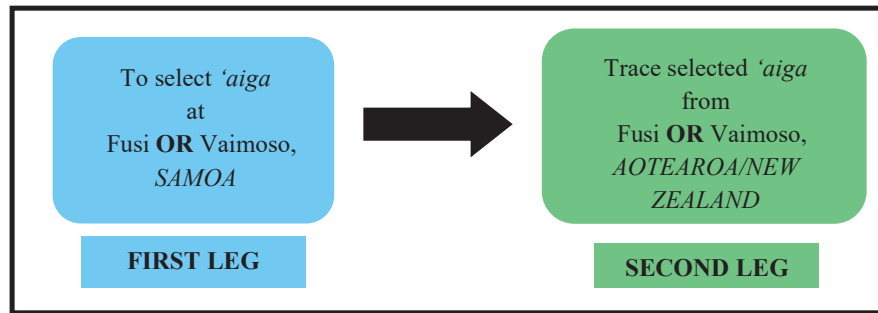
### **3.1 Planning the study**

The planning of the study was done from my base in Suva. My recollections of movement among the people of Fusi and Vaimoso villages and after talking with friends and other people from the villages during holiday visits to Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa convinced me of two factors. First, the majority of the villagers



from the two places live in Aotearoa/New Zealand and most of them reside in the South Auckland. Hence, the navigational plan for my study as shown in Figure 3.1 below was premised on these two observations.

**Figure 3. 1: The navigational plan for the study**



I intended to undertake two pilot surveys to map out the country of residence of the villagers abroad and to confirm the choice of Fusi or Vaimoso as the study focus. Thereafter, ‘aiga would be selected and *talanoaga* commenced in Samoa as the first leg of the fieldwork (see, Figure 3.1). The second leg constituted the tracing of members of the ‘aiga in Aotearoa/New Zealand as indicated by the arrow in Figure 3.1

My eldest sister in Samoa was my main research assistant. I consider her role an important one in this study. Besides my parents, she knows the people and the two villages (Fusi and Vaimoso) better than I and in the context of ‘aiga and *fa’aSamoa*, it is culturally appropriate for her to establish the initial contact with the village council about my study. We had several telephone conversations over the study plan. I also emailed a copy of Figure 3.1 to her in July 2010 for her information. She in turn informed *matai* of my ‘aiga in Fusi and Vaimoso who presented my request to the village councils for consideration. Her feedback later suggested that the councils had expressed support for the study with an overwhelming sense of pride in the fact that “one of their own was pursuing what the villagers saw as something very big in the *palagi* (a white person) world” (Email, 20 July 2010).

### 3.2 To touch base: the pilot survey experience

Being away from Samoa let alone the villages for some time validated the need to touch base with the community and especially for my study. Most people in the villages did not recognise me straight away in December 2010. I was identified through my parents all the time. Having my eldest sister, her two adult sons and our relatives in villages with me brought relief because the villagers recognised them. It was not unusually for people to ask my sister, *E loga fia lea i le fa'asologa?* That is, in terms of birth order in my family, where am I in the line of sixteen children? And there were many more similar questions.

Polit et al (2011:467) define pilot survey as a small scale version or trial run in preparation for a major study. As a 'dress rehearsal', the pilot surveys provided useful directions for the study, and their outcome was not to my expectations. First, contrary to earlier assumptions, findings showed that more people from the villages resided in Australia than Aotearoa/New Zealand although they moved to the latter first. It reconfirmed observations by Lee (2009b:11) that the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement (TTTA) allowed for Australians and New Zealanders to move easily between the two countries to visit, live and work. *Pakeha* (European in Maori), Maori New Zealanders have taken advantage of this arrangement, as have Pacific islanders who first became citizens of New Zealand (Lee 2009b:11). Subsumed in the last category are the people from Fusi and Vaimoso. Second, while there are people from Fusi and Vaimoso in Aotearoa/New Zealand, they do not live in South Auckland but in areas such as Napier, Hastings and Gisborne and other places in the South Island. Third, movement to American Samoa is linked to the tuna cannery in Pagopago and people do not live there for long.

The pilot survey result was a waypoint. There were several implications if I were to follow the study plan in Figure 3.1. First, to trace the villagers in far-flung areas of Aotearoa/New Zealand is expensive. Second, to opt for Australia or American Samoa where the majority of the villagers reside has its fair share of concerns and financial costs. To obtain the relevant entry visas to the two countries would be a challenge. The costs to change the Fijian money to the Australian or the US dollars would have been beyond my study budget. American Samoa is relatively closer to

Samoa yet it is so far to reach when considered in the light of these structural constraints.

### **3.3 In search for an alternative study base**

Golden and Powell's (2000) advice to researchers to be flexible in the field as the capacity to adapt came to mind. The reality on the ground revealed a dynamic dimension of social cultural life and movement of Samoans. It may be seen to have derailed the study however it offered better direction and possibilities for the current study. Indeed, Judith Okely's (2009:1) reminder that "aspects of fieldwork ... regarded as failures and sources of guilt [are] potentially key avenues for knowledge" was restorative therapy.

I would be in denial if I admit not to have been hit by the outcome of the pilot survey. I found haven in the 'darkness of silence' while recollecting myself and to chart a prospective course. Levin (2013:718) captures the moment when she says that "some experiences have no words equivalent to the experience itself". After intensive moments of reflection, discussions and debates with my siblings in Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand, a real prospect emerged by way of the Wesley Methodist Church (WMC), Papatoetoe, New Zealand as an alternative study base.

On reflection, the newfound alternative (the WMC) was the best option considering the aim of this study and the minimum costs involved. Additionally, my older siblings are devout members of the church there. And, as my power base in that country, I could count on their support, as I always do, to negotiate my access to the church members' homes for interviews. I had silent confidence that the support of the church members for my study would be guaranteed.

Involving my older siblings in the process speaks of the crucial role of '*aiga*' in ensuring that one's endeavour is supported and achieved. Samoan writer, Sia Figiel (1996), captures this essence as expressed at the beginning of this chapter. She writes about Samoans and their inseparable ties to '*aiga*', the church, the village and society at large. She also highlights the inclusive aspect of *fa'aSamoa* that I could not ignore. To include my siblings in the research planning and discussions

throughout the study was a sign of respect for, and humility towards my older siblings. Although the study was a personal academic pursuit, the processes of planning and doing field work were collective. Naturally, my families in American Samoa, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Samoa became my co-researchers with distinct roles to play. The study was much as theirs than it was mine. Phrasing it differently, the study became a *fa'alavelave* of a different kind for my 'aiga and like all *fa'alavelave*, everyone contributed in various but equally important ways.

The experience also brought to light the reality of doing field work in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa. I could not be purely or solely a researcher. I could not divorce myself from the sociocultural milieu of my 'aiga as Tamasese et al (2005:303) reminds us. Rather, my positions in the field were constantly negotiated. Although I considered myself an adult at the time of the study, to my siblings I was still the second youngest member of my 'aiga who yet again needed some looking after. Birth order really matters. It has an important purpose in understanding my place as a relational being; my movement and relationships with others while in the field. Being in the field reminded me of how inseparable I was from the social context that deserved a special research attention.

### **3.4 Finding a course at last**

The WMC became the study base of choice in the end. WMC is located on 37-39 Kolmar Road, South Auckland (Figure 3.2). It belonged to the Methodist Church of New Zealand (MCNZ) (*Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa*). MCNZ has different divisions and parishes throughout that country which catered for the English speakers as well as the growing number of committed followers from the Pacific Islands. The latter divisions included the *Te Taha Maori* (Maori); *Wasewase Ko Viti Kei Rotuma e Niu Siladi* (Fiji Methodist Synod, New Zealand); *Sinoti Samoa* (SS) (Samoan Synod) and *Vahefonua Tonga o Aotearoa* (Tonga).

**Figure 3. 2: The Wesley Methodist Church, Papatoetoe, Aotearoa/New Zealand**



**Source:** <http://www.heritagehunter.co.nz/methodistchurch>

Engaging the WMCSS meant a re-alignment to the initial study plan in Figure 3.1 was necessary. Unlike the original plan, Aotearoa/New Zealand became the first leg of the fieldwork instead; reversing the order than it what was first envisaged. Figure 3.3 illustrates the revised study plan.

**Figure 3. 3: The revised study plan**

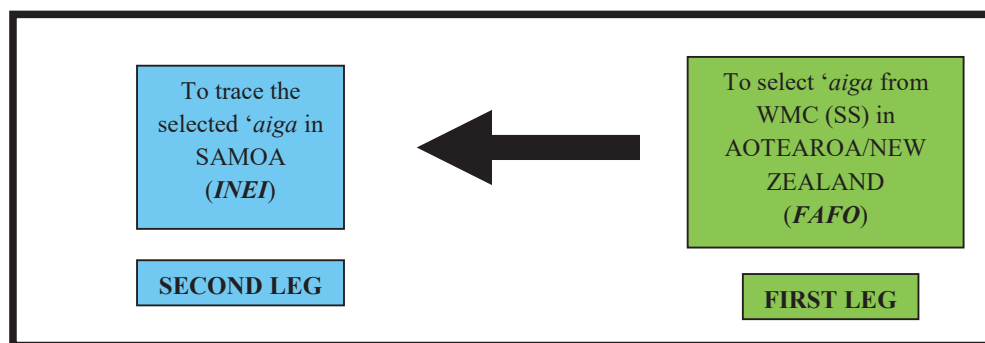


Table 3.1 is a navigational log of this study. It is an attempt to summarise the passages I travelled to find relevant knowledge and information for my study.

**Table 3. 1: The navigational log of the stud**

TARGET	LOCATION	TIMELINE
Touch base	Samoa	December 2010 to February 2011
Negotiate access	Aotearoa/New Zealand	June to July 2011 and December 2011
Trace roots, routes and residence	Samoa	December 2011 to March 2012

Firstly, to touch base with the villagers of Fusi and Vaimoso required me to travel from Fiji northward to Samoa. Discoveries and conditions there in December 2010 to February 2011 called for a revised course hence negotiations were made with my relatives to assist in accessing families in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The need to trace roots, routes and residence of members of the New Zealand-based participants required the re-crossing of the Samoan passage to find relatives in villages throughout Upolu and Savaii. I discuss in the next section my experiences in working with Samoans involved in the study.

### **3.5 Towards an indigenous research framework**

I introduced a two-sided approach to understanding movement and the justifications for it in chapter one. I present here the conceptual grounding of this approach and its use as a method in the form of a tracer study. I used the term tracer study simply because my main purpose was to trace, find, locate and connect Samoans and their stories of movement and lived experiences with their *‘aiga* in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa. It provides the way to access and understand the valued contexts in which the meanings of movement and lived experiences are rooted.

### **3.6 Trace to connect *‘aiga***

The two-sided approach is premised on *‘aiga* and *fa’aSamoa* (Figure 2.1). Particularly, the notions of *‘aiga* as *tino e tasi* (one body), *toto e tasi* (one blood) and *va fealoa’i* sit at the heart of this thinking. As explained in chapter two, *suli* (member) of *‘aiga* are part of one extended unit who interact with each other irrespective of place of residence. The nature of interactions can be understood in the contexts of the depth and breadth of relationships among members of *‘aiga* as well as with other extended *‘aiga* rather than in isolation. The interactions and linkages emphasised the persistence of a two-way relationship among *suli* of *‘aiga*.

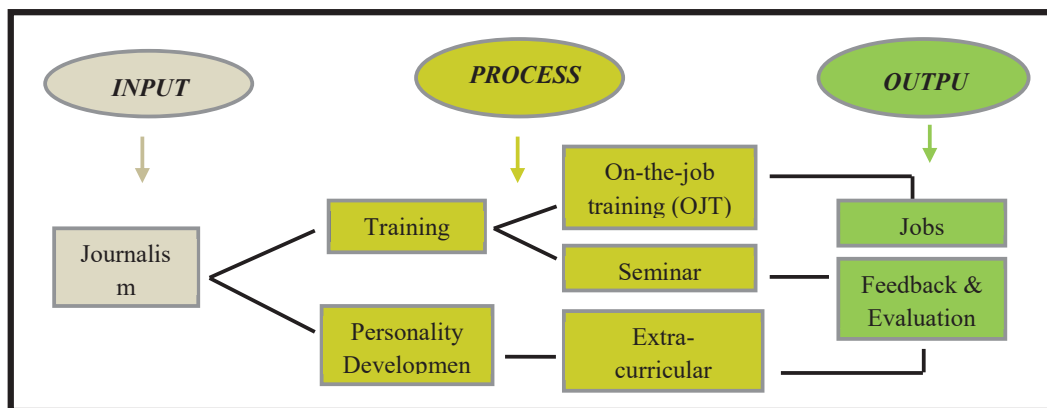
It is also through two-way interactions that movement takes place and is understood within that context. Interactions and relationships are cyclical and two-sided. To understand the lived experiences of Samoans and the meaning of their movement required a holistic view of the interactions and linkages of members that constitute ‘*aiga*’ in its entirety rather than a focus on a single member. Tracing/linking/connecting ‘*aiga inei*’ and *fafo* provide the links and fill the gap in our understanding of movement and lived experiences of Samoans.

Members of ‘*aiga*’ maintain, nurture, treasure, cultivate relations and *teu le va* (to nurture, cultivate relationship) through forward and backward linkages. One’s success is measured by the breadth and depth of familial relations. It is through interactions and linkages that respect is given and received; and values such as *alofa* (love) are expressed that reinforce family connections.

### 3.7 Connecting footprints: tracer study in action

The conceptual framework to the tracer study can be summarised in a three-part model: Input, Process and Output (International Labour Organization (ILO) 2011; Balingbing 2014) shown in Figure 3.4. The model shows a Journalism program and participants as *Input*. The programme offered opportunities for participants to develop skills and personal development through seminars, on-the-job training and extracurricular activities (*Process*). The ultimate aim of the programme was for participants to secure employment (*Output*). Another aim was to assess the success of the programme years later in the view to improving it, hence the term tracer study.

**Figure 3. 4: The system approach to tracer study**

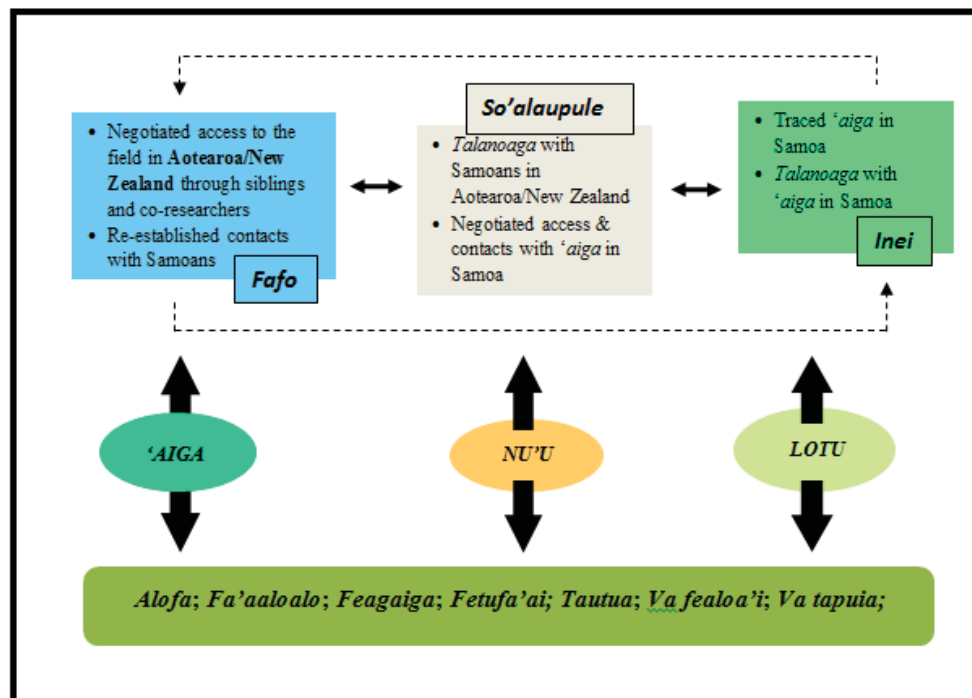


(Ebuenga et al 2014:20)

There are variations to the systems approach I discussed above depending on its users and purposes for adoption (Cohen 2004; Levin-Rozalis 2004; Gines 2014; Ramirez et al 2014). However, the main purpose of tracer studies is to evaluate the success or otherwise of an educational programme so effective and ineffective components can be improved (Gines 2014:81). As an assessment tool, tracer studies provide information to enhance elements of an educational programme in order to make improvements to a programme as well as to the learning experience of participants involved.

In the same way, a two-sided approach and as a tracer study method would complement our understanding of movement of Samoan families in this study. The two-sided approach is culturally-inclusive and sits comfortably with the intention of this study that is, to find culturally-bound explanations of movement and lived experiences of Samoans. I adapted the systems approach to my study. However, the framing of *O tino o le 'aiga* is anchored in an indigenous Samoan worldview to understand movement that is grounded in the context of 'aiga. Figure 3.5 illustrates this thinking.

**Figure 3.5:** *O tino o le 'aiga: a conceptual grounding*





The frame is underpinned by the principle of inclusiveness and connectedness of *suli* of ‘*aiga* for lifetime as discussed in chapter two. Tamasese et al (2005:303) explained that the “Samoan self has meaning only in relationship with other people, [but] not as an individual”. Therefore the Samoan self cannot be divided. To maintain, nurture and nourish relational ties hence the concept of *teu le va*, is through the inclusion of members of ‘*aiga* in *talanoaga* on matters of concerns to the unit of which movement, *fa’alavelave*, *matai* titles among others are included.

There are three distinct, but linked parts of *O tino o le ‘aiga* frame. To connect and maintain familial links between *fafo* and *inei* is through *so’alaupule* (open communications and negotiations on issues of concern) that are on-going. Communication is depicted by two horizontal backward and forward arrows through the process of *so’alaupule* as shown in Figure 3.5.

*O tino o le ‘aiga* frame is informed by the three pillars of *fa’aSamoa* – ‘*aiga* (extended family), *nu’u* (village) and *lotu* (church) (Figure 2.1). They are represented by three vertical backward and forward arrows which are anchored on the values of *fa’aSamoa* as the bedrock. By its very culturally-informed nature and basis, I conceive that *O tino o le ‘aiga* frame could complement our understanding of movement of Samoans that is rooted on *fa’aSamoa* and island epistemologies.

As applied to the study, my older siblings and co-researchers negotiated my access to Samoans’ homes, their knowledge systems and spaces in Aotearoa/New Zealand (*fafo*). They liaised directly with the church minister and study participants on my behalf. My access to the field was granted through this process. Upon arrival at the field site, I re-established my ties with the community. Further negotiations took place there as the field work evolved.

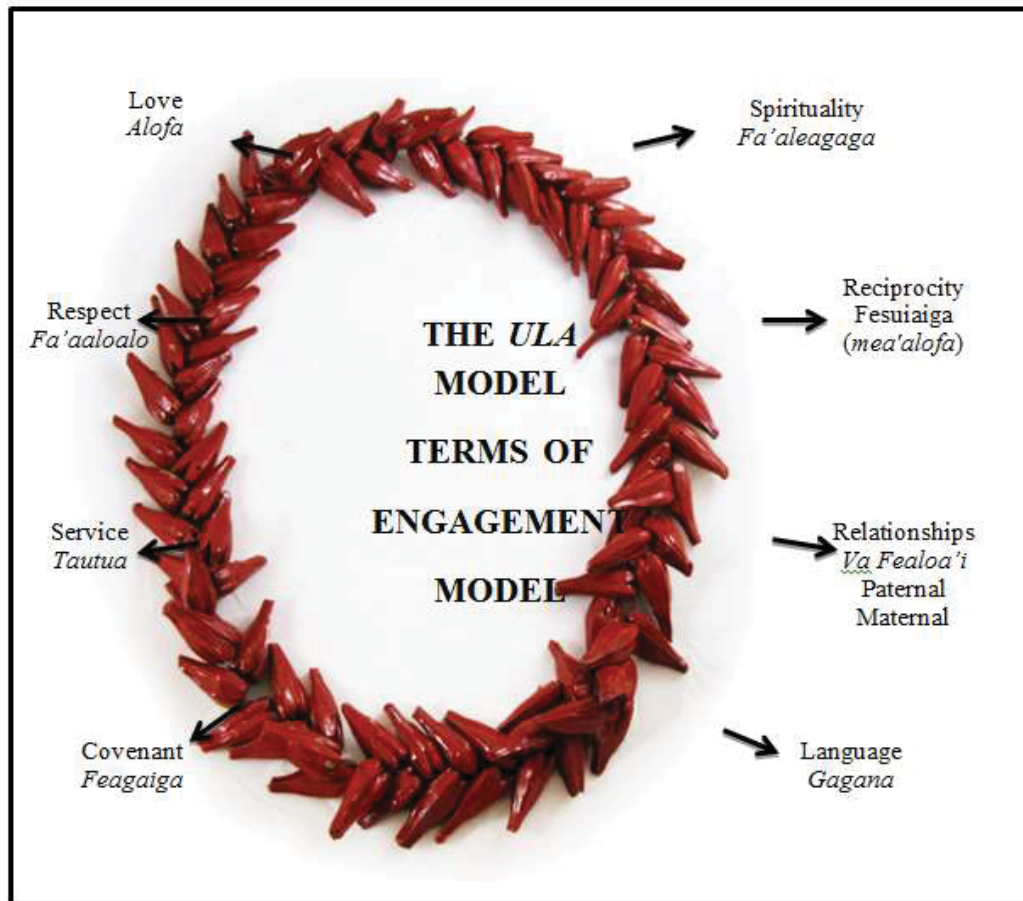
The concept of *So’alaupule* represents the actual face-to-face *talanoaga* I had with the study participants. Although the two spiral arrows showed a linear progression from one stage to the next it was not the case in practice. *So’alaupule* is open and on-going. At *talanoaga* with participants in Aotearoa/New Zealand for example, I negotiated access for follow-up *talanoaga* with members of their ‘*aiga* in Samoa.

Thereafter, I traced participants' 'aiga in Samoa (*inei*). Follow-up *talanoaga* were conducted with people based in the villages. The matching of *fafo* and *inei* sides of 'aiga provided the link to understand a complementary context in which movement and lived experiences could be understood. This completed the two-sided approach and the tracer study method I proposed in this study.

*O tino o le 'aiga* frame was inspired by related research frameworks by Pacific scholars in the fields of Education and Health and they are mostly by women. These included the *Kakala* Framework (Konai Thaman 1988, 2008); the *Kaupapa Maori* Research (Linda Smith 1999, 2012); the *Tivaevae* model (Teremoana Maua-Hodges 2000); the *Fa'afaletui* (Tamasese et al 2005); the Fijian Vanua Research Framework (Unaisi Nabobo-Baba 2005); *Teu le va* research paradigm (Melani Anae 2010); the *Ula* model (Luama Sauni 2011) and the *'Iluvatu* framework (Sereima Nasilisili 2012). The above research frameworks recognised the need for researchers to engage in culturally appropriate ways to access, conduct and report on research findings involving Pacific peoples.

The *Ula* model in Figure 3.6 is relevant to my study. I re-adapted Sauni's eight-flower model that represents values of *fa'aSamoa* in my study that are crucial to building research ethics and to guide all aspects of my research.

**Figure 3. 6:** The *Ula* model



Sauni (2011:57)

Table 3.2 summarises these core values of *fa'aSamoa*. They also informed my research design and the processes involved in negotiations for access, conduct of *talanoaga*, field observations and reporting of findings. I conceived of *O tino o le 'aiga* frame as a continuous process presented in a circular manner that is made alive by forward and backward linkages through open *talanoaga* grounded on values of *fa'aSamoa* as in the *Ula* model.

**Table 3. 2: The Principles of the *Ula* model**

Values/Guiding principles	Description
<i>Alofa</i> (love)	The importance of good intentions i.e motives or agenda of both researcher and participants.
<i>Fa'aaloalo</i> (respect)	The 'most important principle of Samoan culture' and the core-research value that determines related values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour.
<i>Tautua</i> (service)	Traditional roles and responsibilities and the notion of 'always being of service' and of 'service leadership' for the betterment of others in the wider cultural community.
<i>Feagaiga</i> (covenant)	In direct relation to male-female relationships and the codes of conduct that dictate proper and respectful communication.
<i>Fa'aleagaga</i> (spirituality)	Linked to <i>mana</i> (power) in connection to service leadership and the importance of spiritual values and sense of connectedness within the wider spiritual and religious worldview.
<i>Fesoa'aiga/fesuiaiga</i> (reciprocity)	Refers to reciprocal relationships and the nurturing or maintaining of positive relationships as well as appropriate cultural gifting.
<i>Va fealoa'i</i> (relationships: paternal/maternal)	Relates to the nature of relationships and the manner in which one conducts him/herself in relation to the other determined by the nature of the relationship or connectedness.
<i>Gagana</i> (language)	The use of the Samoan, or bilingual Samoan/English in appropriate contexts. Code-switching where necessary to maintain a comfortable rapport and on-going communication between participants, and between researcher and participants

(Sauni 2011:56-60)

### 3.8 Old pathways, autobiography: collective memory re-visited

I crossed several passages to find relevant knowledge and information for my study. I read field notes of my past research activities in Aotearoa/New Zealand at the very start. Sifting through notes and readings on Samoan migration recalled memories of several incidents where I was asked by participants if I were an employee of Immigration New Zealand or Inland Revenue Department. I was cautioned then and

needed to prepare for people's changing perceptions on a topic that received a lot of media attention.

I navigated USP's main library at Laucala campus for information on the broad fields of migration, development, culture and change in the case of Samoa and 'island' places. The Pacific collection holds a reasonable selection of materials on these topics. The library's e-Resources particularly the Databases (including e-books), Free Books & Journals and the USP Theses collection provided an array of relevant and rich information.

I collected archival materials on or related aspects of development and movement of Samoans from the Nelson Memorial Public library, the National University of Samoa (NUS) library and government departments – CBS (Central Bank of Samoa), SBS (Samoa Bureau of Statistics) – and the ANZ Bank and money transfer agencies during my visits to Samoa. The visits were mostly 'aiga and work related. Information from government departments provided a macro quantitative view of migration through statistics that were captured by national census and other surveys. Statistics from CBS on Balance of Payment accounts provided a view of cash remittances in aggregated amounts and its contribution to the national coffer.

In most trips to Samoa I would meet former classmates, friends and USP graduates at places where I needed information. Knowing people on the ground made my access possible to otherwise confidential or no information. At CBS and SBS, I was able to get copies of government reports on Strategies for the development of Samoa and the population census in 2011 before the official release of census findings to the public. However, it could be a barrier too when I was not successful to getting a record of *fa'amomoli* (remittances) from a former ANZ colleague because the information I requested was confidential.

I also learned during these visits about many new developments in the country from colleagues working in the relevant ministries. For example, the government's partnership with churches to recruit youth groups for the New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer (NZRSE) Scheme. Secondly, at the time of fieldwork, the

proposed public consultations and the drafting of Samoa's first Migration policy document in 2012/3.

Finally, the ever reliable and convenient Google search engines, Google scholar and electronic databases provided timely access to journal articles on cultural explanations of movement, Pacific theorising and doing field work. The online Anthropology Matters Journal for example provided the greatest source of information to understand the complex nature of the field and negotiations while being there.

### **3.9 Negotiating access: the power base of 'aiga**

I have not conducted a research with members of the WMC Sinoti Samoa before nor am I a member of the church. However, my initial contact began few years back at the funeral service of my late brother, theologian and a devout member of the church. I was made to translate in English a eulogy by a *matai* of my family at his memorial service in late 2007. It was an unexpected call by my older siblings who felt the need to translate the eulogy part of the service due to the diverse ethnic backgrounds of mourners who attended in hundreds. Caught unprepared for a task I had no prior experience nor could I refuse. Admittedly, it was a challenge to match the Samoan language expertise of the speaker who used epigraphic quotations skilfully and frequently. I dealt with my deficits during the ordeal by 'spicing' the original speech with creative additions to the delight of the audience who could understand despite the solemn occasion.

If anything, that experience turned out to be a good preparation for the field. Recalling the moment later, I felt that experience was a blessing. When my siblings first approached the church minister about my study in March 2011, he agreed straight away. My sister had this to say when we spoke over the telephone later regarding their meeting.

*O la e manatua oe e le faifeau i le taimi o le maliu i le faiga o lau molimau. Fai mai le faifeau e aua le popole ua lelei.* (The church minister remembered you from the funeral service and the eulogy (laugh!). The church minister said not to worry it is ok.

### **3.10 An effective ‘coconut’ network: ‘aiga net worth**

Things moved swiftly since that conversation and subsequent emails with the church minister. The church minister also informed the congregation of my study and sought their support. My sister explained to me later that church members had volunteered their names to her since the service in which the study was announced. In this light, I conceived of the process of volunteered participation as inclusive, culturally and relationally acceptable and scientifically valid.

Besides members of the church at Papatoetoe, my siblings and their networks ‘spread the gospel’ about my research; it went viral. Voluntarily my siblings also accepted the ‘expressions of interest’ from their friends, friends of friends and many more friends. Naturally, the number of interested parties grew exponentially and so too my level of anxiety, if not stress.

Situating the turn of events with the sample size in the inclusivity of *fa’aSamoa* was necessary. Speaking from within it, I paid respect to my siblings and co-researchers who navigated the terrain to look for sources of knowledge. And, importantly it was with respect and humility to the participants who agreed to offer their knowledge. For my study, offers of that nature were too valuable to miss. It was also an opportunity to validate and reaffirm the understanding of movement and lived experiences that are central to this study.

Talking from within this frame, it was not possible to decline an offer to be interviewed. Accepting all was appropriate to *teu le va* between my siblings and I; but more so that between my siblings, the ‘seekers’; and participants, the ‘givers’, of knowledge. However, I was also cautious that I needed to contain the number of participants within the aim of the study, resources and my ability to meet all. With joy and humility, I had *talanoaga* with fifty participants – twenty two at the WMC

while the rest came from outside of WMC group; thanks to the effective networks of my siblings and co-researchers.

For my purpose and to comply with confidentiality required of the study and the verbal reassurance I had given to USP's HEC, I identified study participants by their point of entry to the study. To the twenty two Samoans from WMC I gave codes WMC1 to WMC22 while codes CN1 to CN28 were given to members who came from outside of the church group.

Table 3.3 shows the demographics of the study group. The number (or numbers) at the end of each code represent(s) the order in which I had *talanoaga* with members of each group. WMC1 for instance was the first member of the church I had *talanoaga* with and the seventh for the study overall. The *talanoaga* took place when participants were available and it followed no particular order or preference.

In the second leg of field work, I used the same codes except adding the letter S (stands for Samoa) to each code to differentiate the two parts of *talanoaga*. Therefore *talanoaga* for CN1 in Aotearoa/New Zealand was followed by a conversation with her relative (CNS1) in the village of Leauvaa, Samoa. The order in which the *talanoaga* took place in Samoa did not follow a chronological sequence as in the first leg. For example, although CN1 was the first *talanoaga* in the first leg, the follow-up *talanoaga* in Samoa was not the first. It was also the most sensible way to organise information and *talanoaga* in this study and to ensure that the two-sides (*fafo* and *inei*) of *talanoaga* corresponded.



**Table 3. 3: The co-producers of the study**

	AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND			SAMOA				
	Participant codes	Age	Gender	Participant codes	Age	Gender	Villages	Collection status
1	CN1	59	F	CNS1	44	M	Leauvaa	A
2	CN2	47	F	CNS2	52	M	Leulumoega-tuai	A
3	CN3	31	M	CNS3	57	F	Sinamoga	V
4	CN4	60	F	CNS4	65	M	Vailima	D
5	CN5	39	F	CNS5	53	M	Fogasavaii	S
6	CN6	31	F	CNS6	56	F	Samalaeulu	S
7	WMC1	56	M	WMCS1	48	M	Faiaai	S
8	WMC2	31	M	WMCS2	64	F	Apia	V
9	WMC3	41	F	WMCS3	56	F	Saleilua	S
10	WMC4	61	M	WMCS4	67	F	Siumu	S
11	CN7	29	F	CNS7	51	F	Fasitoo-uta	A
12	CN8	36	M	CNS8	60	M	Leulumoega-tuai	S
13	CN9	58	M	CNS9	37	F	Leauvaa	S
14	WMC5	52	M	WMCS5	67	F	Gagaifo	D
15	WMC6	48	F	WMCS6	54	F	Fagalii	S
16	WMC7	60	F	WMCS7	49	M	Toamua	V
17	WMC8	52	F	WMCS8	53	M	Saleilua	S
18	WMC9	58	M	WMCS9	62	M	Faleapuna	D
19	WMC10	49	M	WMCS10	56	M	Faleasiu-uta	D
20	WMC11	50	F	WMCS11	65	M	Leulumoega-tuai	A
21	WMC12	44	M	WMCS12	55	F	Saina	D
22	WMC13	59	M	WMCS13	46	F	Satapuala	A
23	WMC14	62	F	WMCS14	43	F	Togafuafua	V
24	WMC15	47	F	WMCS15	54	M	Vavau	A
25	WMC16	52	F	WMCS16	42	F	Sagone	S
26	WMC17	72	M	WMCS17	55	F	Gagaifo	A
27	WMC18	45	F	WMCS18	58	M	Tuanaimato	S
28	WMC19	46	M	WMCS19	63	F	Puipaa	V
29	WMC20	55	F	WMCS20	48	M	Matafaa	A
30	WMC21	64	F	WMCS21	53	F	Tafatafa	A
31	WMC22	59	F	WMCS22	65	M	Levili	S
32	CN10	50	F	CNS10	34	F	Aleisa	D
33	CN11	60	F	CNS11	32	F	Fagalii	V
34	CN12	45	F	CNS12	50	M	Lalovaea	V
35	CN13	41	F	CNS13	42	M	Faatoia	V
36	CN14	70	F	CNS14	65	M	Eva	D
37	CN15	29	F	CNS15	63	M	Vailima	V
38	CN16	37	F	CNS16	58	M	Moamoa	V
39	CN17	33	F	CNS17	54	F	Iva	D
40	CN18	54	M	CNS18	55	M	Talimatau	V
41	CN19	49	F	CNS19	50	M	Siusega	V
42	CN20	45	F	CNS20	46	F	Alafua	V
43	CN21	59	M	CNS21	60	M	Avao	S
44	CN22	41	F	CNS22	42	F	Vini	V
45	CN23	54	M	CNS23	57	M	Afega	A
46	CN24	61	M	CNS24	46	M	Faleasiu-uta	S
47	CN25	55	M	CNS25	36	M	Vailele	V
48	CN26	33	M	CNS26	57	M	Faga	S
49	CN27	53	F	CNS27	54	F	Malie	S
50	CN28	41	M	CNS28	52	M	Vailoa	D

V: Vaivase-uta (15); A: Apia (10); D: Delivery (9); S: Search (16)

(Field notes Aotearoa/New Zealand 2011 and Samoa 2012)

### 3.11 Meeting the movers and shakers; co-producers of the study

As discussed in chapter one, the Samoans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and their relatives in Samoa are the co-producers of this study. Borrowed from Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1874) poem *Ode and Music and Moonlight* collection, I conceived of them as “movers and shakers” of knowledge because the knowledge they shared with me “shake the foundations of conventional thinking by the strength of their imagination and vision”. Their knowledge, lived experiences and cultural understanding of movement defied conventional perspectives that my study intends to bring to the fore. Therefore, their role is a crucial one in this study.

My brother in-law and adult nieces took turns to drop and pick me from the homes where face to face *talanoaga* took place. Because my brother in-law is now retired, he was my designated driver most of the time. On some days my two nieces – a teacher and a nurse – would take turn when their father was tied up with his daily routine at home. At the time of the field work, schools were also on holiday, that enabled my niece – the teacher to take me to participant's homes whenever they were available and willing to *talanoa* (talk; tell stories).

I used *talanoa* as the major research tool in my pursuit to acquire information from the study participants. The *talanoa* method is popular among Pacific researchers (Nabobo-Baba 2005; Vaioleti 2006; Johansson-Fua 2007; Latu 2009; Maitaitoga 2010; Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea 2014), and it suits my purpose in this study. Nabobo-Baba (2006:27) defines *talanoa* as a process in which two or more people talk together or in which one person tells a story to an audience. It is through this process that views and experiences are exchanged and shared in the Pacific (Robinson and Robinson 2005).

However, Tongan educationist Vaioleti (2011) argues that *talanoa* is more than just an exchange of stories. Rather, it is where knowledge is transmitted in Pacific Island cultures through passing of instructions, narratives and stories. To this end, Marshall and Rossman's (2006:104) advice on ethnographic *talanoaga* suits the purpose of my study to gather people's cultural understanding and meaning of movement.

Ethnographic interviewing is not simply doing an interview. Instead, it is an elaborate system of series of interviews structured to elicit insiders' cultural knowledge... The value of ethnographic interview lies in its focus on culture through the participant's perspective and through firsthand encounter. This approach is especially useful for eliciting participants' meanings for event and behaviors and for generating a typology of cultural classification schemes. It also highlights the nuances of the culture. The method is flexible in formulating working hypotheses and avoids oversimplification in description and analysis because of its rich narrative descriptions.

I used a battery operated tape recorder and a 200 page A4 size field note book to record my notes on *talanoaga* and observations during fieldwork. I also took notes on the actual coded questionnaire for each participant. I chose these basic, practical and reliable tools/methods to record information for my study. Despite their simplicity, they captured valuable information that was offered with sincerity, love, emotions and memories by their owners. The notes I took in the field were supplemented by tape recordings of *talanoaga* and observations.

*Talanoaga* were conducted in the English and Samoan languages at the preference of the participants. To what extent a language was used depended on participants and the topic of conversation. Talks related to '*aiga*, *fa'aSamoa* and *fa'alavelave* for example were naturally held in the Samoan language interspersed with English sporadically. On the other hand, conversation on issues or matters such as marriage, children, property, education and employment, for some reason, the English language was the medium of exchange.

The number of *talanoaga* in a day ranged from two to six, throughout the week except Sundays. Because most participants are in paid employment and had different work schedules, *talanoaga* took place as early as nine o'clock in the morning to as late as eight o'clock at night and times in between. Each *talanoaga* lasted anywhere between one to one and half hours. On days when the appointments were spaced out, I could afford to spend an extra time after an official *talanoaga* to 'talk stories' with

participants, expanding on some of the points they raised earlier while waiting for my transport. This was not possible on days I had back-to-back engagements.

