

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# **Tongan Women and Leadership in New Zealand**

A thesis

presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
of the degree of Master in Business Studies at Massey University

**Seluvaia Talikivaha Paea**

**ID 10258278**

**Date: 04 October, 2016**

# Table of Contents

Dedications .....	3
Acknowledgments .....	4
Glossary .....	5
Abstract .....	7
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	8
1.1 Research Question and objectives.....	8
1.2 Research Context .....	9
1.3 Tongan Women in New Zealand .....	10
1.4 Significance of Study .....	13
1.5 Thesis Structure.....	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	15
2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 Leadership.....	15
2.2.1 Leadership theories.....	15
2.2.2 Leadership in the study of management and organizations .....	17
2.2.3 Power .....	18
2.2.4 Discursive Leadership.....	19
2.2.5 Art of Framing in leadership.....	20
2.3 Women in Leadership .....	23
2.4 Leadership in the Tongan context .....	25
2.4.1 Leadership in the Pacific.....	25
2.4.2 Leadership in Tonga .....	26
2.4.3 Tongan women an leadership .....	28
2.5 Conclusion and Research Gap.....	30
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	31
3.1 Research Design.....	32
3.1.1 Qualitative Research .....	32
3.1.2 Kakala Research Framework .....	33
3.2.1 Teu – Research Preparation .....	36
3.2.2 Toli – Data Collection.....	38
3.2.3 Tui – Data Analysis .....	42
3.2.4 Luva – Presenting of findings .....	44
3.2.5 Researcher Reflections .....	44
Chapter 4: Results.....	46
4.1 Introduction.....	46
4.2 Lalanga Mo’ui ‘a fafine Tonga .....	46
4.2.1 Strand 1 – Tauhi va.....	48
4.2.2 Strand 2 – Mateaki.....	54
4.2.3 Strand 3 – Fakatokilalo .....	60
4.2.4 Strand 4 – ‘Ilo’i kita – Know your responsibility .....	63
4.2.5 Strand 5 – Mo’ui Lotu (Christian belief) .....	66
4.2.6 Strand 6 – Ako – Mo’ui fakapotopoto .....	68
4.2.7 Summary .....	74
4.3 Leadership practice .....	74
4.3.1 Leadership defined.....	75
4.3.2 Gendered Experiences .....	78

4.3.3 Fakahaa'i e loto'i Tonga 'i he ngaue – The Tongan heart is revealed in Action/Work	82
4.3.4 Ngaue fakataha – Work in Collaboration .....	86
4.3.5 Faka'apa'apa - nonconfrontational? .....	89
4.3.6 Service .....	92
4.4 Summary .....	94
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	95
5.1 Introduction .....	95
5.2 <i>Findings overview</i> .....	100
5.3 Tou-lalanga – A discursive Approach to leadership sense making.....	103
5.3.1 Leadership - making a difference .....	105
5.3.2 Leadership – Serving .....	105
5.3.3 Leadership – Humility .....	107
5.3.4 Leadership – Tauhi va .....	108
5.3.5 Leaders – Egalitarian .....	108
5.3.6 Summary.....	110
5.4 Fala Utilitarian .....	110
5.4.1 Fala – Framing leadership.....	110
5.4.2 Fala for fua fatongia – leadership sensemaking.....	126
5.4.3 Summary.....	128
Chapter 6: Conclusion .....	130
6.1 Introduction.....	130
6.2 Summary of the Findings .....	130
6.3 Implications.....	132
6.4 Strengths and Limitations .....	134
6.5 Suggestions for Future Research.....	135
References .....	136
Appendices .....	145
Appendix 1 : Research Information Sheet .....	145
Appendix 2 : Massey University Human Ethics Approval .....	146
Appendix 3: Research Talanoa Questions .....	148

## List of Tables and Figures

Table 1.3a: Age group and median age of Tongan population in New Zealand.....	11
Table 1.3b: Occupation for employed Tongan ethnic group .....	12
Table 3.2: The Participants' summary: Source: Fieldwork (2016) .....	37
Figure 4.2: Interlacing of strands in weaving.....	74
Table 4.3: Participants' definition of leadership and leadership concepts and emerged strands....	76
Figure 5.1 : Similar patterns used in the fale lalava are used in fala weaving .....	98

## **Dedications**

I dedicate this work to three special women that have shown great influence in my journey through framing my worldview in life.

To Silina Laupulou Tu'ipulotu Malua (RIP), to Lanuola Lomitusi (RIP) and to Rev. Seluvaia Kalina Malua-Katoa, you all have been instrumental in shaping how I frame the world so I can make sense of life and act accordingly to influence others positively.

To God be the glory.

