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**THE ROLE OF FA'ASAMOA IN
SOCIAL WORK
IN
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is researched, reasoned and evidenced on a statement which argues that although *FA'ASAMOA* is not fully recognised, it has a role in social work in New Zealand, because the rapid increase of Samoan client-population demands the implementation of *FA'ASAMOA* by Samoan social workers as it is ethnically empowering, therapeutic, practicable, significant, effective, natural and experiential as a living system in facilitating a two-way working relationship with Samoans within the context of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Samoan social workers in Aotearoa prefer the less formal implementation of *FA'ASAMOA* because of the scope it provides for flexibility and the development of closer interaction between Samoan social workers and Samoan clients. This indicates that Samoan social workers in New Zealand are more likely to adapt *FA'ASAMOA* to take advantage of the new opportunities, the environment in which they practice, and the nature of Samoan clients with whom they work.

This study is supported by data and information gained from implementing qualitative research techniques, including the use of unstructured as well as semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions with the participants. This thesis is distinctive in that it is a study of *FA'ASAMOA* as a comprehensive culture in social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

DEDICATION

to

my beloved Parents

father - MULITALO Lautu Tafaogalupe MULITALO
(died on the 21 January 1993)

and

mother - Auauoletai MANO'O TILIVE'A MULITALO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Words cannot express the extent I value and appreciate the knowledge, time and energy that my three supervisors have sacrificed towards the completion of this thesis. Dr Michael A. O'Brien, in the role of chief supervisor, has given much of his invaluable comments, scholarship and Papalagi perspective to the contents of this thesis, keeping this study in perspective and the writer in the land of sanity.

I am also privileged to have the watchful eye of Chief Orator Fa'amatuainu Fa'afetai Tu'i, who is not only an academic educator but also a highly respected Samoan Matai from the Atua District of Upolu Island of Samoa, especially in his role as my *Fa'atonutonufolau* - the steerman of the ship - for this researched, reasoned, evidenced and argued study. *Fa'afetai i lau Susuga Lufllufi i lau fesoasoani e tusa ai ma leni taumafaiga. O le a le galo oe i lo'u mafaufau ma le agaga e tusa ma lou agalelei.*

Dr Theresia Liemlienio Marshall, from the English Department of Massey University at Albany (Auckland), certainly deserves to be thanked for the substantial volume of hours spent on critiquing the contents and even editing the structure of this thesis from the viewpoint of an academic, a publisher in the Arts, and a Polynesian woman.

Not to be forgotten are the research Participants - the Samoans based in Samoa and those based in Aotearoa New Zealand - without whom the thesis simply does not exist.

In the ultimate, my heartfelt thanks to my *Atga* (family) who constantly picked me up through their prayers and other forms of support. *Fa'afetai tele e tusa ma lo outou alolofa ia te a'u.*

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GLOSSARY

The glossary in this section is set according to the Samoan vowels A, E, I, O, U, F, G, L, M, N, P, S, T, V.

AIGA	Members of the nuclear and extended family
AOGA AMATA	Samoan language nest for pre-schoolers
AUAUNA	Servant
AFAFINE	Daughter
AFIO MAI LAU AFIOGA	Welcome to your ladyship/lordship
AGA	Tradition; attitude
AGAGA FESOASOANI	Willing-spirit to help
AGALELEI	Kindness
AGAMALU	Humility
ALI'I	High chief
ALI'I PAIA	Sacred high chief
ALOFA	Love or charity
AMIO	Attitude or behaviour
AMIO FA'ATAMALI'I	Diplomacy or act in a respectable behaviour
APOAPOAIGA	Counselling
ATUNU'U	Country
AVA	Respect or sensitive to others
E ALU ASO, E SAU ASO	The day goes, the day comes
IE OLE OLA	The cloth of life (ietoga)
IETOGA	Fine mat
IFOGA	Ceremony of forgiveness
OLA MO ISI	Live for others
OLA MO OE LAVA	Live for oneself

O OU MAMA NA	Good luck
OPOGI	Embrace
OSI	Encircle or conform
OSI AIGA	Family commitment
USUSU	Chant
FA'AALOALO	Deference, respect, politeness
FA'AIPOIPOGA	Wedding
FA'AULUFALEGA	Dedication ceremony
FA'AFUINA	Renewal or renaissance
FA'ALAVELAVE	Crisis or crises
FA'ALELEIGA	Reconciliation
FA'ALILOILO	Confidential
FA'ALUPEGA	Ceremonial acknowledgement
FA'AMAONI	Honesty or integrity
FA'AMALUMALUGA	Embody or encompass
FA'AMATAI	Chiefly-way
FA'ASAMOA	The totality of Samoan culture representing the key components of the Samoan Heart; the Samoan Way; Ceremonies; Protocols and Values; and Structures and Institutions; also represents the cultural system which makes the components functional in working with Samoans in the context of social work
FA'ATAU	Deliberations among chief orators
FA'ATONUTONUFOLAU	Director or steerman of the boat
FA'AVAE LE ATUA SAMOA	Samoa is based on God
FA'AKERISIANO	Christian-like way
FAIA	Kin-relation; or bond
FAIFEAU	Church Minister
FALEAITU	Comedy
FEAGAIGA	Covenant or code
FESOASOANI	Help

FIATAGATA	Proud
FOFO	Massage
FONO	Meeting or conference
FONO A ALI'I MA FAIPULE	Council meeting of chiefs and orators
GAGANA	Language
GAUAI	Commit
LAUGA	Oratory or speech
LAFO	Donation or tip
LALAGA	Small fine mats
LOTO	Heart
LOTOA	Fearless
LOTO FESOASOANI	Desire to help
LOTO MAUALALO	Humility
LOTO NU'U	Sense of patriotism
LOTU	Church, religious or spiritual belief
MAFULU	Name of a Samoan victim
MAFUTAGA A SAMOA	Fellowship of Samoans
MALIU	Death; or funeral
MALU	Calm
MANA	Power or authority
MANU SAMOA	Samoan Rugby Union National Team
MAMALU	Dignity
MATAI	A person bestowed with a chiefly title
MATAI SILI	Paramount chief
MATUATALA	The corners of a Samoan meeting house
MEAAI	Food
MEALOFA	Gift
NU'U	Village
PAIA	Sacred
PAPALAGI	Caucasian person
PUIPUIGA	Protection; or safeguard

PULE	Authority; or governance
POUTU	Central post
SA	Sacred
SI'I	Material acknowledgement with gifts
SUA	Ceremonial presentation of gifts and food
SUAFA	Name or title
SUAMATAMULI	Shame; or embarrassment
TAULE'ALE'A	Young man not yet bestowed with a chiefly title
TAUTALA	Speak
TAUTUA	Service
TAGALOALAGI	Ancient God of Samoa
TAMA-AFAFINE	Father-Daughter
TAPU	Sacred
TAPUI	Make sacred
TAPUA'I	Waiting in silence for good fortune
TAPUAIGA	Traditional worship for good fortune
TEU IA LILO	Disguise; or kept in secrecy
TINA-ATALI'I	Mother-Son
TUAFAFINE	Sister
TUSIGAIGOA	Registration of names for purposes of fundraising
TOFA UA TASI	Consensus
TOGIOLA	Sacrifice; or payment for saving life
TOLOA	Grey duck
TU MA AGA MAMALU A SAMOA	Traditions and customs of Samoa
TULAFALE	Chief orator
TUPE	Money
KOMITI A FALETUA MA TAUSI	Women's committee comprising wives of high chiefs and orator chiefs

SAMOAN SAYINGS / ADAGE / OR EXPRESSIONS

<p>E LE MOU LE TATOU GAGANA AUA TATOU TE LE'I FOLAU MAI VASA -</p>	<p>The Samoan language will not vanish because Samoans did not sail from oceans afar</p>
<p>E LE NA'O UPU MA TALA, A'O MEA E FA'ATINO E ILOA AI LE ALOFA -</p>	<p>Not just words and stories, but actions and sacrifices one gives to show love</p>
<p>E LE TU FA'AMĀUGA PEA SE TASI -</p>	<p>No one stands like a mountain or an island forever</p>
<p>E FOFO A E LE ALAMEA LE ALAMEA -</p>	<p>The fish 'alamea' can harm a person and can also be used to cure the same injury. This saying, therefore, implies that the people who cause an injury are the very people who can fix the same injury.</p>
<p>E SUI FAIGA AE TUMAU FA'AVAE</p>	<p>The style may change but the foundation remains unchanged</p>
<p>E LELE A LE TOLOA AE MAAU ILE VAI</p>	<p>The grey duck Toloa may fly over land, but always returns to water where it belongs</p>
<p>E FA'AVAE ILE ATUA SAMOA</p>	<p>The foundation of Samoa is based on God</p>
<p>IA GATA AI I TOTONU O FALE NEI LE MEA UA TULA'I MAI-</p>	<p>What has happened or has arisen must be kept and restricted within this house.</p>
<p>O LAU PULE LEA, FA'FETAI LE ALOFA MA LE AGALELEI -</p>	<p>Your authority is this, thank you for your love and generosity</p>
<p>OLE ALA ILE PULE OLE TAUTUA</p>	<p>The way to rule or to authority is through service</p>
<p>FA'AFETAI TAUALO, FA'AFETAI TAPUA'I</p>	<p>Thank you for rowing (steerman to crew) and for your prayers (steerman to people on shore)</p>
<p>TA'ATIA MAI LOU FINAGALO SE'I IAI SE TAIMI ONA LOGO ATU LEA -</p>	<p>Lay your request with me and I will let you know in due course</p>
<p>TOFA MA LE FA'AUTAUTAGA LOLOTO OR UTAGA LOLOTO -</p>	<p>Be cautious and wise in deliberating over something</p>

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study rests on a thesis statement that although *FA'ASAMOA* is not fully recognised, it has a role in social work in New Zealand, because the rapid increase of Samoan client-population¹ demands the implementation of *fa'asamoa* by Samoan social workers as it is ethnically empowering, therapeutic, practicable, significant, effective, natural and experientially universal; the total ethnic characteristic of a culture facilitates a two way working relationship which, as a living system, must be fully recognised and integrated.

That *Fa'asamoa* is not fully recognised yet, as having a role in social work in New Zealand, is evident from the following conditions in which there is a lack of :

- a Samoan supervisory training and development on the concept of *fa'asamoa*, in government departments;
- b resources and compensation of *fa'asamoa* skills, that is, the use of Samoan language by probation officers, social workers, group conference co-ordinators, and prison officers;
- c literature on *fa'asamoa* in the context of New Zealand social work;

¹ For example, according to the 1993 list of offenders reported to the Mangere Community Corrections Office in Auckland, of the 66 offenders surveyed, 20.4% were Samoans who had not yet been in the country for more than 5 years. A few had come over during the short-lived visa-free period in early 1987, and most of these men were unemployed and without the language skills or education to do much else (Mangere Community Corrections Office Files, 1993). See also the *New Zealand Herald*, 5 November 1988.

- d official recognition, by the New Zealand Criminal Justice System, of *fa'asamoa* ceremonial, cultural and practical aspects (for example, the *ifoga* ceremony).

