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The Effects of Social Policy Upon the Tongan Kainga.

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Masters of Philosophy
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Emeline L Afeaki

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Abstract

In New Zealand social policies are continually developed and lived out of a democratic society. Each day the New Zealand airport is busy with a growing number of foreign migrants arriving into New Zealand prepared to start a new life. Many of these migrants are Pacific Islanders who have left their beautiful, unpolluted seaside island and have come to New Zealand with a dream to seek opportunities and resources available to ensure a better quality of life for themselves and their families. Tongan migrants are amongst the many Pacific Islanders who arrive into New Zealand with this dream. This thesis describes the fononga (journey) of Tongan-born parents to New Zealand in the 1970s and their settlement with the birth of their first generation New Zealand-born Tongan children and the impacts of social policies effecting the construction of the Tongan *kainga* (family).

As a practitioner (social worker) and an “inside researcher” within my own Tongan community I know and understand that the *kainga* (family) is who you identify with and how others identify you. For the purpose of this research, four families; seven individual parents (3 sets of a husband and wife group and one father) and twelve young individuals defined as youth aged between 15-25 years following consent participated in this research. I will present subjectively the conflicting views found as a result of intense qualitative interviewing of Tongan-born parents and their New Zealand-born children (youth) in the same family unit.

This research is inclusive of a socio-historical overview of Tongan culture from the creation myth to the introduction of Modern Tonga, the monarchy, the migration of the Tongan-born parents to New Zealand and an illustration of the conflicting worlds that exist between the New Zealand born youth and their Tongan-born parents. This research will look at how social policy development is vital to minimising the gap between the two conflicting worlds.

Acknowledgements

As I sit and begin to list the names of specific individuals who have contributed in some way towards ensuring the completion of this thesis, I reflect back to when I was 23 years old and decided to travel back to Tongatapu with the purpose of acculturating my New Zealand born self into the faka-Tonga (the Tongan) way of life. My 'fononga' (journey) to really discover who I am as a young Tongan woman were plans towards achieving something that was purely academic and has now become passionately personal in my heart. Some years later, I am pleased to say I have finally arrived at the end of my 'fononga' in this part of the study but continue to go about "my business" with the passion that the fononga of this thesis has ignited in my community.

First and foremost I give all praise and glory to God, I acknowledge the relationship I have with my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the strength he continually brings to me as each day He greets me with His joy in the morning. I know that what I have achieved in my life is because of you my Lord. I thank you for teaching me patience, perseverance, endurance and a commitment to finishing this race. This thesis is for your glory and your glory alone Lord.

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Malo 'Aupito.

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