## Acknowledgments

‘Oku ou fie puke ‘a e faingamalie ko ‘eni ke fai ha fakafeta’i ki he Tu’i ‘o e Langi ‘i he’ene foaki poto kuo fai ‘o lave monū ai ‘a e ki’i finemotu’a tu’a koau. ‘Oku ou fiefia ‘i he faingamalie kuo Ne ‘omai ma’aku keu kaungākau ai ‘i he fekumi ki he poto faka’atamai’. Fakafeta’i ki he ‘Eiki ‘i he ivi mo e kelesi kuo Ne fakateunga’aki ‘eku mo’ui pea lava ai ke fakakakato ‘a e ki’i fekumi vaivai ko ‘eni. I am thankful to God for his love and guidance in giving me the opportunity to pursue this study.

I would like to thank my Supervisors Dr. Ralph Bathurst and Dr. Rebecca Gill for your patience, guidance and wisdom that you shared with me during this journey. Without your guidance, I may not be able to produce this study to the best that I could. A big MALO ‘AUPITO to you two.

I would like also to acknowledge the Pasifika Directorate Staff for all your support. Thank you also to Dr. Fuafiva Faalau for the many lunches together and fellowship. You have been a great motivator and leader. I also thank my Christian family for your prayers and encouragements, which I do appreciate very much.

Lastly, I would like to thank my dear family for standing by me during this journey. I know that it was not easy as I spent late nights and weekends away from you, but you believed in me which makes a lot of difference. Thank you to my dear husband, Sione Latu Paea and my lovely children; Tevita Halaiano, Obadaiah Amitai Ari, Lavinia ‘Elenoa To’omeilangi, Sakaria Lavemai Kepalani and Sisilia Laukau Ola ‘i Heamoni. I hope that this study will empower you all to continue your life journey with pride and do not take for granted what you have observed, learned and experienced at home, at church, in the community and at school. They do somehow frame the way you practice leadership in every stage of your journey. Malo ‘aupito e tokoni. ‘Ofa lahi atu.

## Glossary

<b>Tongan Terms</b>	<b>English translations</b>
<i>'ilo'i kita</i>	Knowing oneself / knowing one's responsibilities towards others / knowing one's place in a kainga circle
<i>'ulumotu'a</i>	The head of the kainga (clan)
<i>Ako</i>	To be educated
<i>Fahu</i>	Father's sister's privilege over her brother's children
<i>Faka'apa'apa</i>	Respect
<i>Fakatokilalo</i>	humility
<i>Fale</i>	house
<i>Fale lalava</i>	House that is lashed with kafa (sinnet) to connect the poles and posts. Sometimes patterns are created.
<i>Famili</i>	Familial relationships
<i>Fatu</i>	Start the weaving of a new fala
<i>Fe'unu</i>	Weft / strands
<i>Fi</i>	braid
<i>Fi kafa</i>	Braiding of sinnets
<i>Fononga'anga</i>	journey
<i>Fua fatongia</i>	Fulfilling obligations
<i>Kafa</i>	sinnet
<i>Kainga</i>	Extended families
<i>Kavenga</i>	obligations
<i>Lalanga</i>	weave
<i>Lalanga</i>	Weaving
<i>Lalava</i>	lashing
<i>Lo'ihoosi</i>	Horse meat in coconut cream
<i>Loto'i Tonga</i>	Heart of a Tongan
<i>Mateaki</i>	To die for/ hardworking / perservering
<i>Mehikitanga</i>	Father's sister
<i>Mo'ui fakapotopoto</i>	Being wise
<i>Mo'ui lotu</i>	Christian belief
<i>Ngaue fakataha</i>	Work together/collaboration
<i>Ngaue mateaki</i>	Hard working

<i>Nofo</i>	To stay / to live / to reside
<i>Nofo 'a kainga</i>	Extended families living
<i>Potalanoa</i>	Making conversations
<i>Talanoa</i>	To talk, to converse
<i>Tauhi – va</i>	Maintaining / nurturing relationships
<i>Tou-lalanga</i>	Group of weavers coming together to weave mats
<i>Va</i>	Space between two things

## Abstract

This study aims to explore how Tongan women practice leadership in New Zealand organizations. To understand the Tongan women's leadership practice involves understanding the factors that underpin the philosophy behind their practice of leadership in their given contexts.

The development of this exploration study was completed using a qualitative research framework with a focus on interpretative study interlaced with the *Kakala* model to produce a feminist interpretive qualitative study. I employed the *talanoa* method in my data collection to assist the research framework to gather valid and indepth reflections by the participants. I used the thematic analysis to analyse the data.

The findings indicated how Tongan women in New Zealand organizations practice leadership based on frames that they observed and experienced during their upbringing and life journey. Numerous factors or strands emerged from the findings that weave together to produce the participants' understanding and sensemaking of leadership. During the participants' practice of leadership in their given contexts, they reframed some of the pre-concieved frames that enhance their leadership understanding and leadership practices. I used the metaphorical process of *lalanga fala* to frame the participants' ontological narratives on their sensemaking and practice of leadership.

This study highlights the value of understanding the frames that shaped the understanding of Tongan women in New Zealand on leadership. How they practice leadership in their given contexts relates to the frames that they see through. The use of framing helped to motivate participants to contribute in leadership acts no matter what position they hold in an organization.