Of the 170,442 Pacific Island Peoples living in New Zealand, 85,743 are Samoans.² This means that people of Samoan ethnicity form the largest component of the Pacific Island group, making up 50% of the Pacific Island population in 1991. According to the 1992 Statistics of the Department of Justice, the majority of Pacific Island offenders are young. For example, of the 2,647 conviction rates for offences against the person, property, law and order, 83.8% of offenders were male in the 17 to 39 age group. Of this percentage, 63% are Samoans.³

In addition, the 1995 census reported that 6,162 Samoans - which is 13% of the Samoan population in the age bracket of 15 and over - had been involved in voluntary work. Voluntary work was defined in the 1995 census as work performed by people who benefited those outside their households or families (*Statistics New Zealand, 1995*). This involvement level was similar in the case of both men and women. The level of participation or involvement in voluntary work was similar for New Zealand born and overseas born Samoans. Fourteen

² Department of Statistics, Pacific Island Population and Dwellings, *A Report from the 1991 Census of Population and Dwellings* (Wellington: Department of Statistics, 1993a).

³ Justice Statistics (1992). Tables 3.24 and 3.25, pp. 95-96.

percent of New Zealand born Samoans indicated that they had undertaken voluntary work in the week prior to the census, compared with 12% of overseas Samoans.

These statistics indicate the extent or the degree to which Samoans are involved in voluntary work in New Zealand. This also implies that voluntary work is part of everyday community life of Samoans in New Zealand, and it is an activity that suits their talents and skills. Voluntary work is a component of social work of which the main thrust is the role of *fa'asamoa*. It is, therefore, necessary to articulate the influence of *fa'asamoa* on Samoans in social work, and the manner in which they conduct themselves whenever delivering social work and social services in the field.

In the light of the above background, this study naturally falls into eight chapters. As *fa'asamoa* is a complex term, Chapter Two must give a picture of existing concepts for developing an understanding of the definition of its nature from a general perspective, which forms the basis of definition and redefinition of *fa'asamoa*, as a concept signifying more than simply 'the Samoan way', for the purposes of this study.

Chapter Three illustrates the nature of social work as working

with people with special needs, and it explores the extent to which the manner of social work practice is influenced and shaped by *fa'asamoa* and is understood by Samoan social workers in the field. Concepts of the nature of *fa'asamoa* are, therefore, also significantly provided by participants' insights.

The rationale behind those methods and skills, used by Samoan social workers, is discussed in Chapter Four which appropriately examines the role of Theory and which provides a theoretical explanation of the relationship between *fa'asamoa* and social work. Furthermore, Chapter Five is the research methodology wherein participants' explanations and descriptions give extra clarity to the qualitative manner in which data were gathered from the field, and information generated from the data.

The actual feedback and input from the participants are discussed in Chapter Six, the focus being on the experiences and testimonies of the New Zealand participants in contrast to those of their Samoan counterparts, on the role of *fa'asamoa* in delivery, performance and social work practice.

Chapter Seven provides a practice-framework of *fa'asamoa* to guide those non-Samoan social workers whose clientele

includes Samoans also. Students studying social work will find this chapter invaluable in understanding *fa'asamoa* and developing some thoughts on its implications for *papalagi* practice with Samoans.

Concluding this study, Chapter Eight highlights, summarises and refines the key points of the thesis statement, offering solutions, predictions and recommendations: the redefinition of an initially too broad a meaning of *fa'asamoa*; the discovery of Samoan social workers having a different perspective and manner of social work practice; the significance of using Samoan protocols, values, approach and language; the importance of other cultures' ethnic practices to Samoans; and the validation of *fa'asamoa* practice in various theories on social work.

In order to ensure the anonymity of participants, quotations have generally been summarized rather than presented in the original form. Transcripts of the interviews are available if the reader wishes to explore the data further.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURE OF FA'ASAMOA

2.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to develop an understanding of *fa'asamoa* in terms of its key components and their influences on social work. *Fa'asamoa*, being a complex topic, needs to begin with an understanding of what it means and why it is relevant to social work in New Zealand. For this purpose, an understanding of *fa'asamoa* as a concept needs to be developed through an examination of a variety of perspectives in section 2.1 below. From this general framework of *fa'asamoa*, this study will proceed to discuss its meaning from the Samoan social workers' perspectives in section 2.2, which is important to gain an understanding of *fa'asamoa* in a riot of meanings to different users of the terminology. A review of sections 2.1 and 2.2 in section 2.3 should, therefore, make it possible to redefine or reconstruct an alternative framework of *fa'asamoa* that relates specifically to social work for the purposes of this study. The last section (2.4) focuses on the specific components of *fa'asamoa* which have an influence on Samoan social workers in the field. Such influence will again be looked at in detail in

Chapter Six.

2.1. SO WHAT IS FA'ASAMOA?

According to the literature, the word *fa'asamoa* has more than one interpretation. Tupuola Efi (in Field, 1984:20), for example, defines *fa'asamoa* as

a body of custom and usage. It is a mental attitude to God, to fellow men and to his surrounding. 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 people....Fa'asamoa provides individuals, the aiga and the nu'u with an identity and a place in the society with carefully defined but unwritten roles and rules.

It is interesting to note from Efi's definition that the 'physical makeup' and the 'mood' and 'passion' of a person are not part of *fa'asamoa*. He continues to say, however, that *fa'asamoa* is a 'collection of spiritual and cultural values' that motivate people. Tupuola Efi seems to have overlooked the reality that the 'mood' or 'passion' of a Samoan person represents the intrinsic variables of *fa'asamoa*. The effects of these variables cause the Samoans to behave and perform differently from the *papalagi* (Europeans) and those of other cultures. Is the sentiment of *alofa* (love) and *lotonu'u* (sense of patriotism), for example, not

part of *fa'asamoa*? Is *alofa* not a criteria in appointing a person to the title of *matai* which represents the physical component of *fa'asamoa*? Why do Samoans, residing overseas, continue to send remittances to their relatives in Samoa? Is this gesture not a manifestation of their *alofa* in the physical sense? Is performing a *si'l* (gift ceremony) not motivated by *alofa* and the *faia* (kin connections) factor? Why did the players of the *Manu Samoa* rugby team cry and become emotionally inspired (Gifford, 1996) when they played against Wales in the World Rugby Cup Tournament in 1991? Is pride not a value of *fa'asamoa*? In other words, these examples in question demonstrate that peoples' moods, passions and sentiments are fundamental parts of the social existence of Samoans. Because of their influence and role as manifested in what the Samoans do, they are considered for the purposes of this study as components of *fa'asamoa*.

Another perspective of *fa'asamoa* is provided by Pulotu-Enderman et al (1992) who defines *fa'asamoa* as the 'Samoa Way' which embraces the social structures and institutions of the *matai* (chief) system, *aiga* (family) and cultural values. The way in which he interprets *fa'asamoa* restricts its scope to these particular elements. Pulotu-Enderman was vague in what he

meant by the 'Samoan Way', what it represents and how it works. His interpretation has not expanded to identify explicitly, for example, that according to the 'Samoan Way', people behave in a specific way for a specific reason. Unfortunately, Pulotu-Enderman appears to have failed to explicate this very important aspect of *fa'asamoa*.

More specific is Tu'i (1987) when he explains the Samoan Way in the form of oratory (*lauga*) within the context of a *maluu* (funeral). Tu'i (1987:102) asserts specifically and explicitly that

(t) he funeral speech differs in structure from that of the welcome and wedding speeches. The death of a chief must not be confused with that of an orator, because different words apply for each.... Orators take great care in the drafting of speeches because of the various customs applicable on the deaths of Samoans.

This quotation implies that the 'Samoan Way' varies according to customs, values and protocols within each particular social context or event. Thus abuse, insult, embarrassment and exploitation are avoided when the 'Samoan Way' is precisely delivered, accordingly applied and properly acknowledged in each social context.

Meleisea (1987), in his analysis of *fa'asamoa*, tends to focus on the social structures of *aiga*, *nu'u* (village), *matai* (chief) and *fono* (village council meeting) to explain the historical and the ecological relationship between the Samoans and the environment in which they live. His analytical framework is useful for understanding the way Samoans conduct their cultural affairs; view the world; practise religion; relate to people; network and socialise. Meleisea has further seen *fa'asamoa* through the social structures' conveying 'a very deep meaning to Samoans.' He has been selective in highlighting only those elements of *fa'asamoa* that collaborate with the intents and purposes of his analysis. To an extent, he agrees with Tupuola Efi and Pulotu-Endermann that *fa'asamoa* represents cultural values, *aiga*, *nu'u*, *matai*, and the Samoan Way. Realistically, these components have made *fa'asamoa* distinctive (Field, 1984:20) in providing a Samoan person with an identity and a place in the Samoan society.

A further perspective, provided by Fereti Ngan Woo (1985:11) who likens *fa'asamoa* to

*an immortal tree with roots that grow deep into the ancient world.
It is watered by the rains, warmed by the sun and shaped by the
wind from the four corners of today's world. Its substance is changing,
its philosophy has expanded and its practices have been enriched.*

The implications of the quotation from Ngan Woo reaffirm the historical relationship between *fa'asamoa* components and the past. For example, the Samoan cultural values of *fa'aaloalo* (deference), respect, hospitality, *paia* (sacredness), *mamalu* (dignity), diplomacy, *fa'amatai* (chiefly practice), *matai* titles, allegiance and pride are all ancient in terms of their philosophical basis and development, as they have been created and passed down by Samoan ancestors from one generation to another. However, Ngan Woo supports the view that while the growth of these values has been sustained over many years, the values themselves have been modified in terms of the way in which they have been applied and implemented. An example of this is the way Christianity, as a form of institution, has been adopted and modified by Samoans to suit their needs and expectations, as propounded by Ngan Woo. In this respect, the component of *lotu* (religion) is a contributing factor to many of the changes to *fa'asamoa*. For instance, the recognition and use of the Samoan *ietoga* (fine mat), as an antique and a treasure, has been denied and prohibited by some churches such as the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. *Ietoga* from their perspective is idolatrous and irrelevant to the needs of church members.⁴ Despite the degrees of variation in the above ways of seeing and interpreting *fa'asamoa* in general, there seems to be a

⁴ Pastor, Seventh-Day Adventist Church: Personal interview, 29 April 1997.

consensus among them that *fa'asamoa* is a very powerful influence on the lives of Samoans living in New Zealand; that the make-up of *fa'asamoa* represents a whole range of variables; that *fa'asamoa* has a life and a world of its own; that its roots are firmly entrenched with the past; that its processes and methods are subject to change; that *fa'asamoa* requires nurturing and protection; and that *fa'asamoa* has the potential for unity and solidarity in bringing together the Samoans living abroad. Therefore, *fa'asamoa* is indicative of many facets; however, given the intents and purposes of this study, *fa'asamoa* needs to be related to social work and social work practices for Samoans living in New Zealand. The next section is appropriately a discussion on the perspectives of Samoan social workers on *fa'asamoa*.