One of the greatest tests in all *talanoaga* was time. Keeping to the focus of *talanoaga* was a challenge. Participants had a lot to share about their lives and movement that I felt the allocated time was not enough. In some cases it was simply to end it in order for me to make it to the next appointment. On some occasions, we arranged for another session later to continue the sharing. This worked well for members of the WMC who when a need for additional time arose, these meetings were held at church.

The first three *talanoaga* revealed how narrow and inappropriate of my use of the word 'household'. When translated to the Samoan language, the closest word is 'aiga which is understood by Samoans as a tangled net of social relationships. When asking about the number of people in 'aiga, I was confronted with additional questions from participants if I were referring to their 'aiga potopoto (extended family) or 'aiga patino (nuclear family). It was a crucial piece of information to capture in order to understand the context of each participant's story and their relations to other people being referred to during *talanoaga*. This was important for the WMC participants whose stories were part of other participants' stories irrespective if they were related or not.

Participants were well informed of the social media technology. They or their adult children had integrated this medium to maintain links and interactions with 'aiga in Samoa and other places. In response to questions such as how they keep in touch with their families, a list of internet-based examples and applications came into conversation. The use of mobile phones, Facebook, twitter, bebo to communicate, update and share information with families and friends in the islands is the 'in-thing'. It was an eye opening observation. I knew and used twitter or bebo a little myself. The rewiring of Samoans enabled them to know the news and 'gossips' in their own families and Samoa in general.

Fourteen of the twenty two WMCSS participants had their *talanoaga* at the church hall on their request. These sessions were carried out before and after the choir

practices on two Thursdays and prayer meetings on two Fridays. It was a convenient and a cost saving suggestion. The change of venue also enabled me to meet other families who were not on the original list of study participants.

In addition, I held two focus group discussions with seven male and eight female youths of WMC at the church hall. Each participant represented different 'aiga interviewed. I discuss this in detail in chapter six. I felt the need to include this group based on informal conversations at church and after speaking to some of them at their homes during *talanoaga* with their older folks. As the next generation, their views were important to providing another angle to understanding movement and *fa'aSamoa* in their 'aiga.

Thirty six *talanoaga* took place at people's homes. Although I spoke with one 'key' person in a family; either husband or wife, *talanoaga* were not in isolation. Other family members were at the background going about their own activities and joining in to remind the audience on specific questions. For example, the year they came to New Zealand, the schools they attended and what and how much they sent to or received from their relatives in Samoa last. Importantly, family members got to hear stories of many other movement and relatives in Samoa whom they may not have heard of or met.

The life story and autobiography part of the study was carried out at participant's homes. The times for these *talanoaga* depended on the availability of the chosen members. Their views offered in-depth insights into the relationship between movement and *fa'aSamoa*. Because they are leaders in their 'aiga and community, their life histories and autobiography and cultural understanding of *fa'aSamoa* was useful to the study.

In the field, the expressions of peoples' *alofa* (love; compassion) were extended to me freely at their homes. Some offered meals, drinks and sometimes money which they said, "to help pay for my school fees". This aspect of the Samoan hospitality was a challenge to resist. I shared my discomfort with my siblings. To which they responded, "You would offend people if you refused their *alofa* and *fa'aaloalo* (respect). Just go with the flow and thank the people when you had finished". This

field experience speaks of the trust and hospitality that Samoans in general offered to researchers or visitors. It was this reality and understanding of the local context that I felt researchers have obligations towards the participants in interpretation and reporting of information they offered.

### **3.12 En route to field sites: the excitement of first leg of field work**

I was scheduled to depart on Sunday June 2011, seven o'clock in the morning from Nadi on an Auckland-bound Air Pacific (then) flight to collect people's life stories. My meeting with church members was confirmed at twelve o'clock midday after their morning service just in time of my arrival. My field work gear – questionnaires, interview schedules, selected readings, tape recorder and spare batteries, field note book, laptop and accessories – were in place and packed in my cabin bag. Such valuable possessions were unfit as checked-in baggage in fear of them getting misplaced as past experiences showed.

Travel for research was often delayed due to circumstances beyond my control. Despite airport delays, I got to church to find the elders of the congregation 'in-a-waiting ordeal'. It demonstrated the good nature of a community who responded willingly to the church minister's call to assist in my study. And they did. Not because I am a researcher but I am Samoan and was one of them. It was a humbling experience. I considered this incident a turning point of field work worth highlighting that I penned the following lines in my field note book.

I left for Auckland frustrated from the flight delay. I lost hope in making it to the meeting and a success of the field work. Knowing the Samoans, they will not wait for hours to hear about someone coming from some place to do research.

Oh, I guess I was wrong. Having seen the elders and congregation waiting today moved me beyond words to describe this expression of love. So genuine and real! Is because they are Christians? or Samoans? These people are not what I thought of while in Nadi. This is the highlight of this field work. Perhaps, my view of the group was

based on previous research encounter when not making on time means a re-schedule or a lost opportunity. This is the beginning of a new learning; new knowledge and discovery imagine what is 'in-transit'...? How shall I return the favor worthy of what I was shown and given today? (Field notes Aotearoa/New Zealand 2011).

I felt an urgent need to reciprocate this gesture appropriately and in the best way possible. Reciprocity is expected and a culturally appropriate gesture (Nasilisili 2012; Koya-Vakauta 2013; Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba 2014) when doing research in the Pacific Island communities. In the same spirit, I also intended to present a copy of this thesis to the congregation when it finishes. It will also involve a presentation of gifts.

The congregation recognised me from my late brother's memorial service. The initial conversations before and after the meeting proper were unavoidably centered on that day, although I preferred it not to be our focus. Memories were fresh and I rather not revisit them in this context. The experience highlighted an important reality of fieldwork that usually not openly discussed by researchers. I was caught at a crossroad; being a researcher on one hand and as a member of the community who shared a collective memory about an experience that was personal and recent. Ingie Hovland (2012:69) captured my state of vulnerability in the field:

For those who do fieldwork at home, or in a place or community that they already have some familiarity with, culture shock may be replaced by a certain uncanny feeling as the familiar space is turned into an object of study. At the same time, the researcher is confronted with herself [himself] – her [his] memories, her [his] loyalties, her [his] position.

Therefore, Hovland (2004:2) continues that," the uncanny is terrifying because it comes about in a space that we thought was familiar, and that we are unable to separate ourselves from completely".

Our meeting then consisted of head of '*aiga* of the church. While the meeting was meant to be as such, it was not in isolation from the rest of the congregation who, from body language, were also eager to hear about my study. Because of my late arrival, everyone kept each other occupied at church. In this light, it was only appropriate that anyone who wanted to attend could do so. It was also important for people to hear about the study from me to put them at ease after earlier publicity.

At this gathering, I explained the research, its purpose and relevance to Samoa and all of us in attendance. I perceived of this meeting as making the study official. What followed next was simply a 're-run of the headlines' that had been 'on air' for some time by the 'coconut' network of my research crew and co-researchers before I got to the field.

### **3.13 Situating emotions in field**

Like all my previous visits to Aotearoa/New Zealand, I stayed at my sister Muliauma and her family's home at Botany, Auckland. Being the eldest of my siblings in that country, her home is and has been the base of my '*aiga* there. Unlike my past visits, my return at the time, as my siblings understood was to carry out a research for a PhD degree. While I was not the only one in my family to go to a university and had involved in a research, however this is the first PhD research in my '*aiga*. Everyone was keen to know what made such a research any different.

In the quietness of my mind, I also knew that my visit was more than what my relatives understood it to be. Rather, it was another opportunity for me to visit Muliauma who had been diagnosed with the Alzheimer disease some years earlier. Any chance to do so and to offer moral support to her family was precious. In this valued context, I perceived of my return then as a researcher in the 'body' (and thinking) of a brother, an uncle, a member of my '*aiga* and the community and a Samoan; and had to navigate waves of emotions as part of the field. I reflected critically on and continuously of myself as a researcher and all my other identities during the fieldwork processes (Morse et al 2002). Denzin and Lincoln (2002:183) captured this state of mind that, "although we have many selves we bring with us, those selves fall into three categories: researched-based selves, brought selves, (the



selves that historically, socially, and personally create our standpoints), and the situationally-created selves”. Reinharz (1997) reminded that researchers do not only bring the ‘self’ to the field but they also create the ‘self’ in the field. This experience was true in my case.

Navigating through my multiple self and emotions specifically related to my being part of the field, heightened the meaning of the field for me and it subsequently took on a new meaning of field work experience overall. It was a steep learning curve. As Thurnell-Read (2011:46) suggested, “emotions are important elements of coming to know the field”. I shall return to this point later in this chapter.

### **3.14 Grooming for field actions**

The fifty participants demanded careful planning and proper coordination. Admittedly, I was worried whether I could handle the communication and arrangements the task demanded in a place I had limited knowledge where to find people. It might be a natural reaction if it is seen from an individual researcher standpoint. However, from the view of *fa’aSamoa* the task was manageable. I did not doubt the support of my *‘aiga* rather it was more to do with what I would do without them in the context of fieldwork in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa.

Although I had a list of participants, it was merely to keep me informed. Contacting and organising appointment times were done for me. Because all participants came to the study through my different siblings, they made the arrangements. Open communications were important to ensure that appointments did not overlap. In this context, it was only appropriate that my siblings handled this crucial aspect of the fieldwork. The weight was not so much on the request itself but the person making it. Sanga (2004) and Nasilisili (2012) find relevance of the same principle in their research in the Solomon Islands and Fiji respectively. I felt the need to comply with this important expectation. Although my siblings and co-researchers negotiated my access to the field and arranged for *talanoaga*, the actual *talanoaga* with the study participants was my domain.

I listened intently to the way in which my siblings addressed and interacted with participants when speaking over the telephone. I concluded that negotiating access in the field was a special task that required skills, time and people. Negotiation is about people after all. It was about building relationships, mutual understanding and during which respect was given and taken. It was cultivating and nourishing the *va* (relational space) and reinforcing values of *fa'aSamoa*.

Being an observer and listener was a useful place and a space to reflect upon as the negotiation process unfolded. When my brother-in law organised appointments with participants CN1 and CN2, I listened to the manner in which he addressed them, the kind of information, issues, jokes exchanged and his body language and expressions. These were very important for me and the study. I took notes of each participant while listening to telephone conversations that lasted from some fifteen minutes to about half an hour.

I committed one full page of my field note book to take notes on each participant while listening to conversations. These notes formed the basis of follow-up, casual information-finding talks I had with my siblings about a participant. I also recorded defining characteristics or 'things' that stood out during a telephone conversation to help me differentiate each personality. To illustrate, CN2, a mother in her late 40s; runs a small sewing business at her home; and travelled frequently to Samoa. This background information would not be forthcoming if it was not for this opportunity.

The phone conversations gave me a great 'feel' of the people. Confidently, by the time I met each participant face to face, I knew about their background and enough to help me personalise the questions during *talanoaga*. This was also very crucial as I was able to know the appropriateness of and the order of questions I asked. It was particularly important for me given that I knew little about the people beforehand.

I was conscious at one stage whether my knowledge of participants would influence my reactions that may lead to my being biased in my position as a researcher. However, as Wax and Wax (1980) argued researchers need to learn more than just the topic under study before entering the field. They should be grounded in scholarly

work and to know their respondents. The authors argued that knowing the respondents and understanding information about them is a mark of respect. It also reflected that researchers made a genuine effort to know the research participants before meeting them rather than just getting information from them.

Understanding the background of participants in this way helped me to find candidates for the life stories autobiography part of the study. I got my cue from Patton (2002:40) on purposeful sampling where the participants I selected were largely because “they are information rich and illuminative, as they offer useful manifestations of” a cultural understanding and meaning of movement. I selected two women in Aotearoa/New Zealand and one man in Samoa for this part of the study to triangulate the data collected from other sources. These participants do not know each other; nor did they know of their selection for this part of the research. The *talanoaga* for the life story autobiography took place at participants’ homes. I had to carry out follow up sessions with the two women when they were free at their homes especially for CN2 because she was always busy sewing to meet orders.

### **3.15 A request within a request**

I introduced the second leg of the study purposefully before the end of each *talanoaga*. It was a crucial transition to make to avoid any misunderstanding and misinformation. I explained the reasons for a two-sided approach to understand movement of Samoans. Connecting people’s footsteps was a key factor in this study and also to our understanding of movement. I had no hidden agenda. I referred to Figures 3.1 and 3.3 to convince participants of the need to have *talanoaga* with their relatives in Samoa. For this purpose, I printed Figures 3.1 and 3.3 in colour and laminated to use as draw cards in the field when I felt the need to. In addition, I had a copy of the questionnaire for participants in Samoa on hand for viewing. The draw cards certainly had an appeal to the participants simply from observing the body language, facial expressions and the responses.

My reading of people’s reaction suggested a positive response. However, I was reminded of what Hycner (1999) stressed the need for researchers to listen carefully to what participants said during interviews. It includes reviewing the audio recording

repeatedly in order to develop a complete understanding of a conversation. I was conscious that what I said and meant may not necessarily be the same as what participants heard or perceived. The inputs of my siblings and co-researchers in this regard were also helpful to reassure participants of the intention of the study.

Strategically, I offered to take letters and *fa'amomoli* (remittances in cash and in-kind) to the relatives in the island. I also agreed to make a donation, but it was declined by all, to pay for phone calls to inform families in Samoa of a proposed *talanoaga*. I was reminded by participants of their use of the social media for communication in this case; implying there was no need for such an offer. I took note of telephone numbers of family members during *talanoaga* then and sometimes days later. Three study participants (WMC15, CN16, CN18) had relatives from Samoa visiting at the time who I established contacts for follow-up *talanoaga*.

### **3.16 To you, with love: reciprocity returned**

At the end of fieldwork, the WMCSS families prepared a farewell lunch at the church for me. Although the feast was viewed in farewell terms, I, as an insider ethnographer conceived that there is no closure rather it was the beginning of new relationships with people. That relationship and connection in my mind is for a lifetime (Nasilisili 2012). Just as I had filled my field note book and mental memory of information about people's lived lives and movement experiences, they too got to know much more about my life as an individual and collectively with my '*aiga* after each *talanoaga* than we first started.

As mentioned earlier the urgent need to show my appreciation appropriately was about paying respect, humility and *teu le va* (to nurture social space and relationships) with the people. As Rice (2005) reminded researchers, the value of reciprocity is that as we received from others, we must also offer to others. Reciprocity reflects the relational worldview and understanding that suggests that people must honour relationships with other people (Hart 2010:7). Nabobo-Baba et al (2012:103) suggest that "researchers must ensure there is sufficient means to show appreciation to people so that people's love, support, time, resources and knowledge freely given are duly reciprocated". To honour relationship with WMCSS, my

family presented a monetary gift to the congregation and the church minister on my behalf.

### **3.18 Tracing roots, routes and residence: extensions of the field in Samoa**

Thirty four of the participants handed me letters and parcels of varying sizes and weight to take to their *'aiga* in Samoa. Besides the information I received, the notes written on the items and envelopes gave hints about the beneficiaries and their locations in Samoa. The other eighteen did not, but they reassured me that arrangements would be made for a follow-up *talanoaga*.

For the first time I had carried items on the plane for other people. I felt obliged to do it. In doing so, I needed to navigate the border controls of the two countries purposefully. Firstly, paying for excess package; this was generously and naturally taken care of by my co-researchers. Secondly, navigating the arrival/departure formalities of the two countries and answering to what may be seen as routine questions but potentially had legal implications. 'Did you pack your bags?' 'Are you bringing in goods on behalf of another person?' I listened or read the questions carefully before answering or signing the forms. If the way from Nadi to Auckland was dramatic, the Auckland to Apia stretch had its share of special moments. I was in prayerful silence from the moment of departure until I wheeled my luggage out from the authorities at Faleolo International Airport to the sanctuary of Vaivase-uta, my home and base; the extension of the field in Samoa.

I informed the recipients of the goodies by phone the following day. With much relief, most recipients had anticipated my call about the goods but not the most important part, the follow-up *talanoaga*. I used the opportunity to explain about my study and to ensure a follow-up *talanoaga* was done. Fifteen collections were made from Vaivase-uta in exchange of information-rich and insightful *talanoaga* with much laughter for five days; three sessions in each. Recipients in this category are identified with the letter V in Table 3.3.

On their request, another ten recipients preferred to collect theirs in town, Apia; identified by letter the A in Table 3.3. I chose the place for the meetings simply

where we could talk. The *Fale o Pulenuu* (an open house for the village mayors located in central Apia) was chosen because of its centrality.

I made deliveries to the homes of nine recipients (marked with the letter D in Table 3.3) and conducted nine *talanoaga* at Aleisa, Eva, Faleapuna, Faleasiu-uta, Gagaigo, Saina and Vailima, on the island of Upolu. Two recipients resided in the villages of Iva and Vailoa on the big island of Savai'i. *Talanoaga* with the two recipients took place on the wharf at Salelologa in exchange of the goods.

Identified with the letter S in Table 3.3, sixteen participants presented challenging but exciting moments for the study. The experience opened new learning pathways and invited future research. For my purposes, I was determined to trace this group in order to achieve the aim of the study. All possible efforts were made to locate members of this group. It included telephone calls to my siblings in Aotearoa/New Zealand to follow up with relatives there. I also resorted to the ever effective power of the 'coconut' network through friends, friends of friends, former USP students and my relatives. It took time, resources and patience. Through a combination of the above links and a drop of divine intervention, I connected to eight participants. Four in Upolu in the villages of Faleasiu-uta, Leauvaa, Leulumoega-tuai and Saleilua and four in Savai'i in the villages of Avao, Fogasavaii, Sagone and Samalaeulu. The other eight (WMCS1, WMCS4, WMCS6, WMCS8, WMCS18, WMCS22, CNS26, CNS27) however, the terrain and routes required further re-negotiations. Navigating such terrain and passage demanded time and resources, the luxury I did not have, until I returned to base in Suva. This mattered not because I had sufficient information for purposes of this study.

#### ***Talanoaga* in action: context matter**

*Talanoaga* in Samoa lasted between one and one and half hours and they were conducted in the Samoan language. I resumed my note taking/making tasks in the same field note book I used in the first leg. I also used a new coded questionnaire as explained earlier, for each participant in Samoa. The tape recording of *talanoaga* complemented the notes taken during sessions.

I greeted each participant upon arrival at Vaivase-uta and invited them into the house. The topics of the ice-breaking conversations vary from our family homes, cars in the garage, the number of people in my family, my father's grave in front of the house, which villages we come from, our neighbours, the cost of living and eventually to the relatives who sent a parcel or letter. Based on her research in Fiji, Nasilisili (2012:100) found that such exchanges were important as they affirmed relationship, belonging, care and inclusiveness. Surely our casual talks helped to establish rapport and loosened ourselves up, but if not handled well, it could derail the focus of *talanoaga*.

Transitioning our casual conversation to the study focus was important. I introduced the aim of the study purposefully for people "to embrace that the knowledge they have matters" (Marshall and Rossman 2006:101) particularly movement and lived experiences in their *'aiga*. To access this local, oral and holistic (Maurial 1999) knowledge, people need to share it. That knowledge is their gift to the study and importantly to the future. I used the laminated draw cards of Figures 3.1 and 3.3 again here while explaining the purpose of the study to prevent misinterpretation and misinformation. I also had a fresh copy of the questionnaire I used for the participants in Aotearoa/New Zealand for viewing.

As a culturally grounded host, my family prepared light refreshments of tea, juice and sweet biscuits for *talanoaga* at Vaivase-uta. Not all participants took part or stayed for refreshment thereafter as some needed to attend to other commitments. Those who chose to stay a little longer; six in total (WMCS14, WMCS19, CNS11, CNS13, CNS22, CNS25), it was an opportunity not to miss for the additional insights and further clarifications of what they shared before. The spread also brought my own family members together in preparation, serving and reflecting afterwards as I shared with them the research and its aims.

*Talanoaga* I had in Apia town was interesting on many fronts. As discussed earlier, I chose the place to meet in my view as being the easiest to find. However, different understanding of concepts such as absolute and relative location, place perception and direction could make such a place inaccessible. A case in point, when participants and I agreed to meet at *Fale o Pulenuu* on a particular day and time.

Besides the time factor, I understood this to mean either waiting inside or on the steps of the open *fale* but not on the lawn of the Nelson Memorial Public Library which is situated opposite the proposed meeting place or several other places nearby such as the government house or the ANZ bank. It turned out to be another aspect of tracing people within a familiar location. It also speaks of a different kind of movement and tracing I did not envisage.

*Talanoaga* were held inside the *Fale o Pulenuu* and some days on the steps outside it that overlooked the *Eleele fou* (reclaimed area) and the landmarks of central Apia. I introduced myself and the study to each participant emphasising the knowledge they had was important for my study. My reading of people's reaction such as nodding their heads or uttering words such, *oi ua lelei* (Oh, that is ok) to suggest their agreement with the study and its intentions. I took those as signs of volunteering for a *talanoaga*. From observation, the openness and isolation of this place may have an influence on the participant's level of enthusiasm during the sessions and their willingness to engage by asking questions, related and unrelated to the study.

I had with me on each occasion a *niu* or bottles of soft drink and *panikeke*, (pancake) or *pani popo* (coconut buns) to share with participants. People were appreciative of the gesture and some politely refused. Their sincerity was reflected in their body language and verbal expression of gratefulness before saying farewell.

The nine deliveries to the villages including *talanoaga* with eight of the S group (see, Table 3.3) was an adventure. Each passage, location and channel crossed was unique. As in the other *talanoaga*, my focus was to get people to internalise the notion that they had knowledge worth sharing with the study that no one else had. I felt this was accomplished by people's reaction and body language as *talanoaga* sessions were set in motion.

In the villages, I was showered with various gifts at the homes of participants with mostly *fa'alifu* (*taro* or bananas in coconut cream) or *koko* (cocoa) Samoa. At times there were some fresh fish or sea food from some family members returning from the sea. I reciprocated the interviewees' gifting with small goodies for the children of chocolate, lollies, chewing gum and assorted USP-logoed pens and pencil cases.



Reciprocity is an important aspect of fieldwork that could not be ignored. Entering people's private knowledge spaces made it all pressing that returning the favour is done appropriately to maintain the *va*, a sign of *alofa* and appreciation of the gifts of knowledge being freely shared.

### **3.19 Diverse field terrain**

My nephew, a teacher by profession drove me to the villages in Upolu. He also accompanied me to the different homes and hang around while I was at work. His local knowledge and familiarity with the new roads from years of taking his own students on fieldtrips let alone his own personal wanderings became the easiest ways to locate the Samoa-based relatives of those in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In addition, he also knew some of his former students, a colleague or a friend who helped us along the way.

I paid for the fuel and our lunch throughout the time of fieldwork in Samoa. I knew he should be compensated a little more generously than this. However, considering that my study was conceived as a *fa'alavelave* in my *'aiga* as discussed in chapter three, we both knew that the reward would come at another time. He did not mind the work. As I shared with him things about the study, he too learned few things which he said were helpful for his work and developing research projects for his students. I also had another mission for sharing my newly found liberation in the alternative approach to understand movement in the hope to 'save another soul from the grips of the conventional'. Nabobo-Baba et al (2012:104) argue that "researchers need to ensure as far as possible that local people in the research setting are co-opted as members of the research team. This is a means of building local capacity and ensures benefits in multiple ways to the community".

To locate a participant, I would contact a person using the telephone number I had to arrange for a time of our expected arrival. Because we commuted from base at Vaivase-uta, distance travelled, the conditions of the road and whether or not we were both familiar with the location were taken into consideration to approximate our arrival time. At a village, we would ask a passerby for assistance especially for some villages such as Faleasiu-uta and Gagaifo where people lived inland from the

coast. Asking people along the way enabled me to verify the recipient and his family. However, it was also time consuming because some people we stopped to ask knew nothing about the target families and sometimes gave a ‘suspicious’ answer or look.

In the big island of Savai’i, I stayed at our ‘*aiga* base there; a longtime family friend who is a secondary school teacher and a *matai* in the village of Vaiafai. His knowledge of and status in the community was valuable. I relied on him in my pursuit to find participants there. I also tapped into his knowledge of *fa’aSamoa* as a resident *matai* of his ‘*aiga* and *nu’u* at the end of field days.

### **3.20 Treatment and analysing ‘gifts’ from the field**

For my study, quantitative and qualitative information were collected from various secondary sources available in hard copies, online and more importantly people’s knowledge from Aotearoa/New Zealand and villages in Samoa. Quantitative and qualitative methods are “complementary rather than substitutable” (Hussein 2004:4) and they are appropriate to address my aim in this study. The research questions: *How do Samoans conceive of their movement to, from and within Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand; what are the implications of their movement for themselves and society at large?*

I re-checked the completed questionnaires, reviewed my field notes and transcribed the tapes at the end of field days. I was able to do so for few days but not on others. When I could not keep up with the demands of field work and the calls to domesticity of being-in-field, my focus was on doing the most urgent task. That was, to fill in what may be missing in the completed questionnaires and completing, adding and building on notes from *talanoaga* and participant observations. Transcribing was done a later day.

The quantitative and qualitative questions were integrated in one questionnaire (see, appendix). Two different but complementary questionnaires were designed for participants in South Auckland and their ‘*aiga* in Samoa. The quantitative data from the *talanoaga* was simply to establish the contexts and understanding the background

demographics of the study participants. I pre-coded the quantitative questions which were entered into Microsoft Excel for data analysis as I completed each *talanoaga*. The use of any statistical analysis software package was not required. Simple calculation of numbers and percentages of responses was done manually. Tables and graphs were generated for analysis thereafter and where appropriate, they are incorporated in chapters four, five and six.

Qualitative data from *talanoaga* was coded into themes or categories after the fieldwork. However, recognising the common phrases, ideas or statements used by participants was a straightforward way to analysing the information as the interviews were completed in the field. Patton (2002:436) argues that “ideas for making sense of the data that emerge while still in the field constitute the beginning of analysis”. This worked out the best way while in the field where I did not have access to NVivo10, the software program of choice to analyse qualitative information.

The codes “summarize, synthesize and sort many observations made out of the data” while coding is the “process of categorizing and sorting data” (Charmaz 1983:111). Coding therefore, is the connection between data obtained and conceptualisation and the building up of categories from various observations (Bryman and Burgess 1994:5). These categories were analysed and interpreted in a more comprehensive and in-depth manner later. The outputs of the qualitative data analysis are presented in verbatim statements in the next three chapters.

Qualitative coding is different from coding I used for the quantitative data as discussed earlier. Charmaz (1983:111) describes quantitative coding as that which “requires preconceived, logically deduced codes into which the data are placed”. Qualitative coding on the other hand means I created codes and categories to interpret the information after *talanoaga*. In other words, these codes emerged from the texts after transcribing the tapes and cross-checking with my notes and the completed interview questions.

In compliance with research protocols and assurance to the USP’s HEC, the confidentiality of participants’ identities and views was maintained throughout the

data collection, analysis and reporting. All *talanoaga* were given codes as discussed above to differentiate each participant based on their point of entry to the study.

### **3.21 Observing observations closely: the power within**

I paid attention to all aspects of the field in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa during *talanoaga* with study participants at their homes, at Vaivase-uta, the WMC church hall and in public places. These were significant places for they are “not an imprisonment but as something that reach out into the world while not losing their possibility as dwellings for humans in the midst of things” (Lems 2014:18). During *talanoaga* with participant at their homes, I was conscious of the “practice of place-making” (Lems 2014:9) where participants and families appeared to be occupied with getting the home in order to what may be described as a deliberate tampering of field site. The re-ordering included but not limited to straightening the settee and cushions, rearranging the shoe rack, moving the dining chairs to chasing the children away from the sitting room or made them to play games in the garage. To re-set the place as noted above reverberate what Heidegger (1975) calls making-room, which indicates the “changing character of space” (Lems 2014:18). Participant’s re-ordering of their home practices may be unrelated to my being there however, re-ordering the site defeated my aim as an ethnographic navigator to study and understand the participant’s lives and contexts “in their naturalness” (Armstrong 2008:55). Being mindful of the Samoan hospitality and concept of *va*, I understood the basis of their actions and placed them in their own contexts in relation to the study.

Observations of verbal utterances, silences, spaces and persons interacting in different settings contribute to the richness of data set I collected. Facial expressions (Ekman 1998; Fernandez-Dols and Crivelli 2015) conveyed meanings and were a part of the context in which interactions take place. Body language was equally important markers and conveyers of meaning that substantiate the spoken words. My reading of people’s responses such as: “*Ua lelei* (It is ok); *magaia le sailiga*” (It is a good study); body language and facial expressions suggested their agreement to *talanoa*. The use of humour is an inescapable feature of Samoan life. These were

part and parcel of the field experience. Again, humour needs placing in its right context to make the narratives complete.

### **3.22 Being true to myself: many fields, one self**

I was naturally absorbed into my usual roles in my '*aiga* while in the field. As a researcher with a multiple identities body, I navigated with, and at times against these identities. As Chattopadhyay (2013:138) describes "fieldwork generates multiple levels of power relations that I was placed in the spaces of in-betweenness. At one time I was not part of the field sites and nor could I sojourn to my personal space". I was straddling multiple spaces as a result (Chattopadhyay 2013). As a researcher my data gathering activities ended when I reached home to my usual role as a *taulealea* of my '*aiga* and doing the domestics – mowed the lawn, cooked, cleaned, a messenger and attended to other work around the house. I attended to my field work notes afterwards or when there were not any happenings at home that would necessitate my participation.

In between *talanoaga* with study participants in Aotearoa/New Zealand, I spent time with my sister. My brother in-law would have brought her from the rest home to their home in Botany daily and took her back in the evening. On days I returned from the field, to find her at home I would spend time to feed, talk to or simply to look after her in order to give my brother in-law time out. On days she was not at home on my return, I re-checked the completed questionnaires, transcribed the tapes and/or reviewed my field notes. On other days, I was simply absorbed if not emotionally drained by my 'being in the moment' that I worked on the field notes and preliminary data analysis a day or two later.

Twice I went to help out with *teuga falesa* (cleaning up the church) on Saturday afternoon. Families are put on a duty roster to prepare the church for the Sunday service. Such important work in the community involved sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, wiping, arranging the seats and putting up the material decorations for the altar and other strategic places inside the church. Picking rubbish and pulling or cutting grass outside church was also part of the work required of families on duty. *Teu* (bouquets of fresh or artificial flowers) are made and sometimes ordered to

decorate the church. A family's duty does not end until the last service on Sunday afternoon and the material decorations are removed, washed and put away for the following Sunday.

*Teuga falesa* gave me an opportunity for participant observations of community engagements with the church. My observations were more than just hanging out or to pass time but it was observations with a purpose (De Walt and De Walt 2001). It provided another opportunity to have conversations with people at church about movement and the role of *lotu* in *fa'aSamoa*. Saturday is also the day of choir practice and hymn rehearsal for Sunday service. At times a church meeting of the elders was also held to discuss certain issues while the youths put up a game of *voli* (volley ball). Therefore, Saturday is another full-on day in terms of community get-together at church and a fertile field of purposeful observations.

On one occasion, I attended a funeral of a first cousin in the village of Vaimoso. Because my other siblings were at work in Apia, someone needed to represent our side of the family at the occasion. My involvement in this important event was not for few hours. I spent two nights away from Vaivase-uta to assist with the preparations for the funeral and cooking for relatives attending to pay their last respects. And a day later to recuperate before I could resume any work on my study. It was an opportunity to observe the displays of material wealth and the breadth and depth of 'aiga relations from near and far converging at one place. I got to know about the events of the past with the Vaimoso side of the family and the numerous changes in the village compared to the time of my childhood there.

Being in the field, moving between *talanoaga*, participant observations and engagement with my 'aiga and the community at large, I became more aware of another dimension of movement. That is, I was always on the move between different participants, *talanoaga* at different sites and places (village, town, or different island). In addition, although I may be physically resting, my mind was still on the move and anticipating the fields of and pathways to knowledge for my study, my field work schedules and many other issues related or unrelated to my being in the field. Being in that state of movement consciousness appears not to end.

### 3.23 Building fieldwork reserves and personal reflection

Recording my personal field experiences and reflections proved to be an important task before, during and after fieldwork. I made a point to record these in my journal daily however I was not able to maintain the momentum throughout the fieldwork with domestic engagements in the field. Although entries were not made daily, I would recall and record my reflections few days later with passion and force. Sometimes my reflections and outpourings are embedded in the field notes.

The different stages of the fieldwork were characterised with colourful moments and my reflections and emotions naturally found home in the journal entries. A case in point before the fieldwork were negotiations for research funds, ethical clearance, and the justification of certain budgeted items for village *o'o* (gift) to negotiate access. This could be energy and emotional-draining processes. As experiences in the field showed, reciprocity was, and is more than a budgeted item in research funding application. It is about building and maintaining relationships with people. Research Ethics Committee of University needs to accept this reality that reciprocating people appropriately is just as important as any other aspect of fieldwork and maintaining the *va* with Pacific peoples. My own case highlighted the need for University to privilege this aspect as it directly relates to the concept of intellectual property of Pacific peoples when they offer their knowledge freely with much sincerity.

Each time I said thank you and farewelled each participant brought home issues of trust and gifting. The people trusted me and the study with knowledge I did not have. I saw the unequal power relations in this relationship. I, and the study gained; they received a thank you and a God bless you at each farewell that I felt it was insufficient at times. I wonder if this aspect of research is given enough attention as part of what Louis (2007:133) reminded researchers of their obligations to communities they research. It also speaks of the sincerity of the Samoans who offered their knowledge and information without asking for any payment in return. Besides their participation in the study they also gave hospitality and much *alofa*, money, food and drinks and offered best wishes for the study. All cannot be sufficiently compensated.

Documenting insightful, challenging and emotional experiences during and after *talanoaga* in my journal was an exciting task. It reminded me of my role as a researcher as well as the demands and expectations that are embedded in the exercise. I learned that the personal notes I took complement the field notes from *talanoaga* with people and participant observations. Writing reflections were also therapeutic on days that ‘things fieldwork’ could be overwhelming.

Throughout the fieldwork, communications with friends, families and my children became the greatest source of motivation. Words and gesture of encouragement and support to hang in there was hope to hold onto at times when the going gets tough and demands of work, the pressure to finish a PhD, to look after my children and simply living life appeared to have got the best of me. Getting these clutters out on my journal pages performed miracles and restored needed sanity to press forward on a lonely yet rewarding journey.

### **3.24 Chapter summary**

I set out in this chapter to explain the processes involved in the gathering and analysing of quantitative and qualitative information suitable for my study. I present an alternative approach to face to face *talanoaga* to data collection as a way to break away from the conventional way of doing data collection that has taken roots in the academy. The multiple and mixed methods approach adopted in this study complement the use of empirical information, interpretation of personal information and deep reflections of the process. My search for new and alternative knowledge and understanding revealed much more complexities and experiences that warranted the use of different methods to find meaningful interpretation. It also shows the limitation of the language as there are some experiences that “have no [English] words equivalent to the experience itself” (Levin 2013:718).

This chapter has set the scene as contextual background to findings from the fields in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa as discussed in the next three chapters.



## Chapter Four:

### SAMOANS AND FA'ASAMOA ON THE MOVE: REFASHIONING PLACE

A radically different approach to the scholarly study of movement is needed. Such an approach demands more than a survey of forms of movement – rural-urban, urban-urban or transnational – it demands more than an alternative perspective on the flow of resources, remittances and people between different places; it demands an orientation in thinking about people *in* movement (Young 1998:27).

Samoans like other peoples of Oceania in diaspora are indeed ‘doing what their ancestors had done before them: enlarging their world as they go but on a scale not possible before; they are settling down new roots in ‘new resource areas, securing employment and overseas family property, expanding kinship networks through which they circulate themselves, their relatives, their material goods and their stories (Hau’ofa 1993:10).

As an ancient practice, movement is an integral feature of life of people in reciprocity and care-based societies. Peoples of Oceania are at home in a large and unbounded sea of islands (Hau’ofa 1993). When conceived in this light, home is but “a large sea that is full of places to explore, to harvest, or to settle and it is also full of people to visit, to exchange with, or to dominate” (Falgout 2012:184). As Hau’ofa (2008) argues, this reality allows peoples of Oceania to live fluid and mobile lifestyles; as was, is and will always be, before the imposition of political borders and rules by the West that unsuccessfully confine the movement of peoples within set structures.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of place and people’s relationship with place. In and through it, I show that the conventional understanding perceives place as a

‘thing’ therefore place is understood by its physical, discreet attributes and markers. This position ignores the complex cultural attributes and processes of the people that constantly mold and define the social cultural fabric and outlook of places. I use the Samoan concept of *fa’asinomaga* as my grounding in the next section. In its simplest meaning, *fa’asinomaga* is identity; at a higher level, it is a way of thinking. This, I contend is a sensible approach to theorise place better. It is more appropriate to my attempt to refashion place and what it represents for Samoans. In closing this chapter, I explore the enlargement and connectedness of peoples and places, that is, Samoans in their *nu’u* (village) in Samoa and relatives in South Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand. Context-specific places as such are situated sites of understanding and knowledge where the movements of Samoans and the mobility of *fa’aSamoa* are grounded, networked and celebrated.

#### **4.1 Peoples; Places: people-place making**

The literature defines place as ‘something’, an object that exists out there that can be discovered and possessed. In this light, the attributes of place that describe the physical environment and the ‘natural’ beauty define place and to an extent influence one’s preference of one place over another. In her study of the Aboriginal communities of North America, Lisa Prosper (2007:117) finds that the physical landscapes of these communities are conceived in terms of their “material and morphological artifacts”. Tonia Horton (2004:71) concludes in her study of cultural landscape in the USA that an uneasy fit exists between the cultural landscapes of that country and her National Register. In both studies, the materialist approach privileges the “artifactual typology” where the value of landscapes is located in the physical discreet entities of places rather than the entire landscape (Prosper 2007:117). The wholeness of place is possible when people are in the picture because in and through them our understanding of place can be made completely meaningful.

The materialistic, physical attributes perspective of place characterises the attitudes of the colonial powers at the time of searching for and the eventual occupation of foreign places worldwide. Gail Christopher (2013), the Vice President of the W.K Kellogg Foundation wrote the Foreword to the book, *Telling Our Own Story: The*

*Role of Narrative in Racial Healing* by Godsil, R and Goodale, B in which he, says [the],

belief in human hierarchy based on physical appearance or characteristics was first proposed by Linnaeus during the age of the European Enlightenment. Like many ideas of that era, this concept of human hierarchy or racism, has transported human enterprise to unanticipated heights and depths. This idea was used to justify and rationalize the single most dramatic economic expansion in human history, the institution of the trans-Atlantic slavery, and to support conquering, exploitation, displacing, and discriminating against entire populations within geographic areas.

