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THE CHANGING ROLES

O F

GRADUATE WOMEN IN TONGA

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Social Science) in Social Anthropology at Massey University.

Lesieli Ikatonga Kupu

April, 1989

To My Parents

'Ofa atu

A B S T R A C T

This thesis examines the roles of graduate women in modern Tonga and how they differ from the women's traditional roles. A survey of a group of graduate women and how they perform at work, at home and in the community was undertaken. This was to investigate their own perceptions of the place graduate women have in their own society. Evidence from the study indicates that graduate women have changed in the ways they fulfil their roles.

At work they are no longer confined to "women's work", but they are beginning to take up prominent positions in the office. This has had an impact on their relationships with their male superiors and both their male and female colleagues. At home, graduate women have become "providers" for their family, and that has given them a say in the family as a decision-making body. In church and community functions, there is a marked decrease in active participation but an increase with financial contributions.

In conclusion, the graduate women know that their roles are changing. This change is determined by a combination of factors. While these factors liberate the graduate women from the pressure of social obligations, the same means of liberation have also isolated them from other social groups in Tongan society.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

Many people have assisted my efforts in the planning and completion of this work, it is impossible to mention all here but I would like to thank you all. In particular, I thank the graduate women in Tonga who assisted me with information, for without their co-operation, this study would not have been possible. Thanks also go to Beryl Higgie for proof-reading the original draft; to Gay Devlin, who lived in Tonga for many years, for her contributions in making valuable suggestions. Thanks must also be extended to my supervisors, Dr Ian Duncan, head of the Social Anthropology Department and Dr Wilhelmina Drummond, of the Education Department at Massey University, for their guidance which enabled this study to finally reach completion.

To the New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship, I thank them for the Smethurst grant; to the Maori and Pacific Arts Council, my gratitude is extended for the assistance which enabled me to travel to Tonga to do the research.

To my siblings and extended family in Tonga, my gratitude is extended and I will always treasure their help and support before, during and after this study was completed.

Finally, I am especially indebted to my husband, Bill MacIntyre, who has willingly played the role of a father as well as a mother in the family, while I pursued this study; and my children, Jason Falekava and Ruth Kaufo'ou, I can only thank them for their patience.

Malo 'aupito,

Tu'a 'ofa atu.

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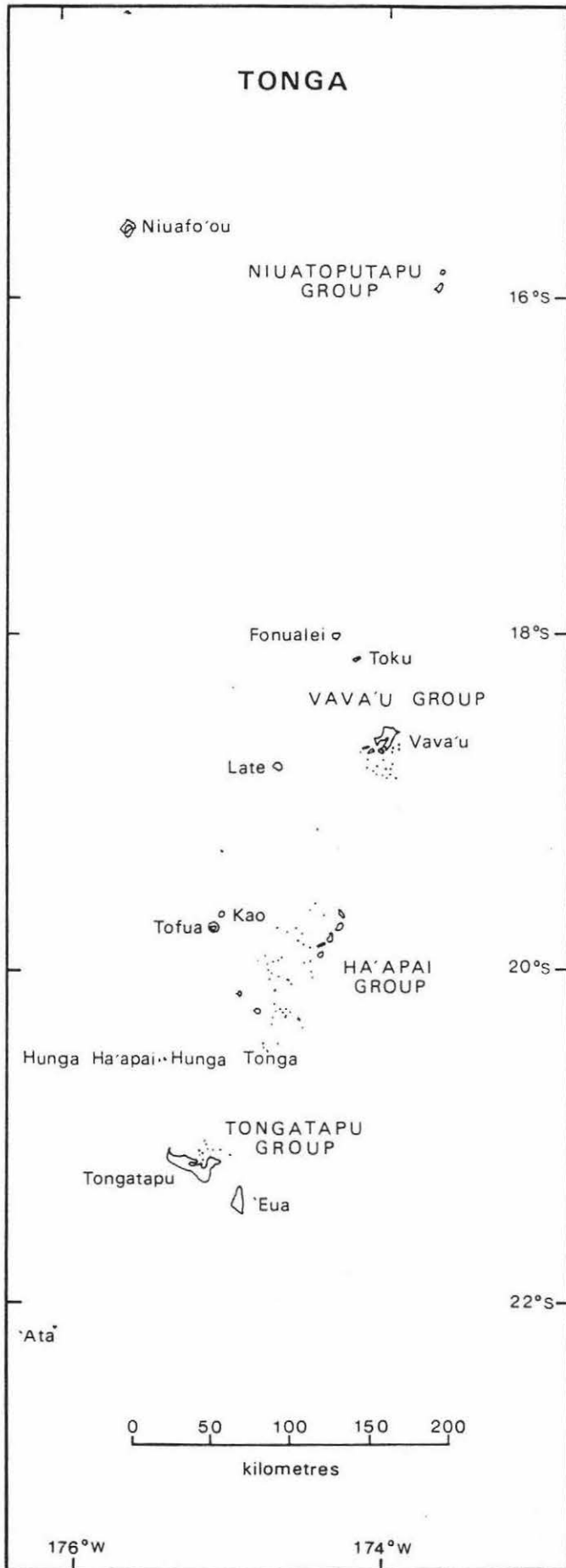
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