2.2. THE PERSPECTIVES OF SAMOAN SOCIAL WORKERS ON FA'ASAMOA

The key questions in this section are: How do Samoan social workers define *fa'asamoa*? What does *fa'asamoa* mean to Samoan social workers in the field? These questions significantly help determine the nature of the influence of *fa'asamoa* on Samoan social workers in the social work field. Therefore, when the participants in this study were asked to describe what *fa'asamoa* meant to them, for example, some of

them gave the following descriptions as summarized in Table One below.

Table 1: New Zealand Based Participants' Perspectives of *Fa'asamoa*

Fa'asamoa is to do with courtesy;
 Respect for elders and parents;
 The way you walk, talk, sit and stand;
 The use of the Samoan language;
 An understanding of Samoan protocols;
 Your diplomacy attitude (*amio*); A sense of humility; Manners; An ability to relate to people; Your mentality as a Samoan;
 Social structures of *Aiga* (family);
 The Church and *Matai* systems; Values and Beliefs; Samoan identity and ethnicity.

Source: (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

Others attribute *fa'asamoa* to people's roles and what they do in ceremonies such as funerals, weddings, investitures of chief titles, official opening of a church building or a special celebration of some kind. In their views, when the word *fa'asamoa* is used in these contexts, it represents the following characteristics set out in Table Two below.

Table 2: Participants Based in Samoa: Perspectives of *Fa'asamoa*

The performance of rituals and ceremonial practices;
 Elaborate involvement of people in groups;
 Involvement of *Matai* as key players in the proceedings;
 Skills and proficiency are highly specialised;
 Level of formality is hierarchical and traditional;
 Compliance with protocols is highly emphasised;
 Samoan oratory is the official language to use;
 Roles of players are more pronounced;
 Food and material goods are exchanged and distributed.

Source: (Interviews with Participants in Samoa, 1997).

The participants in Samoa tended to emphasise the characteristics in Table Two, set out to describe what *fa'asamoa* meant to them, while those in New Zealand adopted those set out in Table One to highlight the manner in which they viewed *fa'asamoa* in terms of their social work practice in New Zealand. The findings in Chapter Six show the reasons underlying the New Zealand based participants' choice of a set of characteristics (Table One) as opposed to another set (Table Two) chosen by those in Samoa.

2.3 RECONSTRUCTION OF FA'ASAMOA FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY

From the above discussion, therefore, *fa'asamoa* represents the totality of those aspects of the *fa'asamoa* culture that are visible and invisible in nature. The visible aspects of *fa'asamoa*, due to their physical form, include the social structures of *ai'ga* / family, *matai* / chiefly system, religion / *lotu*, ceremonies and cultural practices. The invisible aspects, on the other hand, include variables such as ideas, beliefs, values, skills, moods, passions, attitudes and knowledge. All of these aspects are interdependent and cannot exist in isolation from one another. Therefore, a redefinition of *fa'asamoa* in this context, points to two distinguishable but closely related aspects. Firstly, *Fa'asamoa*

refers to

the totality of invisible and visible aspects of Samoan culture in terms of knowledge, beliefs, values and attitudes; and the social structures of *aiga*, *matai*, *lotu* and *gagana*/language that influence and shape the way in which Samoan social workers operate in the social work field.

Secondly, *Fa'asamoa* is

a cultural system that delivers the invisible aspects of Samoan culture into action when a Samoan social worker deals with a Samoan client or family.

This reconstruction of *fa'asamoa* creates a link between the two aspects where one relies on the other for motivation and action whenever a Samoan social worker comes in contact with a Samoan client through social work. In this context, it is the first part of the above reconstruction of *fa'asamoa* that dictates the necessary action which the second part delivers. The procedures and the processes involved in the second part are conducted through a system that Samoan social workers are familiar with; that which they have learned from Samoa and their church as well as their parents. As a system, it continues to develop and grow with the support of the church and with the increasing presence of Samoans in New Zealand. Like any other culture, *fa'asamoa* is operated according to certain rules and protocols. Its hierarchical structures and authority arrangements are more focused and specialised. Management of

cultural and family affairs is shared, and involves members as a group. Individual rights are treated slightly differently by the *fa'asamoa* system, than they are by Western society. As Meleisea (1987:124) explains,

An injury inflicted by one individual upon another is not seen in fa'asamoa, as it is in Western law, as a case between two individuals. but as a case between two groups.

In other words, group involvement in this regard is a significant feature of *fa'asamoa* as a system. However, other aspects of *fa'asamoa*, which are more relevant to and influential on Samoan social workers, need to be explored further.

2.4 RELEVANT ASPECTS OF FA'ASAMOA AS A SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON SAMOAN SOCIAL WORKERS

As already discussed, Samoan social workers are most likely to be influenced by *fa'asamoa* through five main areas. These include the invisible components of *fa'asamoa*; the visible social structures of *aiga*/family, religion/*lotu*, *matai*/chiefly system, *gagana*/language and ceremonies; and the Samoan way in which these are delivered. Distilled, the above key components of the nature of *fa'asamoa* - to which Samoan social workers

turn and return to seek and to reassure the appropriateness of their actions - include the

- i **"Samoa Heart"** component which represents all the invisible aspects of *fa'asamoa*, ranging from variables such as ideas, beliefs, values, skills, attitudes, sentiments, moods, passions, feelings, temperaments, attitudes, just to name a few;
- ii **Samoa Way** which concerns the manner, style, method or fashion that a Samoan social worker undertakes in dealing with another Samoan person; more succinctly, it is the philosophy which compels living one's life for others;
- iii **Structures and Institutions** which represent the frameworks of *aiga* / family, *lotu* / religion, *gagana* / language and *matai* / chiefly system, all of which are visible in physical form;
- iv **Ceremonies or Ceremonial Practices** which signify the space that provides the opportunities for Samoans to practice their values and cultures as a group or as individuals;
- v **Protocols and Values** which represent the unwritten rules and customs that regulate the social behaviours of Samoans as a people.

Thus *fa'asamoa* can influence a Samoan social worker through any one of the above five components, or through a combination of several components, or through all of the five components as a whole. Each of the components will now be applied and elucidated in the sequence given above. The five components of *fa'asamoa* are also explained diagrammatically in Figure 1 at the end of this Chapter.

(i) **THE SAMOAN HEART COMPONENT**

This component represents the desires, beliefs, passion, conduct, feelings, attitudes, spirit and the morale of a Samoan person. In the literature, they are generally described as invisible elements of human culture (Metge, 1976). However, for the purposes of this study, they are referred to as the Samoan Heart of *fa'asamoa*. The Samoan Heart is influenced by a whole series of stimuli which often influence a Samoan person to behave in a particular fashion or manner. Is not this the reason that the players of the *Manu Samoa* rugby team cried before their big game with the Welsh team in 1991? As Papali'i Pita Fatialofa (1996:18-19) said,

Before we went to the ground, Tate Simi spoke to us about how important the game was going to be for Samoa. He started crying. Then Peter Schuster, our coach, said this was history in the making. He began crying, too. The president of our rugby union spoke, and he was pretty emotional too....Then a guy we didn't know got up, and started talking in an American accent. "Well guys, I'm the representative in Washington for American Samoa, and as far as I'm concerned we're all Samoans here. I'm really proud to be here....Alan Grey said that...so much was against us, but that would bring out the best in Samoans. And he told us that the game would be watched by people on giant screens at Apla Park back home.

These sentiments are part of the "Samoan Heart", a term applied to the same sentiments as those which Metge (1976:48) has described as the term 'Maori Heart':

(A) general attitude of pride in being Maori and of identification with Maori and Maori ways: an attitude that is often described as 'te ngakau Maori' (Maori Heart) or 'te wairua Maori' (the Maori spirit).

It could be argued that the Samoan players were emotionally overwhelmed with pride and sense of determination to win, as they saw themselves playing for their *atunu'u* (country), their families, friends and relatives, and not for themselves alone. So, the - "Samoan Heart" - in terms of people's moods, spirit, passion and emotions - plays a powerful influence and role not only in sports, but with social work as well.

For instance, from a social work perspective it is likely that a Samoan offender would respond positively if a social worker knows the manner in which to talk to the offender: through his or her 'Heart'. Human beings sometimes follow their sense of instincts and what their 'hearts' direct them on what to do and so forth. Therapists and counsellors tend to work on people's sentiments as part of their attempt to re-educate and re-create clients to change. Religious leaders appeal to people's 'hearts' as part of their ministry to convert the latter to the gospel. Similarly, sport coaches use emotive language to prepare their players mentally and physically before they go on to the field, or enter a contest. In other words, the 'Samoan Heart' is a component of *fa'asamoa* that should not be ignored when

working with Samoan clients, their families and the Samoan community within the context of social work. I will return to the component of the 'Samoan Heart' in Chapters Four and Six.

(ii) THE SAMOAN "WAY" COMPONENT

This component is referred to by some (for example, Pulotu-Endermann et al., 1992) as the 'Samoan Way' of conduct. However, in a more complex way, it relates to the way a person verbally communicates (*tautala*), behaves (*amio*), relates to people, carries out one's commitments and obligations, thinks, socializes, learns, empathises, feels and reacts to people. Protocols, rules, conventions and assumptions are also part of the Samoan Way. The Samoan Way is also expressed in terms of material items used as a means to convey their beliefs and their commitments to kin and others: money (*tupe*), *ietoga* (fine mats), *meaal* (food) and clothing are the most common indicators of love (*alofa*), appreciation and generosity to families, friends and neighbours. The Samoan Way also embraces rituals, ceremonies and cultural practices such as *ifoga* (ceremony of public apology), *fa'aleitoga* (reconciliation) and *si'i*. The *si'i* is a tradition of donating food, money and fine mats to a kin, a friend or a neighbour who is facing a

fa'alavelave (crisis), as a token of love and concern. Praying, for example, is another form of ritual that the Samoans have adopted as part of the Samoan Way. The preparation of food, the types of food and the quantity of food provided are also part of rituals. Food is prepared with a view to providing enough for the whole group and not necessarily just for the number of people invited. Samoan oratory (Tu'i, 1987:1) is also a part of the Samoan Way when it is the exclusive prerogative of the Samoan matai, the holders of specific title names, whether as *ali'i* (chief) or *tulafale* (orator). So, the 'Samoan Way' is represented by a variety of activities, and they are delivered in different styles and forms, depending on the event or the social context of the occasion.

Therefore, what to use, how to use it, why and when to use any of the above 'ways' are significant questions that one must take into account when undertaking social work practice. If, for example, a social worker thinks that prayers and parables from the Bible are necessary to use in counselling a Samoan client, then they should be used wherever appropriate. If using the Samoan language is the most effective method to communicate with Samoan clients, then this should be encouraged and supported. In terms of communication, it is an advantage for a

social worker to understand and be able to speak Samoan. It is one of the most powerful skills required in social work when dealing with Samoans either as individuals or as a group. Language, according to cross-cultural literature (Sue & Sue, 1990:124), creates 'a common sense of bonding', symbolises the group identity, determines people's ways of seeing the world and carrying their culture. If - in terms of communication language- *ifoga* (ceremony of apology) or *fa'aleleiga* (reconciliation) are the best options to restore peace and harmony between families of the offender and those of the victim, then the social worker recommends them to be considered by the authorities. If invited by a Samoan family or a Samoan client to eat with them in their home after an interview, or while in the process of a home visit, it is neither rude nor culturally insensitive to decline. Responding to these invitations requires a judgement call and common sense on the part of the social worker.