True to the motives as Christopher described above, the Pacific islands was, and is still perceived “physically as an exotic place” (Baldacchino 2007:170) of tropical paradise (McGrath 2002:307), swaying palms trees, plentiful sunshine, white sandy beaches and an endless supply of people’s ever smiling faces living there. The Pacific is framed as a place of choice to escape the harsh winter season and the busy urban lifestyle and where one could “become refreshed and rejuvenated” (Helu-Thaman 1993:108). As Kennedy (2014:7) passionately writes, the South Pacific is not *Paradise* (italics in original) as portrayed in the writings of the early Europeans and the tourist brochures of recent. Samoan writer Apelu Tielu (2003:349) in his novel, *Forever in Paradise*, speaks too of the fact that despite the tranquil image of Samoa to the outside world, “trouble still exists even in paradise”.

The Pacific is also the place of colonial imprints through the re-engineering of the physical environment in the form of the plantation economy – the sugarcane (Fiji) (Zipp 2014:6) and the coconut (Samoa and the Solomon Islands) plantations. The plantations tell stories that not only sit in the plantation landscapes they too transform and enrich places.

In the above cases, it was not just the creation of a plantation-type landscape in contrast to what existed before then. Rather, the plantations and the subsequent economic returns that its owners took much pleasure in rested on the sweat and in the

hands of hard working labourers from India in the case of Fiji and from China and the Solomon Islands for Samoa. The Indians, Chinese and the Solomon Islanders and all the other labourers the world over had made the aspirations of the colonisers possible. They also added value and colour to place; ever transforming places and making them undeniably plural in all facets. As highlighted by feminist geographer Asenati Liki (2007) in her PhD study of *Teine Uli* (Melanesian-Samoan women) in Samoa, the plantation as a place has not been given the attention it deserves, if ever, in the literature of colonised landscapes and in particular the history of Samoa. The labour communities exist only in the census count but largely invisible in society. The forgetting of the reality of place making and the history of making place in the case of Samoa presents a sense of urgency because of its relevance to my attempt to refashion place.

The physical attributes of place are undoubtedly important however it is the people in residence and their cultures that provide meaning to place. Without people, place is but a ‘thing’ that exists in isolation and it is admired from afar. In this way, a place is mostly known by the descriptions such as – the rolling mountain ranges, the meandering rivers, deep valleys, white sandy beaches and the like – it is given. However, in a study of the Barkindji (river People) Aboriginal community of western New South Wales, Australia, Lorraine Gibson (2012:201) cautioned that even in the case of privileging the physical attributes of a place, people attached particular cultural beliefs, feelings and ways of knowing to the physical environment. The Barkindji community in her research perceives the Darling River not in its physical sense but the river is very much a part of life and being of the community as one study participant writes. “I was reared up on the river, that’s where we get our name from. Barka means ‘river’, Barkindji means ‘river People’. Without the river we lose our culture, we lose our identity” (Gibson 2012:201).

The late Fijian anthropologist Asesela Ravuvu (1983) and Raymond Young (2001) made similar observations about the Fijian’s perception of their relationship and connection to the *vanua* (land). For the indigenous Fijians,

*vanua* (place; land), is the living soul or human manifestation of the physical environment which the members have since claimed to

belong to them and to which they also belong. The land is the physical or geographical entity of the people, upon which their survival as group depends. Land is thus an extension of the self. Likewise the people are an extension of land. Land becomes lifeless and useless without the people, and likewise the people are helpless and insecure without land to thrive upon (Ravuvu 1983:76).

Phenomenological philosopher Edward Casey (2001:684) describes the relationship between self and place in terms of “constitutive coingredience”. Simply, “each is essential to the being of the other ... thus there can be no place without self and no self without place”.

Place and space are twin concepts in the discipline of Geography. In fact, the two concepts appear in most definitions of Geography as a field of study. Since the quantitative revolution of the 1950s, Geography is often defined as “the spatial science, that is, it is a discipline that concerns with the use of the earth space” (Fellmann et al 2012:4). In other words, Geography is the study of spatial variation. This definition of the discipline survived for a while. As an undergraduate student of Geography in the mid-1990s, I learned the discipline spatially. In turn, I have adopted the same perspective unconsciously in my early years of teaching Geography at USP until recently.

The emergence of the humanist perspective in the 1960s, saw shifting attitudes in Geography and other social science disciplines towards the importance of place not in terms of the physical, discrete attributes but the people-driven processes and activities that made and give place meaning. Gibson (2012:203) argues that

place is a social concept and the ways in which a physical place or space is understood, experienced and imagined is tied to the cultural values and beliefs of people in a place. What it takes to be Barka or Barkindji is practiced and expressed variously; in fact, all are ‘clearly and directly place- or River-related, thus it is a ‘holistic identifier’. This encompasses all of life as lived; it cannot be reduced to the physical or spatial place of the River in any isolated or separated sense.

This perspective confirms what Norberg-Schulz (1988:24) said that it is “only when space becomes a system of meaningful places does it become alive to us”. Tuan (1977; 1980) has alluded to the same idea and argued that place is experienced; it is interpreted, it is given values and it is culturally conditioned. Therefore, place and culture are inseparable entities. In a recent book article, Wight (2012:233) passionately writes and I say the same with him that, “while some of my early geography interests were more *spatial*, my focus now is very much *placial*” (italics my emphasis).

Anthropologist Arturo Escobar (2001) advanced the thinking that culture is situated in places. Like Arif Dirlik (2000) and Karen Olwig (1997), their concern relates to the privileging of space over place. Space is connected to the dissolution of political borders. This in turn intensified the transnational flow and counter flow of ideas and information, material and non-material things as well as people across borders – a process that has come to be known as globalisation. Implied in the exchanges across borders, is another dimension which suggests that the global, the dominant culture, for whatever reason, is more appealing to people than the local ones.

Because of globalisation, political borders are conceived to have lost their purpose and may seem irrelevant to a degree in this day and age. This perspective informed the work of geographers – late Doreen Massey (1994), a feminist geographer, social geographer Tim Cresswell (2003) and an applied geographer and planner Ian Wight (2011; 2012). Professor Massey (1994:251) argues that rather than, “thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understanding”. Cresswell (2003:273) speaks of place as “always changing and in the process of becoming. Therefore, place is not finished, not obviously ordered and not easily framed. It is blurry at the edges”. In agreement, Wight (2012:233) conceived of place as “becoming space”. A place is “always emerging – becoming” (Wattchow 2015:137). Place then is work in progress; it is yet to arrive.

Place scholars – Ed Relph (1976), Yi Fu Tuan (1977) and Seamon (2013) for example – have long argued that place is best understood as a phenomenon. Of recent, Wight (2012:232-233) reminisces that

the place I have in mind is much more than simply geographical or locational; it is integral in the sense of including while transcending the pre-modern, modern and post-modern notions, or ‘senses’ of place. It also has an inherent dynamic in that place is constantly emerging, both developing and evolving, constituting a verb as much as a noun, in that place is always in the process of being made and remade in pursuit of an ever-greater sense of the good (and the true, and the beautiful). Could such integral place-making be synonymous with wellbeing as a socio-spiritual construction? Can they inspire one another, and generate a synergy for planning, policy and design to harness?

Evident thus far, the discourses on place, space and links to globalisation are diverse. It is also clear that to privilege space over place as fusion of social structures, cultural practices and “experiential experiences” (Tuan 1977:34) is worrying. As Escobar (2001:141) cautions that such a position has “profound consequences for our understanding of culture, knowledge, nature and economy”.

The literature on movement of Samoans reveals the forgetting of people in place-making as it is clear in the discussion above that people make place, *the* place. One of the consequences of privileging space over place as Escobar cautioned is the disappearance of migrants’ roots and the anchor in their cultures. Therefore, the title of Casey’s (1993) book, *Getting back into place* signals a timely reminder to “reverse the long-standing disempowerment of place in both modern theory and social life” (Escobar 2001:143).

The notion that culture sits in place (Escobar 2001:142) has never been so valid today and relevant to my study. In fact, the idea itself speaks of and represents the very essence of reciprocity and care-based societies; and it is not new. What is, though, is the need for many more scholars to embrace the idea as a necessary equal to the existing theorising of space. For Samoa and her Oceanic neighbours, their islands are home and a place that is linked to ‘*aiga*, *nu’u* and *atunu’u* as alluded to at the beginning of this chapter and elsewhere in this thesis. Home and place to the Samoans are tied to their *fa’asinomaga* (identity), the focus of the next section.

Home and place go hand in hand as Barbara McGrath (2002:309) found in her study of Samoans in Seattle, USA.

Like other people on the move, Samoans travel far and wide the world over (see, Sutter 1989). They interact with new places, with different people and diverse experiences whether their movements are related to *aoga* (education), *galuega* (work), *ta'alogā* (sports), *malaga* for all-sorts of reasons and *tafaoga* (leisure; holiday) to name a few examples. These experiential experiences (Tuan 1977) add value to existing island-based ones. Needless to say, Samoans are highly likely to acquire 'new' things while on the move such as other ways of thinking, new ideas of living and spicing up of life; other identities; forget not the dramatic changes in body size and shape among others. However, the newfound ways and identities for example cannot be assumed to have diminished or perceived to be in any way better than identities and experiences that are firmly anchored in Samoa. Rather, they complement each other. As Entrikin (1989:41) argues, "human experience is always rooted in place".

#### **4.2 The gift of *fa'asinomaga*: a way of thinking**

At a basic level, Samoans in the study belong to villages that are scattered throughout Samoa (see, Table 3.3). Samoa's Bureau of Statistics refined the scattered nature of three hundred and fifty villages in Samoa into forty one political districts and they are grouped further in four census regions: Apia Urban Area (AUA); North West Upolu (NWU); Rest of Upolu (ROU) and Savai'i (see, Map 1.1) (Government of Samoa 2011).

From this angle, villages and people are conceived in lived binary: coastal/inland; big/small; located in Upolu/Savai'i; and either close to town/*kua back* – a saying that Samoans use loosely and jokingly to refer to villages that are distant from Apia (town) and the people who reside there. Implied here is that villages closer to or within Apia in the case of AUA and part of NWU are considered the 'core' and for some reason, they are seen favourably over the others simply because of their proximity to town. The villages in the case of ROU and Savai'i are the 'periphery' for being too distant from Apia.



But, Apia is not always the core of Samoa. Rather, it was established by the colonial government as its headquarters and subsequently became the center of Samoa since then. Because of their location between the islands of Upolu and Savai'i (see, Map 1.1), the islands of Manono and Apolima that constitute the ROU region, was conceived at one stage as the center of Samoa. According to Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi (2008:33), these islands have greater strategic and political importance in pre-European Samoa and justifiably so.

Tofiga Fepulea'i (2010) of the Laughing Samoans Comedy Show<sup>2</sup> highlights the same dichotomy in his life history documentary. Because his parents are from the villages of Fusi Safotulafai, Saleaula and Falealupo in the big island of Savai'i, make people think of them as *kua back*. In his reply, a deliberate effort to de-center Upolu and reconsider other places and villages differently is needed. Evidently, the current census divisions pay little attention to the histories of places. They are also insensitive to the distinctiveness of these islands as separate entities that deserve acknowledgement. So long as the current frame remains, place will continue to be seen in binaries.

The scenarios above speak of a legacy of blindly adopting taken for granted frame of reference that conceives place and place-making processes in binary codes. The adoption of the four census regions may be useful for purposes of a national census but they reveal no other meaningful information about the villages, the people and the processes shaping their community. It also points to the common practice in the academy of breaking up things into bits and putting them in little compartments (Helu-Thaman 1993). In this case, people; their history; ways of thinking are squeezed to fit neat structures and set categories as the case of the islands of Manono and Apolima show. Far be it for me to judge but categories, structures and theories are "constructions" (Rosenau 1992:90); created for specific purposes that simply defined people as mere classifiable units (Sillitoe 2015:4). Such constructions can be politically motivated to suit certain agendas and their value diminishes when situated in the social realm of the people concerned.

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<sup>2</sup> Fepulea'i, T. 2010. Life Story Part 1 YouTube video. Retrieved, 4 March 2014 from, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=424PZL\\_M4o4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=424PZL_M4o4). Tofiga Fepulea'i and Eteuati Ete are New Zealand-based comedians who formed the comedy group called the Laughing Samoans.

In contrast to the present classifications, each village that is represented in the study is unique in several ways – the people; land area; location and history for example. For the Samoans in the study, the history of their villages is a better way to think of them rather than the proximity of their village to Apia. The study participants argued that the history of their villages (and *'aiga*) speak volume of “themselves as themselves”. This connects them to their past that is more meaningful than what people see in the present. In this way history also represents the source of people’s *mana* (power; source of inspiration) that makes them who they are rather than anything else. Therefore, “history is not stuck in the past but moves through the lives of people and places and is being recreated in the present through fond memories” (Bennett (2014:658).

Miller (2002:217) argues that there are three cornerstones of belonging – history, people and places – that resonate with the participants’ refashioning of place. Study participants from the villages of Leauvaa, Leulumoega-tuai and Samalaeulu for example, reminded me when they made reference to a historical event that connects these villages. The villages of Samalaeulu (with Mauga and Saleaula on the northeast of the island of Savai’i) were significantly affected by the eruptions of the Matavanu volcano in 1902-1911 (Meleisea 1987b). The village of Saleaula was relocated to the south east of the island of Upolu to the present day village of Salamumu. The name consists of two words: *sala* (punishment) and *mumu* (fire) literally means punishment by fire. On the other hand, the villagers from Mauga and Samalaeulu found themselves a new place on the northwest of Upolu in the present day village of Leauvaa. As *lava* flow ruined the villages of Mauga and Samalaeulu, the people escaped by *va’a* (boat, canoe) hence the name: *Le au va’a*, (meaning the people of/from the boat).

Samoans believe that the eruption of Matavanu volcano was a punishment from God for people’s ‘sins’ of not observing the Sabbath (Sunday). Samoans understand Sunday as the day of rest and people are expected, although not all follow, to engage in all things church-and-rest related. However, this understanding is contested by geologists suggesting that the volcanic eruptions could be geologically explained (Fepulea’i 2016). While a geological perspective is useful, my purpose here is following the participants’ refashioning of place based on their shared history.

Despite the prevailing notion, the study participants recounted this history with pride and tellingly had nothing to shy about it. They told me of a special bond, connection, friendship and intermarriages that people of these villages shared which had its beginning in their collective past. In our *talanoaga* in Auckland (July 2011), a villager of Leulumoega-tuai and study participant (WMC11); a 50 year old mother; pointed this out to me;

Although I said I am from Leulumoega, I have relatives in Leauvaa Samalaeulu, Saleaula and Mauga. So, I am from there too. People of these villages have one origin. I have relatives in these villages. We are related and connected because of our history. Before I used to be shy and get angry about what other people say about my village. You know what the Samoans are like when they tease people, especially people from these villages. But, not anymore, in fact, I am happy when I hear people talking about my village because it is my chance to tell them something about my village. I am proud to be called *le au va'a* [people of the boat]. I am not ashamed of it anymore.

Perhaps, one cannot blame this respondent and others who may feel ashamed of the village they come from. In Samoa, people use descriptions such as *toega a le afi* (left over from the fire); *taulua popo* (coconut bundle) to refer to anyone who had ties to the villages of Saleaula, Salamumu and Leauvaa for example. In a society where the use of descriptions as such may be attributed to having a different sense of humour, the other side of it can be defamatory to those whom these descriptions are directed to.

Peoples' stories of their village, *malaga* and identity are fused with historical events such as the volcanic eruption. Although there was danger and panic as with any natural disaster, memorable stories and interpretations of the eruption were finely woven into people's refashioning of their identity and their level of emotional attachment to that place. In the same way other people were also part of these interweaving (Ka'ili 2012) as evident in the villagers' stories. This is an example of a people's history that had been forgotten as people are 'squeezed' into neat categories for census counting.

But what had caused this participant to view the history of her village as something very important to her I insisted. To which she reasoned it was largely “because the event [volcano eruption] has always been framed in the light of a punishment from above [God] and nothing else”. As a result, people of her generation internalised this line of thinking. In her mind, the schooling system also promoted this belief through the history curriculum. For her, however, having lived life and seeing the bigger world outside of Samoa, allowed her to conceive of this event in another light when she said,

It [volcano eruption] tells me about how brave our ancestors were and how they used their God-given sailing and swimming skills to cross the sea to Leauvaa. Remember, then people crossed the ocean in their simple *paopao* (canoe) and whatever they could use in those days, *tau lua popo* (bundle of coconut as floaty); *oga fafie* (a piece of wood or log). There were no big boats like the big Lady Samoa [a passenger ship that travels between Mulifanua and Salelologa] and big machines that sailors use today to read the ocean currents or the weather. Our ancestors were brave to use the simplest of means to cross and they made it to Upolu. It is something. It is a story worth telling!

Indeed it is a “story worth telling”. She continued to point out that this story should be documented for its value goes beyond the present; it brings the past to the present to benefit the next generation, knowledge-wise. In her mind, not telling this story is a loss.

The young generation needs to know this because it is part of their *fa’asinomaga* (identity) and what makes them a true people of the boat. Our ancestors conquered the sea and gave us a *meaalofa* (gift) of *fa’asinomaga* – a gift of identity to belong and not to be called people who float around with no roots and no *fa’asinomaga*. It is our *tofi* (a right; responsibility). We need to pass this [gift] onto the next generations because it is about us; our history and our gift of *fa’asinomaga*.

From her perspective, *fa'asinomaga* is more than an identity; it is also a gift – a special one that she saw as her *tofi* (duty, responsibility) to treasure and pass on. In this line of thinking, people's past and ways of knowing and understanding of belonging to a place are inseparable from themselves wherever they go. For this study, the gift of *fa'asinomaga* and the knowledge it held was not meant to be kept but shared with others as this participant shared with me during fieldwork. This sharing of knowledge is a feature of oral-based society like Samoa where the older generation pass on the knowledge (gift) and *mana* of their ancestors to the next generation through story-telling. In line with the view of this participant, Kuhn (2000:193) argues that, “gifts in terms of knowledge, history, and tradition are passed between people for generations, over time, each holding the knowledge or history until the next generation is ready to receive the gift”.

*Fa'asinomaga* is a way of thinking that appropriately captured the fullness of people's theorising of themselves as peoples and their place rather than how they are classified into census regions. The theme in the book *No Home Like Place: A Christian Theology of Place*, by Leonard Hjalmarson (2013) resonates with the line of thinking evident in the study participant's narratives. His book is about place, rootedness and belonging. In it Leonard talks of a journey to rediscover place that is rooted in history, culture and geography that brings a joy-filled remembrance of place in people's lives as in the case of study participants. Passionately, he encourages people to prefer the particular over the universal, a recurring theme in the study participants' stories.

The volcanic eruption then may have led to people leaving their villages in Savai'i to form new ones in Upolu. However, it did not diminish the inseparable links that people maintain between the old and the new villages. In fact, it has led to an expansion of people's field of movement between the two islands.

While these villages are associated with the volcano eruptions of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, to the participants, however, the event is very much a part of Samoa's history as well. The eruption then is likened to the effect of the *tsunami* that affected some villages in the south eastern part of the island of Upolu in September 2009. As this study participant (WMC11) maintained,

it does not matter if you belong to this village [Leulumoega, Leauvaa] or not, it [volcano eruption] is about the history of Samoa too. It is relevant for everyone. We must keep the spirit of gifting alive because it is about the same spirit that keeps Samoa and the *fa'aSamoa* alive. It is not dead because it [*fa'aSamoa*] goes wherever we [Samoans] go and live in places we live. Look around here [New Zealand] you see Samoans and *fa'aSamoa* everywhere because we [Samoans] are here. And as you know *fa'aSamoa* here is big, maybe bigger than Samoa.

She associated her sharing in terms of a gift of knowledge to me and the study. Along this line of reasoning, she conceived of her gifting as keeping the spirit of *fa'aSamoa* alive. It is in the same light that she perceived the event that affected her village, the place that shaped her world, in a different, positive yet valid.

Robyn Sandri (2015:76) in a study of her Aboriginal community of south Queensland, Australia argues, that it “is the existence of culture [and history] that affirms a peoples’ sense of belonging, identity and self-worth”. Because people live “in a world of meaning” (Cresswell 1996:13), it confirms then that “there is something in people’s insistence that tradition rules” (Sillitoe 2015:11) and it calls for attention. Therefore, as Alan Howard and Jan Rensel (2001) describe, the transnational experience of the Rotumans is best viewed as people *doing* culture rather than *having* a culture (italics my emphasis). I may also add that this view holds for Samoans if not all cultures in Oceania.

#### **4.3 New Zealand-Samoa connections**

Taken together as a bundle, the villages on one hand and South Auckland on the other are distinctive places by way of landscape, size, function, history, development and glamour. Alternatively, they could also symbolise crucial experiences in the history and development of Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand as countries and unique places.

As a start, the villages represent the heart of Samoa where the practice and living of a distinct culture – *fa’aSamoa* that defines Samoa and her peoples – situates. Villagers learn *fa’aSamoa* through cultural practices that are guided by a social system providing every Samoan a place to engage and belong. As discussed in chapter two, the government of Samoa embraces the central role of *nu’u* (village) in the development of the country (see, United Nations (UN) 2002). This is because of two things: first, the backbone of Samoa’s agricultural sector is the villages and, secondly, villages are places where *fa’aSamoa* is lived through the strong guidance and control of *matai*. The villages then are the bed rock of Samoa. *Nu’u* (and ‘*aiga*’) are also places where Samoans’ identity are grounded; the power base with which Samoans engage and make sense of, old and new experiences.

The participants in this study conceived of ‘*aiga*, *nu’u* and *lotu* as pillars of their existence. A 67 year old female; married with five children and a resident of the village of Gagaifo, Lefaga (WMCS5); captured this point in her view at our *talanoaga*:

Samoans belong to ‘*aiga*; ‘*aiga* form a *nu’u* and *nu’u* makes *atunu’u* (country). Samoans cannot live without this. Samoans are part of their ‘*aiga*, *nu’u* and *atunu’u*; they cannot be separated. It is all three in one body. Wherever Samoans go, they take with them their ‘*aiga*, *nu’u* and *atunu’u*. Samoa and *fa’aSamoa* is practised wherever Samoans live.

Study participants conceived of their villages as their *fa’asinomaga*; a reference points, the very essence of belonging to a place; a special gift as mentioned earlier. In this way, *fa’asinomaga* is a way of thinking. Italian Anthropologist Domencia Calabro (2015:54) in her study of the impact of indigenisation of New Zealand rugby on Maori identity makes similar observations. She notes that her “research meets Maori [and] Maori meets [her] research on equalizing terms” (Smith 1999:185).

South Auckland (and Aotearoa/New Zealand generally) represents *malaga* (international movement). It is also Samoa’s gateway to the world and undoubtedly

an extension of Samoa, '*aiga* and *nu'u*. In the words of a 60 year old study participant (WMC7), a retired social worker:

Auckland [New Zealand generally] is an extension of Samoa; a part of my '*aiga* and *nu'u*. My children live here; I come here to visit them during the Christmas holiday and for *fa'alavelave*. I go back [to Samoa] during the winter because I do not like the cold weather. I go back sometimes when am bored here too. It is not that I do not like my family here but because Auckland is different.

To have family members in New Zealand is an enlargement of '*aiga*'s field of movement. This enables Samoans to travel between the two places for reasons that are also connected to '*aiga*, *fa'alavelave* or simply to visit children and grandchildren. The latter is common for parents and grandparents whose pattern (and timing) of visitation is associated with New Zealand's cold season in July. Clearly, physical separation reinforces rather than diminishing people's connections to places.

Despite Auckland's materialistic appeal and glamour, study participant's perception of what constitutes a 'good' life and how to live life differs as the narrative by a mother of four children (CN10) shows.

It [Auckland] is nice; we have nice things – food, car, house and everything one needs to develop an '*aiga* but it [Auckland] is not like Samoa. You know, in Samoa, you can go to your neighbor to *tafao* (for leisure) and *talanoa* (to talk; tell stories) when you feel like. You take your *fala* (mat) under the shade of a tree *e fa'asavili* (to enjoy the fresh air).

[But] here [Auckland], I stay home most of the time; within the four walls and watch the video tapes of Petelo and Sumeo's *faleaitu* [comedy] to laugh and to kill time. I also watch the new boys [Tofiga and Ete – The Laughing Samoans]. I do not watch TV all the time as I do not understand what they show. I listen to the radio to the



Samoa station. I get to hear about what is happening in New Zealand and Samoa from our people.

Place perception is more than the material wealth a place possesses. While Samoans enjoy the ‘nice’ things that Auckland offers, there is such a thing as diminishing marginal returns. That is, the additional level of satisfaction from Auckland’s material wealth diminishes over time to a point that it may be insufficient to influence people’s attachment to a place. Samoans still miss the communal life in Samoa where one is surrounded by people in the village from time to time. While material things certainly make good life in places like Auckland, participants still long for familiar experiences and relationships with people that are rooted in the islands.

All participants pointed to the fact that the freedom to go to a neighbour’s house for a *talanoa* (talk; tell stories) or leisure could not be continued in New Zealand. For some who have parents or grandparents living with them, they would take them to other elderly members of their church or village who reside close by from time to time. They kept their parents occupied in this way. Parents on the other hand, got to spend time with other people who are in the “same boat” (WMC5). For the case of the twenty two WMC participants, the prayer meetings, choir practices and Sunday services are also special moments to look forward to and to offer one another moral support.

It was clear during the fieldwork that the role of the Samoan performing art and comedians such as Petelo and Sumeo and the Laughing Samoans in providing home entertainment deserves recognition. However, the valuable contribution that they made and what it represents for Samoans may have been taken for granted. The materials the duo in the Laughing Samoan used are based on realities of living life in Samoa. Humour aside, their productions constitute a wealth of knowledge and a great source of information that are related to ‘*aiga, malaga, fa’alavelave, lotu*, relationships and living life in Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand in general. For Samoans in the study, watching and listening to these comedy tapes ‘take’ them back to Samoa while in Auckland. They are truly “sources of good laugh and great learning” according a father of one child (CN8).

While living in Auckland allows her to visit a new place, one grandmother (WMC21) noted that the core of her *'aiga* is in her village of Tafatafa, Falealii, Samoa.

But, the core of my *'aiga* and *nu'u* is still in Samoa. I am here [New Zealand] because my children wanted me to come to see my grandchildren and spend time with them. I also go back [Samoa] when I want to. The major part of my *'aiga, nu'u* and *fanua ma eleele* (land) is there [Samoa]. I also need to go back to see my other children and grandchildren living there.

Having children and grandchildren in Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand, is an important factor for her comings and goings. It is her obligation to them (children) especially now she has grandchildren whom she would like to spend time with. Samoa is not only the place of her birth it has formed a major part of her world. She travels between and within the two places for this purpose and engagements with her wider *'aiga*.

Nearly 20 years ago, Gerard Ward (1997:184) captured the *fluid* nature of movements of Pacific Islanders as evident in the narratives from the field. He writes that “the nature of migration in the Pacific Islands is very different”.

Unlike most diaspora of recent times, [the movement of islanders overseas] is not caused by war, expulsion or famine; it is not forced movement; it is not the flight of dispossessed to the margins of the occupied world. And unlike those diaspora in which there was a major break from the source area, physically, socially and often emotionally, in Oceania very close ties have been maintained between the source and destination areas and communities. It has resulted in an unusual, if not unique creation of transnational social and economic relationships at family levels which in some respects transcend the state as the primary socio-economic grouping for whole peoples (Ward 1997:194).

The signing of the Treaty of Friendship between Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa in 1962 marked the end of New Zealand's political control over Samoa. It was also the beginning of more regular movements of Samoans to that country which was made possible by the provisions of that symbolic treaty. Subsequently the treaty had created what may be called an enduring friendship and a New Zealand-Samoa enlargement. When seen in this light, Aotearoa/New Zealand is part of Samoa; Samoa is part of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Stating the same differently, and from a Samoan migrant's view, Aotearoa/New Zealand is Samoa; Samoa is Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The participants of this study were a part of fluid movements to Aotearoa/New Zealand that began way before the post-war period and continue till this day. The industrial expansion of the Aotearoa/New Zealand economy created the need for labourers that was conveniently opened to her Pacific neighbours. The New Zealand government's adjusted immigration policies at the time enabled that goal to materialise. The Samoans in the study joined other islanders from the Pacific in the (re) making of the factory landscape of Auckland; creating what Auckland is today. Studies by Pitt and Macpherson (1974) and Krishnan et al (1994), for example, described the evolving landscape of Auckland as a function of intensified movements of Pacific Islanders there.

The relationship between Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa of over fifty years is not only historical but a special one that is lived to the present. There is a close association of people in the two places in many areas of life. A number of Samoans went to schools, found work, lived and died there. Some intermarried with New Zealanders. Not surprising, Samoans formed the largest Pacific island community in that country (New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade).

To add, depending on where one's loyalty lies, but the All Blacks and Manu Samoa historical test match in July 2015 in Apia for one was much more than an international test match between the two countries. It may have been seen as a true test and an expression of this lasting relationship between 'two brothers' visiting each other. However this international rugby match was framed in the media as a contest but in a way, it was simply a 'friendly encounter' of a special kind.

The rugby match raised interesting questions among the Fijians in the local media. ‘Why did New Zealand send the All Blacks team to play the Manu Samoa in Apia?’ ‘Why did a “lesser All Blacks team” according to some Fijians, play the Flying Fijians in Suva?’ Without overstating the obvious, understanding the historical nature of the two countries’ relationship would have been a key part of the context of the test match. It would have explained its deeper meaning for both countries.

Relationships have deepened and grown fixed roots as Samoans have been successful in different fields of life in Aotearoa/New Zealand – notably in the sports of rugby and netball; the performing/expressive art; politics; music and art; literature and business for example (Samoan New Zealanders). It makes sense then that the world of Samoans is conceived of as an enlargement as was, in and has always been in the past (Hau’ofa (1993; 2008). A popular saying is that the All Blacks team is Samoa’s team; the Silver Fern team is Samoa’s too. Hence, in the 2015 rugby world cup final, the All Blacks is Samoa’s Manu Samoa. Just as the whole of New Zealand cheered for the All Blacks, the whole of Samoa did the same. In the same line, the unfortunate event that happened to Jerry Collins (and his partner) whose lives had been prematurely taken in a car accident in southern France, June 2015. As an All Blacks player of Samoan descent, Jerry’s passing had united the rugby fraternity, if not the two countries.

As in any relationship, theirs is not a perfect one. The early dawn raid that targeted Samoans (and Tongans) in 1970s who overstayed their visa was one event. Go back further, the inept and incompetent early administrations of Samoa by New Zealand in 1918 that allowed the ship Talune with carriers of the influenza to dock in Apia. The disease took with it many lives to the mass graves that formed part of Samoa’s colonial landscape (besides the receding coconut plantations) at the villages of Vaimea and Vaimoso. At last, the shooting on Apia’s Beach Road in December 1929 of peaceful Mau protestors by the excessively armed New Zealand police. It killed the leader of the Mau Movement, Tupua Tamasese Lealofi Aana III and nine others and at least fifty people were injured (Tapaleao 2014). The New Zealand police also “banished Samoan leaders and stripped some of chiefly titles. Their actions split families apart and some families lost their titles forever” (Clark 2002).

Disagreements happened in relationships and so too in *'aiga*. But these are resolved amicably and there is no rule as to the timeframe. Values of *va fealoa'i* (social space that relate) and *ava fatafata* (respect) guide genuine efforts for restorative relationships. In the spirit of reconciliation the former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark made an official apology in 2002 on behalf of the government of New Zealand to the government of Samoa for years of bullying; in Helen Clark's words, "a closure on past shame" (Ward 2002:1). Such a gesture is necessary to nurture and foster lasting relationships.

#### **4.4 Settling down: Samoans are not alone!**

In New Zealand, study participants spoke of the different working environments, expectations and opportunities to learn new things in that country. Shift work; the importance of time; getting used to new routines of reading the bus schedules and catching the right buses to and from work; the closest shopping center among others were the first things one needed to master in a new place. Learning new things take time. Having relatives who offered assistance was a bonus. As expected, misreading the bus schedules, getting onto the wrong buses or missing the bus happened at times. Samoans learned that as they experienced new life in Auckland, the assistance of their *'aiga* became their greatest help.

Imagining the reality of these diverse experiences in a foreign place made me ask the 41 year old male participant (CN28) to elaborate this point on how he dealt with his experience of missing the bus after work. As Samoans are known for a different sense of humour, I consider his experience as something serious. For him, however it was part of learning about his new environment. He did not mind having to walk a few meters for another bus route and much to the anxiety of his family who were waiting patiently for his arrival much later than usual. "It is part of living in New Zealand," he maintained. And, "one learns all the good, bad and ugly about a place faster in this way so that he knows the tricks of living" in a different country.

While study participants understand English before arrival in New Zealand, they found immediately the need to learn and adjust to communicate in the English language the *kiwi* way. New words and slangs such as "sweet as; choice; ...aye?"

kiwi-nised the Samoan-ised English. With the TV being a popular pastime and children who speak the language in the house, it did not take long for them to catch the ‘fever’. As I listened to our *talanoaga* during fieldwork in Auckland, the study participants had certainly caught the ‘kiwi fever’ very well that I felt the need to ‘catch it’ too albeit temporarily in order not to misinterpret what they shared with me.

In fact, the greatest adjustment of all for all study participants was getting used to, in their view, “their worst enemy – New Zealand’s cold season”. Participants used these phrases frequently, “*Ua ova le malulu o le akunu’u*”; “*Matua ese le malulu o Giu Sila*” simply means New Zealand is too cold or very cold for people who were used to the warm, tropical climate of Samoa. For the senior participants, the cold season is an important factor in the timing of their travels to Samoa and back as evident in the grandmother’s (WMC7) story above.

Study participants spoke highly of the role of Samoan songs and expressive/performing art as part of adjustment to life in New Zealand. Participants made references to some of the good old Samoan music bands of all time such as the Eva Eva; Kukama; Ma’a Tulua; Punialavaa; RSA; Tiamaa; Aufai pese and Au siva a Faiaoga; Au fai pese a aulotu Samoa (Samoan church choir) and individual artists such as Jerome Grey; Laine and Lauvai; Yandall Sisters; Dave Parker; Suliveta Kurene and Malaesaili Saga. Their own collections in whatever form of these treasures are favourite past times.

The audio cassette and video (VHS) tapes of fond memories of Samoa are played or shown at most homes of Samoans there. In this day and age of smart technology, cassette tapes and VHS video tapes are ancient treasures. However, to the Samoans in the study, the familiarity of songs and messages they impart ease the feeling of homesickness and reduce distance between the two places they felt at times. The feeling of ‘missing’ Samoa appeared to be greater among the senior study participants whose views have been connected to their experiences of the winter season. For study participant (CN11), she has a cassette collection of Sumeo and Petelo’s *faleaitu* (comedy show) during Samoa’s independence celebration; the Teuila festival video tapes and of recent the Laughing Samoans. Teuila festival is a

tourism festival in Samoa which is held in the month of September every year. Her family members met at her place sometimes to watch these tapes. They also borrowed her tapes at times.

I chose to include Jerome Grey's (1980), a Samoan musician's one time hit song, titled *We are Samoa*, that I heard played at some homes of the Samoans (CN18, CN25) during field work at this junction. The lyrics also represent the stories and thinking of Samoans in the study that resonate with the focus of this chapter to refashion place.

Our Samoa, the greatest place of all  
She is green and blue lush with beauty  
And heart as pure as gold  
Touch someone with tears of joy  
Touch someone with smiles of love  
Oh what a happy feeling from such happy people

We are Samoa, people from the sun  
We are Samoa, and our heritage lives on  
Teach the world humanity and hospitality  
We are Samoa, and God we trust in Thee

Samoa e pele oe i si ou fatu  
O le a ea se mea e ao ona fai e tautua ai mo oe  
O Sasae ma Sisifo e tasi  
O le viiga lea i le lagi  
Aiga ma nuu tai tasi  
Tuu mai lou aao ta pepese faatasi

Uso Samoa, fanau mai le la  
Uso Samoa, manumanu i le upega  
A o i nuu ese le loto alofa  
Samoa mo oe, Samoa mo le Atua

#### 4.5 Facing fear without fear

Samoans faced many experiences associated with being in an unfamiliar place without fear; and they survived. In each *talanoaga*, participants shared experiences that are related to their work; going about with daily activities at a supermarket; seeking information or assistance from the Work and Income Office or some incidents at a local night club. Lived experiences were points of much laughter and joke that turned *talanoaga* sessions into an endless roar of laughter and *faleaitu* (comedy show). This became a part of the fieldwork experience that indigenous researcher would know how to navigate the different layers of humour and when a participant is serious.

For example, a 49 year old male participant (WMC10), married with four children and work as a welder at a steel factory since 2000, spoke of an incident at work where he had a go at his line supervisor for what he claimed to be his boss' habit of putting the PIs (Pacific Islanders) down for "not a good enough reason". For over ten years of faithful work, he never had problems with work. For some time, when he asked for leave to attend a *fa'alavelave*, his supervisor had a habit of declining it. In the interview, I asked: "But why would a supervisor not allow people leave?" "The supervisor has something against the Samoans" he insisted. I asked again: "What makes you say that?" With a broad smile on his face that put me on edge of expectation, "because his wife ran away with a Samoan guy. Since then he appeared to not like any Samoan boys including us here at work".

On a deeper level, participants' lived experiences should not be taken at face value all the time. Deeper analysis of each layered story reveals much more than the joking manner in which the stories were shared with me. Rather, they were stories of resilience, perseverance, commitment, determination, hard work and self-belief to succeed for 'aiga and children as with the case of a 47 year old mother and business woman (CN2). Her initial work at a factory was good but the nature of shift work became tough for her when she had children. Because she learned how to sew from her mother in Samoa and the home economics lessons she had in school there, she decided to capitalise on that skill. In her view, "it was the best decision ever". It suited her changing family situation in her mind. For just two months shy from the



eighth year of operating her sewing business from home, she was satisfied overall. She felt that she had gained financially and relationally, with her children and her wider '*aiga* – more than if she had remained at her job at the factory.