(iii) STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS

The key structures and institutions involve the *aiqa*/family, *matai*/chiefly system, *lotu*/religion, and *gagana*/language (being a cultural manifestation, as opposed to communication system already discussed above). A brief description of each variable is

presented below.

a) **Aiga/Family**

Aiga means a group of people who are members of both the nuclear and the extended family. It is used in the Samoan sense to include not only the immediate family (father, mother and children), but also the whole union of families of a clan and even those who, although not related, are subject to family control. The origin of some of the members of the *Aiga* can be traced back to forced or willing subjection. Willing submission may be brought about by what is termed "*togiola*" payment for saving life. If for any reason a person takes refuge in the *Aiga* of another family, such a person will submit to the domination of that family or ruler, in gratitude for the protection afforded. That person remains on the land and under the control of the protector, as are the offspring of the indebted (Kramer, 1994). Membership is determined through blood ties, or adoption, or marriage. It does not always happen that the various branches of the family or *Aiga* live close together. Usually they are to be found scattered over Samoa, including overseas, such as New Zealand, Australia, Hawai'i and the United States of America. The village family is divided into several further families with

each family being subject to an elder *matai*. One of these *matai* is the superior of the whole village families, and is termed the '*Matai Sili*' or head *matai* (Tuvale Te'o, 1918: 6). Many families have this subdivision. In families of lesser importance the organisation is simpler and they have only one *matai*. The various members of the family are called upon to serve and pay their respects to the *Matai* who in turn is supposed to look after the welfare of the family.

Aiga is significant from a social work perspective, because it provides the basis for support, resource and space to enhance the role of the social worker. Understanding the social structure of *Aiga* enables the social worker to make contacts with the key people whose influence may be necessary in the supervisory or monitoring role of a family member. It is not unusual, in therapy, to include members of the family (or the family as a whole) to take part in therapeutic activities which are relevant to the wellbeing of a person or group, not very different from Sue & Sue's (1990) family identification in the Hispanic context. Conceptually, *Aiga* is further elucidated for a fuller understanding in Chapter Four and Six below.

b) Matai System

The word *Matai* is synonymous with the concept of mastership, leadership and representation. When a person receives a *matai* title, it means that this person acts as a representative for his or her *aiga* in relation to family and village matters. Some writers (O'Meara, 1990; Meleisea, 1987) describe a *matai* person as a trustee of the family; an advocate; a leader; the head; a person that God has chosen and annointed; a master in terms of skills, knowledge and expertise; an authority; and a mediator.

A *Matai* may be either an '*Ali'i*' (chief) or a '*Tulafale*' (orator). In former times the word *Matai* applied only to *Tulafale*, but as times changed the term became applicable to Chiefs or *Ali'i* generally, and this has continued down to the present time (Kramer et al., 1994). Chiefs sometimes appoint the *Tulafale* within their own families for the purpose of strengthening their following and influence. The title of a family *matai* which is peculiar and particular to that family, is the subject of Samoan tradition and is faithfully recorded by the family and passed on from generation to generation. Each *Matai* possesses a name or '*Suafo*' by which and through which this person exercises rights in the family over which this individual presides.

Before the advent of the European the '*pule*' or authority of the Matai extended to life and limb, but this power has been absorbed by the white man's Government and the Matai's authority is confined to the parental right of chastisement (Te'o, 1918).

When a *Matai* becomes old he⁵ may decide to relinquish his *Matai* title and, if so, he will transfer his authority and name to his successor. He does not revert to the status of a *Taule'ale'a*, but takes a new complementary name and retains only a portion of the family lands and property for his own use. A retired *Matai* usually enjoys the respect of his family and is referred to as the '*Fa'atonutonu folau*,' the steerman of the boat (Te'o, 1918: 4). He does not actually do the steering but his advice is listened to and his family profit from his ripe experience.

A woman can hold a *Matai* name and have the *pule* of the family, but this does not often occur. Should she have both she will usually bestow her *Matai* title on one of her family members, probably her husband, and retain the *pule* (authority). It has been noted that very often there is a tendency

⁵ The masculine personal pronoun "he" is used here and hereafter appropriate to the fact that the majority matai are men rather than women.

on the part of the males to object to the *pule* of a woman in a family (Te'o, 1918).

The authority of the *Matai* is not unlimited. He is called upon to discuss with the family all important matters. Should the matter be of minor importance and only of interest to the immediate village family, then the more distant relations would not be included and not be consulted. *Matai*, who are subject to a matai 'Sili,' are independent in family matters and may be excluded at the will of their superior at any time. The influence of the *Matai* is felt not only in the village, but in the district as well, and even beyond.

By virtue of all these features, mataiship is a powerful component of *fa'asamoa*. Understanding the matai system enables the social worker to utilise that system to the advantage of the client. For instance, the social worker can use the matai groups for supervision of Samoan clients; enlist the help of matai leaders to act as liaison people with the Samoan community; involve a matai leader of the aiga to influence other members to support and enforce a development for the benefit of a family member or the family as a whole. Conceptually, the institution of Mataiship is introduced at this stage of the study,

but will be further elucidated in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven.

c) **Lotu (Religion)**

Lotu, in this context, means a belief in Christ and accepting God as the foundation and centre of the social and religious existence of the Samoan people. Religion is so important that the Samoans have embraced it as part of their motto in their Constitution which reads: Samoa is founded upon God (*Fa'avae Le Atua Samoa*).

Before Christianity was introduced into Samoa, the Samoans had their own form of lotu from which is derived the notion of *tapuaiga* (waiting with a chance for success), *pala* (sacredness) and *mamalu* (dignity).

'*Tapuaiga*' is made of the word 'Tapu' which means 'sacred,' and 'aiga' which stands for 'family'. So when the word '*tapuaiga*' is used, it expresses a waiting by a family or a group of people in self-abandonment with a chance for success. In ancient times, whenever a district went to war the elders stayed behind to pray, fast and remain in deep quietness (tapu-sacred) as part of their

meditation for good fortune (*tapua'i*). The same form of meditation applies to sport when elders of the village remain behind to *tapua'i* whenever their village team competes elsewhere outside their village. Today, when a boat is well rowed, people say during a rest period, "*Fa'afetai taualo, Fa'afetai Tapua'!*" (Thanks for the constant rowing and for resting to start anew).

Furthermore, the notion of '*paia*' (honour) and that of '*Sa*' are also associated with lotu or religion. '*Paia*' in ancient Samoa is consecrated for people to have and earn while '*Sa*' is mostly attributed to things (*tapui*). '*Sa*' is synonymous with the notion of sacredness and forbiddenness mainly in relation to material things, whereas '*paia*' is consecrated for people such as the '*ali'i paia*' whose high title chiefs are consecrated by the act of *ususu* chants or the sprinkling of coconut water. *Ali'i paia* sit by themselves in the centre of the respective sides (*matuatala*) of the specially designated part of the Samoan house; (bearing in mind that not all Samoan houses these days are oval in shape, the use of the word 'corner', rather than 'side', undermines precision of meaning). In modern times, the *faiifeau* (church ministers) are regarded as having the same status as the *ali'i paia* because of their status as God's spiritual agents on earth.

Thus, the Samoans hold their pastors in very high esteem, respect; and they are honoured because of their religious position and religious knowledge (O'Meara, 1990:48). In terms of social work implications, 'lotu' is a powerful mechanism that controls the lives of the Samoans in their daily existence. For example, the Samoans consider the Bible as their Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics that guide their actions and social behaviours within their respective communities. Samoan counsellors and social workers also integrate religion through its beliefs and ideologies as part of their practices when dealing with Samoan clients. Furthermore, the traditional values that link with the concepts of '*Tapuaiga*', '*Sa*' and '*Paia*' reinforce the role of spirituality in the traditional sense that complements the role of Christianity in creating a sense of unity, peace and harmony among the Samoans. The influence of these traditional values also add weight to the influence of Christianity in bridging relationships between the Samoans and other cultural groups in New Zealand. The manner in which 'lotu' affects the way Samoan social workers operate will, again, be examined in greater detail in Chapter Six.

d) **Gagana (Language)**

The Samoan language is essential in the context of social work, as it is a 'vehicle' to connect Samoan clients with the realities of their world-views in order to perceive, interact with and respond to the world in which they exist (Tamasese et al., 1997:12). From the traditional perspective, the use of the Samoan language is associated with four key elements.

The first is the fluency of *gagana* (Tamasese et al., 1997). Fluency in Samoan is an added factor in facilitating alliances between social workers and clients. The other is the ability to understand what is being conveyed in the context of that world-view. If the world-view in this context involves the essentials of *fa'asamoa*, then it is important that the client and the social worker understand one another through the use of *gagana* Samoa within the context of *fa'asamoa* world-view.

The third factor is the ability to respond to that world-view (Tamasese et al., 1997). The delivery of *gagana*, for instance, is essential in this regard because of the impact *gagana* creates on the recipients. The delivery involves the person's tone of voice, the pace of that individual's speech, the words used and the

contents of the person's discourse. These are all meaningful variables of *gagana* Samoa that impact on people's attitudes, expectations and perspectives in working with Samoans in the field of social work.

The last, but not the least, factor is the ability to bridge the two world-views without compromising the first paradigm (Tamasese et al., 1997:14). In this regard the two world-views involve 'Fa'asamoa' and the 'Papalagi' (European) systems that make up the social existence of Samoans in New Zealand. The ability to interpret and translate the exact message from Samoan to English (and vice versa), without losing the original flavour and content of what has been said in Samoan (for instance) is essential in this context. In the process of doing this, it is important to retain the integrity of the meaning of what has been conveyed in Samoan, for the recipients to understand and respond accordingly. Traditional values and meanings are also linked to *gagana* because of its foundation relating to knowledge and history. The design of *gagana*, for instance, has its roots connected to historical and geographical sites, familial names, honorifics and titles, genealogy, rituals and chants (Tamasese et al., 1997:12), all of which convey information and knowledge about the Samoans, their place of birth and identity,

for which *gagana* is part of the process in validating, synthesising and analysing their origins. The role of '*gagana*' will be given extra clarity in Chapter Six.

(iv) CEREMONIES AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

In the physical sense, ceremonies and cultural practices are referred to in this context as the 'space' which provides the opportunities for Samoans to practice *fa'asamoa*. Proponents of ethnic-sensitive theories of social work (Devore & Schlesinger, 1981, 1991), for example, believe in promoting cultural orientated activities such as ceremonies and celebrations because of the positive effects they have on people's wellbeing and sense of spirituality. Perhaps the ceremonies and cultural practices that are most relevant to social work in New Zealand would be the '*ifoga*' (ceremony of forgiveness), the '*fa'aleleiga*' (reconciliation), and a series of other practices such as the '*ava*' (drinks made from the dried roots of the pepper shrub (*piper methysticum*) ceremony, *lauga* (oratory) and '*si'i*' (gift ceremony).⁶ The ceremony of '*ifoga*' or the public ceremony of forgiveness involves considerably more than just the offender and the victim on their own. There are other people involved: the matai of the families, the kin members, the church pastor,

⁶ Also see comments earlier in the thesis.

the police and the members of the Samoan community. As recorded by Aeau Semi Epati (1995:51),

(a) case in point is the 1994 case at Otahuhu when a young Samoan boy ran over and killed two young Tongan children. When the offender was identified his aiga requested the assistance of the Samoan boxer David Tua and a local Tongan Methodist priest to lead the ifoga on their behalf. They were respected personalities in the community and would add to the weight of the apology. The apology was accepted immediately and the matter was settled.

David Tua and the offender have a '*fala*' (a connection)⁷ as they both come from the same village of Faleatiu on Upolu Island in Samoa. Strategically, the involvement of David Tua was worthwhile as his presence was felt in this particular occasion. Part of the *ifoga* process involved the presentation of fine mats, money and food that the offender and his family had provided for the Tongan families. The offender showed humility and atonement by kneeling in front of the victims' parents in Church, with his head bowed and covered with a fine mat. The chiefs of the offender's family were also seated cross-legged in the background with their heads bowed and covered with fine mats, silently awaiting a chance of success and good fortune which is a part of the traditional process of *tapuaiga*. After the offender's plea for forgiveness, the parents of the two Tongan

⁷ Samoans can be closely connected or related by blood ties, kin membership, marriage, or adoption.

boys stood up and embraced the offender with open arms, which was a gesture of accepting the offender's apology and restitution in the name of their Christian God. *Fa'aleleiga* (reconciliation) was, therefore, achieved when peace and harmony were restored between the two communities through the '*ifoga*' process. The sentiments of 'love', 'forgiveness', 'peace' and 'harmony,' from this ceremony, should be treated as the guiding principles to inform a social worker to initiate and promote ceremonies of this nature because of their significance in restoring justice between an offender and a victim. Chapter Six further discusses the extent to which *Fa'asamoa*, through ceremonies and cultural practices, influences the manner of social work practice among the Samoans.

(v) PROTOCOLS AND VALUES (TU MA AGA MAMALU A SAMOA)

The term 'protocol,' in this context, is synonymous with the notion of formality and conventional rules of '*tu ma aga mamalu a Samoa*' relating to customs, traditions, personal behaviour and etiquette. It is important for social workers to understand the influence of protocols on people's behaviours and the way these protocols affect the manner people relate to one another. Making contacts with Samoan families and

networking with the Samoan community are influenced by protocols and values. To make contact with a child or another member of the aiga, without consulting the matai (chief) or the parents of that family, could be regarded as culturally insensitive from a Samoan perspective.

Traditionally, the matai is the head of the family and it is expected that this person is approached in the first instance on matters that involve a member of the family. Because of the hierarchical structure of aiga (family), the matai, elders and parents often speak and make decisions on behalf of the members of their aiga. Such a pattern is not uncommon in most Pacific Island cultures. As Barker (1993) describes it, the grandmother of one Pacific Island patient at Middlemore hospital takes the leading role in the admission process, because she has the authority, the experience and the duty to show her daughter the manner to respond and the type of decisions to make.

The point that needs to be emphasised in this case is that family consultation is part of *fa'asamoa* protocol which also applies to most Pacific Island cultures, and must not be undermined. Children and family members are seen, from the

Polynesian perspective, as people belonging to their entire kin group or extended family which has a collective responsibility for their wellbeing (Finau, 1982).

In terms of Samoan **values**, the significant ones would be the values of *fa'aaloalo* (being respectful and in deference to); *fa'akerisiano* (being christian), *loto maualalo* (being humble), *amio tamall'i* (being diplomatic); *alofa* (being sensitive); *fa'amaoni* (being honest); *gaua'i* (being committed to); and *loto nu'u* (having a sense of community). There are many other important values, but these are selected on the basis of their common usage and visibility. If a Samoan client tends to be reticent, silent or indifferent in attitude or behaviour, it could well be that this person has reacted in this manner out of *fa'aaloalo* (politeness and respect), modesty or shyness to talk.

Fa'aaloalo is manifested in a variety of ways. For example, the ritual of '*fa'alupega*' is performed as a method of respect to acknowledge another person's identity, status, village and presence, at a *fono* (meeting) being held or at a public gathering of great significance. Tu'i (1987) describes *fa'alupega* as a mandatory part of speech which identifies the participants along with their rank and prestige both in their own

communities and in Samoa as a whole. It also recounts some historical event or special attribute that defines the various diverse and complex networks of rights, responsibilities and duties. *Fa'alupega* is, therefore, conducted in a particular fashion within the context of oratory. Thus, the Samoans according to O'Meara (1990:35),

(are) known for their elaborate social and political etiquette. The Samoans at times are thought to be a serene and easygoing people because of this politeness, but primarily the elaborate etiquette is designed to prevent slights, anger or violence.

Fa'akeristiano (being Christian), on the other hand, emulates the religious values derived from Biblical teachings and principles which set a standard for people to adopt and practise in their daily lives. Similarly, *loto maualalo* (being humble) informs the Samoans to perform the '*ifoga*,' as demonstrated in the case involving the Samoan driver and the Tongan children in Mangere.

Last, but not the least, is the value of *amlo tamali'i* or one's social behaviour in a mild and diplomatic fashion. This is also associated with the virtues of efficacy, tolerance and patience, all of which are fundamental values and protocols of *fa'asamoa*. In the context of *fa'asamoa*, all of these values are part of *fa'asamoa* skills and competencies which inform the manner in

which Samoan social workers conduct their practices.

2.5. SUMMARY

Figure 1 below summarises the five key components of *fa'asamoa* which play an influential role in Samoan culture and on Samoan social workers. Letter **A** represents the component of the Samoan Heart, **B** the Samoan Way, **C** structures and institutions, **D** ceremonies and cultural practices, and **E** protocols and values. As shown in the diagram, the circles are interconnected, which indicates that the components are interdependent and in co-existence with one another. They are bound together by a cultural system known as *fa'asamoa* which represents the totality of the invisible and the visible aspects of the Samoan culture as a whole. As a system, it forms the basis of influence on Samoan social workers in the field. Chapter Six examines the extent of this influence on Samoan social workers.

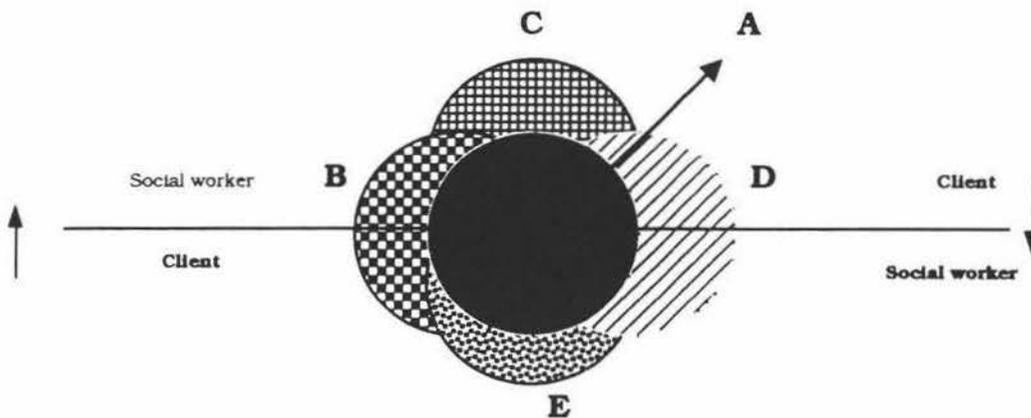
Figure 1 shows that the components do not exist in isolation from one another. For example, if **A** (Samoan Heart) motivates **B** (Samoan Way), then **B** would react according to the protocols and values set by **E**. The co-ordination, therefore, between **A**, **B**

and **E** would enable **C** (Structures and Institutions) to fulfil some of its goals. If **C** is required to participate in **D** (Ceremony), then the contributions by **A**, **B**, **E** and **C** would allow **C** to play a role in **D**. If **C** involves the variables of *aiga* and *matai*, then the contributions made by **A**, **B** and **E** would enable the *aiga* and *matai* variables to participate effectively in **D**. If **D** (Ceremony) involves a funeral ceremony in which the variables 'aiga and matai' (**C**) are expected to take part, then **C** needs the support of **A**, **B** and **E** to enhance its role in **D**. Without the motivation provided by **A**, kin members in **C** would not be in a position to make a contribution by way of food, money or fine mats (**B**). Whenever they are in a position to do so, the amount of provisions would be determined in accordance with **E**. If the protocol in **E** requires each kin to donate a certain amount of goods and money towards the funeral project in **D**, then this would enable the *matai* and other key members of the *aiga* in **C** to participate in that ceremony.

The above dynamics, exemplified and explained, serve to demonstrate that the key components need the support of one another and cannot function in isolation. Thus, as a model, this can be adapted to suit any given social situation whether it be an event relating to sport, religion, ceremony, social work,

politics or whatever projects that may involve Samoans. The components do not always necessarily have to start and proceed in chronological sequence (or alphabetical sequence as shown in Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: CORE ELEMENTS OF FA'ASAMOA



(Source: Writer's reconstruction, 1997)

The intention of this diagram is to indicate that the functionary components of *fa'asamoa* can work either backwards or forwards, vertically or horizontally depending on the source of arousal. If, for example, anger was aroused from the use of *gagana* (language) Samoa as a variable of **C**, then this causes **A** to react, which directs **B** to inflict harm on the other person who then becomes the victim in this case. As a result of the involvement of the matai and the aiga members as the other variables of **C**, the influence of the matai may lead to the

performance of an *ifoga* ceremony which is a variable of **D**. So, when the *ifoga* is performed, it is conducted in accordance with the protocols in **E**. Chapter Six provides further examples to expand on the implications and notions represented in Figure 1. Chapters Five and Six will further examine the extent to which the five key components of *fa'asamoa* (Figure 1) influence the nature of social work practice conducted by Samoan social workers in the field. Discussions on methodology are presented in Chapter Five which illustrates how the key components of *fa'asamoa* (Figure 1) affect the manner in which the participants were approached and how the interviews were conducted. Furthermore, the way in which the participants were influenced by *fa'asamoa* is specifically explained through the evidence and the examples that the participants had presented in Chapter Six. Therefore, the discussions in these two Chapters are essential to this thesis in confirming whether or not *fa'asamoa*, through these key components, influences the way Samoan social workers conduct their practices in the field. The explanations in Chapter Five and the findings in Chapter Six serve to verify the nature of *fa'asamoa* in relation to Samoan social workers and their practices. The next Chapter discusses the nature of social work and the contribution of social work knowledge in relation to this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF SOCIAL WORK AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter discusses the nature of social work from a theoretical perspective with section One focusing on the framework of social work proposed by Hepworth and Larsen (1990). The discussion in section Two continues on from section One, except section Two focuses specifically on the implications of Hepworth and Larsen's framework on Samoans. Section Three discusses some of the social work developments which have a direct bearing on Samoans in New Zealand. The Samoan perspectives of social work are discussed in section Four to provide a context in which to explain how the Samoan participants operate and the skills they apply in the field of social work. The discussion in this section continues on in the final section where specific issues are discussed and the methods applied by the Samoans. The final section is an attempt to obtain an insight into the approaches undertaken by Samoans in social work. Some of the points and issues raised in this section will be further elucidated in Chapter Five of this

study.