Samoans survived the newness and unfamiliarity of Auckland because they were surrounded by a network of relatives at home and friends, families, fellow villagers and other Samoans at church and/or in their work places. The value of this support base is beyond monetary value. Because their initial contacts in New Zealand were through members of their '*aiga*; other siblings; children; *faiga uo/fa'aaiga* (friendship); *vae tama* (adoption); and/or through connections to *faifeau* (pastor) in that country, they were in and under the care and warmth of their '*aiga*. This is a common pattern the world over. People moved to familiar places where families and friends reside. However, as Barbara McGrath (2002:310) has found in her study of Seattle *Fa'aSamoa*, proximity to one's cultural group could be a challenge. Sela, (one of the main interviewees in McGrath's study) discovered that while she was happy to be closer to Samoans in the beginning through the church that her aunty attended in Seattle, her life became everyone's business. As Sela described, "I don't want to get too close to the [Samoan] people. All they do is talk, talk, talk. If I go somewhere, before I get home, my auntie knows. Someone has called her".

Despite the newness and strangeness of Auckland's physical layout, the familiarity of the people and the community network that participants joined was/is the irreplaceable link; the life-blood. This was a safety net where Samoans had found refuge while adjusting to the newness of place. This was not easy at first according to study participants. But the support network of their '*aiga* in Auckland and other Samoans they met at church and work enabled them to fit in with ease.

I could relate to the participants and their stories of 'fitting' into Aotearoa/New Zealand in their early days in that country. As discussed in chapter three, my sister and her family in Auckland have been our family base there since my siblings left Samoa in the 1970s and 1980s. They had since been the life-blood; the safe net for the rest of my siblings who went to New Zealand in the mid-80s and subsequent years. Besides turning their place in Auckland into the Auckland-headquarter of our family, my sister and her family's familiarity with Auckland and their knowledge of

New Zealand as a whole, became a vital link that helped reduce, if not, erase the fear my other siblings would have felt of being in a new place. I, myself, once experienced that unsettling feeling of being in unfamiliar places – in Australia, China, Ethiopia, Germany, Japan, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, and the USA. All wonderful and special places indeed, but the unspoken fear of the unknown; unfamiliar; and the fact that ‘I know no body but me’ could be overwhelming.

The Wesley Methodist Church provides spiritual support and warmth for the WMC participants in the study. All participants acknowledged the centrality of the church in their lives there without which, they would not have been successful in New Zealand. Reverend Faleatua Faleatua who was the resident pastor at the time of the fieldwork said that Samoans need the church as much as the church needs them. For Samoans in the study, the church needs to play a social, cultural and spiritual role for the community. However, as pointed out to me during my focus group discussion with the youth groups, “the church today needs to adjust its life and programs” to better suit the emerging needs of the New Zealand-born children whose experience, exposure and thinking may be different from that of their parents. To this end, the WMC involved youths in the life of the church through school camps and summer retreats to get them connected and be an important part of the community.

#### **4.6 In the name of ‘aiga**

All participants in this study are now citizens of New Zealand, albeit via different avenues, years and experiences. The elders and retirees got to New Zealand through their children who received their citizenship papers first. The others came through the *se’i* which stands for the Samoan Quota. *Se’i* means to draw or pull something of a bag to refer to the selection process to fill the Quota. Interested Samoans need to register with Immigration New Zealand (INZ) when the registration period is opened each year. Registrants are given numbers which are then “drawn randomly from the pool”<sup>3</sup>. Samoans who won the ‘lottery’ are informed by INZ, inviting them to apply for a resident visa under the Samoan Quota Scheme. INZ outlines the following criteria to qualify for a resident visa. The principal applicant must be a Samoan

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<sup>3</sup> Immigration New Zealand (INZ). Retrieved 20 June 2017 from, <https://onlineservices.immigration.govt.nz/opsmanual/46617.htm>

citizen (having been born in Samoa or born overseas to a Samoa citizen who was born in Samoa); be either in Samoa or lawfully in New Zealand at the time of application for a resident visa; have their registration drawn from the Samoa Quota Scheme (SQS) pool; lodge an application for a resident visa under SQS within eight months of written notification from INZ; between 18 and 45 years of age at the closing date; have an acceptable offer of employment, or have a partner included in the application who has an acceptable offer of employment; (if they have dependent children), meet the minimum income requirement; meet the minimum English language ability and meet health and character requirements<sup>4</sup>.

But the road to a New Zealand citizenship was not easy as many people thought. Study participants who arrived in New Zealand in the 1970 to the late 1980s said that “coming to New Zealand was easy then” however, the rest who arrived since the early 1990s and particularly in early 2000s described the contrary in different ways but collectively pointed to one thing, “it is very hard” now.

To apply for citizenship, participants had to submit many documents and reports, they told me. Getting police clearance reports from Samoa and completing health checks of all kinds were part of it. For one participant (WMC12), he had to get reference letters from a *faiifeau* (pastor), his employer and even one of the Samoan politicians to support his application.

Not all applications were successful. Some participants have appealed decisions when they felt their applications were not given a fair treatment by the authorities. The case of study participant CN22; a 41 year old female illustrates this point. Despite her application being rejected initially, the decision was later reversed. “It was worth the sacrifice” she said. There were still others whose appeal did not change the original ruling. Study participant CN25; a 55 year old male for example shared with me his experience regarding an application for his late father. Accordingly, his appeal was not successful because five of his siblings live in

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<sup>4</sup> Immigration New Zealand (INZ) Retrieved 20 June 2017 from, <https://onlineservices.immigration.govt.nz/opsmanual/46617.htm>

Samoa; the other three including him reside in New Zealand. The decision would have been different if there were one of two of his siblings remaining in Samoa.

Needless to say the citizenship application (and appeal in some cases) process can be tiring and stressful. Besides the time taken and the care needed to fill the necessary forms correctly, there were financial and psychological costs that participants spoke about. Police clearance reports and several health tests were evident examples. Participants also paid for phone calls and transportation related to getting these reports done. And, when all documents are in order, an application fee accompanies the completed paper work. In addition, the psychological drain of waiting for a decision could be overwhelming. It could be much more when decisions do not come as anticipated as the case of CN25 showed. Although the result of his father's application for citizenship was declined, it did not really matter because he could still live with them in New Zealand, as a visitor, until his passing.

Most citizenship applications were successful, according to the participants who relied on the network of other successful Samoans in church to assist with their applications. While getting a New Zealand citizenship may suggest an individual milestone worth celebrating, Samoans may retain their Samoan nationality as well. Why not? A New Zealand citizenship not only allows them to reside in that country permanently it enables them to travel to many more countries of the world without visa restrictions. However, for Samoans in this study, this milestone is conceived differently. As a 61 year old grandfather (WMC4) shared his thoughts below.

I am a New Zealand citizen now. I got it in December of 1986. I had to go to Wellington to attend a ceremony where I sang the New Zealand national anthem with many other people – Samoans, Tongans, some *palagi* too – who came there for the same reason. When I got my [New Zealand] passport later, I was very happy not because I want to show off to my friends but I was happy because it is for my 'aiga. The passport I got was through the support of my 'aiga and it is for my 'aiga. I was happy that more members of my 'aiga could come to New Zealand. I can sponsor them to come over to visit, *tafao* (leisure) and to see this place [New Zealand] that they hear so

much about where as they said, *O le atunu'u o loo tafe ai le susu ma le meli* [The country where milk and honey flows freely, a biblical reference].

In the name of '*aiga* Samoans lived their lives; in the name of '*aiga* they do things in Aotearoa/New Zealand; and in the same name they look back and forth to Samoa and to the rest of the world as they forge new ties and engage with new experiences. In the same thinking, they situate their gaining opportunities such as their New Zealand citizenship as an achievement to help their families in Samoa so that they too could visit them in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I shall turn to participants' engagements with what life in New Zealand offered next.

#### **4.7 New discoveries: to live and learn**

It was evident during fieldwork that Samoans in the study worked hard to build their lives and homes in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Twenty of them have bought residential properties in that country. It was not easy, they told me. They have been home owners ranging from two to twenty years. They were proud of their years of sacrifice and endless prayers. Why should they not? Naturally, they took great care of their homes. Although five participants have mortgages to pay at the time of fieldwork, they were at ease knowing that they were home owners and they no longer "spend their hard-earned cash to pay for someone else's mortgage".

Home ownership is an important criterion when considering one's ability to sponsor a relative from Samoa. This view was expressed by a 48 year old woman study participant (WMC6). For her, home ownership gives an extra weight to a prospective traveller's application to come to New Zealand. In fact, that was the aim of the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development, to reform and modernise its social welfare system. Importantly, to break the cycle of people relying on the government for housing that has labelled Pacific islanders in that country for years. Another fifteen, the recent arrivals (in the last three to six years, at the time of fieldwork) were considering investing in a home. They sought advice of family members and other Samoans at their work places and church about their options. The fact this group told me of their going to different Open Homes in the area and

had been in contact with some private home sellers, was an indication of their interest to invest in a home. At the time of fieldwork, the remaining fifteen were undecided for they anticipated joining family members in Australia and other places. In the words of one female participant (WMC18), “buying a home is not cheap and never easy. It is a long term commitment and sacrifice”. In recent years, the average price for house in Auckland has increased by over ninety percent since 2007, to more than 1 million<sup>5</sup>. This would make house affordability a major issue for potential buyers including Samoans.

From our *talanoaga* and my observations, study participants appeared to have adapted to the country where money is needed in nearly all aspects of life. As one participant (CN19); 49 year old married woman described, “you pay for everything here [New Zealand] – food, water, electricity, clothes for the different seasons, parking – everything. Nothing is free in this country”. One needs to work to survive.

The study participants’ stories were clear on one point: that they had organised themselves well. For example, a 56 year old male participant (WMC1); a factory worker; four of his six children are in full-time employment, had delegated responsibilities such as paying the bills and grocery shopping among members of his family members. Study participants also encouraged their high school children to find part-time work (such as packing shoppers’ groceries at a local supermarket) during weekends and school holidays. In some cases, adult children did home delivery of newspapers around the neighbourhood in the evenings. Some did part-time cleaning at offices or shopping mall three times a week. For others, they worked as security guards at the local primary schools or as truck drivers for freight forwarding companies. In these cases, every member contributed variously to the running of a family unit.

These narratives showed that Samoans in this study did their best to use the work opportunities available to provide for themselves. Samoans in this study were aware

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<sup>5</sup> Hurley, E. 2017. NZ housing market could go bust – Goldman Sachs. Retrieved 20 June 2017 from, <http://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2017/05/nz-housing-market-set-to-bust-goldman-sachs.html>

of what they needed to do and they were not waiting for handouts from the government. Their experience supports what Hau'ofa (2008:36) said,

Ordinary Pacific people depend for their daily existence much, much more on themselves and their kin, wherever they may be, than on anyone's largesse, which they believe is largely pocketed by the elite classes. The funds and good that homes-abroad people send their homeland relatives belong to no one but themselves. They earn every cent through hard physical toil in the new locations that need and pay for their labour. They also participate in the manufacture of many of the goods they send home; they keep the streets and buildings of Auckland clean; they keep its transportation system running smoothly; they keep the suburbs of the western United States (including Hawai'i) trimmed, neat, green, and beautiful; and they have contributed much, much more than has been acknowledged.

#### *Going back to school*

Samoans also understood the need to improve professionally in the work they do in factories and other work places. This was the case of WMC14; a retired community worker. Her work as a shop keeper at Ah Fong's shop in Apia introduced her to the world of commerce before she left for New Zealand in 1980. She found work in a car factory and it was good money at the time, she recalled. But, in her words, "I did not want to stay there forever". So, while working at the factory, she decided to enroll for a Certificate in Early Childhood Education at the Auckland Teachers College (ATC). Why ATC I asked? In her reasoning, factory work was "just a beginning of working life to get an experience, earned some money while I looked elsewhere for something better".

Like her, other Samoans in the study understood the value of a good education, if not for them it was certainly for their children. In the case of WMC1 as mentioned earlier, his four children have completed post-secondary school education; two have completed undergraduate degrees in Law and Business Management from the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) and Auckland University. The other two at

the time of field work were in part-time employment while, and in their words “deciding on what to study at university”.

### *‘Au piki*

On a bigger scale, participants in the case of CN5; CN6 were part of their family and friends who formed a working group: ‘*au piki* and bid for a contract to pick apples, strawberries, oranges and grapes at Hawke’s Bay during the Christmas holiday. They came to know about this opportunity through family and friends’ connections in Napier. Close to 90% of New Zealand apples are grown in Hawke’s Bay. This represents about 60% of the country’s production; 26% from Tasman-Nelson area and the remaining from the Otago, Waikato, Gisborne and Wellington (ProPicker 2015).

At the time of fieldwork, the participants, both females in their thirties and unrelated; CN5 had a five year old son who lived with her mother in Samoa; CN6 was single, had participated in ‘*au piki* in their families for six years then. They told me that some of their relatives came from Samoa at times for the *piki* contract and returned after four weeks richer. In fact their first visit to New Zealand was for the *piki* (to pick apples). This ‘back door’ contract arrangement had been in place before the New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer (NZRSE) Scheme (ILO 2015) came into place in 2007.

NZRSE allows the horticulture and viticulture industries to recruit workers from overseas for a seasonal work when there are not enough New Zealand workers<sup>6</sup>. Samoans alongside other workers from Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have found work on New Zealand farms for a period of up to six months. According to INZ, a limit of 5,000 places was in place in the first year of recruitment however successes since then have led to the number of places increased to 10,500 in December 2016 for this scheme.

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<sup>6</sup> Immigration New Zealand (INZ). Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. Retrieved 20 June 2017 from, <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/research-and-statistics/research-reports/recognised-seasonal-employer-rse-scheme>



The *piki* experience was fun but also worrying, as they recalled. Because the *piki* took place among other family members, their first encounter was not a problem. They marveled of their first time on an apple farm in Napier as “*oka gi fa’akoaga apu; e fiu e kau apu*” (The apple farms are so huge; it is almost impossible to pick all apples). The apple farm landscape and the nature of work were different from the familiarity of work in the *taro* or banana plantations they used to in Samoa. The apple farms were huge and ordered in contrast. The size of the farms and their orderliness amazed them at how it could be humanly possible to cultivate such a large area with one crop. If that was not enough, the trees were almost perfectly spaced out and trimmed. Apples are big and so red hanging from the trees and in bunches – a scene they equated to that of the once-in-the-year Christmas trees – in Samoa. Unlike the apple trees in Napier, their Christmas tree experience however, had colourful decorations laced with many Merry Christmas cards, old and new from relatives overseas but “no money falling from or hanging on them” they joked about these. I shall return to this point later.

The women pickers learned quickly that there was, in their view, a ‘thing’ called “the right way to pick apples”. It was a new learning. Their initial thoughts of picking apples were simply pulling fruits from the trees, similar to their way of picking mangoes in Samoa. However, never before that they were expected to pay much attention to the simplest but an important task of picking fruits. While at work, they needed to use both hands (and brain) willingly: one hand to hold the branch, the other to hold the fruit and twisted it slowly until it comes off a branch. To snatch the fruit or *makua’i lulu le lala* (to shake the branch uncontrollably), as in the case of their experience of picking mangoes in Samoa, would only break the branch and waste apples. Similarly picking with one hand would ‘hurt’ the tree and made other apples fell on the ground; a waste. Care is needed at all times: after picking the apples, placing them carefully in the bags and transferring them later into bins. Failure to do so is wasted effort because bruised apples are not accepted and they would be discarded unnecessarily no matter what they thought of them, “*o loo lelei lava apu*” (the apples are still good).

There were times when their work did not require picking the fruits but to prune the young trees for the next picking season. *Fa’avalavala* (to separate; to reduce) as

they told me was a part of pruning the trees. During our *talanoaga*, their confidence and pride could not be contained easily while sharing their new found knowledge with me. Because apples bear fruits in bunches of four or more, *fa'avalavala* is needed so as the fruits grow bigger, there is space for them to develop fully. *Fa'avalavala* is a welcome change from the rigidity and the care required to pick apples. They preferred this work [*fa'avalavala*] because, “it is a lot easier and faster” for them.

The ladies described picking of apples as fun and “*tupe vave*” (fast money) and “*aula vave e sue ai tupe*” (a quicker way to get money). However, they quickly reminded me, that one had to be relatively fit, highly motivated and never ran low on energy. The work was straight-forward but labourious as it required climbing a ladder and moving it around from tree to tree; filling a picking bag that weighs about fifteen kilograms when it is full then emptied its contents into a bin. On their estimate, it would take about thirty five full bags to fill one bin of about 525kg. Workers were paid by a full bin; prices ranged from thirty two to forty New Zealand dollars if one found work with a generous contractor. However, it was not easy to find a contractor that fit the generous category these days, they said.

They guesstimated that one could fill five to six bins in an eight-hour shift. But filling more bins was possible, if someone is super energised. It could be made possible if people too organised themselves smartly at work. Participants told me, for example, that their families learned how to do just that; to “beat the system” by working smarter. Instead of working individually, they did so in pairs: one picking apples, the other filling the bags, bins and moving the ladder around. Between pairs, they rotated when one needed a change from the repetitive work or after picking one tree; whichever combination that worked. They also changed partners at times to ensure the work was done as quickly as possible and without wasting the fruits. This was the case when there were many ladies in a team. For some of them, “*e vave guku ae kuai lima; faikakala*” (Their mouths are faster than the hands); frankly put, too much gossiping slowed down the work. In a team of eight relatively five young males and three females, they could fill more than six bins in a day. The more full bins, “*e kele foi le tu*”; *tu* short for *tupe*, (means more money).

In an article by Tauafiafi (2012) Samoa's Trade Commissioner, Dr Lafitai Iupati Fuata'i described the experiences of the two female pickers. Accordingly, "our strength in the RSE is the high proficiency of our fruit pickers. They are performing very well. Some people can pick up to ten, twelve bins in a day". In an article by the Editor of the *Savali* newspaper, Tupuola Terry Tavita (2014), the CEO of Mr Apple (Andrew Van Workum) said that, the Samoan workers are, "strong, keen, organised and willing to work to earn money to take back home and are prepared to put in the long hours". And, "there has been an upswing in his business".

For a labourious outdoor task, one needed to be appropriately attired, something that the women pickers took for granted as simply wearing an *ie lavalava* (wrap around material/sarong). They learned about the need to wear suitable clothing such as *ova lola* (overall) or long pants and long sleeves shirt not to expose their bodies to the elements. Wearing of big hats, light safety boots and an adequate supply of water were essentials. Sunscreen lotion is recommended but as they said, Samoans thought of this as unnecessary because they are used to working in the sun in Samoa. Besides the personal essentials, one needed a picking bag and a ladder. These were provided by a contractor to get workers to the top of the apple tree from the side where the *tu* was and ready to be picked, they joked. Subsequently, the phrase Samoans often say, "*e tutupu tupe i luga o laau*" (money grows on trees).

Because the '*au piki*' consisted of family members, their time on the farm was also a time to catch up with relatives including some who may have come from Samoa for the duration of *piki*. It was a social activity. They were conscious of the need to do the work; and to do it well because it ensured a renewal of contract the next time. Being with families on the farm also made the work faster and reduced boredom of the repetitive nature of the work when joking or singing songs while at it. They spoke of how they used saying such as "pull me down; fall you off" and imitated characters such as Aunty Tala, Sam and other comedic expressions by performing artists of the Laughing Samoans all the time. Laughing and singing they said are noticeable features that *palagi* contractors observed of the PIs (Pacific Islanders). Their singing and laughing break the monotonous nature of the work and added a different meaning and measure to the farming landscape and the work at hand. In the

case of the women pickers, working on the apple farm reinforced unity among members of '*aiga*.

When talking to some of my own relatives who have had participated in *au piki* before the RSE scheme, *piki* was a family outing more than anything else. At the surface level, it was an activity to earn extra dollars but the practice of and the means to getting the extra dollar is perceived in the social realm. It is a good way for members of the family to work as a unit to achieve a collective goal. It is an opportunity not to miss because some families in New Zealand hardly get a chance to do something together at times as people are tied up with their own commitments at work, school or church. Being on the farm is also a place for the children to learn about the real meaning of responsibility and sharing for the common good of all. Therefore, it is also educational. "Children who grow up here [New Zealand] need this kind of grounding for their own good", said one relative. Picking apples provides that reinforcement of family bonding and values being wrapped around in a search for the extra *tu* that is hanging from an apple tree.

The above experiences may be seen to have been motivated by making the interest of the family a priority over the individual however, it also speaks of the fact that Samoans are not just 'milking' the social welfare system or waiting for handouts. Surely, there are some who would take advantage of such opportunities and it is a universal concern. For the participants in this study, they, in their own ways found and continued to look for ways to live and support themselves in New Zealand and lend support to their wider '*aiga*.

In the name of '*aiga*, the participants rely upon for adjustment in a new place and it is in the same name they work hard to uphold. In the name of '*aiga* in their eyes brings meaning and purpose while living life in an enlarged place. The WMC on the other hand fills an important part of Samoans' adjustments to and in New Zealand as pointed out earlier. As a 54 old male participant (CN23) described, "the purpose of life in Samoa and for Samoans, is life with a purpose". That purpose is evident in the experiences of the study participants.

#### 4.8 Breaking convention: a Samoan innovative touch

##### *Re-fashioned home*

It was telling during fieldwork that Samoans have a way to improve the interior and exterior landscapes of their homes in Aotearoa/New Zealand as the case might be for any other cultural group. The homeowners had converted or re-arranged garages at their homes into a multipurpose area. At one level, the conversion or re-arrangement may be viewed to have disrupted the original order and structure of residential homes built for a different type of home owner in mind. On the other, a refurbished garage speaks of an innovative solution to contemporary space usage and a deliberate re-organisation to suit changing familial situations. From this perspective, re-arranging a garage into other uses breaks the conventional structural arrangement and reflects changing circumstances of people in residence. It is an innovation with a bigger purpose.

The refashioned garages serve as a meeting place for lunch, *fa'alavelave* and family fundraising activities such as Bingo, birthday and Christmas parties. Study participants embraced the idea of having an extra space for family gatherings and more room for the little children to play.

While the refashioned garages created an extra space for purposeful usage it also speaks of the fact that Samoans perceived their being in New Zealand as not just for themselves. But, their work, thinking, lives and includes the re-arrangement of their homes as orientation to support the larger '*aiga*. To move to and to get a 'good life' in New Zealand is not an individual goal, albeit secondary, it is to extend/share the same experiences of a 'good life' with the rest of their '*aiga*. This thinking is captured in a phrase study participants used from time to time during *talanoaga*, "*E fa'asalalau le alofa o le Samoa*" (The love of Samoans knows no boundaries). Simply, one's *alofa* is shared with one's '*aiga*.

Although study participants moved to New Zealand first, they knew that their parents, siblings and other relatives would follow them later. As they build their lives in New Zealand, they also need the helping hands of their '*aiga* to manage the home front there while they attend to paid work. Relatives come to New Zealand to

baby sit new born children and those who are not in school. Day care charges tax families heavily that use this service. In fact, sending children to a day care center is a “new thing” they said. For Samoans, grandparents look after grandchildren who teach them the proper ways and manners of *fa’aSamoa*. Grandparents and elderly members of ‘*aiga* represent continuity; they are the inter-generational link. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi (2008:74) talks of the crucial role of *matua taus* (grandparents) to nurture the young generation “so that the young will inherit from them the stories of their struggles and survival, their values, their *alofa* and their vision for the future”.

### *Symbolic decorations*

In addition, one would not miss the ‘Samoan touch’ in the internal decorations of study participants’ homes. The decorations ranged from the obvious Samoan handicrafts: *ula* (necklace) such as *ula sisi* (necklace made of sea shells); *ula fala* (necklace made of dry fruits of a pandanus tree that had been painted in a bright red colour); *ula fau* (made of bark of beach hibiscus tree) that have been dried and dyed in bright red colour); to the other ‘silent’ expressions represented by the things of value on display at peoples’ homes.

Besides the boxes of *umu*, packets of *keke saina* and locally-made *taro/banana/taamu* chips and home-made *koko* Samoa (roasted cocoa beans), *ula* is part of movement at points of departure and arrival – Auckland and Faleolo airports. As an important artifact to Samoans, its essence has also been used as a metaphor for research and Samoan theorising as discussed in chapters two and three. Apart from the die-hard wailing by the ladies who are the undisputed experts in this field during farewells at airports, families also gifted a traveller with *ula*. Births and deaths are important events to Samoans; arrivals and farewells are conceived in the same light. Every farewell could be the last and it explains the women’s wailing obsessions at airports alongside a large non-travelling contingent to see one traveller off. It matter not whether one or ten people travelling, the unwavering support for, and of ‘*aiga* can be measured by the number of non-travellers present. Similarly, there are great celebrations and feastings when a traveller made it safely to families waiting on the other end of a travel.

A traveller rarely receives one *ula*. In a country where people do things in double and triple, a traveller receives many *ula* that could cover an itinerant's poor neck. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, *ula* eventually found their ways onto the walls around wooden framed pictures of family members – the old and young; the departed; the new arrivals; on the headstones of parents and grandparents at memorial gardens; graduation ceremonies; weddings; and the 21<sup>st</sup>, 55<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays – to name a few. *Ula* in their fine designs, beauty and carefully assembled by a crafted maker add colour and attract the attention of any visitor like me to a display of a family's treasured memories on walls of people's homes.

The *ie* Samoa (finemat); the Samoan national flag; the wooden 21<sup>st</sup> birthday keys with the word Samoa carved or printed on it; pieces of *siapo* vanished and framed and *fu'e* (fly whisk) are popular wall hangings. In some homes, miniature *tanoa* (wooden bowl), a *fale* Samoa (miniature Samoan house) with sea shells decorations, *ili* (fan) and ladies mat handbags being displayed on different corners of wall units. These give colour to the interior feel of homes and to an extent, a feeling, or perhaps a warning that it is a Samoan territory. Against this backdrop was the playing of Samoan hits as mentioned earlier. It completed the picture in perfect harmony and provided warmth and safe space to tell and hear stories.

For Samoa-bound movement, travellers also receive *ula* that are not made of 'island' materials but lollies, snickers chocolate, Wrigley's all favor pk chewing gum packets, Jasons Supa Blo chewing cum in green and pink wrappers, and *lole laau* (lolly with a handle). Unlike the use of *ula* that moved with people to Aotearoa/New Zealand, *ula lole* (garland made of lollies) with Samoa-bound travels form part of a traveller's *oso* (gift) to waiting *aiga*. *Oso* may also include other food items such as de-shelled, frozen and bottled mussels and apples for example. Gifts are on offer to the children and adult alike waiting for the grand display and distribution of other goodies pulled out carefully from suitcases and bags of all dimensions. It is a scene likened to that of actress Julia Andrews in her famous children's musical movie, *Mary Poppins* where she descended from the clouds in response to the Banks children's announcement for a nanny. With her in descent was a magic handbag which she drew numerous goodies of kinds – a hat stand, a wall mirror, a pot plant, a side lamp, shoes, clothes, tape measure – to the awe of the Banks' youngsters. For

the Samoans, it is *alofa* (love) expressed in a range of materials goods being carried in and retrieved carefully from suitcases.

Material things and souvenirs such as the A3-size fabric maps of New Zealand; table cloth with the name Aotearoa in large prints found their ways too on the walls of some homes or simply hanging freely next to a corner post of a *fale* (house). Things such as rugby jerseys, beer mugs for example with All Blacks printed on them are also very popular. Besides these are white goods – refrigerator, television set and countless materials of personal effects such as mobile phones and supplementary accessories travel. As a 56 year old study participant (WMCS3) said, “those [pointing to a TV set on the table and a DVD player] are from my son in New Zealand I brought from New Zealand last year”.

#### *Home gardens and landscaping*

Yi-Fu Tuan (1977:34) informs us of, “two fundamental principles guiding spatial organization and experience: the human body and place”. As Janet Donohoe (2011:26) writes that

we [people] are embodied creatures that we take up space. But more than that, we inhabit a place through and in our bodies. On a basic level we can see the relationship between the body and a particular place of the built environment in the idea of the home. When we inhabit a house, we say we live there. We say ‘come back to my place’. It is a space that is intimate and into which we usually only allow those whom we consider friends and acquaintances. The house is where we develop a certain style of acting in the world. In many ways it reflects our character in the way in which it is decorated and arranged. But the house too arranges us, much as any building arranges us, but in a much more fundamental and determinate way.

While subtle, but not less important, the exterior of family homes also revealed something about their owners. Besides the personalised wooden carving: *Afio mai* (Welcome) hanging on the front door of some homes, the flower garden was another marker. Lou Qingxi (2003:28) argues that gardens are forms of cultural



construction. To Lewis (1993:107), a garden is a work of art that has “intrinsic values for the gardener and it can be a diagnostic artifact”.

Clarissa Kimber (2004:268) argues that the literature on flower gardens reveals three strands of focus. That is, the “biological and agronomical, secondly, the “cultural and social aspect” and “the landscape design and art history”. The cultural and social aspect of flower gardens “reveal ethnicity; as household space; sites of economic activity; sites of cultural reproduction; reciprocity network; as negotiated and contested space; and as migrants’ space and maintenance of cultural identity” she continues. In Kimber’s view, this aspect of flower garden has not been given attention. A study by Sime and Kimura (1988) to compare the western and Japanese perspectives of home gardens highlights not only the cultural variation in the attitudes of the two groups but also raises the same neglect that Kimber found in her study. Landscape designer Philip Smith (2004) noted that in the case of New Zealand, the nature of flower gardens in that country has evolved and they have come to represent the cultural background of migrants.

While gardens have national significance as Beattie (2007:39) found in the case of Chinese gardens in New Zealand, they are equally important at the household level. Flower gardens at the homes of study participants have roses of all colours, shapes and size; sunflower and the famous *pohutukawa* tree. In what appears to be different ways of gardening where plants are left to grow ‘wildly’ for one cultural group, Samoans have the tendency to trim plants to a point where it is hardly any leaves left on them. Samoans keep their compounds and flower gardens in Samoa free of weeds and dry leaves including the fallen ones and flowers. This cultural measure of cleanliness is expressed in Auckland in the manner in which the participants’ flower gardens are pruned and the soil is carefully tilled. By no means to suggest that other people do not keep their flower gardens clean. Interestingly, with the plants being trimmed uncontrollably, the outdoor solar lights are fixed within the gardens providing a different outlook yet pleasant and suits the owner’s preference.

Besides observing flower gardens and landscaping of Samoans’ homes in the study as a way to refashion their places, I noticed at my sister’s neighbourhood this expression of difference. On one side is a Chinese family. The owner has a

vegetable garden instead where he planted tomatoes, cabbages, spring onions, carrots, herbs and ‘grasses’ of all sorts from what I could get from private scans of his garden and yard from a hole in the wooden fence as a divider. The vegetables get rotten sometimes but he never gives some away as what would be the case in Samoa. On the other side, it is a *palagi* owner. The flowers in his garden and the rest in the neighbourhood appeared to have been left on their own. A *pohutukawa* tree and another one grew along the wooden fence separating the two properties. The heights of the two trees are inches from the roof of his house. The branches were semi-blocking the view of his yard unless on a windy day. The branches naturally crossed over the wooden fence. In her stronger days, my sister would cut the branches during her routine time in her flower garden. She maintained that the branches “are too long and the fallen leaves made her compound and place look dirty”. This became a point of tension; a clash of perspectives between the two home owners. One’s expression of cleanliness and re-arrangement of place was obviously unacceptable to another user. Sime and Kimura (1988) sum this point when they said, “In each culture the home garden is the place where the paradox of each person’s tangible physical existence, but ultimate mortality, can be effectively resolved”.

My observation of the ‘expressions’ of Samoa in the homes of the participants through the things and ideas Samoan was clear on one thing. The ways and manners of thinking and living life travel with people to places they go to as Smith (2004) reports. Samoans made imprints on the landscape and in their homes whether owned or rented just as, on the one hand, the case of the Chinese man next door, the *palagi* neighbourhood, my sister and the Samoans in the study on the other. As Bloch (1992:120) writes that some expressions of cultural identity are a challenge to put in words.

There is, of course, much about cultural identity that is not and indeed cannot, be verbalized, and which ‘goes without saying’. Bloch uses the phrase to outline the disparity between language and thought; to demonstrate that unlike language, everyday thought relies on ‘clumped networks of signification’ which are ‘only partly linguistic’, including as they do the integration of ‘visual imagery, other sensory

cognition, the cognitive aspects of learned practices, evaluations, memories of sensations, and memories of typical examples.

Related but a different point, Bloch's observation also highlights the insufficiency of the English language as evident in this chapter and the others in this thesis to capture the essence of Samoan thinking. As shown in the manner Samoans in the study interact, use space and refashion place, it is a challenge to describe what some experiences represent for them in the English language.

The discussion thus far indicates that while the study participants expressed themselves through a cultural refashioning of their homes in New Zealand, these are often theorised differently in the literature (Relph 1976; Malpas 1999; Casey 2009; Seamon 2013; Donohoe 2014). In their own ways, Samoan migrants break the conventional understanding of home by creating alternative uses of space in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Indeed, a place is always in the making; a work in progress.

#### **4.9 Chapter summary**

I have drawn on the concept of *fa'asinomaga* as a way of thinking that shapes the way Samoans think of place and what it represents for them. Samoans travel with *fa'asinomaga*, a guide; a light to show, inspire; and an armour as they move to and from Auckland engaging with new work experiences in factories, supermarkets, schools, apple farms, through delivering newspapers or in the transportation system. In the cocoon of their 'aiga and church networks, Samoans survived temporary 'shocks' of unfamiliar settings of South Auckland. They styled the interior and exterior of their homes, refashioning garages for purposeful use and placing island-styled decorations on walls, playing of island music and watching island comedy show. Such are examples of conscious attempts to connect with identity and culture, and in so doing enliven one's *fa'asinomaga*.

In the next chapter, I discuss how reasons for people's movement between Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand carry meanings that are strongly rooted in culture and people's identity.

## Chapter Five:

### TOWARDS A BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF 'AIGA AND MOVEMENT OF SAMOANS

Unlike some of my anthropological ancestors, I have no love affair or fascination with the bizarreness, strangeness or exoticness of other cultures, nor am I disenchanted, fed up or disillusioned with my own Samoan culture. The purpose of my work in looking at the identity of NZ-born Samoans, [that is,] researching my own culture, is to continue the voyage of my Samoan ancestors across time and space, and to tell the story about the experiences of Samoan people across time and space (Anae 1998:21).

This chapter examines the reasons for, and meaning of, movement among the Samoans. To reiterate, and as declared in the first two chapters, my interest was to investigate alternative meanings of movement based on the perspectives of Samoan migrants and their island-based relatives. This approach was born out of a personal dissatisfaction with the prevailing view that considers movement as essentially a component of national economics – applied uncritically to the lived experiences of people in reciprocity and care-based societies. Such a dominant view, according to Young (1998:60), continues to see people as responding to socioeconomic circumstances and opportunities perceived to be plentiful in technologically advanced places. Calculatingly, the decision by people of opportunity-starved places (Betram 1986:820) to migrate, is dictated by the economics associated costs and rewards (Macpherson 2004:168). Such reasons may be economically meaningful but culturally deficient for my purpose here because it ignores the cultural reality of people's lives particularly in reciprocity and care-based places like Samoa. This study argues for a cultural thinking that is grounded in '*aiga*, the core of social relations and what defines Samoan mobility. My analysis focuses on the cultural meaning of movement and what it represents for Samoans and their '*aiga* in an attempt to provide a broader understanding of such a process.

The movement, lived experience and way of thinking of the Samoans in this study reflect a continuity of life and living of ‘*aiga*’ relations. To begin with, I discuss the reasons for movement and how study participants perceived their movement within their ‘*aiga*’ and the Samoan culture over time and space. As mentioned in the earlier chapters the Samoan culture is *not* a mere variable, rather it is a framework; a context and the starting point to a different understanding of movement and development. Missing this point can invite misrepresentations of mobility as a cultural process. This chapter also exposes a fusion to what has come to know as the ‘usual’ reasons for and explanations of movement. Alongside the ‘usual’, I also draw on the ‘emerging’ ones. They are essential to understanding movement in its totality and specificities in this day and age. Taken together, these reasons and explanations are interwoven into the lived experiences of Samoans. They create the only way to describe and understand movement in what Bruner (2004:692) called the, “lived time”. They are situated within a cultural frame, thinking and specific contexts that cannot and should not close our eyes to.

### **5.1 Complexities of movement and reasons to move**

Even before thinking about movement in economic terms, Samoans have always moved around to the four corners of the world (Sutter 1989) for reasons that are diverse and complex. I argue that reasons for *malaga* are always connected to ‘*aiga*’; it is about ‘*aiga*’; it is for ‘*aiga*’, it takes place within the context of ‘*aiga*’ and involves – directly or indirectly – all ‘*aiga*’ whether one moves or stays behind. Samoans move for different kinds of *fa’alavelave* (cultural events of ‘*aiga*’) as discussed earlier.

These reasons, and many others, evolve around ‘*aiga*’. Therefore, movement is fluid, flexible and dynamic. It is circuitry as Salesa (2003) describes. Movement does not suggest a rupture but strengthening of family ties; broadening of Samoans’ horizons of knowledge, material wealth, networks, and sociocultural life itself. Samoans may engage in waged work and otherwise; succeed in playing rugby or netball; work in diverse mission fields or factories, or travel to places near and far whether in Apia, Auckland or elsewhere. What binds these engagements is people’s thinking and

living, geared towards and shaped by their commitment to, and love for their '*aiga*' as discussed in chapter four. Thus the 'doing' of movement and the reasons for it need to be understood in the context of people's cultural milieu rather than in solely economic frame of thinking. Nor is it sufficient to consider movement a response to a monetary transaction or condition alone, for migrants and their families can be agents of change themselves.

The life stories of Samoans in the study represent the fusion of what the literature described as the 'usual' as well as the 'emerging' reasons for and explanations for movement. For clarity, I refer to these reasons as separate however reality does not reveal itself in such a neat manner. Rather, reasons are interwoven and are layered into complex patterns as Samoans move around over time; across Samoa and abroad wherever members of their '*aiga*' reside. The boundary therefore between the two disappears quietly.

## **5.2 I/We move ... 'for my/our '*aiga*'**

Previous studies have acknowledged that reasons for movement are multifaceted. Given the complex and fluid nature of movement attempts seem to have highlighted the economic considerations. As a result, discussion appears to have locked in the thinking about people responding to an economic transaction or a phenomenon. This marginalises Samoans in this study who conceived of their movement broadly, multifaceted and deeply cultural. While it is possible to identify reasons for movement, it is not all that easy to isolate the economic factor from all the social cultural contexts in which movement takes place. Studies by Brown and Connell (1995; 2004a; 2004b; 2006a; 2006b) ignore this important aspect and focus on the econometric and mathematical certainties. In his PhD study of Samoans in Australia, Va'a (2001) found that while it is possible to identify the economic motives as the main reasons why the respondents in his study move to that country, he cautions that it should not be interpreted to mean there are no secondary reasons. Rather, it is a combination of reasons in which economic is but one and explanations need to be situated within specific contexts.