3.1 THE NATURE OF SOCIAL WORK

Social work is 'a profession of many faces' (Morales and Sheafor, 1992) which represents an 'extended domain' that requires social workers to serve in diverse settings that deal with people ranging from infants to the elderly, and including those of all races, ethnic groups, socio economic levels, and religions (Hepworth & Larsen, 1990). Although, there is other literature (Munford and Nash 1994, for example) describing social work in a variety of forms, Hepworth and Larsen - chosen for the purposes of this section - have provided a framework that presents a very clear overview of the challenges and the background regarding the nature of social work generally. The framework also highlights the purposes and the knowledge base of social work which underpin social work practice.

Hepworth and Larsen (1990: 3) identify the challenges faced by social work, within a historical and distinctive context, where social work as a profession is committed to serving the poor, the disadvantaged, the disenfranchised and the oppressed. The framework also acknowledges the steadily expanded domain in

which social workers are now involved, as reflected by the diverse settings in which they work. Social workers now serve in a variety of settings including government agencies, schools, health care centres, family and child welfare agencies, mental health centres, business and industry, correctional settings and private practice.

The list of people or clients whom social workers work with, as presented in Hepworth and Larsen's framework, includes people who

are homeless; families including single-parent families; those that have serious conflicts manifested by runaways, delinquency, violence, learning difficulties; couples and families that have problems of child or spouse abuse; couples that have serious marital conflicts; individuals and families whose income is inadequate due to unemployment, physical incapacity, absence of a wage earner, lack of job skills; individuals and families whose lives have been disrupted by punishment for violations of the law; unwed and pregnant teenagers; individuals and families whose lives are disrupted by physical or mental illness or disability; substance abusers and their families; foster parents and children whose parents are deceased or who have abandoned or neglected them; immigrants and minority persons who lack essential resources or opportunities, or who have been victims of racism, sexism; developmentally disabled (mentally retarded) persons and their families; aging persons no longer able to function adequately; migrants and transients who lack essential resources; children (and their families) who have school-related difficulties; and persons who experience extreme stress related to traumatic events or to major life transitions such as retirement, death of loved ones, and children who leave home (Hepworth and Larsen, 1990:3-4).

In the development of the above framework, and given the diversity and the complexity of social work activities, Hepworth and Larsen (1990) have therefore chosen to cite part of the definition (in their attempt to redefine social work) adopted by

the National Association of Social Workers.

professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and to create societal conditions favorable to their goals. (NASW, 1973, pp. 4-5)

In view of this definition, Hepworth and Larsen conclude that the core elements that lie at the heart of social work - irrespective of where it is practised - involve four conceptual domains: (1) The purpose and objectives of the profession; (2) Values, ethics, and a philosophy of direct practice; (3) Knowledge base of direct practice; and (4) Methods and processes employed.

(A) Purpose and Objectives of Social Work

The literature (for example *Journal of NASW*, 1977, 22 (5); 1981, 26 (1); Hepworth & Larsen, 1990) identify the purposes and objectives of social work in association with the need to promote or restore a mutually beneficial interaction between individuals and society in order to improve the quality of life for everyone. By and large, social workers hold the beliefs that it is necessary to create

(t) he environment (social, physical, organizational) to provide the opportunity and resources for the maximum realization of the potential and aspirations of all individuals, their common human needs and for the alleviation of distress and suffering; individuals should contribute as effectively as they can to their own well-being and to the social welfare of others in their

immediate environment as well as to their collective society; transactions between individuals and others in their environment should enhance the dignity, individuality, and self-determination of everyone - people should be treated humanely and with justice.

(*Social Work*, 1981, 26, p.6; also cited in Hepworth & Larsen, 1990:4-5)

Thus, to work towards the enhancement of individuals' capacity for social functioning, and in order to improve quality of life for everyone, the framework that Hepworth and Larsen (1990) have reconstructed requires social workers to perform functions related to prevention, restoration and remediation. In this context, **prevention** involves activities or the provision of services to vulnerable persons before dysfunction develops, including activities such as family planning, parent education, premarital and preretirement counselling, to name just a few. Furthermore, from a restorative perspective, the aim of **restoration** is to rehabilitate clients whose functioning has been impaired by physical or mental difficulties, while **remediation** requires the elimination or amelioration of existing problems such as marital dysfunction, delinquency, educational maladjustment, social isolation, child abuse, substance abuse and lifestyle problems.

In addition to these activities six main objectives complement the above purposes of social work. According to Hepworth and Larsen (1990), these include the need

- (i) to help people enlarge their competence and increase their problem-solving and coping capacities by assisting clients to view their difficulties from a fresh perspective, consider various remedial alternatives, foster awareness of strengths and teach problem-solving strategies, and interpersonal skills;
- (ii) to help people obtain resources through social workers' playing the role of broker in referring people to resource systems, and assuming the role of case managers whenever social workers assume direct services, and ensuring that clients receive needed services in a timely fashion;
- (iii) to make organizations responsive to people through social workers' assuming the role of expediter or troubleshooter whenever the latter scrutinize the policies and procedures of their own and those of other organizations to determine if clients have access to resources and if services are delivered in ways that enhance the dignity of clients;
- (iv) to facilitate interactions between individuals and others in their environment through social workers' enhancing communication among family members and assisting groups to provide maximal support to members;
- (v) to influence interactions between organizations and institutions through social workers' playing roles as co-ordinators, mediators or disseminators of information in order to meet the needs of the clients; and
- (vi) to influence social and environmental policy through social workers' promoting policies and legislations that enhance the physical and social environments of clients.

(B) *Values, Ethics and Philosophy*

Values, defined by Hepworth and Larsen (1990), refers to strongly held beliefs about people, preferred goals for people,

preferred means of achieving those goals and preferred conditions of life. To put it simply, values represent selected ideals as to how the world should be and how people should normally act. Despite a myriad of values associated with social work as a profession, the most common values identified by Hepworth and Larsen include the following:

- (1) the opportunity for people to have access to resources they need to meet life's challenges and difficulties in order for them to realize their potentialities throughout their lives;
- (2) that every person is unique and has inherent worth; therefore interactions with people - as they pursue and utilize resources - should enhance their dignity and individuality;
- (3) that people have a right to freedom as far as they do not infringe on the rights of others; thus transactions with people should enhance their independence and self-determination; and
- (4) that realization of the above values should be the mutual responsibility of individual citizens and society. This implies that society should foster conditions and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the democratic process and, in return, citizens should fulfil their responsibilities to society by actively participating in the democratic process.

At this point, Hepworth and Larsen remind us that the unique combination of all these values differentiates social work from other professions. They propose that if all these values are considered in their entirety, it reaffirms that social work's identity comes from its connection with the institution of social

welfare which represents a special helping mechanism devised to aid those who suffer from the variety of ills found in industrial society. Furthermore, the four value systems outlined above represent different levels of professional values. For example, the values that characterize a strong community are represented by the intermediate level which pertains to values of various segments of society. On the other hand, the operational level is characterized as the third level which refers to preferred behaviours and instrumentalities such as safeguarding the confidentiality of information disclosed by clients.

As individuals, social workers operating at these levels of values are controlled by a code of **ethics** consisting of principles that define their expectations as well as rules to which they must adhere to remain in good standing within their profession (Hepworth and Larsen, 1990). The three key ingredients central to the code of ethics are the needs to

- (i) safeguard the reputation of the profession through the establishment of explicit criteria to regulate behaviour of social workers;
- (ii) enhance the level of competency and responsible practice by social workers and;
- (iii) protect the public from exploitation by unscrupulous social workers.

(C) Knowledge Base

According to the framework presented by Hepworth and Larsen (1990), social work practice is underpinned by a range of knowledge bases which embody knowledge about human growth and development; social policy and social work practice methods. Knowledge about human growth and development places an emphasis on the life tasks encountered by individuals during different developmental stages in their lives, and this is essential to practitioners. Social workers would be able to assess and to work with human problems if they are aware of needs and resources associated with each developmental stage.

Similarly, social workers need to be aware of ecological systems theory so that they become familiar with forces that motivate group and organization behaviour, and that provide knowledge of factors which contribute to developmental difficulties. Thus, knowledge of all these factors is essential to the planning and the implementation of preventive and remedial programmes for clients.

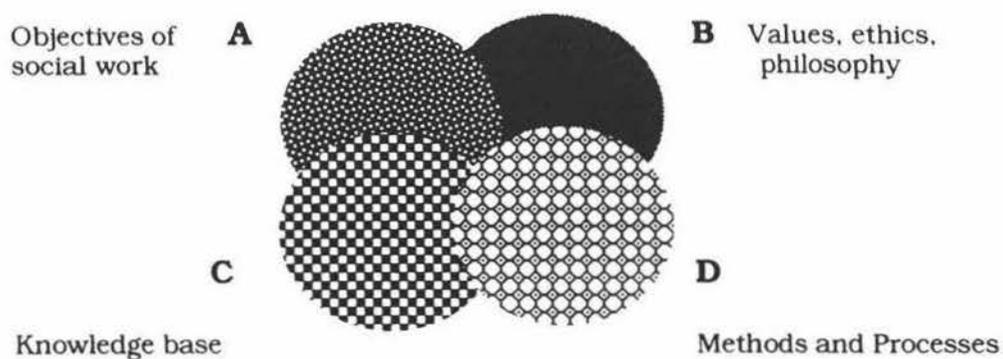
(D) Methods and Processes

The argument here is that for social workers to accomplish the mission and objectives of social work as a profession, social workers need knowledge and practice skills that enable them to enhance the social functioning of clients. While skills and knowledge vary according to different people of the population served by social workers, Hepworth and Larsen (1990) summarize such skills and knowledge into three main levels: the micro, mezzo and the macro.

At the **micro** level, the practice is 'direct,' because social workers deliver services directly to clients in face-to-face contacts. This level is essential because of the social workers' involvement with various client groups including individuals, couples, families and groups. Diametrically opposed to this level are the mezzo and the macro levels which generally involve minimal face to face contacts with clients. The **mezzo** level, for example, involves the process of administration which entails assuming leadership in human service organizations to effect delivery of services in accordance with the values and laws of society. The **macro** practice, on the other hand, involves the process of social planning and community organization where

social workers serve as change agents who assist community action systems composed of individuals, groups, or organizations to deal with social problems. Alongside these levels of practices is research which is the driving force behind vigorous advancement of knowledge. Research as a technique is essential, because it gives social workers the ability to discriminate between conclusions based on empirical data and others that are subjective and unwarranted. Figure 2 below summarizes the key features of the social work framework that Hepworth and Larsen have presented upon which the thrust of the discussions in this section is based.