I explore this theme further in *talanoaga* with Samoans in the study and with particular references to the life history and autobiography *talanoaga* of two women (CN1 and CN2) in Aotearoa/New Zealand and their relatives (CNS1 and CNS2) in Samoa. These women are strangers and had no knowledge of their selection for this segment of the study. Our *talanoaga* illustrate how movement experience is social cultural in nature than anything else. *Malaga* is about building, enhancing and cultivating family relations and to support the general good of ‘aiga as evident in part of my *talanoaga* with CN1 below.

CN1: As you know, I came to New Zealand to my older brother. It is my love of and for my ‘aiga that’s why I came here [New Zealand].

Me: Can you tell me more about it? How did it happen?

CN1: Ah, well, my brother came to New Zealand first. He is the eldest in our family and he lived with our uncle (mother’s brother); his wife and three children in Onehunga.

My brother found work in a car factory through my uncle. He [brother] liked his work there until he retired. He sent money to our parents at home [Samoa] to help my family. He also helped pay for my air fares to come to New Zealand.

I reached Form 5 level in Samoa. It was a tough decision whether to continue school or to find work to help my parents on our plantation. I wanted to become a nurse ... Being the second eldest child in a family of eight and the eldest girl I opted to find work instead. I worked as a shop keeper at Pakele’s [Bartley] shop in Apia for about 4 years. I was happy to get a job there to help my parents and my other younger siblings at the time.

My eldest brother had convinced me to come to New Zealand where I could get a better pay to help our family and to get a better life for the '*aiga*.

Foremost in her mind was her '*aiga*: to help her parents to look after their family. Her story speaks of many other Samoans in the study whose movement and thinking is geared towards the enhancement of '*aiga*. It is for her '*aiga*, her power base and where she belongs. Her choice to find work at Bartley store instead of following her personal dream to become a nurse was framed and evolved around her '*aiga*. Her brother and uncle who were residents in New Zealand at the time provided another opportunity for her to move beyond her home at Leauvaa and the confines of Bartley's shop in Apia. It was an opportunity to fulfil her wish to look after her '*aiga* as our *talanoaga* continued below.

Me: When did you come to New Zealand? What was it like?

CN1: Oh, long time ago. I first came here for X-Mas of 1974. It was my first trip out of Samoa and also to New Zealand. A mixed feeling – excited, sad, scared at the same time. The thought of travelling was scary. Hearing of a different place [New Zealand] scared me the most. It is very different from Samoa then; and now. Luckily, I stayed only for the holidays. My brother, his wife and uncle took care of me; showed me the place. Oh! What a big place!

Me: So your first trip to New Zealand was an important one? Can you tell me more about it?

CN1: Yes! My brother and uncle also made it [trip] successful in the sense that they helped me made up my mind about coming to New Zealand. I knew I could help out my family given what I saw and heard from their stories. I returned to Samoa after my holiday convinced but I also needed to talk with my parents about it. It was hard. I like New Zealand from what I saw in



my first trip but I did not want to leave my parents. Because am the eldest of girls, it is my duty to look after them [parents].

Me: What did your parents think? How did they take it?

In Samoa, my parents and I talked about it. My brother and uncle may have also added their bit to influence my parents' decision. Surprisingly, they encouraged me to come to New Zealand. We cried many times; and we also prayed so many times about it. I also know that my parents shared this news with our pastor and his wife and they would have prayed about it too.

Few months later in 1975, I was ready to leave Samoa. Between my return from New Zealand and the time I left Samoa, my parents, the village pastor, and I think everyone in my extended family and village had knowledge of my coming to New Zealand. You know how things are with us in Samoa; everyone knows everyone's business and life. One's life is an open book. Life in the island [Samoa] is such.

All Samoans in the study had visited Aotearoa/New Zealand before settling there. Besides the descriptions of that country they heard from relatives and through other means, seeing Aotearoa/New Zealand and being aware of opportunities there that could "improve 'aiga and one self carries weight" according to a 49 year old working mother (CN20). The presence of relatives in Aotearoa/New Zealand ensures the smooth transition and provides the needed support net as Samoan scholars (Va'ai 2012; Va'a 2001) have found. For study participant CN1, her first visit maybe seen as a usual Christmas holiday, however, it was a step towards re-positioning and expanding her 'aiga's development in mind. She returned to Samoa after her holiday convinced of the opportunities in New Zealand. Convinced too that her dreams to provide for her 'aiga would be made possible with the support of her 'aiga there.

CN1 embraced her obligations as the eldest daughter to look after her parents seriously. Although she described leaving her parents in Samoa as difficult, she realised that going to Aotearoa/New Zealand would enable her to provide for her parents and to reach out to her wider ‘*aiga*. This finding is consistent with many other studies on migration in Oceania (see, Kaitani et al 2011; Lee 2003; McGrath 2002), however, these studies fall short to detail how reasons such as “to help my family” are situated within the context of an extended family.

Given the nature of the Samoan society, decisions or events are never confidential. Rather, the case in point involved everyone and calls for blessings of many people including the village pastor. Seeking success and committing important decisions such as to migrate to New Zealand in prayer was not unusual. Although the inclusiveness of living life in Samoa has been described by CN1 as “an open book” the openness ensures that decisions and information are openly shared and discussed widely.

Samoans understand that decisions or events that receive blessings of ‘*aiga* and heaven above are likely to succeed which guarantees the success of ‘*aiga* as well. Referring to this proverb *E le sili le tai i lo le tapuai* (The support of one’s ‘*aiga* guarantees success), this participant (CN1) attributed her success in life to the support, prayers, fasting and blessings of, and from her parents, ‘*aiga* in what she called, her “first movement moment”. This support network was shared by all Samoans whose views and actions were anchored in the collective base of their ‘*aiga* and *nu’u* networks rather than in their individual self.

The expression of this collective support is evident in the segment below. It is a testimony to the inseparable nature of a Samoan self from ‘*aiga* and community. As McGrath (2002:319) finds that people’s identities “are multifaceted and transnational communities are not defined by physical place” which points to “the enduring importance of defining self ... in a world full of movement and change”.

At the *ai ava* (farewell dinner) with my ‘*aiga*, I think the whole village came (laugh!). The *auluma* came. They [villagers] brought food and *meaalofa* (gifts) of all kinds and the endless best wishes. It looked like a festival. My family prepared a big feed for everyone. I still remember that evening. I was sad, nervous but also very excited. It is hard to describe in words.

The pastor said the *lotu* and offered *upu apoapoi* (words of advice) and *upu alofa* (words of love) for me. I remembered what he [pastor] said during the *lotu afiafi* (evening devotion), ‘*Ia e manatua ou matua, lo’u ‘aiga ma le tapuaiga a le tatou muu. Aua lava nei galo*’ (Remember your parents, your family and the village. Do not ever forget).

### 5.3 Do not forget...continuities continue!

She/They never forget. She supported her ‘*aiga* through the years of sending her *alofa* in the form of remittances and periodic visitations. She too received her ‘*aiga*’s *alofa* of home-baked *umu*, *keke saiga* (Chinese biscuits), *masi popo* (coconut biscuits), other island delicacies and money in return. Although her parents have passed on in 1995 and 1998, she spoke of her *tautua* (service) to them with a great level of personal satisfaction having “served them faithfully” CN1 recounted. It was her calling as a daughter to look after her parents and her ‘*aiga* she reminded me.

Over the years, four of her other siblings came to Aotearoa/New Zealand through her and her older brother’s assistance. The same siblings have moved on and established themselves and families in Australia. It has certainly expanded hers and her ‘*aiga*’s field of movement. She goes to Australia to visit them for “a little *tafao* (holiday) when I find a sponsor or during the off peak when airfares are cheaper” she told me in between her light giggles. Her parents too had also moved between Samoa, New Zealand and Australia on several occasions. And when her parents could not travel, she would; going back and forth to visit, to take them to Samoa or to bring them over to New Zealand or Australia.

The departure of her parents did not stop her ‘outreach’ routine. She still travels for reasons connected to her ‘*aiga*’ and many ‘things’ ‘*aiga*’-related. They are plentiful and diverse. Besides going for *maliu* (funeral), court cases over *matai* titles or *fanua*, one of her significant travels was to do the adoption papers of her younger brother’s daughter; her niece. Intra-family adoption is one of the common practices in Samoa where grandparents take their grandchildren to look after them and to do their chores. Her niece in her late twenties was one such example. She was raised by her parents and lived with them for most of her life. The niece also travelled with the grandparents to Aotearoa/New Zealand some times. Before her parents passed on she felt dutiful that “she fulfils her promise to them [her parents] to ensure that her niece gets a good life for herself” in New Zealand.

Her parents spoke to her about adopting her niece long before their passing she told me. Although her parents did not use the word adoption because the Samoan words for this practice are *fa’atea* or *vae tama*, she understood what her parents meant when they spoke with her about getting “a good life for her [niece]”. Recalling her parents words, “*Manatua mai si ma tama ia maua se lumanai i Niu Sila*” (Remember our child [grand daughter] to get a good future for her in New Zealand), she framed their request in the concept of *mavaega* (departing words). Departing words and wishes of parents and grandparents are not taken lightly in Samoa. Although the “adoption process was not easy and costs money”, she was determined to see that the adoption papers were successful.

But, how did you know the adoption of your niece was on your parents’ minds, I asked? She paused; I felt slightly uncomfortable wondering if I had asked a bad question. “*Alofa; o le alofa lava o matua i fanau*” (Love; love of parents for their children), she said repeatedly while pointing to a large wooden picture frame of her parents hanging on the wall of her sitting room. “I know them [her parents] very well” she continued. They “talk *alofa* and give *alofa*”. Their thinking is fused with love and they would want nothing less than the best for us, their children and especially their grandchildren. For this participant, she travelled back and forth then to ensure that the adoption papers were completed while her parents were still alive. In her words, she “wanted her parents to know that their wish had been fulfilled so they could go in peace”.

### 3.4 Continuities is also personal

On a personal level, CN1 felt obliged to adopt her niece because she has been with her parents in some critical moments when she could not be with them nor could her other two sisters in Australia. She had come to semi-relied on her niece to look after her parents and to keep her informed of their health from time to time. She trusted her.

Additionally, she does not have a biological daughter herself. She had longed for a daughter. From this angle, the adoption for her niece was also beneficial to her little family. She reasoned that “her three sons need a sister”. Her desire to have a daughter to share her ‘things’ with and to look after them in their old age was also a factor.

### 5.5 Finding passion in movement

In her youthful days in Samoa, CN1 had a long term desire to become a nurse. She spoke of her experiences as a young girl seeing *asiasi komiti* (district nurses) coming to her village in Leauvaa to conduct monthly *fuaga pepe* (check-up of babies and young children) and to carry out general home and village hygiene inspections. In the days, she would accompany her mother to the *Fale Komiti* (Women’s committee house) for the event and to take their *fafaga* (food) for the women and the nurses to share after their work. Sometimes she would join the women as they walked from home to home singing, some gossips too about each other’s home and things at home. Furthermore, the traditional nurse’s uniform: knee-length white dress with a matching little cap appealed to her she said. However, it is “the life-saving work; the work of love” nurses do that fascinated her the most and whet her longing for the profession. It is a duty she took to heart to care for her family and parents in their old age. It is for this reason that made her left school to find work at Bartley’s shop in Apia and motivated her to leave Samoa. While she did not pursue her passion, her love for her parents and family was bigger than a personal goal. To her, she was doing her passion regardless through the work she carries out in and for her ‘*aiga*’ all the time. In her eyes, she knew her calling is to become a nurse not in a hospital, but the one for her ‘*aiga*’.

In between sending her boys to school and looking after her family in New Zealand, she took up an offer for community work at a local elementary school where her three boys once attended. It was a welcome help for her husband who was the sole breadwinner then she told me. The teachers knew her well after spending most of her time in school. How did it happen I asked? The head teacher of the school asked her one day if she would be interested to help the school out. His main reason, she recalled, was “The school management was encouraging parents to get involved in the running of the school”. She admitted her nervousness, excitement and a sense of achievement about the offer. Although she knew close to nothing what “to get involved” meant she did not mind it after all. However, the *palagi* teacher whom she worked with confided to her later that the school was in need of help as the number of Pacific children in the school increased over the years. She started as a volunteer teacher for one school term in 1998; and later got a permanent offer as a teacher aide (teacher helper) since then until the end of 2009.

While this opportunity relates to her passion – “to care for young children” in New Zealand, she conceived of it as a blessing from above because of the *tapuaiga* (support) of her ‘*aiga*. She believed God knew her heart was to care for other people besides her parents, children and ‘*aiga*. She did not get to wear the nurse’s white dress and a cap but God opened an opportunity for her to find her passion again to care for young children at the local elementary school that became part of her life and story.

Although she has retired, the school holds a special place in her heart she recalled. Understandably, she felt connected to this place not only because her boys went to school there, it became her “work station; her second home and where she developed relationships with other people” she said. Besides this, it provided an opportunity for her to re-experience the world of work in a field of her liking to care for others. She spoke of her working days at Bartley’s shop in Samoa and valued her new found exposure and experience working with young children. She loved it. She met other Samoans whose children attended the school. Through it too, allowed her to continue her ‘outreach’ routine of travels to and fro her ‘*aiga* in Samoa for *fa’alavelave* as well as her engagements with the wider Samoan community in South Auckland she is part of.

Now retired and a devoted Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) member in Papatoetoe, she continued her caring work there. She is a Sunday school teacher and a church youth counselor. In her new roles, she continued to care for others under her care.

## 5.6 Reaching out from within

When talking to CN1's brother at the village Leauvaa in Samoa, he described his sister as someone "who reaches out to her '*aiga* from within her heart" and who always cares for others. I include part of our conversation with him [CNS1] in Samoa below.

Me: Your sister in New Zealand told me a lot about your family *iinei* (Samoa) and *fafo* (New Zealand). Can you tell me more about her and your family?

CNS1: As you know, my sister is the backbone of our family. She takes care of our family. She contributes to making decision to develop our family and to care for our parents when they were still alive. She made a lot of sacrifices for us [family], especially for them [parents]. She did not finish school too because she wanted to help our family.

Me: She has been living in New Zealand for a long time. She maintains connections to your '*aiga*, can you tell me more about this.

CNS1: As you know she went to New Zealand to our older brother. They lived there and they helped to bring the rest of my '*aiga* to New Zealand and Australia. She comes here [Samoa] and goes back for *fa'alavelave* and sometimes for a visit.

Our family valued her *tautua* and we wanted to reward her with a *matai* title for her *tautua* and commitment to '*aiga*. She refused it but we [siblings] insisted for her to take it [title].

Samoans in the study travel back and forth to attend to events related to '*aiga*. Their movements are deeply cultural and communal in nature. These travels do not just maintain but also build relationships within '*aiga*. It is the way, as he said, "that we [Samoans] live in this world and I see no other way". When conceived in this light, movement is deeper and bigger than the economic frame that suffocates it in the prevailing literature. If anything, movement is about people, for people and by people. The people-centeredness of movement counts for it to have meaning and purpose.

### **5.7 Alofa and va fealoa'i know no boundaries**

For this participant, his relationship with his older sister (CN1) has another meaning when she adopted his daughter as mentioned earlier. His tone at the time of the fieldwork suggested to me the adoption may not have settled with him. I wondered what the basis of his views I asked.

Me: Your sister had adopted your daughter when she was about ten years old I heard. Can you tell me how this happened?

CNS1: The old couple [parents] wanted my sister to adopt her [daughter]. They thought it was the best thing for her [daughter] so she can get a good future in New Zealand. I was undecided when the old couple asked me but she [daughter] was with them [parents] most of the time, so I know she [daughter] is closer to them [parents] than I. In fact, she [daughter] did not know about me then, us [her biological parents] until later.

Me: How do you, your wife, family feel about the adoption?

CNS1: Mixed feelings, sad but mostly happy. Sad when I think of what I missed out on as a father but very happy for my daughter, my sister and my parents. I know my wife will feel the same way if she is still alive. For her [daughter] she lives



there [New Zealand] and comes home [Samoa] to visit. I also go there some time in the Christmas holiday.

I am happy for my sister too especially because she also wanted a daughter...I could not refuse what she [sister] wanted. She is my *feagaiga* and I know my wife would be happy for our daughter if she was still around.

It [adoption] is not that she [daughter] is adopted by a stranger. No, she is still in my family.

In his view, the adoption was simply sharing *alofa*; a gift among members of 'aiga. This understanding of adoption may be different from other situations where children are adopted by non-family members. In the case of Samoa adoption is cultural and it is also framed in the context of *va fealoa'i*, the brother-sister relationships I discussed earlier. This does not suggest that adoption in Samoa is always cultural and without issues. If anything however, the understanding of adoption from the fields suggests that it is guided by the principles of *fa'aSamoa* of *alofa* and looking out for each other for the collective good. As this participant contends, adoption is 'aiga; it is within 'aiga for 'aiga.

For CNS1, the adoption of his daughter provides more meaningful reasons for him to travel back and forth to visit especially now his daughter has a young family. I wondered how his travels to see his daughter and her children sit with his sister and her family I asked. Without a delay, he said,

CNS1: I travel to and fro to visit my daughter, her children [grandchildren] as well as my sister and her family. I do not visit them to take her [daughter] away. She [daughter] knows everything now. She is still very much part of our family. It will always be this way. We travel to visit each other and that is it. It will continue in the future as long as we can. It [*malaga*] is our way of life and as long as I can afford it, I

keep going to visit them. As you know Samoans travel to and fro to visit our '*aiga*. So it is the same thing for me.

My sister does not mind. She wants me to come for a visit when I get a *pasese* (air fare).

The above situation may well and truly be an ideal case, the reality of adoption and in some cases, tensions and unsettling feelings are undeniably possible. As far as the reactions and responses from the participants involved go, the depth of relationships and understanding rooted in the dynamics and context of their '*aiga* appear to have prevailed. When seen in the light of *va fealoa'i*, the relationship and covenant between a brother and sister as understood by Samoans, adoption has a particular meaning.

## 5.8 Adoption links one's links

Speaking to the adopted daughter in New Zealand, revealed that her experiences of living with her grandparents and her relations to other members of her '*aiga* have shaped her thinking and outlook about the adoption. Intra family adoption is common practice among Samoans whether in Samoa or abroad. In our *talanoaga*, that took place as the last set of *talanoaga* in New Zealand, I sensed a strong feeling of pride and positivity in her outlook that was different from what I had anticipated.

Daughter: Living in Samoa can be an experience. Having lived with my grandparents most of my life, I learned from them a lot. They are my role models. It is through them that I went to many places in Samoa and abroad. I met many people in my '*aiga* through them. This is a blessing. They taught me the value of Samoan way of life which is all about *osi* '*aiga* (cultivate family relations).

Me: Your mum spoke highly of you that you have been a blessing to your '*aiga*? Can you tell me more about this?

Oh, that is nice to hear. Because I know my aunty and cousins well, the adoption was just a formality thing to get my papers but the living of it is normal for me. I do not feel different at all. My aunty and uncle never stop me from connecting to my biological father. He comes here to visit us.

Adoption was not a big issue for me. I still feel a part of my ‘*aiga*. It has not restricted me in any way. In fact, it [adoption] has linked me to more ‘*aiga*.

She did not feel to have been neglected because of the adoption. The adoption however, has enabled her to appreciate the central place of her ‘*aiga* in shaping her views of life. Her ‘*aiga* is her extended family network she said. Through the adoption she conceived her own movements as a way to maintain her multiple links to Samoa. That is, to visit her biological father and the rest of her ‘*aiga* there and also to visit to her grandparents and her mothers’ graves. In her view, she needed to maintain and cultivate *va* with her adopted father (uncle) and his side of the family as well. Because she is the only girl in her adopted family, she understood the expectations and responsibilities of a “*tamaitai* Samoa (Samoan lady) as *pae ma le auli* (peace makers)” as discussed in chapter two. In this valued context, she conceived of her adoption and herself as the link to link to her many ‘*aiga*. Maintaining her links to all the links she knows and values is a task she promised to do. She is living it by doing.

## **5.9 Living *malaga* and *fa’alavelave* is not to all people**

It was also clear during fieldwork that life and living *malaga* is not as smooth as it appears at the surface of my *talanoaga*. In reality, the practices of *malaga* and ‘*aiga*-related *fa’alavelave* is filled with other stories that constitute the entire experience. As the next piece with CN1 shows, reality is more complicated and context specific. These other stories are equally important to a fuller understanding of *malaga*, its practices and how it contributes to the lived experiences of Samoans.

Me: You have been helping your family in Samoa since you arrived in New Zealand, can you tell me what was it like? How did you manage?

CN1: That's right. I came with the main aim to help my family. It was not all easy but I worked and prayed hard to God to help me. My brother and uncle also helped me a lot. I am happy I was able to achieve that.

Factory work was good money when compared to my work at Pakele in Samoa. Samoans often said, when you have a big heart and a never give up attitude one will be successful in places like New Zealand. Good things do not come easily. I was single, much younger then and full of energy to do shift work. I enjoyed it although the work is repetitive and can be boring at times.

I tried to save and also to help my brother with things here [New Zealand] as you know everything costs money.

Me: Did your families in Samoa know of your story of making a new life in New Zealand while supporting them at the same time? What was their reaction?

CN1: I told them how many times when I was there [Samoa] about the reality of living in New Zealand. It is different from Samoa. Here [New Zealand], one needs money to get most things, the bills, food you know. Maybe they did not understand that then until they came here [New Zealand] and saw for themselves. My siblings who once lived here [New Zealand] and now in Australia understand our life here. They too, have the same attitude. It is not that we run away from *fa'alavelave* but we are doing them differently and smarter. In this way, we are also sharing and helping one another instead because we cannot live without '*aiga*'.

Me: How did you manage this situation in your family?

CN1: My motto now is very simple. I do not stress too much about *fa'alavelave*. I only contribute only when it is appropriate and with a clean heart. *Fa'alavelave* is the number one problem with Samoans because people over do things at times. They (*fa'alavelave*) are not bad but it is how we [Samoans] do things. At times we do *fa'alavelave* with wrong motives and people blame *fa'alavelave* and *fa'aSamoa* but really it is the people themselves who are the cause.

For my family, there is plenty of land in Samoa for people to plant but sometimes people do not use the land and rely on us to send things. When a phone call comes, I assess and contribute. Other times I simply say I cannot afford it this time. However, even if I say no, I still do it, you know. It is not easy to say no to *fa'alavelave* because we need to as part of our *tautua*; *va fealoa'i* and *osi 'aiga*.

The tensions shown in the stories above speak of the reality of *malaga* and *'aiga fa'alavelave* and they were also common in the stories of other Samoans in the study. They highlight three important issues. First, while the opportunities to improve one's lot as CN1 and all Samoans in this study perceived to be plentiful in New Zealand, the reality of accessing them through the nature of factory work they engaged in and in an environment that is understandably different from Samoa was not easy. For CN1 while her determination to work hard and the wages were surely higher than what she used to receive from her work with the Bartleys in Samoa, she soon found the repetitive factory work less appealing. It is also challenging when raising a young family.

Samoan artist Fatu Feu'u (2012) describes his father's experience in their early days in New Zealand along the same line. He writes,

The first ten years of my father's life in New Zealand were very difficult for him. I still picture him as a broken man. He was living in a different culture, with a different language. But he had to move because of us; because my mum said his kids had to have an education to change their way of life. All I know is that he loved my mum very much. He would do anything for his wife. And he did.

I admire my father and I thank him for letting Mum move us to New Zealand to have a better education and a better way of life. And when I say a better way of life, it's different from the Samoan, subsistence ways of life. These days we believe in education, and you work...you get a job and earn the money for your children and for things like having a house, like having a car, like having a holiday, or like having a bank account you can use when you feel like going anywhere. That's part of what my mother aspired to, and my dad had to follow through.

That's not the sort of life that he knew or thought he would know when he was a young Samoan – just to be in the village, go to the plantation, go fishing, feed the kids. I sometimes wonder whether the people in the village in Samoa know what my parents sacrificed when they left.

My father was out of place in New Zealand. He had arrived in a strange country and he didn't speak English. He was working in the factories, making parts of cars. There were a lot of other Samoans in the factories, and he enjoyed being with his friends there (Feu'u 2012:72).

Through their work in factories, Samoans have had an opportunity to experience the world of work in a foreign country. It had given them an exposure to a different form of specialised work where parts of a product are being made by different people in an assembly line. However, factory work is not a destiny, rather a stepping stone for most Samoans while contemplating better work conditions and educational

opportunities elsewhere, if not for them, it is for their children and other family members. In the case of WMC14 getting a certificate was a pathway to a better opportunity for her elsewhere. In fact, all study participants talked of participating in one professional development course at some stage. For Fatu Feu'u (2012), he left factory work and pursued his passion for art that not only connects but re-connects him to himself and his Samoan culture. His return to formal education at the University of Auckland's Art School speaks too of many other Samoans in the study who continuously searching for opportunities to improve themselves. As Feu'u (2012:103) says "I have to earn my living and this is the only way I know how. I know there are going to be sacrifices".

Secondly, the tensions highlighted earlier constitute the Samoan experience. '*Aiga* relations are maintained and reinforced through *fa'alavelave*, without them, '*aiga* will not exist. However, it is the perceived inconsistencies of and injustices in the practice of some *fa'alavelave* that Samoans in the study see as the problem. Feu'u (2012:79) asserts that, "there's nothing wrong with spending money on recognising those big events. But when it's excessive it really annoys me". The cultural value of *fa'alavelave* such as funerals has not changed but people sometimes use these events to advance personal and selfish interests as CN1 says, "Samoans over do things" at times.

Feu'u (2012:75) summarises his views to what appears to be a situation of dependency of island-based Samoans to those in New Zealand as follows.

I don't have a plantation here in New Zealand like people have a plantation in Samoa to feed the family. I have to go to work forty to fifty hours a week to help my family ... and help the people in Samoa. Tell the people in Samoa to stop ... begging for money. Go and ask them to work on the plantation. Sometimes my father [doesn't] like me to talk like this. Now, apparently, I talk like this when I go and see my family in Samoa. Stop asking us for money. Money [doesn't] grow on trees in New Zealand. Go and work the land.

All Samoans have had experienced *fa'alavelave* in one way or another. In this day and age, they have learnt that *fa'alavelave* are central to their understanding of being Samoan, however, they also need to re-assess and modify certain aspects that people may have gone overboard, without losing the main purpose and meaning of *fa'alavelave*. One of the respondents summarises this smart and sensible approach to *fa'alavelave* in this saying, “*E sui faiga ae tumau fa'avae*” (Things change, but foundations remain). That is, *fa'alavelave* would continue however, people are conscious of the appropriateness of what to take to a *fa'alavelave* and when to take part in one.

While *fa'alavelave* may be seen as problematic when viewed in terms of this contemporary age, they cannot be avoided easily. It is because of the unseen web and thick blood lines of ‘*aiga* that runs through and provide meaning to these cultural practices which cannot be appropriately measured in contemporary terms. Samoans could “see the unseen links” (CN13) and their views suggest that while they surely moan and talk about *fa'alavelave*, they also negotiate ways to ensure that while living at present they “continue to hold onto things that give meaning to living such as participating in *fa'alavelave* in ‘*aiga* and the wider community” CN20. *Fa'alavelave* will continue, but doing it differently and appropriately is the sensible way forward.

Thirdly, contexts matter in Samoans’ views of *fa'alavelave*. In the case of CN1, the attitude of her relatives towards *fa'alavelave* and asking for money has changed significantly when they arrived in New Zealand and experienced the reality of living life there. There is that educational factor. Understanding the context where Samoans live and work in New Zealand certainly shaped her relatives’ thinking and attitudes towards requests for money and *fa'alavelave*.

Like CN1, Fatu Feu’u reflected on this educational factor when he spoke of telling his relatives not to rely on their New Zealand-based ‘*aiga* but to use their land to plant. In his case he built an art gallery in his village of Poutasi, Falealii for his relatives and other villagers to learn how to do art. This initiative was partly to develop his community but also getting the villagers to use the land with their skills thus avoiding what appears to be a reliance of some Samoans not onto themselves



and the resources abound but their relatives abroad. It is a direction towards instilling self-belief in the villagers that development begins whenever and wherever people want it.

It is clear a mismatch in expectations exists between Samoans in Samoa and their New Zealand-based relatives when it comes to sharing material wealth. In general, people in Samoa want to share the good, material life they think family members have abroad. Unfortunately, the majority do not understand that cost of living is high. For Samoans in New Zealand finding work is a necessity.

### **5.10 Self-belief begins with self**

My autobiography *talanoaga* with participant CN2, a 47 year old mother of three children; a business woman provides a compelling story about human agency, creativity and self-belief. Her story is a reminder of the power and depth of ‘*aiga*’ relations to support, to provide and to facilitate one’s success. It is also a story of resilience, commitment and sacrifice that is fused with *alofa* of and for her ‘*aiga*’.

Her initial experience of work in New Zealand began as a part-time cleaning work followed by a permanent one at a car factory. These places in her mind were stepping stones for her move towards bigger and better things for her and her young family. These work experiences she argued cannot be discarded for they introduced her to “know life and what opportunities New Zealand has to offer”.

The talent and passion for fashion and sewing that she had developed while seeing her mother at work in Samoa soon surfaced strongly in the early years of her arrival in New Zealand. Perhaps, the new environment and circumstances there may have motivated her to examine herself closely about her other talents and skills. She discovered that the factory floors are but a door to her own door of success in her own terms. As our *talanoaga* segment shows, the circumstances of her family have molded her and have since been the greatest motivating factor for her, believing that like many other Samoans, she too could do equally well. She believed it.

Me: You have been doing well with your work, family and business. Can you tell me how did it all begin for you?

CN2: Oh! Where can I start (laugh!)? As you know I came to New Zealand to find a better future. My other brothers and sisters [half brothers and sisters] were here already and have their jobs and families. I am grateful for their help. Being one of the youngest in my '*aiga*, I have to rely on them initially but soon I need to find work and look after myself. I also need to support my mother who was still alive and lived in Samoa at the time.

I started with a cleaning job at the local supermarket in the evenings and weekends. I resigned from the cleaning job when I got work at a car factory. My brother was also working in that factory as a machinist helped me to get a job there. I like it. I worked there for about 3 years or so.

Me: What did you do after that? When did you start with your sewing business?

CN2: I stayed home when my second son was almost one year old. There was no one to look after him. My husband was busy at work most of the time. I had to bring my mum from home [Samoa] to help me before my delivery date and she stayed on to look after him. It is not easy to raise young children here [New Zealand] when parents are not around. She [mum] did not mind staying here because she got to visit her other grandchildren and relatives too.

When my mum was here, we started talking about starting a sewing business. I realised that shift work at the factory became a challenge with my new routine at home. That's how it [sewing business] began. My mum was good at it because

she was doing the same work in Samoa. She was a great help. So the next thing I bought a sewing machine and then this and that. It sort of started from there.

Me: How did people get to know about your business?

CN2: People know me first before my business. Because there are Samoans around (laugh!) and as you know, the word got around quickly. My first orders were mostly from my family members. And with my mum with me and going to mass and attending this and that *fa'alavelave* the news did not take long to spread.

She [mum] too helped out a great deal with the sewing of clothes and other minor work such as stitching the button holes, hemming, ironing etc. She was used to that work and she was quite fast too.

### **5.11 People know people first**

Changing family circumstances was not a barrier to achieving one's goal as this participant's story shows. Instead, it created an opportunity to nurture other interests and skills to make a living. Wondering about her entrepreneurial skill and background led me to ask her. To which she responded casually, "maybe because I am part Chinese; my father is Chinese; I remembered him as someone who always thinks of ways to make money. I guess I got that drive from him". Certainly that entrepreneurial skill plus her mother's marketing touch were recipes for any new business to grow.

Because "people know people first" suggests that although Samoans may not approve of it, they are not separated from their *'aiga* irrespective of place of residence. For this participant, Samoans knew about her first before thinking about the business she operated. It is a recurrent theme in other *talanoaga* too because of the inseparable nature of a Samoan and *'aiga*.

### 5.12 The ‘newness’ of life

The beginning of her business was crucial. Because she always had an entrepreneurial view, she found that settling in was quickly and seamless. Admittedly, a cloud of doubt was hanging in her mind in the beginning she recounted. However, having her mother in Aotearoa/New Zealand was her greatest support and pillar to rely on in the initial years. It mattered for her. She credited her confidence to running her business to her parents and ‘*aiga*’ in Samoa. It is where she learnt how to count money when selling brown coconuts by the road side at home in the village of Leulumoega-tuai. Sometimes, she was the designated salesgirl for her parents at the Savalalo market on Fridays and Saturdays to sell produce of their farm. It was a role she took much interest and pride in she recalled, counting the coins, notes and balancing a day’s taking. All of that experience gave her confidence to a new life, a new future and certainly a new her.

I sensed an air of excitement and happiness as she shared her initial experiences of getting a new life. The ‘newness of life’ to her was: having her family, running a new business and moving to a three bedroom house from the State Housing at Papatoetoe. Thanks to them [Social Welfare] she told me “for giving me a place to live and my children for it was because of them that got us this [house]”. Her home is a unit on its own with a garage detached from it. She considered her blessed when compared to some of the people she knew.

Purposefully, she used the garage to set up her work station. She furnished it with the tools she needed, one at the time she reminded me. Firstly, with a white Singer sewing machine and an over lock machine. Two foldable plastic tables came next. Before then, she would use the dining table in her house and sometimes on the floor to cut the fabric materials for sewing. The foldable tables have multiple uses she said. Besides cutting the fabric and stacking them there ready for sewing, she also used them for ironing some fabric materials that are “hard or slippery to sew”. But mostly the tables were useful to iron the finished pieces. The flexible and moveable nature of the tables ensures that she could shift them around her garage whenever her work space needed a new look.

She installed several lines running between the walls to hang the finished *puleitasi* (a two piece matching top and sarong for ladies), T-shirts and dresses for display. The fact that New Zealand Samoans ordered Samoan clothing for functions of all kinds suggests that the living of Samoan culture there is strong. On the other hand, it also means continuity for this participant's business. Besides a cushioned chair she used, she had one wooden bench and a small, squared wooden table with assorted partially worn-out Women's Weekly magazines and other fashion magazines scattered on table top. Although she does not use the patterns in these magazines, she had them there via donations by relatives and friends. In her words, they [fashion magazines] were simply there "for decorations and to add colour. It is normal for most tailors to have them".

The newness of life was also about the flexible working hours and new work conditions and expectations. This allowed her to work and attend to happenings at her '*aiga* much more and at any time. Although she was a non-practicing Catholic, she had at one corner of the garage a small statue of Mother Mary, a rosary and a lit candle. The presence of these was enough for me to understand that she is a believer and perhaps it may have been a factor to consider with regards to her views as evident in the later section.

### **5.13 New movements and work: '*aiga*-business-leisure**

As the words about her and her business spread, she too needed to move around to find fabric materials she needed that suit people and their diverse preferences. This meant taking advantage of closing down sales at certain times of the year by the big retail shops at the town center. Shopping around she told me was "the smartest way to shop especially for little important things such as needles, fabrics, threads and other accessories". It also meant that she needed to go to the homes of some people who could not come to her place to take their body measurements. Although she had preferred people to bring their best fitting clothes for measurement she recognised the need for her to practise using the tape measurement again especially there were some people who may not be able to come to her under certain circumstances.

Besides her movements within Aotearoa/New Zealand, she also travelled to Samoa to buy Samoan printed *tapa* materials for her clients. When she could not travel, she would arrange with relatives in Samoa to send her orders. At times she would know from her customers about other Samoans going there or returning whom she sent requests for materials. And because her mother was also a seasonal traveller, she too was a reliable carrier of these precious materials and other accessories such as coconut shells and other island ornaments that could only be sourced from Samoa.

The new rearrangement of her family also allows for greater flexibility in her movements to Samoa to see her eldest son who stayed with her parents when she first moved to Aotearoa/New Zealand. It was a challenging experience living separately she recalled. Her movement between Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa enabled her to fulfil her promise to her son for visitation and their eventual reunion in New Zealand.

Because of the volume of requests for Samoan printed materials she received, she opted to do some printing herself in Auckland. She discovered that printing her own to be convenient and suited her best in terms of choices of material designs and colour combination. This, she knew would set hers from the “common material design and prints in the market”. Her printing of Samoan materials was to complement her sewing and for cases where people asked for specific designs and different fabric. To do printing of materials required extra hands that came in the form of her teenage sons and two of her adult female cousins whom she asked for help every now and then. Sometimes when she had relatives visiting her from Samoa, their contributions were invaluable too.

As a mother, her new work and business became very convenient in terms of her being able to sew clothes for her children. She did not have to buy ready-made clothes for them anymore unless she needed to. The ready-made clothes from China do not always fit the children for long before their expiry dates. Besides the children, she could sew other accessories – pillow cases, bed sheets, curtains, cushions, table covers – for her home which she would normally spend money on before.

#### 5.14 Business and ‘*Aiga* refinements intertwined

Because most of her customers are her family members and other Samoans whom she knew from church, she needed to know the latest fashion in *puletasi* and what Samoans like in fashion generally. Her knowledge of Samoa and being Samoan also helped her to know what Samoan ladies want when it comes to fashion. The different events such as weddings; who is getting married and to whom, give her ideas of what to expect in terms of the kind of choices of patterns and designs. Other major events such as White Sunday, Christmas, birthdays, *au malaga* (travelling party) and church related functions in the form of *fai'feau* and *fale'itua* (pastor's wives) she knew them well.

The relationship she had with her family members grew deeper and stronger. The nature and level of engagement helped her to fine tune her sewing all time. She reasoned that it was the genuine and open relationship she had with her ‘*aiga* and other people that helped her and her business to grow. She made a point to call people up if “their clothes fit comfortably; if the clothes are too tight, too long or short” and “to bring them for re-adjustments if need be”. She found that following up with people for that purpose improved her sewing. It also guaranteed people's satisfaction as reflected in their returning for more sewing orders after their initial encounter. As a result, she knew her established customers well and so as their specific preferences that she would sew their clothes accordingly the next time.

She conceived of the refinement in her sewing in another light. That is, it is through her work (sewing) that she had continuously refined her relationships with her wider ‘*aiga*. If her sewing is refined; her relationships with people she sew for ought to follow all the time. Because she conceived her work in the light of *va fe'aloa'i*, she paid particular attention to details – from selecting the fabrics to the finished product. That is, she ensured that the finished piece is perfect inside and outside. I wondered what she meant by this phrase “perfect inside and outside”. To which she explained,

Some tailors sew for the money and forget the people. As a result, they sew clothes anyhow sometimes. Many people told me or brought

to me clothes that someone else had made for them. The pattern and outside look maybe nice but the inside is not with threads hanging.

That is not good. For me, the inside is a reflection of *va* between a tailor on the one side and the people on the other. Although people do not see the inside of the clothes we wear, for me, the inside should be as good, if not better, than the outside because the inside is a true measure of a relationship rather than the outside. For me, people first; my relationship with them is first and it is my priority. When that is in place, I do not need to worry about the rest.

This line of thinking was also reflected in her attitudes towards the prices she charged for her sewing. When I asked about how much, she did not answer this question directly. I expected an answer in terms of \$20 for a shirt or \$30 for *puleitasi* I would have got if I were to ask someone at the flea markets in Apia or Otara. Rather her simple answer was: “*soo se mea lava* (whatever people could afford and/or bring). You know how things are with us”. But do you have set prices for *puleitasi* or *ofu tino* (shirts) that you sewed I insisted. She explained,

I told you earlier, I sew for people and I value the relationship I have with them whether they are my ‘*aiga* or anyone who come to me for help. That is a priority for me. When our relationship is intact and guarded, people would be happy, satisfied. When people are happy the rewards are many folds.

I believe it because I have experienced the many returns, not only in monetary terms alone because of my business. I believe in that philosophy of guarding your relations because it is through your relations that you get more than you give. I do not know if having set prices would bring the same rewards for me. I also do not know if it will change my thinking or make a difference. So you work out the rest (laugh!).



I must admit to have been blown by her story, her thinking and her unique philosophy of doing business was simply about guarding her *'aiga* relations. This unsettled notion had led me to ask my own relatives who have had engaged her to sew theirs or their children's clothes. "Oh! She's like that" was the common answer from my relatives. "She accepted whatever people gave her. Sometimes she refused to receive money from some people".

Is it possible in this day and age? From the conventional economic standpoint, her philosophy may be seen as a recipe for business failure and bad practice. It may also be considered as scientifically invalid to the hard core positivists. But to the Samoans, this thinking sums the essence of living. To her, this philosophy works because it is guarded by the unseen but live connections that are informed by *va fealoa'i*. It is a win-win situation for her and her *'aiga*. It is the very reasons she came to New Zealand initially, travelled to and fro Samoa to visit or buy materials for her business and to bring her eldest son from Samoa. Her business philosophy is grounded on principles of *fa'aSamoa* to which she believed in and lived by them. She worked hard to perfect her sewing from the selection of fabric material up to the finished product because to her, it is about her relationship with people. It worked. It is relevant and meaningful in the midst of the conventional economic reasoning.

So how could this philosophy make your business grow I wondered. "Simple, very simple" was her reassuring and confident answer. Perhaps she could also sense my own uncertainty upon hearing that question from me. She paused her sewing to sip her coffee from a plastic mug besides her sewing machine and said,

Love multiplies and grows if and when it is given away to other people. The things will not grow if they are not given away. For my business to grow, I give love in order to receive love. When love grows, the business grows and *'aiga* relations continue to grow stronger and firmer. Believe me, things [love, business, relationship] we give and do grow much faster and healthier than a bank account (laugh!). My work [sewing] is for people and I never lose sight of that. It satisfies me to know that I gain rather losing when I do that

and that's why I keep doing it. So, it is simple, very simple as that. I cannot explain in any simpler way.

### **5.15 The things we give and do grow**

When thinking seriously about it, two incidents helped me understand what she meant in the quote above. Firstly, during our *talanoaga* one particular experience has confirmed for me the beliefs she held. That, the measure of her “returns in many folds” was not just the material wealth and money she received from people. Rather, the depth and breadth of her relationships with her *'aiga* and other people, related or otherwise, she sewed their clothes.

During our *talanoaga* one of her sons interrupted to say that “someone was at the door” to see her. It turned out to be a male relative of a church pastor whom he sent her a food hamper with an envelope for the clothes she had sewn for him and his wife. As he was politely relaying the pastor's gratefulness for the work, she was already rejecting what he had brought and begging him to take them back. The relative being told by the pastors not to return with the goodies begged her to accept otherwise the pastors would be disappointed with him. There was a light scuffle between the two about the envelope. She eventually kept the food hamper while the messenger returned with the envelope. It did not end there, the pastor called her on her home phone later to talk to her. I suspected it was about the envelope. To which she simply said, “I will not sew any more clothes if you keep bringing things like these to me”.

This thinking and reality is not new. It has survived because people practised and believed it. It is about *va fealoa'i*, which is, guarding, protecting and maintaining the metaphorical and philosophical space between people. This is reflected in the rejecting of the payment for a work done. For this participant, her relationship with people is paramount and it has to be the basis of the business she does.

The second incident happened a year after the fieldwork when I learned about her untimely passing through one of my relatives who attended her funeral in New Zealand. She described the occasion as “one of a kind” in terms of the number of

people who attended to pay their last respects, the *sii alofa* (presenting gifts to a grieving family out of love) to the family and people who gave personal testimonies during her family service. Some people who came were not blood relations she said. However, it would not matter to her when she was alive because in her work, she was simply guarding all relations she had with people she shared her love with through her sewing.

Her passing was a loss for the research, knowledge and scholarship. She knew herself well and firmly believed in her abilities to provide for and embrace her ‘*aiga*’ relations. Her solid upbringing in *fa’aSamoa* and living it at Leulumoeaga-tuai and her determination to do better than the cleaning job at the supermarkets or the floors of a car factory she found work initially, all, in one way or another were experiences that breed success for her. Guarding relations – blood, marriage or other relations – through her offer of love by accepting whatever people paid her for sewing and rejecting a payment when she felt it was excessive – to her was her secret to success in her business and the depth of her relationships to her ‘*aiga*’.

Because “the things we give and do grow” her contribution in this study would grow too. Her scholarship would survive not because of her passing but because it is true as evident in the vivid accounts of my relatives and my lived moments with her during fieldwork. Her insistence on guarding relationships is a guard in itself ensuring that even when she is gone, her relations to her ‘*aiga*’ and other people are firmly intact.

### **5.16 Living apart together**

When speaking to CN2’s older sister at Leulumoeaga-tuai, her views of her younger sister suggested that living apart together was possible through countless means and things that her sister did for her ‘*aiga*’. In her words,

She [her sister] was a blessing. She went to there [New Zealand] and never forgets us here [Samoa]. I knew she would do well there because she is a hardworker. She did not take her son with her

initially. It was hard for her to leave him behind but she needs to so that she could settle there first then he joins her later.

She missed her son then. She worked hard to support him and our 'aiga from there [New Zealand]. Although she was living separated with her son, they were in fact living apart together because she would call to speak to him. She also sent things, money for him and visited him when she could travel here [Samoa]. Now that he [son] is there she is still helping us.

She comes now and then to buy things for her business. Sometimes we send some things over to her.

CN2's links to her parents and 'aiga remain intact irrespective of their territorial separation. Telephone calls, letters and money flowing between New Zealand and Leulumoega-tuai via the official channels and the unofficial ones reduced the distance. Travels back and forth enabled her to live apart together with her son until his eventual arrival in New Zealand. As loyal Catholics, they also acknowledged the power of their prayers to make their living apart together possible.

Living apart together may also suggest that while she is no longer around, her memories and contribution to her 'aiga lives on. At the unveiling of her tombstone that I attended while on holiday in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 2014, an overwhelming number of speeches and testimonies by people who attended pointed to one thing. Although she is gone she is not forgotten. Through her memories she is still living apart together with the rest of her 'aiga and the people who knew her. When people sought her help, she gave love through her sewing of their clothes and not expecting too much monetary payment of her services.

### **5.17 Chapter summary**

In so many ways, the reasons for and the activities of the Samoans are diverse. Conventional models and explanations fail to embrace the complex cultural world in which movements of Samoans occur. Seeing movement in the mechanics of

economics reduces the richness and meaning of movement to the people who practise it. In contrast, people's travels for many reasons are associated with the enhancement of '*aiga* relations. From the views and experiences of Samoans, *malaga* is but an expansion of one's kinship relations. Their involvement in paid work or otherwise, all efforts are geared towards the enhancement of '*aiga* relations and the communal good of all.

The specificity of experiences and examples is a reminder of the continuities of links and *malaga* that are not restricted by bounded places. Rather, people's travels take them to places where their links are situated. Acknowledging and appreciating this complexity provides an understanding of movement that is context specific and real because it is lived by people who believe in its deeper meaning and higher purpose.

I point out in the next chapter that continuities continue in Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand especially with the younger generation in this present day of smart technology and living smartly. It is important to situate this understanding in the context of '*aiga*. Without it, any analysis and discussion would fall into the traps of the conventional view and our understanding will suffer.

## Chapter Six:

# REWIRING PEOPLE AND PLACES: LINKING ‘AIGA NETWORKS

As an older Samoan person I am not embarrassed or ashamed to say, that the impasse in the current performance of our Samoa culture may find a breakthrough in the genius of the young, for it does not diminish leadership of the older generation to acknowledge that our young see visions (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi 2008: 127).

In the previous chapter, I examined the movement of Samoans in the context of their ‘*aiga*. ‘*Aiga* is the lens through which the reasons Samoans move – to and fro, *iinei* and *fafo*, individually or in a group – is understood in the ‘eyes’ that lived it. Samoans move for many reasons that are connected to the enhancement and maintenance of ‘*aiga* relations as manifested variously in *fa’alavelave*. Collectively, *fa’alavelave* are expressions or manifestations of Samoa as a place and culture across space; they are where ‘*aiga* relations come alive revealing people’s shared commitment and willingness to lend a hand, to help out and carrying *fa’alavelave* – big, small, happy or sad – together. Thus, when members of ‘*aiga* shoulder *fa’alavelave* it is really sharing a commitment as a corporal unit. ‘*Aiga* and *fa’alavelave* are like the two sides of an ancient ‘Samoan coin’. ‘*Aiga* carries *fa’alavelave*; *fa’alavelave* also carries ‘*aiga*: without either side the value of each diminishes substantially.

This chapter discusses the ways in which ‘*aiga* and places are connected in today’s globalising world characterised by advanced technological and geopolitical changes. According to Damon Salesa (2003), *malaga* rewires Samoans and their ‘*aiga* throughout the islands and the world over. Countless visits and travels point to the continued persistence and strength of connectedness of ‘*aiga* across space and time. Evidently, movement today is more than buying a plane ticket to or from Auckland and Apia but also the territorial linking of people and places virtually through smart

phones, Facebook, twitter, skype, email and mobile phone text messages. These ‘new’ ways complement contemporary travel and rewire people and places continuously but differently thus enabling Samoans to live apart together. The ‘new’ rewiring heightens awareness and the flows and exchanges of information and communication between, among and within places. Smart technologies bring about convenience that connects territorially distant people and places madly faster and closer.

I explore in this chapter the rewiring of ‘*aiga* and places in three parts. I begin with the stories of the children, the second generation through two focus group discussions (FGD) with seven male (FGDM) and eight female (FGDF) youths. Their stories suggest that smart technologies link them to their wider ‘*aiga* network and ‘home’ conveniently. As New Zealand-based Samoans, Facebook for example provides an important connection to their ‘*aiga* and Samoa. At the time of the fieldwork, ten of the group had yet to meet families in Samoa in person. The second part explores the notion of family reunion as a way that increasingly links overseas-born and Samoa-based ‘*aiga* members. Family reunion is a feature of contemporary movement that symbolises the communal nature of the Samoan society and the continuity of ‘*aiga* relations and genealogies past, present and into the future. In closing, the chapter discusses how my research could help inform current New Zealand immigration policies meaningfully. Research and policy links have long been an important point of discussion in the academy and more so in recent years. The persistence of movement of Samoans as shown in chapters four, five and six suggests that the use of policy as a mechanism to control movement is counterproductive (Braddock 2003). Rather, in this day and age, forward-looking and relevant immigration policies to facilitate safe and meaningful movement for all are needed. This study argues that all-round, culturally appropriate and sensitive policies could potentially rewire people and places much more than what appears to be the case today.

## **6.1 Continuity of ‘*aiga*: the second generation**

The participants for the FGD are members of *autalavou* (youth group) and *aufaipese* (choir) (see, Table 6.1) of the WMC. They are part-time workers – as clerks,

customer service representatives, and Office or shop attendants within the greater south Auckland area. At the time of fieldwork, eight members of the group were in school – six in tertiary institutions and pursuing undergraduate degrees in Business Management, Information Technology, Social Work, Communications Studies, Nursing and Early Childhood Education. Those in employment spoke of “taking a break from school” and have also expressed a desire to “resume school” later.

This background is significant. Firstly, in telling their stories, the youths alluded to “where they are today” to the “sacrifices of their parents not only for them to do well in school but to go beyond what they [parents] had achieved during their time in school”. Their parents are the motivating factor for the group’s desire to excel in life. Their views point to the fact that Samoans understand the value of a good education for their children. The parents of these youths have openly shared their aspirations for their children to get a “good future/life” in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The “good future/life” they referred to is for the children to get a “*fasi pepa*” (a piece of paper; a higher education qualification). This is a measure that can guarantee their success in that country and broadly their ‘*aiga*’ in Samoa.

**Table 6. 1: Focus Group Discussion: Female (FGDF) and Male (FGDM) youths**

Participants	Age	w=work; s=school (tertiary or secondary)
FGDM1	21 years	s (tertiary – Social Work)
FGDM2*	22 years	w (clerk)
FGDM3	20 years	w (clerk)
FGDM4*	18 years	w (Office assistant)
FGDM5	20 years	s (tertiary – Business Management)
FGDM6	18 years	s (secondary)
FGDM7*	19 years	s (tertiary – Information Technology)
FGDF1*	22 years	w; s (tertiary – Communication Studies)
FGDF2	18 years	s (secondary)
FGDF3*	19 years	w (Office assistant)
FGDF4	20 years	w (customer service representative)
FGDF5	20 years	s (tertiary – Nursing)
FGDF6	18 years	w (shop assistant)
FGDF7	21 years	s (tertiary – Early Childhood Education)
FGDF8*	23 years	w (shop assistant)

\* have visited Samoa before

Field notes Aotearoa/New Zealand 2011



The views of the group are important to this study by way of what the future would be like; in a strong way they also stand to represent continuity of '*aiga*'. Several authors have acknowledged this dimension of movement as an important indicator for the sustainability of remittances flowing between the senders and receivers (Kaitani et al 2011; de Haas 2008; World Bank 2006; Connell and Brown 2005; Sriskandarajah 2005). However, as the next section shows, the views of this group represent much more than what the literature has made it to be. This necessitates a call for, and of the value of situated contexts in research.

The suggestions by Currle (2011:9) with regards to the composition of FGD and the potential impact of group mix and MacIntosh's (1993:1982) advice for inexperienced researchers to limit the number of participants in a FGD to less than ten were useful. However, it was the field context where I conducted the research that influenced my selection or choice of participants. I discussed the appropriateness of the 'coconut' network method for the study in chapter three which was also useful for the FGD. As far as this segment of the study is concerned, FGD was an invitation to the youths and that the selection criteria I had in mind was simply whoever was available and willing to have a conversation with me. In fact, Mendoza and Moren-Alegret (2012:766) argued that, "... when research is conducted as a conversation rather than an interrogation [focus group] can raise informants' awareness as they discuss, understand and come to terms with their own personal experiences and even become empowered". I felt the youths were empowered to participate given the number of verbal expressions of interest I received, however, not all of them made it to the day for all sorts of reasons.

The initial contact with the group came through one of the male youths (FGDM1) whom I met after a *talanoaga* with his father (WMC1) at their home over light refreshments. A vocal youth whose outright enthusiasm in the study captured my attention and his willingness to talk more on the topic required no further persuasion on my part. He then brought in the other male youths to our scheduled meeting later. I used the same approach with the female youths; my first recruit was FGDF1. Like her male counterpart, she agreed immediately when I asked her to participate after my conversation with her mother (WMC8). I could work out from the questions she asked me that she was aware of the issues about the research. In both FGD, my

teenage nieces and nephews were also my agents who provided the youths with other background information about the study and me. The youths were also present at our initial meeting with the church members and would have known about the study then if not the ‘advertising campaign’ by my co-researchers as discussed in chapter three.

The FGD took place in one of the rooms at the WMC hall on two Friday evenings, firstly with the male then the female youths in the following week. *Talanoaga* with each group was conducted naturally in the English language however members all understand the Samoan language. They used it every so often during the sessions. While each session lasted between one to one and half hours in each evening, the conversations continued outside of these sessions whenever I met them at a church service or at other functions at church.

## **6.2 Moving ‘aiga; moving Samoa**

For these youths, their knowledge of their ‘aiga and Samoa in general came solely from the stories of their parents, grandparents and the continuous presence of other relatives who came from Samoa to Aotearoa/New Zealand and/or on their way there for *fa’alavelave* of all kinds. These pendulum movements disrupt assumptions of migration as one-dimensional and largely determined by the magic of economics as discussed in chapter five. Besides the schools they attend or places of part-time work, WMC is another place outside their own homes where they could connect to other Samoans and take part in *fa’alavelave*. The church plays an important part; a haven for all things Samoan in New Zealand for them as discussed in chapter two.

Although they are members of the youth and choir groups at the time of the fieldwork, the youths in their younger years attended Sunday school. Some were now Sunday school teachers and/or keen helpers with the little children during Sunday services and other functions at church. During my time in the field, not all members (see, Table 6.1) of the group have visited Samoa before. All youths conceived of such a visit to Samoa as something they must do at one point in life. The burning desire to visit Samoa again or to do so for the first time in the near future is reflected in their mention to me of their ‘aiga’s plans to hold a family reunion there.

'*Aiga* and Samoa were points of convergent and divergent interests for the youths. They conceive of the WMC as their village and an extended '*aiga* through which they also learn and practise *fa'aSamoa*. Outside their own homes, the Samoa they practised at WMC, had heard about it on TV or seen in the video tapes of some Teuila festivals (tourism festival in Samoa) is the Samoa they knew. As one of the male youths (FGDM2) put it,

Life of a Samoan is about '*aiga* and *fa'alavelave* most of the time. It is about giving and receiving relations. All of it concerns '*aiga* across many generations in Samoa and outside Samoa and in places like New Zealand. It is about the past, present and the future.

When my parents came here [New Zealand] years ago, they did not leave and forget about their families. Instead, they called them, wrote to them, sent money to them and brought their '*aiga* and Samoa with them here. They also received things, food, letters, collect calls from them. Our relatives also come from or go to Samoa every now and then for many *fa'alavelave*. These *fa'alavelave* concern the passing of a relative, issues with lands, *matai* titles, and a celebration of some kind. As you know we hear about these events [*fa'alavelave*] time and time again... besides these, my parents and other relatives also visit us here or they go to Samoa for a break, a holiday. It is a cycle of life.

For the group, '*aiga* and *fa'alavelave* are inseparable dimensions of life that bind and define them and their '*aiga*. The movements of their parents and other relatives to and fro and the exchanges of material and informational wealth are important elements. Evidently '*aiga*, *fa'alavelave* and *malaga* are indeed about fostering people relations. It is as Chapman (1978:559) notes that, "for the people involved, the basic principle in circulation is a territorial division of activities and obligations". '*Aiga*, *fa'alavelave* and *malaga* not only rewire people and places endlessly, it is through these that people's links to the past, present and future generations are guaranteed.

Indeed a cycle of life as FGDM2 describes and that Samoans move to and fro not only for *fa'alavelave* but to take a break; a needed holiday in Samoa or in Aotearoa/New Zealand. A *palagi* in contrast when going on a holiday would stay in a hotel. Most Samoans (and islanders) on the other hand whether they go for a holiday or on business overseas, stay with their '*aiga*. Similarly, Samoans in the study live with their '*aiga* in New Zealand when they visit that country for the Christmas and New Year holiday. Therefore, taking a break; a holiday, whether in Samoa or New Zealand also means spending time with relatives. It is family time.

'*Aiga* and Samoa are not fixed in places. They move because Samoans move with them and so long as Samoans are able to do so. Tofiga Fepulea'i of the Laughing Samoans Comedy Show also captures this powerful dimension of *malaga* through his Life Story on Youtube video (Fepulea'i 2010). As a New Zealand-born Samoan, his parents were the first in their '*aiga* to move to New Zealand in the 1950s; found work in the car factories and supported their '*aiga* in Samoa. They also hosted many more relatives from Samoa or those on their way there. Although Tofiga was the only child to his parents, their three bedroom house in Wellington was also home to his uncles, aunties and cousins. In his words, there were more than twenty people living with them at any point in time. When his relatives eventually had families of their own and moved on, their home was unusually empty and quiet. The emptiness and quietness he felt speak not of a nature of Samoan life because life of a Samoan is surrounded by members of '*aiga*. It also speaks of an empty life when a Samoan abandons his '*aiga*. However, Samoans do not abandon their '*aiga* when they move to Aotearoa/New Zealand as discussed in the previous chapters. Rather their '*aiga* (and Samoa) are carried to that place; dwell, refine and bind people and places all the time.

In the eyes of the second generation, '*aiga* and Samoa are *forever* as FGDF8 describes,

While my parents may reside here [in New Zealand] their '*aiga* in Samoa is always on their minds. They continue to do, send things to, for their '*aiga*. I see and learn of their sacrifices, commitment and their *alofa* to '*aiga*. I also see the value of their sacrifice to their '*aiga*. Reciprocal flows of *alofa* between '*aiga* and places. This is no

small thing by any human measure. But it is hard to measure people's *alofa* using any measurement ever available. After all it is all about people; it is about building relationships and by its very nature guarantees that '*aiga* will exist always. And our '*aiga* has existed all these years because Samoans build it, not forsake them. '*Aiga* is forever.

The youths described their parents' orientations towards their '*aiga* in a big way. Although their parents may be living in New Zealand, too often they would ask the children to find out if their relatives in Samoa were ok or if they had heard from a particular relative whom they may not have heard from for some time. They would do the same if they were in Samoa, asking relatives there to check on the rest of '*aiga* in Aotearoa/New Zealand. One youth (FGDF5) recalled her mother (WMC16) as

always thinking of somebody in Samoa. When she goes to the shopping mall, she would buy this and that, bath and tea towels, cutlery, linen or an *ofu* [dress] for someone. Her collection of things to give away grows over time. I see her folding, re-folding clothes, linen and bringing them in and out of the suitcases (when she is bored, I think... laugh!) as if to check if her shopping is still all there and everyone in her mind has something. Some of our unused household items -- stereo, TV, furniture, linen, shoes and clothes that do not fit us anymore never go to waste. She would wash, clean and keep these aside for someone in Samoa. She would ask one of us to pack and take these items when she visits or send them across to Samoa through the cargo. It is a life of giving away.

As children are socialised in a society where individualism is but a way of life, it is the experiences and practices at home that the youths were brought up 'living' life that is oriented towards the wider '*aiga*, and giving for someone else. The church too emphasises similar messages of sharing and caring for others. As the youths recounted, sharing and giving are the greatest principles of life they practised at home. Fepulea'i (2010) too in his life story YouTube video speaks passionately

about his parents' orientations to their '*aiga*'. In his eyes, it is a story of love, sacrifice, and commitment for the good of '*aiga*'. In and through the contexts of his family and the movements of his parents and relatives going back and forth that Tofiga admittedly, "learned the real meaning of sharing" and "the value of what little people have". The feeling of blessedness and satisfaction it brings when little things are shared with '*aiga*', words lose their power to describe fully.

### 6.3 Towards '*aiga* movement

Although the second-generation migrant children may not travel to Samoa all the time when there is a *fa'alavelave*, they are actively involved in all preparations connected to one and especially so when it involves one or both their parents travelling there. The literature does not pay enough attention to this crucial aspect of movement. Whether one parent or both travelling, for Samoans everyone including the children is in the picture and unfailingly provide all the financial and non-financial support. Sometimes, it is just by being there that counts. This context cannot be ignored.

In *fa'alavelave*, children and grandchildren will be involved in the preparations which would include all the background work such as collecting, packing and labelling of fine mats and other goods from relatives that need to be taken to Samoa, running around for other errands and last minute shopping. It also includes taking boxes filled with unused household items and appliances, furniture, canned food stuff and second hand clothes to a shipping agent for shipment to the island.

For any *fa'alavelave* the youths interviewed recalled involving everyone who takes charge of something related to it. This aspect of doing *fa'alavelave* together appeals to all youth participants. That spirit of collectivism; to help one another in good and bad times is special in their view. But it is also an aspect of the Samoan culture that "has been taken for granted by many people" according to FGDF7. She shared her thoughts below when I asked for more insights.

Sharing and caring in times of *fa'alavelave* and living generally is an aspect that may come naturally to us [Samoans]. I see how my

parents for example would go out of their way to help their '*aiga* and other people whenever they can. At times we take this important part for granted. For example, when I talk of this to my friends and teachers in school who are not PIs, they found it so cool and they are very interested to know how it works. They asked me to explain. They see the sharing nature of life in '*aiga* as something very special to the Samoan culture because they never experience it in such a big way with their own culture. That got me thinking about it seriously because I assume it is the same for everyone and every culture. That is the beginning for me to think that some practices such as sharing and caring and the importance of '*aiga* in our culture may have been taken for granted. They ['*aiga*, sharing] are something very different and special.

The youths were also the obvious designated messengers for their '*aiga* and negotiators with the airline officers to make travel bookings and bargaining for discounted air fares. They too are important part of travelling parties to the airport to load and off load luggage and importantly they 'stand in between' the check-in officer and the traveller in case of excess luggage. In addition, filling the departure card and ensuring their parents "are comfortable and happy before departure is part and parcel of that larger and solid support system and network" they said. People's network is truly their net worth.

The support and contact do not stop when the parents leave for Samoa. They stay in contact and material things flow continuously between the two places. Conventional models and approaches of movement that assume the severance of ties once people cross a state's borders fade in comparison to what goes on beyond the physical. The social and cultural ties of people tear down border controls instead, as the youths shared that they would answer queries from parents and they are "on standby ready" to send them more things and money if need be.

A *fa'alavelave* may end when the parents return to Aotearoa/New Zealand to share stories and drama, pictures and videos of the event, fine mats and material goods with the rest of their '*aiga*. However, the cycle continues because another

*fa'alavelave* will happen next where the same level of support is expected. People's experiences of previous *fa'alavelave* provide the confidence and learning for the subsequent ones.

The youths have accepted that their parents' thinking and orientations towards their '*aiga*' remains intact. They recognise that in and through the support given to their parents to prepare, farewell and welcome them home after their visits, they too are reaching out to the wider '*aiga*'. In doing so, they become part of living and orientations towards '*aiga*', who they expressed undeniable attachments to. It is a way of life as FGDM1 tells me,

and a way of thinking that I did not understand at first. But, as I grow up, I see and learn more about our way of life, and it is very deep and meaningful. I am still learning more and new things about it. As you know, there has been a lot of noise about *fa'aSamoa* in the media. That's expected. Almost all Samoans would have something to say about *fa'alavelave*. But all cultures, has its own challenges, do not you think? I have not heard of any culture in the world that has no issues and challenges like ours.

As a way of life, it [*aiga*] is part of people's thinking and living as I said earlier. There is a purpose for it and that our parents understand that and they would like us to know. It is only natural that parents would like to teach their children of something useful of their culture that are valuable and meaningful. I think my parents know that purpose and they continue to visit and support their '*aiga*' to fulfill that purpose through *fa'alavelave* and attending to these when they could. They see the value in it and it is worth doing and maintaining relations. I do not know if it makes sense to you, but it is in my mind.

It makes sense in my response, but how would you explain this thinking to another Samoan youth in New Zealand who may not understand it at all or think of it differently I asked. He continued passionately,



The meaning of life and the reasons our parents go to and fro is hidden in our cultural practices especially *fa'alavelave*. *Fa'alavelave* survived not because we want to show we have money to contribute or show we can pay our fares to go there but because the reasons are in them. Our parents give and receive life and love through our '*aiga*. My parents are testimonies to the giving and receiving of life and love in my '*aiga*. It is not an easy life as we know but it is a life worth living. They [parents] came to New Zealand because someone else's in their '*aiga* gave them life and love initially, and in return they continue to live that life and give love. They believe it. They give the same to us [children] so that we understand life's higher purpose and we continue to participate and support our '*aiga* through our parents' and other relatives' visits to and fro Samoa. We face ups and downs while at it, but as I said earlier, we keep doing it. And today, the internet has allowed for fast and sustained connections to our '*aiga*. It is the same love and life traveling through the internet. The internet keeps that love and life flowing from us here [New Zealand] to our relatives everywhere including Samoa. They do the same from that side and wherever our relatives reside. The internet is an enabling tool that facilitates that giving and receiving of love and life. It [internet] is something good.

The youths understand that orientation towards the wider '*aiga* is a part of giving *alofa* and living life that it matter not if one lives in New Zealand or Samoa. They understand that it is through their '*aiga* and their parents' visits to and fro Samoa that reinforce their ties and strengthen relationships to other members of their '*aiga*. Learning to live together; to co-exist is a way of life that is possible to live and worth living. Their participation through all the behind the scene preparations towards, and for *fa'alavelave* before, during and after allows them to live, breathe and experience that life, which in their eyes, is worth living.

Evidently, the evolving technology in contemporary times has fostered the youth's connections to their wider '*aiga* and also to the place of reference they have a lot more to learn about. The new technology is the platform in their views that enhances

communication and shapes their orientations to their '*aiga*. There are advantages that the new technology affords and they are promising for most youths who are yet to make their first visit to their homes in the islands. As FGDM1 describes, the internet facilitates the flows of love and life back and forth between and among members of his '*aiga*. This is the essence of living. Orientations towards '*aiga* is life worth living because it makes sense and has meaning.

#### **6.4 Rewiring places through smart technology**

Although learning about their '*aiga* came largely from lived experiences with their parents, the rise of smart technology is not just a tool that connects them to their '*aiga*, but it also creates a space that they learn of, and about Samoa from others. In her studies of oversea-based Tongans, Helen Morton (1999; 2001) found the Kava Bowl (KB), an online site as a popular means for Tongans to connect with their families around the world and to discuss issues in a space that is seen to be safe. Today, there are as many Facebook pages online as there are Samoans in the world. Family members have created Facebook pages to (re) connect with relatives and friends. Old scholars and people of some villages have also followed the trend. The convenience that Facebook brings to link the youths to their '*aiga* and staying in touch with them frequently is the selling point of the new technology. It is the cheapest and the fastest way to "bring all of them to New Zealand and for me to go to Samoa when I want to" in the words of FGDM3. And rightly so, everyone seems to be living and relying on Facebook these days to get connected, staying in touch and/or to find out all the happenings in their families. As FGDF4 explains,

I cannot live without it [Facebook]. It is becoming a need to have one these days. It is a very good way to stay in touch with relatives and friends. I keep in touch with some of my cousins in Samoa frequently and the fact that we never met in person before it [Facebook] definitely reduces the distance between people and places. For me, I could see pictures of Samoa and of my other family members too whom I heard of in mum and dad's stories. I can put the names to the faces. It is definitely a way to get people connected. It is cool.

Facebook, twitter and Instagram, for example, have ‘dissolved’ geographical boundaries. Each one complementary in nature has enabled communications and rewiring of Samoa faster across time and space than ever before. Through internet the younger generation has another way to connect to and to see relatives whom they would not have been able to in the absence of this facility. For the youths, Facebook, for example, enables them to meet and greet their aunties, uncles and cousins on their terms. It is “cool and sweet” the youths described that they did not have to wait to go to Samoa to meet their relatives. Technology is a blessing but users as the youths cautioned also need to enjoy it responsibly suggesting to me that they are also aware of its potential abuse.

Facebook also provides a space for the youths to share views on issues of concerns to them. It is a platform that, because of its computer-mediated nature, appeals to youths who pointed out to me the ability of Facebook to educate people. As Lee (2003) has described, KB promotes a kava drinking circle in a virtual village for Tongans the world over to communicate and discuss different issues, some may be sensitive if they are discussed in real life situations. The KB forum as she found is popular among the young and educated Tongans.

For the Information Technology (IT) student (FGDM7) he considered the new technology (Facebook) as a repository of his ‘*aiga*. Facebook as he describes,

is like our photo album, a storehouse for our ‘*aiga*’s treasured memories. It enables me to keep and save photos from the past which would have been lost. Photo albums do not last long and it is old fashion. This [Facebook] is good for us because we get to see our other families’ picture collection of our home and village in Samoa.

Besides connecting and sustaining ‘*aiga*’ relations, Facebook enables “the fruits’ of ‘*aiga*’ relationships to be stored, retrieved and shared between generations”, he continued. This is continuity to the youths and it is one aspect that keeps and move ‘*aiga*’ forward together. Visual images are important resources for youths who also consider this asset as having an added value for them. It reduces the distance between them and their homeland.

To complement Facebook, email and mobile phone text messaging are also reliable means to stay connected with relatives for all reasons to youths. Promotions by the Digicel and Bluesky telecommunication companies in Samoa and New Zealand have also made these facilities possible. The youths and other people take advantage of special rates to call and for data to stay in touch with relatives. Although their use of email may not as popular as Facebook and mobile phone text messaging, it is still the choice for other useful purposes such as sending visa support letters, sponsorship forms and other scanned documents and photos. The youths also spoke of the value of mobile phone text messaging to stay in touch with relatives in times of emergencies such as cyclones and *fa'alavelave*. It costs ten cents or less to send a text message. The charge is lower if one has free money to text, the youths reminded me.

Mobile text messaging is also a reliable tool to inform relatives in Samoa when money has been sent through the Western Union according to one youth (FGDF6) said. How does this work I asked. She shared that,

My parents send money to my relatives in Samoa through Western Union. They get a code consisting of several numbers when they pay the cash at a Western Union office at the town center. They then send that code through a text message to a relative in Samoa who then takes that code with an ID to a Western Union office there [Samoa] to collect the money.

## **6.5 Living '*aiga* commitments smartly**

In addition to the views discussed above, the youths have expressed strong perceptions about '*aiga*, movement and *fa'alavelave*. These views are also relevant to the study. As expected, the youths and their parents would have contrasting experiences and opinions on the nature of living life that evolves around '*aiga*. Several scholars have highlighted the intergenerational tensions in Pacific island communities overseas (see, Lee 2003; Anae 1998). My study however points to how the youths navigate the "turbulent sea of living commitments to '*aiga* smartly", as FGDF8 put it. This point of departure offers more than what the literature portrays

of the second generation as determinants of the sustainability of remittances in the future (see, Macpherson 1990). As Bennett (2015:33) points out, to focus on the sending of remittances in economic terms is insufficient to capture complex and multiple experiences, thus, she concludes, “one key aspect or element alone cannot account for the intricacies of the human heart”.

But, how would you or your ‘*aiga* manage your commitments I asked. FGDF8 did not hesitate to share her views.

I said earlier, Samoan life of commitments to ‘*aiga* and *fa’alavelave* are but full of challenges. People disagree with what to take to, how much and there are too many *fa’alavelave*. My parents and I also know of many other Samoan parents who talk of the pressure of meeting commitments to their ‘*aiga*. I think it happens to other cultures too. The funny thing is, people keep doing them [*fa’alavelave*]. They go whenever there is a *fa’alavelave*. So for me, there is something bigger with *fa’alavelave*, there is a reason for people not to abandon or simply give up on their ‘*aiga*.

So, for me, living commitments to ‘*aiga* smartly is smarter living. It means doing *fa’alavelave* the right way for the right reason so that people do not complain. The purpose of *fa’alavelave* is about acknowledgement and reinforcement of ‘*aiga* relationships and not for competition or any other motives. Doing *fa’alavelave* with the wrong motives is the main reason for people stressing out. It is about people to re-adjust how they do *fa’alavelave*.

While there is a general agreement on what the Samoan culture and life is about, there are disagreements however on how some aspects are practised. It is unlikely for Samoans to not living commitments to their ‘*aiga* and *fa’alavelave* as evident above but it is possible to live these commitments smartly and smarter. Disagreements do not mean refusal, rather, it is about rethinking and re-assessing *fa’alavelave* and what they represent in the context of the present. It is smart living.

The government of Samoa and several Christian churches (Kolia 2006:137) have long recognised the growing concerns related to *fa'alavelave* in which financial contributions to the church is part of. They have addressed what appeared to be an abuse in *fa'alavelave* through the introduction of several initiatives. The abuse that has been acknowledged is due to the selfish motives of some individuals, not because of *fa'alavelave*. In a local TV program, *Toe sasa'a le fafao* by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, it not only discusses issues related to the perceived abuse in *fa'alavelave* it has also set out a recommended national guideline and expectations as to how much Samoans ought to contribute to different types of *fa'alavelave* especially funerals. In addition, the government and the Women in Business Foundation (WIBF)<sup>7</sup> have encouraged the weaving of bigger and good quality fine mats for *fa'alavelave* to discourage the production of smaller, coarser ones (Muagututi'a 2006:54) that once flooded the local market. The smaller fine mats take less time and effort to weave and they are for quick sales, but of low quality. The Christian churches in Samoa have also come on board. They discourage church members from presenting fine mats and food to the church during annual conferences and when pastors attend functions such as funerals and other occasions.

The discussion thus far points to at least two things. Firstly, the fact that culture is an interpretive practice (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009a) suggests that while there may have been a norm, coupled with competitive and personal motives for Samoans to contribute lavishly to *fa'alavelave*, participation is and has always been negotiated. Samoans negotiate their participation in and contributions to *fa'alavelave*. Secondly, the fact that Samoans in the study are talking opening about *fa'alavelave* suggests that the Samoan culture is responsive to changing times in this day of rapid transformation. The adaptive and flexible nature of the *fa'aSamoa* ensures that it continues to evolve so that it remains relevant to the contemporary life of people without losing its essence. Its very nature also stands for continuity and strength against the shifting sands of time. Both points do not suggest a watering down of the

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<sup>7</sup> Women in Business Foundation (WIBF). no date. 21 years of development. Retrieved, 29 July 2014 from, <http://www.womeninbusiness.ws/266952/> Established in 1991, WIBF offers opportunities for women, youth and disadvantaged to earn a living through its micro-finance scheme. It operates several programs including the reviving of an old art of weaving fine mats of exceptional quality. One of the aims of this project is to weed out the poor quality of final mats being sold at the local market.