Figure 2: CORE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL WORK



(Writer's reconstruction based on Hepworth and Larsen's Conception)

3.2. IMPLICATIONS OF HEPWORTH AND LARSEN'S FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL WORK FOR SAMOANS

The framework by Hepworth and Larsen (1990) gives the mandate to qualify the Samoans to be involved in social work because, as a profession, it covers an 'extended domain' which requires the participation of social workers from different backgrounds to serve in diverse settings where the demands are high, relating to the disadvantaged, disenfranchised and the oppressed. As, for example, 33% of the 2,647⁸ of offenders convicted of crimes against the person, property, law and order are Samoans, then the Justice Department should view this as a challenge to commit itself to social work that would help prevent the development of dysfunctionality among the vulnerable and volatile Samoans. In other words, such a view implies a moral and legal obligation on the part of the Department to deliver social work and social services as an attempt to prevent and minimize delinquency and dysfunctional behaviours within the Samoan sector. It also implies, from this conception that if the proportion of the clientele is predominantly Samoan, then naturally there should be a large proportion of Samoans employed as social workers relative to ethnicity, cultural background and needs of Samoan clients.

⁸ Justice Statistics (1992): Tables 3.24 and 3.25, pp. 95-96.

This conception will be reviewed further in Chapter Six when the feedback from the participants is examined in relation to their practice and experiences in the field.

Furthermore, Hepworth and Larsen also identify the type of people that social workers work with in different settings, which also characterize the nature of social work as a profession confined to those settings. It implies, from the description of clients and the practice settings, that Hepworth and Larsen prefer not to regard voluntary work as social work, because social work is a professional activity as opposed to voluntary work. If the core elements of purpose and objectives, values and ethics, knowledge base, methods and processes, all characterize social work as distinctive, then this indisputably distinguishes social work from voluntary work. Despite this distinction, it is important to emphasize, however, that both social work and voluntary work have a role to play in helping individuals, groups and communities in restoring their sense of value, dignity and confidence. In both these contexts, *fa'asamoa* has a role to play in the preventative, restorative and the remedial processes of dealing with Samoan clients. If social work is to do with professional activities of helping people, then this thesis would argue that *fa'asamoa* is an integral part of the professional

requirements which legitimize the role of social work in New Zealand.

3.3. SOCIAL WORK AND ITS DEVELOPMENTS IN NEW ZEALAND

The discussion in this section is important to provide perspective, information and background about the nature and the development of social work. Making this information available is thus an attempt towards understanding how *fa'asamoa* fits into the social work framework in Aotearoa New Zealand. The intention of this section, however, is not to provide an exhaustive account of the history of social work in New Zealand, but rather to examine some of the features and the developments of social work where *fa'asamoa* could have an influence in terms of practice and delivery involving the Samoans.

The review of the literature (Beddoe et al., 1994; and Cheyne et al., 1997) confirms a consensus among the experts that the nature of social work in New Zealand, since the 1980s, has changed dramatically when the New Zealand economy experienced a major restructuring - in terms of its political and economic infrastructure. These changes led to the development of legislation, and the influence of the Treaty of Waitangi,

which all change the context of social work practice and the nature of social work in New Zealand. Munford and Nash (1994: 37), for example, identify

(t) he rolling back of the welfare state, the introduction of the funder/purchaser service provision split, the reorganization of the Department of Social Welfare into the New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service, the Community Funding Agency and Income Support Service

as some of the factors that contributed to the ideological and organisational changes which impact on the work social workers perform. Similarly, Christine Cheyne, Mike O'Brien and Michael Belgrave (1997: 201) further explain that

(f) First, separation between funding of services and the direct provision of services was fundamental in the reshaping of the state sector generally. Second, this separation meant a realignment of the role of the state in which the state focus shifted from being the principal provider of services to being the funder of services, services which could be provided through a range of different organizational forms. Third, in contracting to receive funds from the state, the voluntary organizations would then provide specified services such as counselling and accommodation. In the social-services area, this change included a move from funding of organizations to funding of concrete and specific activities. The State Sector Act 1988 and the Public Finance Act 1989 are also important aspects of the new policy environment within which publicly funded social services are delivered.

Furthermore, Liz Beddoe and Howard Randal (1994:21) explain from their perspectives that the changes to social services over the last decade

have arisen as the sector has sought to meet its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

That is also reinforced by Benton et al, (1991; also cited in Munford and Nash, 1994) who claim that the Treaty has important and unavoidable implications for the organisation and the implementation of social services. The influence of the Treaty therefore has a direct bearing on the conduct of social services through the basic rights and guarantees contained in Article Three of the Treaty (Benton, et al., 1991; Liz Beddoe and Howard Randal, 1994). Benton et al (1991) in this context place an emphasis on the importance of the Treaty as a part of the central element of New Zealand's way of life, and as a factor in the gradual recovery of Maori culture (and language), and as a redress to Maori for their loss of natural resources (Liz Beddoe and Howard Randal, 1994).

The above developments also have a direct bearing on Samoans or the Pacific Island community insofar as social work and social services are concerned in New Zealand. For example, one of the significant pieces of social service reforms in New Zealand (Cheyne et al, 1997) is the introduction of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 which places a lot of emphasis on the role of the *aiga* social structure to be a part of the decision-making process which involves issues of care and protection. As Chayne et al, (1991:203) explain, the role of the

family (using the term 'family' widely) is important

as the primary channel through which difficulties would be adhered to.

Thus, the role of matai leadership and the aiga unit becomes relevant and significant under the 1989 CYPFS Act because of the importance of these institutions (*matai* and *aiga*) as part of the Family Group Conference setup in resolving issues relating to care and protection, and juvenile offending. The social work framework established by the CYPFS Act also provides for the opportunities to utilize *fa'asamoa* skills (or rather putting *fa'asamoa* skills into practice) such as the use of the Samoan language, understanding of Samoan protocols, and the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of *fa'asamoa*.

Moreover, the role of *fa'asamoa* is important in the Criminal Justice System when Samoan agencies become involved in the delivery of social services to Samoan offenders whom the Community Corrections Offices have referred to Samoan agencies for supervision and community service. The delivery of social services varies from undertaking supervision of Samoan offenders to the provision of community care. Samoan offenders are referred to Samoan agencies, because they have special

needs relating to counselling, anger management, cultural and/or community educational programmes, general lifeskills, lifestyle and community service. Similarly, the Samoan prison inmates undertake the same programmes including Samoan tuition on Samoan culture and language lessons as part of their rehabilitation training delivered by Samoan tutors and matai practitioners. By and large, the services provided for Samoan clients are delivered and conducted in Samoan and in accordance with Samoan protocols and values. Furthermore, *fa'asamoa* is also significant from the perspective of restorative justice because of the role of '*ifoga*' (forgiveness ceremony), for instance, in restoring peace, harmony and the wellbeing of the victim, the offender and their families.

However, despite the significance of these developments, the wider effects of the economic changes in terms of funding cuts have slowed down the implementation and the recognition of *fa'asamoa* skills in social work (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). Said these participants,

The level of cultural supervision is inadequate because of funding cuts and lack of resources within the State Sector. Before the user pay system was introduced the interaction with the community was integral as part of our work. But now that component of our work is no longer integrated because of the funding cuts (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

3.4. THE SAMOAN PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK

This section is significant, because it develops a basis for comparative analysis between the viewpoints of the participants located in Samoa and those in New Zealand regarding social work. It also examines the implications of the framework, by Hepworth and Larsen, of social work and how it relates to the participants in Samoa and in New Zealand. The discussion is important as well, because it provides the context in which to explain how the participants operate and the skills they apply within the context of their work. Furthermore, the characteristics of social work from a Samoan perspective are provided to differentiate the nature of social work activities in Samoa and New Zealand as part of the process of further explaining the links between *fa'asamoa* and social work. The discussion does not intend to undermine the integrity of different practices delivered by the participants wherever they are located. However, the aim is to develop a knowledge base to further explicate the implications of social work activities in Samoa and in New Zealand, and the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work activities.

Table Three, therefore, summarizes the characteristics of social work from the viewpoints of the participants in Samoa based on

their experience and practice in the village setting.

**Table 3: Participants in Samoa
Perspectives of social work**

Work and duties performed by the matai as a leader, a trustee and a custodian of the aiga; deliberations in village fono to promote the welfare of the village and the people; pastoral work; services provided by the aiga for its members such as making sacrifices and lobbying on behalf of family members; women's work in promoting health initiatives, childcare and childhood developments; household inspections; counselling and managing fine arts; domestic and training developments of unmarried men and women.

On the other hand, Table Four summarizes the characteristics of social work as described by the participants in New Zealand.

**Table 4: Participants in New Zealand:
Perspectives of social work**

Professional training;
Specific objectives and guidelines;
Work paid for by the state or through grants;
Work aimed at helping people with problems;
Specialised level of expertise and skills such as counselling; Delivery of educational programmes;
Networking with Samoan families and the community; Control by the Code of Ethics and Rules of the NZ Association of social workers;
Therapeutic and rehabilitative work; Group conference, report writing and community services.

The above two Tables were presented by Samoan participants including matai practitioners living in Samoa and those living in New Zealand. The participants were all familiar with *fa'asamoa*, and the characteristics they had presented reflected

their understanding and perspectives on social work in which they were involved. The two Tables display two different viewpoints. Table Three represents activities that are predominantly community in orientation in both approach and performance. For example, Table Three implies the involvement of the matai as the key players in social work and social services on behalf of their *aiga* and village. The performance of social work and social services in Samoa is inextricably connected to the matai system and community administration. There are two levels of control. One is at the immediate level of *aiga* where the matai, as the head, and other family members make the decisions on matters that affect the welfare and the wellbeing of *aiga* members. The second stage of control is at the village *fono* level where the council of matai (*fono a ali'i ma faipule*) makes decisions in promoting and protecting the welfare and the wellbeing of village residents collectively. Similarly, the council of women (*komiti a faletua ma tausi*) at the same level administers the provision of social services relating to health promotion, plunket nursing, childhood training, youth developments, fine arts, handicrafts, all of which are relevant to the wellbeing and welfare of village residents. The two levels of practice, implied in Table Three, feature the characteristics of the 'micro' and the 'mezzo' frameworks developed by Hepworth

and Larsen (1990:13) who have designated such features to direct practice because of the face-to-face contacts they emphasize in dealing with people.

Table Three also implies the significance of groupwork in the provision of social services at the village setting. For instance, the matai alone cannot work in isolation from their aiga and the village fono. The decisions exercised by the matai are contingent on the attitudes and the opinions of other matai and members of the aiga and the village. The virtue of '*tofa ma le fa'autaga loloto*'⁹ is highly observed to guide matai as a group in their decision-making deliberations to arrive at a consensus (*tofa ua tasi*) which is beneficial to the village community as a whole. Furthermore, Table Three implies a strong sense of '*voluntarism*' in regards to the activities performed by the participants in Samoa. '*Voluntarism*,' in this context, has to do with one's involvement in community and family work without monetary pay for the performance of such work. Obviously, it is not the influence of money that motivates the matai participants, women and men to volunteer their time and energy in support of family and village activities at the village setting. However, the majority of participants are influenced by the

⁹ If 'tofa' means 'dignity', and 'fa'autaga' means 'wise' & 'cautious', and 'loloto' means 'deep', then this phrase implies one to be dignified, wise and cautious in the deepest sense when deliberating on a course of action to undertake.

principle of altruism and the need for survival. Thus 'voluntarism,' in this regard, is a sentimental variable of the 'Samoan Heart' which is a fundamental component of *fa'asamoa* that imbues many of the participants to perform social work and social services at the village setting in Samoa.