Samoa culture, rather an affirmation of its value and purpose because it is built upon a solid foundation and inclusive participation of all. The Samoan expression, “*E sui faiga ae tumau fa’avae*” (There is one foundation but different ways of expressing it) (Va’a 2006:114) has never been so true.

## **6.6 Reading disagreements differently**

The youths conceived of their critical opinions of their ‘*aiga* and *fa’alavelave* as “signs of healthy living” according to FGDM5. They are not signs of disrespect of their parents and elders nor in any way suggest weakening of ‘*aiga* relations. They represent however open invitations and a space for respectful dialogues between the generations. It is an opportunity for purposeful communications because there is a genuine need for information exchange to take place. Therefore, disagreements reinforce and strengthen ties; a new beginning and renewal of relationships. Like Holton (1994:191) this study acknowledges that while conflicts often occur between parents and children over many issues it does not mean the children will reject their ethnic identities of their parents and not all parents are inflexible with their own culture.

As the youths reiterated, being critical of *fa’alavelave* should not be taken to mean they would stop participating in *fa’alavelave*. This is in contrary to an assumption in the literature on migration that children of migrants would experience cultural clash as they are influenced by the new environment and turn away from the culture of their parents (Reitz 1980). Rather, being critical is a call for understanding and to create new spaces for conversations on aspects that are fundamental to understanding of Samoa. In fact, life is such that when a misunderstanding exists, open discussion and negotiations follow. The Head of State Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi (2008:88) talks of the value and the need for *matua taus*i (elders) to spend time with children to impart the knowledge about *fa’alavelave* and living life in general. It is through these exchanges that understanding can be negotiated. While the role and place of the elders in Samoa can never be taken away it is equally important for them to accept that the young has vision as Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi (2008:127) reminds us at the start of this chapter.

It is also an invite to reconsider *fa'alavelave* in the future to reflect the realities of the present and their rightful purpose. Rethinking *fa'alavelave* together is educational too, for parents to understand that contributions to some *fa'alavelave* are excessive and they potentially cause avoidable financial burdens for 'aiga. Previous studies have acknowledged the pressure of family and cultural obligations on people (see, Lee 2003, Feu'u 2012). As youths have readily testified, adjustment to a new thinking takes time but it does not mean it is impossible. When the heart is willing as the youths pointed out, living smartly is possible for it can outsmart areas and situations of uncalled selfish interests and motives that characterize some *fa'alavelave* in 'aiga.

But would your parents welcome a fresh view of *fa'alavelave* I wondered. FGDM1 replied confidently, "my parents have accepted that *fa'alavelave* will continue but appropriate changes are needed to make them less burdensome, but meaningful still". Admittedly, a conscious reassessment of *fa'alavelave* is a good start. "In itself, it is a new beginning. As you see, it is not about walking away from it [*fa'alavelave*]" as FGDF1 explained. Rather, it is "to find better ways" to uphold their firm belief in the true meaning and spirit of *fa'alavelave* that makes sense, appropriate and meaningful. This was their take; and it is a valid one.

## **6.8 Family reunion: old things become new again**

The rewiring of people and places today is also expressed through family reunion. Reunion of families is not just a feature of contemporary Samoa but in and through it reaffirms once again the centrality of, and the reasons for movement of Samoans are cultural in nature. It is a testimony to the continuity of 'aiga over time and across space. Therefore, family reunion is not a new phenomenon nor unique to Samoa. Family or village members travel to reunite with others on that special day to celebrate and value relationships as discussed in chapter five. Family reunions are also time to mend relationships and forging new ones. I recalled my childhood at Vaimoso where my mother tagged us along to her father's family *lotu fa'amanatu* (thanksgiving service) at Malie on the last Sunday of the month of January. I attended two of these gatherings. On both occasions, I admit to being overwhelmed by the number of people in attendance and being surrounded by the warmth of the



old and the hopeful of new relations, both young and senior who had travelled from parts of Samoa and abroad to be part of the celebrations. Family reunions are big and special and they speak of the continuity of *‘aiga* and linking of *‘aiga* networks.

Family reunions are undoubtedly happy occasions; celebratory in nature and futuristic in outlook. It is one area that unites all categories of participants of this study in view of its value, purpose and what it stands for to each *‘aiga*. It reaffirms one thing: *‘aiga* are forever and people understand this, consciously or otherwise. Therefore, every effort is made to ensure that family reunions past and future live up to the expectations of reuniting members of *‘aiga*.

## **6.9 Building an intergenerational bridge**

While there is consensus on the value and purpose of family reunion however the expressions and the necessary preparations involved vary across families and where it is held. Purposeful planned events like family reunions take years of sacrifice and preparation, organising fundraising activities such as Bingo game, movie nights and personal savings. As in any *fa’alavelave*, preparations, meetings, feasting and merry making toward the reunion day involves everyone. It brings family members together. The excitement and hype among members intensifies as the day draws closer. It is not only fun but it can be stressful too of such a family activity that continuously builds bridges across generations.

The children and grandchildren especially are important features of family reunions because, “we are doing it for them, so that they know their roots” according to WMC3. She continued that,

my siblings and I have been planning a family reunion for our children while our parents were still alive. We owe it to them, to us and our *‘aiga*. Since most of them have not been there [Samoa] we saw the need to hold one so that they will see where we came from and continue to stay connected with their roots... and plus people especially our parents do not stay younger. One does not know the time to go for good [laughs] it sort of start from there and everyone

got excited about it and yeah our children and grandchildren got involved. They organised the fundraising amongst themselves and the activities for the day. The parents provide advice and support them [children] in whatever way we can. The reunion brings our families together.

The unity speaks of the value that people place not just on the immediate goal to unite members of '*aiga* across geographically diverse areas but to build and reinforce links to the past and future. Family reunions are also educational and fun times not to be missed for '*aiga*. In a Bingo night for example, the children and grandchildren would be running the show: giving out Bingo cards and collecting money from players, organise and pay out prizes, donated or otherwise, to winners and take turns to call out the numbers. In the course of a game, an older relative would come from behind to correct the younger ones at the helm who may not recognise some numbers or repeatedly calling out the wrong ones to the excitement of the players. Similarly younger players would be assisted by an elderly on how to use the ink to mark numbers on a card, to identify a number or show a shape to find. At the end of each night, money is counted, recorded and everyone is informed. While tea is served by the hosts, some family reunion plans are revisited and new ones discussed for the following weeks until the day of the meet.

Evidently, the first and second generations stand for continuity of '*aiga*. The old provide the support base, advice, prayers and blessings to the young who would carry on the legacy of '*aiga* to the future generations. For the younger generation their participation and organisation of the activities leading up to and during the reunion on one hand is their initiation into their future roles in '*aiga*. On the other, it is also a public display of their commitment and a practice towards uniting members of their '*aiga*. That is, the older cousins leading, the younger ones following and learning. It is about connecting the family dots.

I recalled my family's first reunion in January 2009, our siblings and I were indirectly involved in the running of our first meeting at Vaivase-uta. For our generation, our roles were confined to discussing matters related to our family properties such as our family land and home there. Our children on the other hand,

whose ages range from mid-thirties to as young as three years old, had an organising committee comprising of the older cousins who put up a program and directed the show throughout the week-long event. In addition, they included our last surviving elders: two uncles, my father's brothers from Fusi and two aunties, my mother's sisters from Vaimoso in their seventies to the family reunion. Their presence at the event is the recognition of the irreplaceable role of our elders in the family. They too represented our parents who have both departed.

***E lele le toloa ae ma'au i le vai***

For most participants their first family reunion was or would be held at base in Samoa. Although the choice of where to hold it may be obvious for all, there are other important considerations according to this study participant (CN12).

Our family reunion was held here [New Zealand] during Christmas of 2010. We wanted to have it at home [Samoa] but because most of us were here, so it was only sensible and the cheapest way for us. Our parents too were here and plus it was a challenge for them to travel because of their age, so we agreed on what is best for everyone. Only my brother and his family who were looking after our 'aiga there [Samoa] came over. It was also a good break for them to come over for a while. After our first family reunion, we consider holding our next one later in Samoa because everyone wants to visit home, you know.

Her brother (CNS12) reconfirmed that while it is always a goal for every Samoan family to hold an important event such as a reunion at home [Samoa], other considerations are equally important. For him, it was an opportunity to travel to New Zealand/Aotearoa again for purposes of reuniting with his other siblings.

It matter not where to hold a gathering of 'aiga, the purpose of the reunion to unite and build relationship is paramount and especially for the children and grandchildren. Because it involves money and travel, it makes sense for people to hold it at a place that is convenient and costs less. Important too are considerations for the elderly and the sickly members who are likely to find travelling a challenge.

As evident above however, the choice of where to hold a reunion is always home in Samoa because “it is where we came from and we want our children to see the place” CN4 continued. Her older brother (CNS4) considered this reason to be the most important one for their family. Their children and grandchildren living overseas need to “get in touch with their roots”, her said. That homeward orientation may be only natural on the surface but it stands for something very fundamental to a Samoan thinking and a way of living movement. Samoa, home to Samoans is more than a place of abode rather it is also an ancestral and spiritual land of birth. It is a reference point. This understanding is captured in this saying, *E lele le toloa ae ma’au i le vai*: The albatross flies, but always returns to its home, the water pond (Lilomaiaava-Doktor 2004:199). There is a homeward device that is built into every Samoan being of this orientation.

#### **6.10 Continuity of old cultural practices**

The *ava* ceremony is an important rite in the Samoan culture. It is a ceremony to welcome visitors to and farewell them from a village. It takes place at a village meeting house or *malae* (village open space), the social and ceremonial center of a village. The *ava* ceremony involves *matai* (chiefs), *taulelea* (untitled men) and *taupou* (ceremonial maiden) or a *manaia* (ceremonial male) who mixes the *ava*.

The performance of *ava* ceremony today is no longer confine to a village. It is staged at family reunion gatherings and performed by members of individual families themselves. The host members of ‘*aiga* would perform an *ava* ceremony to welcome their relatives who have travelled from far afield. In the new setting, the ceremony is performed by children and grandchildren of ‘*aiga* under the guidance of an uncle who may be a *matai*. According to one *matai* (WMCS17), the shift is more than practising an old cultural practice but rather, in and through it represents the continuity and persistence of ‘*aiga*. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi (2008:75) explains that:

The ‘*ava* ceremony is a ritual. Ritual is a not an empty gesture, ritual is more than a theatre, it is a graphic portrayal of myth and history, of

passion and drama in which the participants, the *aumaga*, the distributor, the *taupou*, and all bring to the present that history, myth, passion and drama. Ritual connects the present with the past... 'ava ceremony ... symbolize sharing, the sharing of sacred drink, the sharing with the mythological Gods who gifted the 'ava to the mortals, the sharing of *alofa*. 'Ava stands for continuity.

The performance of *ava* ceremony at family reunions not only brings the generations together but it is also a space of learning of cultural practices according a *matai* (CNS24) in the village of Faleasiu-uta. It is fun too. An older male cousin for example who has the exposure and understanding of the etiquette involved in the *ava* ceremony would not only impress the rest of 'aiga with his gift but he is undoubtedly an envy of his younger male cousins whom he shares his experience with during the family reunion. The elders too would advise the children of areas that could be done better at the next *ava* ceremony. As in any ceremony, none is error-free. Unexpected errors by the performers invite moments of light laughs afterwards and become markers of a particular family reunion. It is in such moments and experiences that make family reunions more meaningful and special. Such unique moments are distinctively remembered long after.

### **6.11 Expressing the same things differently**

Family reunions that take place in Apia or Auckland are different from the ones happening in villages. The latter demands different expectations.

Holding it [family reunion] in the village [Afega] was good for us, the children especially who have not been home before. But as you know, you will have to think of them [village] too while preparing and also during our family reunion. It is not good to have a family reunion in the village without acknowledging the village in one way or another. It is about acknowledging our links there too. Our family reunion is also about reuniting with the village (CNS23).

It is clear that family reunions held in a village context are also about maintaining the *va* (relationship) between *‘aiga* concerned and *nu’u*. The *nu’u* may feel compelled to acknowledge their relationship with *‘aiga* by hosting the family and its members to an *ava* ceremony and exchange of material goods. *‘Aiga* in turn would reciprocate the gesture accordingly. Therefore, family reunion in this context has a double meaning. On one hand, it is a reunion of members of *‘aiga*, on the other it also means a reunion of *‘aiga* with the bigger community it belongs.

While family reunions in Apia or Auckland demonstrate the same thing differently, celebrations in these places are perceived to be “less of a hassle and easier” said a mother of two (CNS20). She shared the following piece when I asked for more information.

Our family reunion was held here [Alafua] because we thought of it to be easier than in our *‘aiga* in the village [Falevao]. You know, anything that happens in the village gets bigger and expensive over time. You have to think of *nu’u*, *aualuma* and *aumaga* who would surely come to visit us, especially when they know there are people coming from overseas for the reunion. All of what involve in exchanges with village costs money.

While it is good in some ways to have our reunion in the village but we want this family reunion to focus on us, that is, to get to know members of our nuclear family better and especially the children to mingle among themselves. That is, our main purpose of our first reunion. To keep it small since it was our first reunion. So the best way, is to begin with our nuclear family first. Because it was our first family reunion, we did not know what to expect so it is best in this way.

However, it does not mean we will forget our village because we also have roots there. That’s why we all went there [Falevao] as part of our family picnic to Lalomanu. We made a point to drop by the village on our way to and fro Aleipata to see our relatives there before returning to Alafua. It works out ok overall.

The purpose of a family reunion is to reunite and build relationship among members of a nuclear family. It is appropriate as she claims because their purpose is clear at least for the first gathering of the family. In this context, families consider a whole range of issues including where to hold their family reunion in the best interests of their *'aiga* that is, to achieve each family's primary goal of the reunion. In this way they need not have to worry about or entertain another party other than themselves. Not holding the family reunion in the village however, is not in any way mean abandoning *'aiga* relations there. As evident, activities of family reunion still include visitation to the village albeit brief, therein is acknowledgement of a family's connections to that place.

Although a family may not have to think of the village in its strict sense, holding a reunion in Apia or Auckland would have included a church minister still to bless the gathering. Sometimes it may also include relatives who may also come from the village or other parts of Samoa for the occasion. Privacy when it comes to family reunion and any *'aiga fa'alavelave* in general can be a challenge to achieve.

#### **6.12 To celebrate and display of *'aiga* talents**

Family reunions are cultural ceremonies and celebrations in their own right. Not only it brings members of *'aiga* to spend and catch up on good old lost time, they are also special family moments to acknowledge and support members of *'aiga* who have excelled in their life choices. This is an important aspect of family reunion which besides the social and fun that accompany such a gathering, there is also a higher purpose to it said a 63 year grandfather and *matai* (CNS15). That is, to support and encourage each member to do well and to move forward together. It is for the general good of the wider *'aiga*. It is also about extending a helping hand to those who need it.

Reunions are also spaces to celebrate talents and individual brilliance within *'aiga* that too often go unnoticed. I recall my own family's reunion experiences in Samoa – in the month of January 2009, 2012 and 2015 – as spaces that celebrate the many talents that exist in our *'aiga*. One nephew in his thirties, an architect by profession designed a family logo (see, Figure 6.1) that captures what our *'aiga* and family

reunion stand for him. The logo is his gift to our 'aiga he said, that has given him meaning of and about life. The first ten years of life in Samoa has inspired him, the work he loves and his design.

**Figure 6. 1: A Family reunion logo**





My nephew provided this blurb to our ‘*aiga* about the logo.

The inspiration behind the logo is straight forward. This is MULIAINA AFUVAI: we are his ‘AIGA, his LEGACY.

M&A means MULIAINA AFUVAI as well as MULIAINA AIGA; it is one in the same. WE are one in the same. M&A was purposely designed to be very BOLD & STRONG as this how I remember Gramps and how I chose to represent him. I also wanted the design to be contemporary so it remains current and can be used over again in all our family reunion and other functions.

The image you see overlapping the M&A are actually 3 birds, representing guardians, our ancestors. Our AIGA is very fortunate to have guardians watch, guide and protect us over the years. I want to acknowledge the gift of our ancestors.

Apart from wanting the design to stay current and contemporary, my choice of colours is purposeful. They represent where our AIGA began – in Samoa. An island (dark brown colour) in the middle of the OCEAN (blue colour); that continues to impact the WORLD, the different places we travel and members of our AIGA live today.

The logo has since been used or printed on our family reunions artifacts: banner, T-Shirts, *ie lavalava*, and other souvenir items. It has also become a symbol for our own unity as a family. In addition, a brother composed and taught us a family reunion song which depicts what our gathering means for him. May not be a number one hit song but it is and a special one to us and our children that it is sung in our family reunions since then and all other family gatherings.

Another sibling donated a tailor-made register book for attendees at family reunions. The purpose she said, “so that we know who attends and what their views and reflections are of each meeting. It is good for memory”. After three family reunions, I understand the value of her contribution. It is not only a record of who attended but

more so it is source of inspiration and documenting our family history. In and through it is educational let alone the deep emotions and memories that it brings. Together these are family assets which are kept and will be passed onto the next generation, in our hope for continuity of this tradition and indeed our *'aiga*.

In all our family reunion gatherings, a visit to the sites (Map 3.1) that hold special meaning to our *'aiga* is one of the highlights. Besides the villages of Vaimoso, Fusi we also visit the village of Neiafu-tai in the island of Savai'i. Our connection there is through my late brother, a Methodist church minister who is buried in that village. Our connection to these places grew over time. The old and young members alike look forward to visit these places. Increasingly our *'aiga* live in other countries and these places are likely to host our gathering in the future.

Each of our meetings was concluded with an island night where each sibling and their children performed cultural items. It was a display and celebration of musical, theatrical and other hidden talents in the family. These talents would remain hidden if it was not for this platform. These were special evenings of fun and so as tears. Island night is not only a celebration of the end of a reunion. Rather, to farewell family members returning abroad but only to plan, fundraise, and return with new items to outdo each other's preparations and many more donations for the next family reunion with sustained energy and unwavering support. Simply, the end of one reunion is a beginning of another, an endless circle.

When reflecting on the themes of each meeting, I could not help but to ask my older siblings during our own session what our family reunions meant. In the light that most of our *'aiga* and our children live off island but travel to Samoa every three years for the occasion. In addition, some of our siblings and children have departed while in preparation of the first, second and third family reunion. Their places of final rest diverse and have become sites of reference and visitation for our family reunion. Different thoughts but all views pointed to one thing and it is captured in the sharing of my eldest sister:

Our movement within and outside of Samoa for me, is because of our *'aiga*, that is our *alofa* for our family. The reasons we go to Fusi and

Vaimoso every so often is because of our ‘*aiga*. We travel to Lalovi, Fogasavaii, Faleasiu, Neiafu all these years because of one of our ‘*aiga* is there. [My eldest brother served as a church minister for the Methodist church in these villages until his passing at Neiafu]. We had to go because one of us is there ... it is our *alofa* for our ‘*aiga* ...

Our movement and visits for *fa’alavelave*, happy and sad, are simply for our ‘*aiga*. *Fa’alavelave* are footprints of *alofa* for our ‘*aiga* here [Samoa] and faraway places. Your coming to our family reunion here is because of your *alofa* for our ‘*aiga*. The value of your *alofa* and our ‘*aiga* are more than your air fares and the contributions you make financial and non-financial, your time, costumes, stress towards our ‘*aiga*. Your *alofa* binds and keeps us together wherever we go and at places we live. It is the very essence that our parents and grandparents lived and we are in it with them as we live and breathe the same now.

This is *malaga* for me and as far as I know it represents our ‘*aiga*. I learned from our parents and grandparents as I joined them then treading the same pathways we are walking today. Our goal in our family reunion is for our children to continue this tradition into the future. It is *alofa* that binds and sustains ‘*aiga*, without it, ‘*aiga* breaks and loses its value.

I end this section purposefully on this because it is ‘*aiga* that is central to Samoans and their theorising of movements as my focus in this thesis. It is impossible for me to write on a topic without drawing on my grounded experiences in my ‘*aiga* that has given me a different understanding of movement that existing theories do not fully explain. It is within this setting that provides a more contextual understanding of movement, its meanings as well as nuances that also inspire this study. It also speaks again of the need to consider a cultural understanding of movement in scholarship as well as in discussion on immigration policy, the focus of the last section. Without it, policy and practice continue to go in opposite directions.

### 6.13 Towards a culturally-inspired ‘movement thinking’

The discussion thus far is clear of the complex, fluid and flexible movements of Samoans. The reality on the ground rolls out many exceptions to grand theories. This reality cannot be captured fully by the specificity of tools of economic analysis nor would the endless supply of philosophical frames that relegate the lived experiences and cultural understandings of people to the fringes been able to. For a long time, the economics of movement has had a major hand in the directions of immigration policies let alone scholarship and research. Professor Murray Chapman has challenged the academy on this dilemma since the 1980s and had asked (1995:258),

Why scholars assume that epistemologies set within the western intellectual tradition represent the exclusive philosophical basis for the study of third world societies? Might not a direct concern with manners of thinking and ways of knowing among such peoples lead to important discoveries and help to remove some of the mystery that often surrounds third world mobility?

Konai Helu Thaman captures the essence of the same call towards a culturally-inspired thinking and understanding Pacific cultures. In her poem, *Thinking* (1999:15) that I included next resonates with the focus of this segment and her other works (Thaman 1988; 2006; 2008) that are relevant to the overall aim of this study.

you say that you think  
therefore you are  
but thinking belongs  
in the depths of the earth  
we simply borrow  
what we need to know

these islands the sky  
the surrounding sea  
the trees the birds

and all that are free  
the misty rain  
the surging river  
pools by the blowholes  
a hidden flower  
have their own thinking  
they are different frames  
of mind that cannot fit  
in a small selfish world

Oceania in its totality – the seen and unseen worlds above and below, the land, seas and the skies – has shaped her occupants’ understanding that do not fit easily into frames designed for another place and a different time. In her keynote address at the University of Hawai’i’s Centre of Pacific Studies’ fiftieth anniversary, November 2000, Thaman concluded that the greatest challenge of the twenty-first century, “is not whether incorporating indigenous perspective and wisdom in higher education [research and scholarship] is right or wrong, but whether we are ready to give other ways and other voices a chance” (Thaman 2003:14).

Studies by Lilomaiaava-Doktor (2004, 2009a, 2009b, 2015); Liki (2001, 2007, 2015); Young (1998, 2015) and others mentioned in the previous chapters for example, have shown that indeed there are alternative frames in existence long before time immortal to understand movement. These cultural understandings are lived by people who do ‘it’ but it is yet to penetrate mainstream thinking and policy circles. In the same vein, Bennett (2015:35) laments that population scholars and policy makers of the North have taken much time to learn of knowledge and perspectives from Oceania. And given this delay Bennett (2015) continues, time is the best judge as to “... what extent [scholars in general and specialists in the field of population and development studies] will frame their research and policy prescriptions within the wider cultural understandings of the people doing circulation”.

This last section is situated within the context I set out above. It is a response to the same call and in particular what this study can offer to, and for immigration policies. It is informed, once again by the perspectives of the Samoans and their children in

this study, whose practices and cultural understanding of movement continuously defy the use of narrow economic frames. It is an additional voice, another shoulder to carry together the burden and weight of a bigger *fa'alavelave* that confront Samoans and other scholars who embrace this cultural thinking of movement in Oceania for being terribly misunderstood.

#### **6.14 Paradox; misunderstanding!**

The western intellectual tradition is obsessed with defining terms and concepts in order to pin them down. This obsession is evident in the literature on migration where a fluid and flexible process is collapsed into the term migration (Abu-Lughod 1975). People who engage in the act of migration are baptised as a migrant or a mover. Therefore, a migrant or a mover is someone who moves between two places. Along the way, several adjectives – return, repeat, circular and floating (Bennett 2015:30) – have been added in the hope to pin a fluid process/act down but only to complicate things further.

In the life history and autobiography part of the study, I had a *talanoaga* with a *matai* from the village of Vaiafai, on the big island of Savai'i. I used the opportunity to exploit his expertise on *fa'aSamoa* and experiences of movement in his family. As a mobile professional himself, his views of movement and *fa'aSamoa* speak to the irony in hand. He looks after his 'aiga and his 70 year old mother at their family home in Savai'i. Two of his elder brothers live in villages close by and visit home regularly with cooked food and otherwise for the daily upkeep of their mother. The rest of his twelve siblings and families reside in American Samoa, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA mainland. Twice always, thrice sometimes in a year he would take his mother to his siblings overseas for a holiday. He returns home and to his work each time while his mother would spend few months with one of the children and grandchildren overseas. He would travel again to accompany his mother to Samoa for few months before they were 'ontheroad-onthesea-intheair' again to another sibling in a different country.

In between his overseas movement and commitments in the village and his work as a secondary school teacher, he goes to Apia regularly for work and to check on their

freehold land, a quarter acre at Falelauniu, suburb outside of Apia. Unless his mother is overseas or there is an adult relative at home with her, he hardly spends a night in Apia when he goes. He would take the first boat at six o'clock in the morning from Salelologa to Mulifanua and returns if not the two o'clock then the last boat at four o'clock in the afternoon. He has an expert knowledge of the timing of the boat trips and additional trip sometimes as he juggles his activities to fit the set boat schedules almost seamlessly.

On their piece of land at Falelauniu stands a two bedroom self-contained wooden house which no one occupies. His family had bought the property so that they have a base in Apia. Falelauniu is his place of transit when he goes to Apia – for work, a break, to farewell or to await relatives coming from or going to American Samoa or the US mainland. He intends to put their house up for rental but his older brothers were weary of the consequences, so things may or may not have changed since then. However, at the time of fieldwork, he continued to visit the different places for reasons other than economic all the time. Visiting him at the beginning of this year (2016) reconfirmed that his routine has not changed since the time of the fieldwork.

The life story above and the discussions in the previous three chapters of this thesis show that Samoans move not just between *two* places, but *many* locations and durations. They move within their village, from one village to another or to Apia or between the islands of Samoa all the time. They also move to and fro their place of residence and that of their fathers', mothers', in-laws', friends and to places of mission works to name a few. And besides the movements within Samoa are people's movements to and fro New Zealand, Australia, the United States and other off shore places.

The reasons why people move are mostly social cultural in nature. To give these reasons a broad brush as driven by the magic of economics is erroneous. This preoccupation of the literature may suggest a lazy attempt to go beyond economics but it also reflects the depth of existing understanding of value of cultural thinking in movement.

Paradoxically, this reality complicates my reading of the literature and has led me to raise these questions: Who is a migrant or a mover then? Are these words – to migrate, to move; a migrant, a mover; migration – appropriate to represent; to speak fully of the fluidity and flexible nature of the Samoan movement experience? Could it be that it is time to look for and use other words that best represent this reality and even if it means the use of non-English terms? Why not? As our autobiography *talanoaga* continued his views of what his goings and comings meant for him speaks louder and to the eye of this paradox.

You asked me of my views of my movement in my ‘*aiga* and I told you already. I do not fit in the category of a migrant or a mover because I am *not* a migrant or a mover. I am doing a simple act like what many other people from Savai’i (and Upolu) do, to visit Apia for work, to check on our house at Falelaugiu. Sometimes I go there on my way out to Aukilagi [Auckland], Kalefogia [California], Pago[pago] or Sigi [Sydney]; I just want to go there and come back. I do not know if categories and labels such as a migrant or mover make any sense to me.

#### **6.15 A borderless world returns?**

His final words “I just want to go there and come back” suggest at least two things. Firstly, the fact that Samoans move to where members of their ‘*aiga* reside speaks of a different understanding of an act that economic calculations and predictions alone cannot be relied upon to inform understanding. Secondly, the living of movement and the persistence of it over time are clear signs and more so this day of globalisation and greater mobility worldwide that the ‘movement moment’ is back; a borderless world returns? Evidently many more developed countries of the world seem to promote the ‘movement moment’ for all good reasons. Since May 2014, the European Union (EU) (2014) has put in a place a visa-waiver policy with several Pacific island countries – Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – that allow their citizens a short-term visit and stay of up to three months in the Schengen (EU) area. Speaking to the Fiji One News 9/5/2016, Andrew Jacobs (2016), the EU Ambassador for the



Pacific based in Fiji, confirmed that Fiji and Papua New Guinea, “ will be in a latter waiver of countries for which visa-free travel will be offered” in the near future.

Perhaps the greatest reason of all is that the Samoan movement experience give Samoans a sense of the historical foundation of their way of life but it is on a more important foundation that their ‘*aiga* and homeward orientation rests. That foundation cannot be shaken by the shifting sand of time. It survived because it speaks to and has remained ever truthful in people’s hearts. The heightened interest in the ‘movement moment’ that appears to prevail today is applauded however it is simply a return to once a borderless Oceania in the views of Hau’ofa decades ago. The tide is slowly turning. Movement is and as always been in the blood of Oceanians; not at the fringes but rather its heartbeat.

The ‘movement moment’ is therefore an awakening that the cultural understandings of people living movement cannot be ignored and it has an important part to play in policy circles, if not cross cultural understanding in a globalised world of nations. Time would tell as Bennett (2015) reminds us as to how long the tide of change, not in terms of climate change, but a change in lens to consider the cultural value and understandings of people that gives meaning to movement. This may well mean a deliberate re-reading of the literature on movement and social life in general for nuanced meanings cannot be captured easily by an unwilling heart and bad instrument. Moving away from head counting people and placing people in categories for purposes of quantifying them have had its days. While important, perhaps it is time to consider people and the reasons of their movement first and foremost. Can we for one not worry about categories to slot people in for categories provide limited information?

#### **6.16 Movement in policy circles**

There is a realisation among Samoans in the study that, “it is difficult to come or go to New Zealand today than before”. This observation sums up New Zealand’s evolving immigration policies regimes, history and experiences that Bedford, Ho and Lidgard (2005) refer to in an article, *From Targets to Outcomes: Immigration Policy in New Zealand, 1996-2003*. A distinguishing feature of New Zealand’s immigration

policy of the late 1990s and early years of the twenty-first century is a shift in policy the authors observed, from set targeted numbers to settlement outcomes. This policy shift coincides with the experiences of Samoans in the study who in their own ways ‘studied it’ and continuously seeking and making headways around it in order to secure residence for themselves and their ‘*aiga*’.

The Samoan Quota system in particular remains an important avenue to residency for most eligible Samoans as explained earlier. Samoans in the study recognise what this scheme meant for them and their ‘*aiga*’. They invest in it through the ballot system and rally the support of their New Zealand-based ‘*aiga*’ all the way.

The New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer (NZRSE) Scheme is a success since its inception in 2007 at least for short-term visits for specific occupations. The opportunity for a short-term employment in New Zealand through NZRSE received praise by most participants in the study who were aware of the scheme. However, there were other untold stories about unfavourable working conditions faced by some Samoans who took part in the scheme. These stories can be a focus of another study.

What does the fluid and flexible nature of Samoan movement experience as pointed out earlier mean for immigration policy? How much of the ‘cultural drop’ has been or will be taken into consideration to re-align and fine-tune existing policies? This study may have little to no influence on when policy makers would be comfortable enough to engage within the cultural lens. But, it offers some questions for the articulation of other meanings of movement that are real and meaningful. The delay in embracing a cultural understanding to inform policy may reflect policy makers’ minimal understanding of the culture of peoples. Such reservations are understandable, however, at least when that time comes, they need not to look too far for the ground is thick with evidence to provide guidance. It is waiting.

## **6.17 Chapter summary**

Through the experiences of adult children, this chapter has emphasised movement as an inseparable part of life. The study provides an explanation to the persistence of movement of Samoans and their children in a globalised world where distant places

are constantly drawn to the core of actions. Much has been said about the loss of cultural identity of people from other cultures over time as they are readily absorbed into the dominant culture. As the discussion shows, this is not the case. As a matter of fact, the opposite is true because the goings and comings of Samoans emphasise the integral part of their '*aiga* and *fa'alavelave* that in due course explains the persistence of movement. Territorial linking of places through technology (Facebook, skype, twitter, mobile phone text messages) enables the flow of people's *alofa* connecting people and rewiring places faster.

Family reunion is a modern expression of '*aiga* and movement. As an event, it continues to draw Samoans, old and young especially to 'feel' home. This home is not always physical but exists in stories Samoans shared, captured in black and white pictures and in the fond memories of home buried in the soil of their upbringing. These stories and memories are told and continued to be told by the old to the young and also amongst themselves as they listen to the good old Samoan songs and dancing at family reunions. These are special moments where Samoans can be truly at 'home' on their own terms.

As Samoans move back and forth within and outside of Samoa, they create for themselves an understanding of their movement that could not fit into theories designed purposefully for another place and time. Their cultural understanding of movement continues to hold an important piece of a puzzle for greater cross cultural understanding. And it is the same understanding that is yet to settle firmly in policy circles and in academy. Time will tell.

## Chapter Seven:

# HUMANISING PERSPECTIVES ON POPULATION MOVEMENT

I belong in Oceania – or, at least, I am rooted in a fertile portion of it – and it nourishes my spirit, helps to define me, and feeds my imagination. A detached/objective analysis I will leave to sociologists and all the other ‘ologists’ ... Objectivity is for such uncommitted gods. My commitment won’t allow me to confine myself to so narrow a vision. So vast, so fabulously varied a scatter of islands, nations, cultures, mythologies and myths, so dazzling a creature, Oceania deserves more than an attempt at mundane fact; only imagination in free flight can hope – if not to contain her – to grasp some of her shape, plumage, and pain.

I will not pretend that I know her in all her manifestations. No one ... ever did; no one does ...; no one ever will because whenever we think we have captured her she has already assumed new guises – the love affair is endless, even her vital statistics ... will change endlessly. In the final instance, our countries, cultures, nations, planets are what we imagine them to be. One human being’s reality is another’s fiction. Perhaps we ourselves exist only in one another’s dreams (Wendt 1976:49).

To begin this final chapter, I return to Albert Wendt’s landmark paper, *Towards a New Oceania* that I referred to in chapter one, for its theme echoes an important goal of my study. As a first generation postcolonial writer, Wendt’s vision of a new Oceania resonates with what I set out to do. That is, to offer an alternative view that best describes the lived experiences and meanings of movement of Samoans in particular and peoples of Oceania generally. Wendt (1976:60) passionately writes, we “... are explaining us to ourselves and creating a new Oceania”. It is “... an exploration without apology” (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi 2008:205) and to

show off our finds to the world because “Oceania deserves more than a mundane fact” (Wendt 1976:49).

The discussion thus far is clear. Advocates of development thinking and persuasion have maintained that Samoans and their cultural activities and outlook are anti-growth thus their economic progress and future is uncertain. At the outset of this study, I discussed that prevailing understandings of movement are rooted in the economics of unequal opportunities and marked differences between places as more important rather than the complementarity of places. People are assumed to respond to the magic work of demand and supply. Advocates of this thinking are content that people of small and poor places are drawn to bigger and wealthier ones because of an expectation of greater opportunities that exist there. Therefore, an unsustainable situation of dependence exists because people continue to depend on the latter for sustenance. Internalising such a belief for too long is paralysing. It has created an attitude of tolerance of “the ghost of belittlement” (Hau’ofa 2008:28) in people (and smaller countries), who are seen to depend on other people and bigger countries.

For the German and New Zealand colonial administrations, commercial interests were their priority and life in Samoa at the time. Understandably then, they misunderstood the social cultural fabric of Samoa in which *malaga* was, and still is, a significant part of living. To dissolve an ancient practice was an exercise in vain for *malaga* persisted stubbornly and more so under resistance. *Malaga* is not just a trip between two geographic places involving one person. Rather it constitutes a whole ‘*aiga*, a *nu’u*, *aulotu* if not the whole of Samoa. Besides the obvious – the movement of people, material wealth, feasting and merry making, displays of cultural brilliance and excellence – is the unseen and tangled web of relations that flow continuously above and beyond villages and islands as well as across nation-state boundaries. Blood connections and relationships strengthen and thicken links that cannot be contained easily by border controls of any measure. In practice of *fa’aSamoa*, cultural exchanges are but expressions of core values – *va fealoa’i* (social space that relate), *alofa*, (love) and *fa’alavelave* (cultural events of ‘*aiga*) – that privilege the maintenance of relationships among people. Therefore, *malaga* and its associated cultural practices and activities cannot be taken to mean anything less than what they represent in reciprocity and care-based Samoa.

The literature is preoccupied with the notion of movement as an economic activity and because of the view that remittances could promote economic growth, it has then been described as a means, “to get people out of poverty” (Garrett 2013:1). Dominant in such thinking, frameworks that were designed to describe movement relegate people to the background and privilege those to model patterns and reasons of their movement and remitting behaviours. Perspectives that fall out of this line are often considered irrelevant if not of minimal value. An extension of this economic thinking is what some scholars and policy makers in support of this view are eager to do. That is, to give advice to Pacific governments on how to solve their development problems and to increase the usefulness of remittances by investing in income-generating activities while singled out consumption as if it is an unforgiving sin. As a matter of fact, policy advisers are too busy talking about what people *should* do rather than understanding what people are actually *doing*. When thinking is locked in trying to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of movement (and remittances), the sacredness of a fluid, flexible and dynamic process to people who have other reasons to value is lost. Any policies, no matter how golden the intentions may be lose their usefulness for people whom advisers intend to help.

Despite the persistence of elaborate cultural activities, practices and orientation of people, the cultural view of movement has long been given a broad brush in Oceania. Until recently, the value of a cultural perspective has just been recognised by scholars, some of whom have been advocates of the dominant school of thought. The revelation is telling. Perhaps scholars are eventually confronting their own short sightedness more than anything else. And that turning a blind eye to a cultural interpretation of movement will leave all people blind. It is also shows the lack of respect and for people whose practices and understandings do not fit models designed by faulty workmanship. This recent realisation however, should not be seen as something new for Oceania for movement has and is always been part and parcel of life (Hau’ofa 1993, 2008).

Recognising that movement of Samoans are flexible and complex necessitates a call for a deeper appreciation and understanding of cultural practices and nuanced meanings imbedded in people’s activities and practices. Many studies in Oceania have highlighted this forgotten aspect as I mentioned earlier in this thesis. However,

many more researchers need to argue the same in different contexts so it may not fall out of favour again.

Because development is a contested term, its meaning ought to reflect a variety of aspirations in different societies rather than popularising the modernisation framework advocated by international aid agencies. Spending time and money on *fa'alavelave* and other cultural activities and practices are not conspicuous consumption but it is investment of a different kind. That is, it is about investing in 'aiga relationships and connections of the past, present and future. Conventional development thinking would argue for people to invest remittances, for instance, in income-generating activities. Samoans on the other hand conceive of their investment in their 'aiga and *fa'alavelave* as equally important as generating and accumulating wealth for one's success is measured by the breadth and depth of relationship with 'aiga. When Samoans spend time and hard-earned money on 'aiga and *fa'alavelave* it is investment on their terms for returns are great. Believing and knowing through experience are related but different; for great lessons and understandings of and about movement are experienced in 'aiga.

The persistence of cultural thinking of movement suggests that while Samoans understand the economics of why they or 'aiga members move within and outside of Samoa, they do so within the context of 'aiga. That is, through their movements they participate in *fa'alavelave* that reinforced one's ties to 'aiga. Essentially, this is development, progress of improvement from the eyes of those who live it and have reasons to value. This study reinforces findings by Young (1998); Lilomaiaava-Doktor (2004) and Liki (2007) that in this day and age, academy and development thinking needs to broaden its approach to understanding movement. It also revalidates the fact that a cultural interpretation of movement is another way of knowing that better explains movement experiences of Samoans and others in care and reciprocity-based societies.

### **7.1 A Samoan understanding and meaning of *malaga*: summing up**

My study aims to provide another perspective to understand movement in and from the eyes of the Samoans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and their 'aiga in Samoa. I

provided in chapter one a background for my interest on this topic. In particular the mismatch realities of living *malaga* at home and the prevailing economic view and interpretation of movement in the literature. While they are important, they are insufficient to capture the essence of, and the social cultural meaning of activities, and practices of *malaga* that is lived. My own experiences, memories, stories and especially the role of my mother and sisters are missing from these explanations. In situations they are, distortion and misrepresentations are the order. Until recently, studies of movement in Oceania continued to be sidelined and misinterpreted cultural explanations and experiences of *malaga* as understood by Samoans (see, Connell 2015).

In the second chapter, I explored perspectives of movement that dominate the literature. In particular my search for a suitable framework through which I could attend to the misinterpretation of Samoan experiences and social cultural understandings of their movement. While structural, dependency and postcolonial scholarship have expressed features of movement of Samoans, these do not acknowledge the fact that a cultural thinking is another way of knowing. Giving the cultural perspective a light weighting in the literature however does not move an iota that it is in and through this lens that people in reciprocity and care-based societies understand, live and define movement for themselves and their '*aiga*. The persistence of *fa'alavelave* and *malaga* of members of '*aiga* and community at large serve as reminders that ignoring and or giving the cultural dimension a broad brush does not broaden our thinking.

The movements of Samoans need to be situated in the context of '*aiga* and *fa'aSamoa* has to be the starting point. Studies of movement in Samoa by Lilomaiaava-Doktor (2004) and Liki (2007) provide guidance in this direction as discussed earlier. From an indigenous point of view (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 2001) this resonates with the humanist approach to population movement that is in need and more appropriate for Oceania. The late Bonnemaïson (1981) and Chapman (1991) have long reminded scholars of such need to broaden our search into other perspectives besides economic calculations and modelling to understand movement in the world of the people they intend to know. These works show that people's understanding, experiences and meaning of movement is rooted in their cultural



realm. This knowing persists over time and it is taken to places where people travel to and live. Thus, for scholars to know the people they wish to know it is simply to know the people first as the people know themselves.

The humanist approach recognises lived experiences as complex, multiple and flexible. The lived experiences and understanding of movement of Samoans are grounded within their '*aiga* and *fa'aSamoa*. The humanist approach overturns the dualistic thinking that characterises the lived experiences of Samoans in dichotomies such as urban/*kua* back (rural); monetary/non-monetary; work/stay home; paid/casual and modern/old-fashioned for instance. Moving beyond these set categories allows for a broader analysis of movement that cannot be achieved by defining in a restrictive manner all the time. Putting categories aside exposes understanding of the practice of movement that is lived by the movers themselves for they have reasons to value (Sen 1999).

The humanist approach also underpins my choice of the multi-method approach I used in search for relevant fields and pathways to information and knowledge. This was my purpose in the third chapter. I adopted a two-way approach to *talanoaga* (conversation) by tracing Samoans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and their '*aiga* members in Samoa. The approach of tracing and matching members of '*aiga* in Aotearoa/New Zealand (*fafo*) and Samoa (*inei*), has not been done in previous studies on migration. The two-sided approach may be seen an extension of current search for an alternative way to understand population movement broadly and to conduct research on the topic in Oceania.

*O tino o le 'aiga* frame acknowledges that '*aiga* (family) has many *tino* (members) who live in Samoa (*inei*) and Aotearoa/New Zealand (*fafo*). Experiences and perspectives of '*aiga* members, *inei* and *fafo*, constitute meanings and understanding of movements that are context-specific. Connecting '*aiga* members I argued brings '*aiga*-specific understanding of and reasons for movement. As pointed out in chapter one, this is the contribution of this study to knowledge. That is, the methodology and methods used were informed by *O tino o le 'aiga* frame which emphasises that the experiences and perspectives of '*aiga* members *inei* and *fafo*, provides a complete, '*aiga*-specific understanding of movement.

The processes of navigating the ‘slippery’ field and pathways to knowledge are just as important as the research itself. This study reinforces the fact that life activities including research for Samoans, take place within the wider ‘*aiga*. Access to knowledge and knowledge spaces is negotiated through elders, the custodian of ‘*aiga* history, knowledge and information. ‘*Aiga* network is an important pillar; a connector to the church community in South Auckland and Samoa that facilitated the pooling of sources of knowledge for this study. The role of elders in research is also an added strength not only as a source of knowledge but their *mana* and blessings is central to the success of any undertaking, including research which may be seen as an individual academic project yet it is collectively pursued within ‘*aiga* and community.

Experiences from the field brought to light important element of reciprocity when conducting research in Samoa. Samoan hospitality was a challenge to resist. While university regulations would have not accepted this, in the context of the study community, not accepting people’s *alofa* in the form of food and money is culturally inappropriate. Reciprocating people’s *alofa* and knowledge appropriately is also part of research. Giving back to the community through a monetary donation at the end of the field work was necessary but more importantly the researcher’s careful interpretation of the people’s knowledge they gifted this study. Re-checking and revalidating of people’s stories was an important part of the research process. This ensures that people’s understanding and voice remains paramount and that they are continuously part of the research as co-producers.

Positionality of a researcher in a research is also crucial but a forgotten aspect of many studies. The researcher cannot be considered as separate from the researched. Thus, my attempt herein as Samoans in the study shared their stories, memories and lived encounters of movement, I also wove in mine. Subsequently, overlaps exist in a tapestry of lived experiences that constitute life and meaning. As a bundle, our stories provide a broader view and a different way of thinking of and understanding movement that characterise diverse lived and complex experiences of Samoans. In the words of Bennett and Wanhalla (2016)

Stories do not explain. They seem to, but all they provide is a starting point. A story never ends at the end. There is always after. And even within itself, even by saying that this version is the right one, it suggests other versions, versions that exist in parallel. No, a story is not an explanation; it is a net, a net through which the truth flows. The net catches some of the truth, but not all, never all, only enough so that we can live with the extraordinary without it killing us.

Too often emotions are not discussed openly as an inseparable part of field work experiences and potentially a source of information and knowledge. Perhaps this is due to the assumption that researchers ought to distance themselves artificially from the researched and the research processes. Accordingly, the further the distance the more objective the research findings get (Rosaldo 1993). In contrary, I took a path less travelled by researchers in the third chapter to document the processes I used to access and negotiate access to the field and pathways to knowledge. Paying attention to emotions, I made a case that these not only raised awareness for researchers they too are part of getting to know the field.

The complex nature of movement experiences of Samoans is entrenched in place and moves to place. I discussed in the fourth chapter places of reference – Samoans' homes in South Auckland and their villages in Samoa – that featured prominently in stories and fond memories of Samoans in the study. Place is usually understood in terms of physical attributes and markers that overlooks the social cultural, ancestral and spiritual meanings and refashioning by people. In his book, *This Place on Earth*, Alan Durning (1996) a researcher for the World Watch Institute describes what led him to turn from trying to fix the world to put down his roots in his home town in Seattle. In the Philippines where Durning interviewed members of a remote hill tribe about their land and livelihood,

a gap-toothed chief showed him the trees, streams and farm plots that his tribe had tended for centuries. It was territory they would defend with their lives, said the chief. As the sun finally slid lower in the sky, the chief introduced Durning to a frail old woman who was revered by the community as a traditional priestess. They sat under a

sacred tree near her farm and looked out over the Ma'asam River. She asked Durning through an interpreter, 'What is your homeland like?

Admittedly, Durning found her [frail old woman] question embarrassing. "He lives in Washington DC with his family but mainly jet-setting on behalf of future generations and had no roots there". The old woman repeated her question, "Tell me about your place". Durning could not answer. The truth, "I lacked any connection to my base in Washington. In America, we have careers, not places. Looking up, I recognized pity in her eyes" (Durning 1996:4).

Viewing *fa'asinomaga* as a way of thinking, Samoans conceived of it as the appropriate way to theorise place. Therein, they know that, unlike Durning, irrespective of their movements, where they live and work, they continued to see and orientate themselves as inseparable part of their land and kin. This homeward orientation in the words of Liki (2007) in her study resonates with the experiences of Samoans in this study. Samoans' connectedness to places and their strong familial network, their network, enabled them to survive the unfamiliarity and newness of places they live. This support net provided Samoans the warmth and assurance they could rely upon as their power base.

The meaning and understanding of movement to Samoans is evident in their perceptions of daily activities. Paid or unpaid, these activities are situated within their value and contribution towards *'aiga* that defines relationships and *fa'alavelave*. Parents and other family members travel to give a hand to children and grandchildren and other relatives in Auckland to look after the little children and to help out with taking care of the household needs there. Contributions to *fa'alavelave* are never seen to be financial alone but more so the non-financial support networks that members offer each other.

Samoans also refashion their homes and places continuously. Remodelling of garages reflect cultural differences in architectural designs of homes and their occupants. It represents a purposeful use and adaptation of designs to suit contemporary uses. Integrating island and kiwi-bought artifacts that travel with

people to the interior and exterior of people's homes shows that Samoans refashion place and home to make them feel at home.

Home after all is not just in the physical sense but more so in the stories, treasured memories and imaginations that Samoans kept and shared amongst themselves within the comfort and safety of the homes they created. Listening to the familiar sounds of Samoan songs, both old and new as well as comedy shows makes their 'home making' experiences complete and a safe haven to be at home to tell and re-live stories of their *'aiga*.

My focus in the fifth chapter centered on the need to broaden our understanding of *'aiga* and movement. When reasons of and for movement are conceived as a function of economics, social cultural explanations that Samoans understand this process are marginalised. Samoans move within and beyond Samoa for reasons that are but related to *'aiga*. While some Samoans move for work, many more travel to and back to provide support to *'aiga* or "simply to go and come back" in the words of a *matai* in the life history part of the study.

Young (1998; 2015) talks of movement of Fijians along established pathways of kinship that are ancestrally and genealogically defined. Samoans understand that attending and contributing to *fa'alavelave* in *'aiga* is about acknowledging relationships and to maintain the *va fealoa'i*. There are many types of *fa'alavelave* and it is through these events that Samoans invest in and for the future. They are investments of a different kind. That is, its return cannot be measured in monetary terms but the growing strength of *'aiga* relationships and expanding network of *'aiga's* support system. This is the expression of Samoan notion of *osi aiga*, that is, Samoans support *'aiga* in and through *fa'alavelave* they engage in to acknowledge and strengthen *'aiga* relations. In Fiji, Young (1998) finds that "being kin" is different from "knowing kin". The former is "encoded in relations where sibling hierarchy, gender and age structure social relations" while the latter "embodies memories where the distinction between past and present relationships is both personal and shared (Young 1998:328). Being kin is insufficient according to Young because one has to live it through participation, reciprocity and obligation irrespective if one lives in or outside of the village. Like the Fijians, legitimacy is

the heart of the Samoan social world and Samoans in the study showed this to be an important factor in their theorising of movement.

Intra-family adoption is not new in Samoa. Children are adopted by *‘aiga* members as well as the grandparents. Adoption is viewed in cultural terms as another expression of *alofa* and sharing it among *‘aiga*. It also guarantees the continuity and links of one to *‘aiga*.

When demands and routine of paid work did not suit them, Samoans created opportunities such as a sewing business to support themselves and *‘aiga*. This study shows that Samoans did not just wait for government handouts but finding ways in the form of part-time packing at the local supermarket, *‘au piki* during Christmas holidays or home delivery of newspapers. In and through these work engagements, family members contribute and support their *‘aiga*.

I discussed in the sixth chapter, examples of continuities of cultural practices with movement. The experiences of children and grandchildren of first and second generation migrants showed that their orientation towards *‘aiga*, is part and parcel of living. While children do not go to *fa’alavelave* all the time, they do so in spirit. Their coordination of activities related to *fa’alavelave* and to ‘stand by’ and ‘stand in between’ for example were evident of their orientation and unfailing support for their *‘aiga*. This finding supports Liki’s (2007) study on home orientations and rootedness in *‘aiga*.

Besides travels back and forth, members of *‘aiga* stay connected through new means of communication such as facebook, text messaging, email for examples. These have enabled Samoans to live apart together. Knowledge and information is also shared through these means much faster and more frequent. Monetary resources circulate in this way between *‘aiga* members in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa and vice versa.

Although family reunions have always been features of Samoan society, it has a new meaning today with the growing number of overseas-born and based Samoans who conceive of the greater need to “go back to their roots”; a pilgrimage that needs

fulfilling in one's life time. Beyond this reason, family reunions are fundamentally about building 'aiga relationships that are not only economic but social cultural and genealogical in nature. Preparations and activities connected to family reunions involve 'aiga members and pooling of their resources for the much anticipated date. There is also an educational aspect of it too as the old share and teach the young about a particular skill. Family reunions also proved to be an important platform to display special talents within 'aiga.

Grounding *malaga* in 'aiga Samoa is evident in the findings of this study. Samoans travel between Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa for all reasons connected to *fa'alavelave* because of their *alofa* (love) for their 'aiga so that 'aiga members may not without 'aiga. In essence, this finding reaffirms that Samoan's lifeworld evolve around 'aiga as a support base, an anchor and heritage through which they understand their movements within and outside their place of residence. Grounding Malaga in 'aiga is central to a complete understanding of movement that better explain why Samoans continue to act and behave in the manner they do. This study reinforces Liki's (2007) study of homeward orientations of movement and rootedness in 'aiga.

## **7.2 Limitations of the study**

While every attempt was made to ensure research rigor certain limitations emerged in the course of this study. Firstly, the sample size means generalisation of results is restricted. Secondly, although adopting a two-ended approach to trace 'aiga members in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa was inspirational experience, it was a challenge to do so given the geographical dispersal of participants. A useful approach indeed, perhaps for future research selecting few 'aiga to study the reasons, patterns and complexity of movement over time will expose further 'aiga-specific and deeper understanding of movement that may not have been possible in a bigger sample. This study shows that a detailed study of selected 'aiga would offer newer and more insights into the dynamics of population movement for Samoans.

### **7.3 Much has been said; much more remains: a final thought**

My study fills part of what Wendt (1976:60) calls “to create a new Oceania”. It is situated within a new Oceania where cultural thinking to understand movement and social realities of peoples demands a place and space in research and scholarship. Far from it being a new ground but certainly it is for development thinking and population geography in Oceania in general and for USP in particular where such an approach has been taken for granted. This is part and parcel of the bigger picture of forgetting of social cultural perspectives of peoples of reciprocity and care-based societies in Oceania by scholars and policy makers when proposing development pathways. This study adds another voice to previous studies on the topic and especially those who use a social cultural perspective as an anchor.

Besides being economically-driven, the dominant approaches to movement in Oceania also display the masculinity of their designers. It is a factor that may explain why research frameworks and models do not fit the lived experiences of Pacific peoples which featured women predominantly. Studies by Underhill-Sem (2015) and Liki (2007, 2015) have acknowledged the need for greater gender inclusiveness in the studies of movement for lived experiences are multiple, fluid and complex. My study found evidence to be thick on the ground on this aspect and reconfirmed my own experiences in my family hence my choice of women for the autobiographical part of the study. Admittedly, more research is needed to understand and acknowledge the gender dimension of movement if not in all other aspects of life. For me at least, this study is the beginning of reorientation along this line and indeed a new development in its own right.

So much has been said about making research meaningful to people who move and drive movement, however much more needs to be done to make it happen. Alternative philosophical and methodological approaches used in this study can help reduce this gap and contribute to future efforts. While movement of Samoans continues, diverse reasons and experiences call for sustained and deliberate efforts to capture this knowledge while we can. It warrants an intentional search and acknowledgement that the, “truth is neither mine nor his, nor another’s; but belonging to us all” (St Augustine). The truth is: Samoans understand their



movement in the context of their '*aiga* and *fa'aSamoa*'. This cultural thinking persists not because it is old but because it is true and meaningful to its holders. It has never been truer as the views of the Samoans in the study have shown. If anything, this is development from within. That is, movement is not just for economic reasons but more so to acknowledge '*aiga* relations across generations and geographical boundaries. Much more can be done to make future research on population movement more relevant, not only to policy, but to the cultural reality of the movers themselves.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Glossary of Samoan words/phrases

<i>aano</i>	flesh
<i>afio mai</i>	greetings; welcome
<i>ai ava</i>	farewell dinner and gift presentation for people departing
<i>‘aiga</i>	family; Aiga (capital A) a name of a person
<i>‘Aiga e tasi</i>	‘aiga is made up of ‘aiga over here and ‘aiga overseas
<i>‘aiga i fafo</i>	‘aiga over there; overseas
<i>‘aiga i iinei</i>	‘aiga over here (in Samoa)
<i>‘aiga patino</i>	nuclear family
<i>‘aiga potopoto</i>	extended family
<i>aitalafu</i>	taking goods on credit
<i>alofo</i>	love; affection
<i>alu</i>	go
<i>aoga</i>	school; education
<i>Aoga Aso Sa</i>	Sunday school
<i>aoga fa’asikolasipi</i>	going overseas to study on a scholarship award
<i>Aoga Faifeau</i>	Pastor’s school
<i>asiasi</i>	to visit
<i>asiasi komiti</i>	district nurses
<i>asiasiga o maumaga</i>	inspection of plantations
<i>asiga malaga</i>	to visit families/friends from overseas
<i>aso fanau</i>	birthday
<i>atunu’u</i>	country
<i>auala galue</i>	road to plantation
<i>auala vave mo tupe maua</i>	a faster way to get money
<i>aualuma</i>	unmarried women of a village
<i>aufaipese</i>	church choir
<i>aulotu</i>	a church parish
<i>aumaga</i>	untitled men of a village

<i>au malaga</i>	a travelling party/group
<i>‘au piki</i>	a group of fruit pickers
<i>autalavou</i>	youth group
<i>ava</i>	a ceremonial drink; <i>piper methysticum</i> ; <i>ava</i> ceremony to welcome visitors to a village. Also known as <i>yaqona</i> in Fijian; <i>kava</i> in Tongan/Fijian
<i>ava fatafata</i>	respect
<i>bamai</i>	(Solomon Island pidgin) <i>ba (go) mai</i> (come)
<i>E fa’asalalau le alofa o le Samoa</i>	The love of a Samoan knows no boundaries
<i>E leai se tagata e noa i Samoa</i>	Nobody is of no account in Samoa
<i>Eleele</i>	soil; land; also means blood
<i>Eleele fou</i>	the reclaimed area in central Apia
<i>E lele le toloa ae ma’au i le vai</i>	The albatross flies, but always returns home to the water pond
<i>E le sili le tai i lo le tapuai</i>	The support of one’s family guarantees success
<i>E loga fia lea i le fa’asologa?</i>	An order of something; in what order?
<i>E sili le manuia o le foai i lo le talia</i>	Greater are the blessings on the giver than the receiver
<i>E sui/tele faiga ae tasi le fa’avae</i>	Things/structures change but foundations remain
<i>E te tu fanua i lau amio, ae le o lou gafa</i>	A Samoan is a commoner only in behaviour and speech
<i>E tutupu tupe i luga o la’au</i>	Money grows on trees (apple)
<i>E vave guku ae kuai lima</i>	Mouths are faster than hands; gossiping
<i>fa’aaloalo</i>	respect
<i>fa’aipoipoga</i>	marriage; wedding
<i>fa’alavelave</i>	social cultural events of ‘aiga
<i>fa’alifu</i>	cooked <i>taro</i> or bananas in coconut cream
<i>fa’alupega</i>	honorific salutations of a family or village
<i>fa’amatai</i>	chiefly system
<i>fa’amisiona</i>	missionary work

<i>fa'amomoli</i>	a collective noun which means remittances, cash or non-cash
<i>fa'asalaga</i>	punishment (noun); <i>fa'asala</i> (verb) to punish
<i>fa'aSamoa</i>	Samoaan culture; Samoaan way of living and thinking
<i>fa'asavili</i>	to enjoy the fresh air
<i>fa'asinomaga</i>	identity
<i>fa'atasiga a 'aiga</i>	family reunions
<i>fa'atea</i>	adoption
<i>fa'aulufalega</i>	a dedication ceremony of a new building: church, home or school
<i>fa'auo/fa'aaiga</i>	friendship involving individuals or families
<i>fa'auuga</i>	graduation ceremony
<i>Fa'avae i le Atua Samoa</i>	Samoa is founded on God (Motto of Samoa)
<i>fa'avalavala</i>	to separate; to reduce
<i>fafaga</i>	to feed; food taken to an event to share with others
<i>fafo</i>	there; overseas
<i>faifeau</i>	pastor; church minister
<i>fai feau</i>	to do work
<i>faiga o le flea maketi</i>	things for or to sell at the flea market
<i>faikakala</i>	gossiping
<i>fai oa</i>	makers of currency and wealth
<i>fala</i>	mat
<i>fanua</i>	land; ground
<i>fau</i>	beach hibiscus tree; <i>hibiscus tiliaceus</i> . Also means to make/build something; Fau (capital F) a name of a person
<i>fale</i>	house
<i>faleaitu</i>	comedy show
<i>Fale Komiti</i>	an open house for the Women's committee in a village
<i>Fale o Pulenuu</i>	an open house for village mayors in central Apia

<i>falesa</i>	church building
<i>faletua</i>	a pastor's wife; wives or mothers of <i>matai</i>
<i>fasi pepa</i>	piece of paper; refers to having a higher education qualification
<i>feagaiga</i>	covenant; Feagaiga (capital F) a name of a person
<i>fetufa'ai</i>	reciprocity
<i>fia siou</i>	to show off
<i>fono a le nu'u</i>	a village meeting; village council
<i>Fonotaga a Malua</i>	annual meeting of pastors of the Congregation Christian Church of Samoa
<i>Fonotaga a Piula</i>	annual meeting of pastors of the Methodist Church of Samoa
<i>fuaga pepe</i>	monthly check-up of babies and children by district nurses
<i>fue</i>	a flywhisk made of strands of coconut husk that form a rope and held to a wooden handle; part of an attire of a talking chief
<i>fuli e lulu le lala</i>	to shake a branch of a tree uncontrollably
<i>gafa</i>	lineage; genealogy
<i>gagana</i>	language
<i>galue</i>	to work (verb); <i>galuega</i> (noun)
<i>ia teu le va</i>	to nourish, cultivate relationship between people
<i>ie lavalava</i>	a wrap around sarong material
<i>ie Samoa</i>	finemat
<i>iinei</i>	here; local
<i>ili</i>	a hand fan
<i>itu tino o le nu'u</i>	'body' parts of a village
<i>ivi</i>	bones
<i>keke Saina</i>	a home made Chinese biscuit
<i>kilikiti</i>	game of cricket
<i>koko</i>	cocoa

<i>koko Samoa</i>	Samoan roasted cocoa beans; also means a drink
<i>Komiti a Failauga</i>	committee of lay preachers of church
<i>Komiti a Tina</i>	committee of female members of church
<i>kua</i>	means back; Samoans refer to villages distant from Apia
<i>le au va'a</i>	people of, from the boat
<i>Leauvaa</i>	name of a village in Upolu
<i>lela</i>	(Solomon Island pidgin) a journey without a particular purpose
<i>le mafaufau</i>	in capable of mature thoughts; no manners
<i>lole</i>	lolly
<i>lole la'au</i>	lolly with a handle
<i>lotu</i>	church
<i>lotu afiafi</i>	evening devotion
<i>lotu fa'amanatu</i>	a family's commemoration service/day
<i>lotu talosaga</i>	a family's prayer/dedication service/day
<i>malae</i>	open village space
<i>malaga</i>	visit/travel/movement (can be a verb or noun)
<i>maliu</i>	funeral
<i>malosi</i>	strength; power
<i>mana</i>	power; source of inspiration
<i>manaia</i>	ceremonial male, a chief's son who mixes the <i>ava</i> at the <i>ava</i> ceremony
<i>manatua se lumanai o si ma tama</i>	remember a good future for our child
<i>manatua ou matua, lou 'aiga ma</i>	remember your parents, family and village
<i>le nu'u</i>	
<i>masi popo</i>	Samoan coconut biscuits
<i>matai</i>	chief
<i>matua</i>	parents
<i>matua tausi</i>	elders that include parents and grandparents
<i>mavaega</i>	departing words
<i>meaalofa</i>	gifts
<i>mu mata</i>	to serve 'aiga diligently

<i>mumu</i>	fire; colour red
<i>niu</i>	green coconut
<i>nofo</i>	chief investiture. Also means to sit or stay
<i>nu'u</i>	village
<i>ofu tino</i>	shirt
<i>Oi ua lelei</i>	It is ok
<i>oka gi fa'akoaga apu; e fiu e</i>	The apple farms are huge; it is impossible to pick
<i>kau apu</i>	all apples
<i>O le ala i le pule o le tautua</i>	The path to power/authority is service
<i>O le alofa o matua i fanau</i>	The love of parents for their children
<i>O le atunu'u o loo tafe ai le susu</i>	The country (New Zealand) where milk and
<i>ma le meli</i>	honey flows freely
<i>o loo lelei lava apu</i>	The apples are still good
<i>O Samoa o le i'a e iviivia ao le</i>	Samoa is likened to a deep sea fish; it has a
<i>atunuu ua uma ona tofi</i>	skeletal frame comprising of intertwing and interdependent fusions of flesh and bones
<i>O Samoa ua ta'oto a o se i'a mai</i>	The inheritance of Samoa has been designated
<i>moana, aua o le i'a a Samoa ua</i>	and preordained
<i>uma ona aisa</i>	
<i>O tino o le tagata</i>	many parts constitute a Samoan self
<i>osi 'aiga</i>	acknowledging genealogy
<i>oso</i>	gift; present
<i>ova lola</i>	overall
<i>pae ma le auli</i>	refers to the role of women and girls as peacemaker; mediators in family
<i>paia ma mamalu</i>	sacred attributes of 'aiga or individual
<i>panikeke</i>	pancake
<i>panipopo</i>	buns baked in coconut cream
<i>papalagi</i>	white person; Europeans
<i>pasese</i>	fare
<i>pepa liliu</i>	legal documents to adopt children
<i>pepa malaga</i>	immigration papers; travel document
<i>piki</i>	to pick

<i>pili aoga</i>	school fees
<i>pili o moli</i>	electricity bill
<i>pohutukawa</i>	New Zealand's Christmas tree; <i>metrosideros excels</i>
<i>poto</i>	intelligence
<i>puleitasi</i>	a two piece top and matching sarong for ladies
<i>pulu</i>	an introduced banyan tree in Samoa usually planted along the coast
<i>sa</i>	an evening curfew in villages
<i>sala</i>	punishment
<i>Salamumu</i>	name of a village
<i>Samoa uma</i>	a notion that means the whole of Samoa
<i>saofai</i>	investiture of chief title
<i>sau</i>	go
<i>se'i</i>	to pull something; also refers to the Samoan quota
<i>siapo</i>	also known as <i>tapa</i>
<i>sii alofa</i>	gift presentation out of love to a grieving family
<i>siitiaga o faifeau</i>	relocation for Methodist pastors to different parishes
<i>so'alaupule</i>	open communications and negotiations on issues of concern
<i>so'o a nu'u</i>	village reunion
<i>soo se mea lava</i>	whatever people could afford or bring
<i>suafa matai</i>	a chief title
<i>su'e</i>	to search
<i>suli</i>	member of 'aiga; familial relations
<i>taalogaga</i>	sports; games (noun); <i>taalo</i> (to play sports; games) (verb)
<i>taamu</i>	giant taro ( <i>alocasia macrphiza</i> )
<i>tafao</i>	to socialise (verb); <i>tafaoga</i> (noun)
<i>tala</i>	Samoaan dollar. Tala (capital T) name of a person



<i>talaga teu</i>	unveiling of a tombstone
<i>talanoa</i>	to talk (verb); <i>talanoaga</i> (noun)
<i>taligamalo</i>	to host visitors
<i>tama</i>	boy or father
<i>tamaitai</i>	unmarried women of a village
<i>tanoa</i>	a wooden bowl
<i>tapuaiga</i>	support
<i>taro</i>	root crop
<i>taro palagi</i>	a variety of <i>taro</i> ( <i>Xanthosoma sagittifolium</i> )
<i>taulaga</i>	town/city/capital of a country; also means an offering
<i>taulealea</i>	young/untitled men
<i>taupou</i>	ceremonial female, chief's daughter who mixes <i>ava</i> at <i>ava</i> ceremony
<i>tausiga o 'aiga</i>	to look after families
<i>tausiga o matua</i>	to look after parents
<i>tautua</i>	to serve; service
<i>tere pati</i>	(Cook Island Maori) travelling party
<i>teu</i>	a bouquet of fresh or artificial flowers. Also means to clean up (verb)
<i>Teuila festival</i>	tourism festival in Samoa; held in the month of September each year
<i>teuga falesa</i>	cleaning up at church
<i>teu le va</i>	to cultivate, nurture the social space between people; familial relations
<i>tina</i>	mother
<i>tino</i>	flesh
<i>tino e tasi</i>	an expression that refers to 'aiga as one body
<i>Toe sasa'a le fafao</i>	a TV program on TV Samoa which aims to reconsider/rethink issues of importance to contemporary Samoa such as <i>fa'alavelave</i>
<i>tofi</i>	inheritance; responsibility; role
<i>toli</i>	to pick
<i>toto</i>	blood. Also means to grow/plant

<i>toto e tasi</i>	‘ <i>aiga</i> as one blood
<i>tu</i>	short for <i>tupe</i>
<i>tufi</i>	to collect
<i>tui</i>	to stitch
<i>tulaga</i>	place; position
<i>tu ma aga</i>	customs and traditions
<i>tupe</i>	money
<i>tupe vave</i>	fast money
<i>tusiga igoa</i>	pledges to fundraise
<i>Ua lelei; magaia le sailiga!</i>	It is ok; a good study!
<i>Ua ova le malulu o le atunu’u</i>	The country (New Zealand) is very cold
<i>ulu</i>	breadfruit tree ( <i>Artocarpus altilis</i> ); also means head
<i>ula</i>	garland; necklace
<i>ula fala</i>	garland/necklace made of dried fruits of pandanus tree that have been dyed in red paint
<i>ula fau</i>	garland/necklace made of bark of <i>fau</i> (beach hibiscus tree; <i>hibiscus tiliaceus</i> ) that have been dried and dyed in different colors
<i>ula lole</i>	garland/necklace by stringing lollies together
<i>ula sisi</i>	garland/necklace made of sea shells
<i>umu</i>	food baked in earth oven
<i>umusaga</i>	dedication ceremony of a new building
<i>upu alofa</i>	words of love
<i>upu apoapoi</i>	words of advice
<i>va’a</i>	boat
<i>vaega</i>	a part of something
<i>vae ma lima</i>	lit. legs and hands – doers of work
<i>vae tama</i>	another word for adoption
<i>va fealoa’i</i>	social space that relate
<i>va-nimonimo</i>	open space; tenth heaven
<i>voli</i>	a game of volley ball

## **Appendix 2: Basic guide for *Talanoaga* (New Zealand)**

### **Interviewee code:**

*Talofa* and thank you for taking part in my research!

First, let me introduce myself and tell you a little about my research. My name is Tolu Muliaina - from the villages of Fusi, Saluafata and Vaimoso, Faleata in Samoa. I am studying for a PhD in Development Studies, at the University of the South Pacific's main campus in Suva, Fiji Islands.

Given the nature of the topic, the success of my research relies on you - your views, support and participation are extremely important! This guide has questions aspects of your movement experiences here in New Zealand and Samoa and with your '*aiga*.'

### ***Talanoaga* summary**

Section A: Your '*aiga*

Section B: Movement experiences

Section C: Expectations and achievement

In keeping with research protocols, I assure you that the information from the *talanoaga* will be held in strict confidence. Your names and other details will not be mentioned in the final report. The information will not be disclosed to any third party either. This research is **not** for the Immigration, Inland Revenue Departments or any other government departments.

I trust that this brief explanation will serve to convince you of the benefits of this research. I ask for your support. Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for your support, time and agreeing to be part of this research.

If you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email me or use any of the contact addresses below.

*Fa'afetai tele ma ia manuia!*

Mr. Tolu Muliaina

The University of the South Pacific, Suva Fiji

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Fax: +679 323 1509

Phone: +679 323 2540

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### A. YOUR ‘AIGA

- [illegible]

6. Please give me information of family members living with you.

	Relationship to <i>'aiga</i>	Age	Are they working? * Put E or U	Are they in school? ** Put P, S, T or N
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Please use extra paper      \* **E**= Employed, **U** = Unemployed      \*\* **P** = Primary, **S**= Secondary, **T**= Tertiary, **N**= not in school

7. Please give information about your brothers and sisters

	Relationship	Age	Place of usual residence	Are they working? * Put E or U	Are they in school? ** Put P, S, T or N
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

PPP please extra paper \* E= Employed, U = Unemployed \*\* P = Primary, S= Secondary, T= Tertiary, N= not in school

11. Can you tell me more about the nature of your work? How long have you been working there? Work benefits/experiences?

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15. Are you a member of any association (*mafutaga a nu'u; aoga; sosaiete* etc)

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**B. MOVEMENT EXPERIENCES**

16. When did you first visit New Zealand? Have you visited Samoa since then?

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17. How and when did you become a citizen of New Zealand? Can you tell me more about your experiences?

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18. Before settling in New Zealand, what work were you doing in Samoa?

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19. How do you contact with your family in Samoa and other places?

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20. How often do you visit your family in Samoa and other places?

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21. What are the main reasons for your visits there?

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22. Do your families visit you? Can you tell me your experience?

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23. What are your views of the nature of New Zealand immigration policies from the time you first came?

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24. What are the impacts of these changes to you and your family?

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**C. EXPECTATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

25. In what ways have you supported your family in Samoa?

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26. How often do you stay in touch with your family?

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27. How often do you send or receive food, money and other things from your family in Samoa?

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28. What are the uses/purposes of these? Can you tell me your experiences?

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### Appendix 3: Basic Guide *Talanoaga* (FGD): Male and Female youths

#### Interviewee code:

1. Can you tell me about yourself? What do you do?

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2. When did you or your family come to New Zealand?

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3. Have you visited Samoa since your last visit? Or are you planning to do so in the future?

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4. How often do stay in touch with cousins and other relatives in Samoa? How?

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5. How often do your relatives from Samoa visit your family in New Zealand?

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6. Do your parents visit your family in Samoa? How often? Can you tell me of your experiences?

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7. What are the reasons for your family going to Samoa and/or coming to New Zealand?

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#### **Appendix 4: Basic Guide for *Talanoaga* (Samoa)**

##### **Interviewee code:**

*Talofa* and thank you for taking part in my research!

First, let me introduce myself and tell you a little about my research. My name is Tolu Muliaina - from the villages of Fusi, Saluafata and Vaimoso, Faleata in Samoa. I am studying for a PhD in Development Studies, at the University of the South Pacific's main campus in Suva, Fiji Islands.

Given the nature of the topic, the success of my research relies on you - your views, support and participation are extremely important! This guide has questions on aspects of your movement experiences here in New Zealand and Samoa and with your '*aiga*.

##### ***Talanoaga* summary**

Section A: Your '*aiga*

Section B: Movement experiences

Section C: Expectations and achievements

In keeping with research protocols, I assure you that the information from the *talanoaga* will be held in strict confidence. Your names and other details will not be mentioned in the final report. The information will not be disclosed to any third party either. This research is **not** for the Immigration, Inland Revenue Departments or any other government departments.

I trust that this brief explanation will serve to convince you of the benefits of this research. I ask for your support. Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for your support, time and agreeing to be part of this research.

If you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email me or use any of the contact addresses below.

*Fa'afetai tele ma ia manuia!*

Mr. Tolu Muliaina

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Fax: +679 323 1509

Phone: +679 323 2540

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### A. YOUR ‘AIGA

1. Your relationship to 'aiga
2. Gender                      1 ☐ Male              2 ☐ Female
3. Marital status              1 ☐ Married      2 ☐ Single          3 ☐ Other
4. What is your age?
5. Are your parents still alive? 1 ☐ Yes: Where are they? .....)  
2 ☐ No

6. Please give me information of family members living with you

	Relationship to <i>'aiga</i>	Age	Are they working? * Put E or U	Are they in school? ** Put P, S, T or N
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Please use extra paper    \* E= Employed, U = Unemployed    \*\* P = Primary, S= Secondary, T= Tertiary, N= not in school

7. Please give information about your brothers and sisters

	Relationship	Age	Place of usual residence	Are they working? * Put E or U	Are they in school? ** Put P, S, T or N
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Please use extra paper in school



**B. MOVEMENT EXPERIENCES**

14. Have you visited New Zealand before? When was the last time you have visited since then?

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15. Who did you visit in New Zealand? How long was your visit?

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16. How do you stay in touch with your family in New Zealand? How often?

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17. How often do you visit your family in New Zealand?

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18. Does your family from New Zealand visit you here?

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19. What are the main reasons for your or their visits? Can you tell me your experience?

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20. What are your views of the New Zealand immigration policies from the time that you first visit New Zealand?

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21. What are the impacts of the change on your family?

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**C. EXPECTATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

23. In what ways do you support your family in New Zealand?

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24. How often do you stay in touch with your family?

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25. How often do you send or receive food, money and other things to or from your family in New Zealand and other places?

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26. What are the purpose/uses of these?

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