By comparison, there is a group of people in New Zealand who share the same perspectives and sentiments with those in Samoa (Interviews with Matai in The Samoan Community in New Zealand, 1997). The people in this category believe that the nature of social work in New Zealand is inherited from their ancestors, parents, *aiga* and the church. One of the key components of social work, based on their experience, is the emotional variable that they have learned from a very early age of their lives. For example, regard for others is derived from the family and the community as a whole, which motivates individuals to participate in a variety of social work tasks. This is true in a number of social work contexts which involve activities such as baby sitting, child minding and caring for the elderly when kin caregivers are temporarily away from home (Bathgate et al, 1994). In the case of adoption and single parentage, the *aiga* unit plays an active role to care, and give the necessary support to those in need. The participation of

Samoans in these activities in New Zealand is inheritable, through life experience, from their elders and peers who tended to place more emphasis on practice rather than theory. The involvement of Samoans in family activities and community work in New Zealand is an indication of their commitment to these tasks as their fulltime responsibility towards their parents, children, grandparents, to the church and to the Samoan community at large. Thus social work, as far as volunteers, community workers and some matai practitioners in New Zealand are concerned, is not a profession but a life-obligation and a commitment to their families, children, parents, grandparents, church ministers and the Samoan community as a whole.

Table Four, in contrast, reveals a different perspective of social work based on the experience and the environment in which the Samoan participants are placed in New Zealand. Table Four implies a strong sense of '*professionalism*' associated with the performance of social work in which the Samoans are involved. '*Professionalism*,' in this context, is associated with qualities, methods and skills of advanced learning applicable to social work as a profession. Some of the qualities of *professionalism* involves the aspects of training and development, scientific and

clinical expertise in special practices such as counselling and therapy. Associated with these aspects are standards set by the New Zealand Association of social workers and the Code of Ethics which make social work, as a profession in New Zealand, distinctive.

Also implied in Table Four is the involvement of other agencies at the macro level where face-to-face contacts with clients are minimised. Report writing, social planning and community organization (Hepworth and Larsen, 1990:13), for example, are some of the activities delivered at the macro level which require management skills and training for a social worker to perform such tasks professionally.

While Table Four implies the significance of formal qualifications and adequate induction of people into social work, the participants were agreeable that *fa'asamoa* still plays a vital role in social work. They believed that *fa'asamoa* had a role to play in dealing with Samoans who were dealt with by statutory agencies and schools in New Zealand. Because of the significance of the role of *fa'asamoa* with regard to Samoan clients, the participants in Table Four therefore implied that *fa'asamoa* needed to be supported, encouraged and recognised by

the statutory agencies and social services in New Zealand (Interview with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

Furthermore, Table Four implies that 'being Samoan' and having the ability to 'speak Samoan' would not necessarily make a person an effective social worker. A good social worker, in the participants' view, is the person who has the knowledge and skills of *fa'asamoa*, as well as the acquisition of Western theoretical knowledge of social work theories and approaches. This further implies that when Samoan social workers are selected, the selection should be on the basis of merit and suitability to account for the person's skills, experience, cultural and theoretical knowledge of social work practices.

3.5. RELATED ISSUES TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE FROM A SAMOAN PERSPECTIVE

If social work is a professional activity to help the disadvantaged and the oppressed, should a Samoan social worker compromise the rules to support another Samoan or a relative? How could one operate as a Samoan and a social worker without compromising one with the other? What should a Samoan social worker do when the supervisor insists on maintaining the departmental line which may contradict with

fa'asamoa beliefs and values? These are only some of the questions to highlight some of the issues, the complexities and the dilemmas faced by Samoan social workers in New Zealand.

While these questions are important to keep the discussion in perspective in this section, the aim is to develop an understanding of social work practice applied by the Samoans in each situation. In this section, a number of issues are examined along with the participants' responses to each case. For example,

- a) if there is a clash between 'being a Samoan' and 'being a social worker,' how would such a clash be managed?

In this case, the participants in New Zealand preferred to analyse the nature of the clash first to determine how they would react. From the participants' viewpoint, if the agencies attempt to deny them recognition of their Samoan values and beliefs, then naturally the 'Samoan Heart' (a component of *fa'asamoa*) would motivate them to act until they achieve recognition wherever necessary. However, if the clash relates to an uncertainty between the identities of the participants as 'Samoans' and as 'social workers,' the participants in this case preferred to seek advice from their elders, church ministers and

leaders of their workplaces. They would also consult the Code of Ethics and the Rules set by the New Zealand Association of Social Workers for guidance (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

The participants' responses, in this case, imply the existence of a sense of *professionalism* and a sense of *fa'asamoa* in their attitudes. The professional values, implied in this example, are characterized by the participants' sense of analysis, tactfulness and being mindful of the need to consult with others as part of their approach. However, despite this sense of *professionalism*, it was obvious from this example that *fa'asamoa* still has a strong hold on Samoan social workers through the influence of their Samoan Hearts. Another implication from this example is the readiness on the part of Samoan social workers to blend professional values and *fa'asamoa* together as a strategy to confront any conflicts with which they have faced in the field. The aim of such strategy is to provide a balance of skills to deal with issues faced by Samoans in a cross-cultural context of social work. This feature of social work practice is also implied in Table Four which underlies the need to combine the professional and *fa'asamoa* skills together.

Furthermore, the implication of the participants' responses confirms that ethnicity is a skill and is an advantage to social work in the Samoan context. While the participants in New Zealand preferred to place emphasis on merit, and not 'race' as the key factor for their appointments as social workers, the participants agreed that 'being a Samoan' had a powerful influence on how they related to Samoan clients. The influence of ethnicity in this regard draws people together and creates a sense of bond, trust and co-operation between Samoan social workers and clients. It is without doubt that other Pacific Island cultures in New Zealand would probably experience the same bond that also develops from the influence of their own ethnicities.

In another context,

- b) should a Samoan social worker compromise the rules to support another Samoan or a relative?

In the main, the participants in this case preferred to undertake a supportive role but not to the extent of undermining the rules at their expense (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). Many of the participants in New Zealand were not prepared to put their careers on the line. If the demands and the expectations from the clients were unreasonable, the

participants were prepared to follow their conscience and comply with the right cause of action. In fact, many of the participants were willing to be bold, direct and straightforward with their people concerning their attitudes and behaviours. Samoan clients would respect social workers for this in the same way that Samoan clients would respect the authority of their elders and matai in the *fa'asamoa* context.

What about

- c) the *Fa'asamoa* practice of *sua* and *lafo*? If a Samoan social worker is presented with *sua* or *lafo*, should social workers in their role accept *sua* and *lafo*?

Sua is a Samoan ritual of 'giving lavish gifts at special family and church events'¹⁰ to *faiifeau* (church pastor), matai *ali'i* (high chiefs), matai *tulafale* (chief orators) or a person with high standing in the community. It is a great honour for such persons to receive such gifts. *Sua* is an act performed by the 'donor,' as a mark of respect and appreciation for the role performed by dignitaries in an important and significant event. A *sua* usually comprises ten small fine mats, plus a large fine mat, a box of corned beef (valued at \$200), and money ranging from \$50 to \$100.

¹⁰ See other comments by Feiloaiga Taule'ale'ausumai in *Counselling Issues and South Pacific Communities* (ed. Phillip Culpertson), Auckland: Accent 1997, p. 234).

Unlike *sua*, *lafo* is a gift ritual given to matai *tulafale* only. *Lafo* is not as lavish as *sua*. *Lafo* is usually restricted to the *tulafale* who has made a speech on behalf of invited guest and dignitaries at the conclusion of a very important event. Other *tulafale* who have participated at the *fa'atau* (deliberations between orators) also receive *lafo* from the host. The *tulafale* who has given the speech receives a *lafo* which may be a sum of money ranging from \$50 to \$100 or, instead, a donation of 10 *lalaga* (small fine mats) plus one large fine mat. The rest of the *tulafale* who have participated in the *fa'atau* also receive *lafo* in the form of money at \$10 each, or one fine mat each.

In the social work context, if a Samoan social worker is presented with a *sua* by a Samoan family, should the social worker be under an obligation to accept such ritual? The majority of participants in New Zealand were wary of such practice. There were those whose concerns were linked to the motives of clients and their families committing themselves to such practice. The participants in New Zealand believed that *sua* and *lafo* could be subject to abuse and manipulation by Samoans to gain favour and special treatment from social workers. They did not want to be involved with such practice, as they did not want to feel personally obligated towards clients

and their families. The participants in New Zealand were also concerned about the economic implications of *sua* and *lafo* on clients (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). From the perspective of the participants in New Zealand, it is preferable to avoid *sua* and *lafo* at all possible costs.

In contrast, the participants in Samoa regarded *sua* and *lafo* as an integral component of social work practice in dealing with families in Samoa (Interviews with Participants in Samoa, 1997). From their perspective, such variables of *fa'asamoa* are a part of the concept of reciprocity which plays an influential role in uniting people as a group or unit. The influence of *sua* and *lafo*, therefore, provides a basis for mutual exchange between individuals and families, that leads to the development of goodwill and spiritual harmony between social workers and clients in Samoa. *Sua* and *lafo* are part of *fa'asamoa* that dominates the lifestyles and social relationships of Samoans in Samoa.

Finally, yet no less significant is the question as to,

- d) what does *ifoga* ceremony tell us about social work in the *fa'asamoa* context?

The *ifoga* process is important in the restoration of peace and

harmony between an offending party and the victim. The participants have fully endorsed *ifoga* as an important variable of fa'asamoa within the context of social work with Samoans. Where an incident involves a person who is not a Samoan, then *ifoga* becomes discretionary in that the family of the offender makes the decision for its applicability based on the degree of the offence, the level of appropriateness, and understanding on the part of the victim's party concerning the significance of such ceremony. However, the participants in New Zealand have expressed their concern when *ifoga* is used for individualistic and self-interest purposes primarily for commercial gain and professional satisfaction. For instance, some participants identified a number of instances where *ifoga* was used by lawyers for their own credibility and for winning sympathy towards their clients (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). In this regard, the issue relates to the way in which *ifoga* had been manipulated by lawyers to their own advantage, and not necessarily in accordance with the true spirit of why and how *ifoga* was needed, and with the context within which *ifoga* was delivered. From the social work perspective, *ifoga* has a role to play in the process of restorative justice; hence, the need to promote *ifoga*, as a means to an end, must in status be recognised in the legal framework in New

Zealand.

The above discussions confirm that there is a link between *fa'asamoa* and social work as reflected in the responses by Samoans in dealing with issues confronted by Samoans as social workers. This reflection is also found in the relevance of *fa'asamoa* skills to social work, despite the professional demands imposed by social work in New Zealand. The reflection extends to the assumption that *fa'asamoa* cannot be treated in isolation from the influence of professionalism as one of the core elements of social work in New Zealand. Finally, the link is reflected in a blend between the two phenomena of *fa'asamoa* and professionalism that is a necessity to maximise the best results in a given situation faced by a Samoan social worker in New Zealand. Although the discussion in this section is brief concerning feedback by the participants, Chapter Six is an extension of this discussion, and further elucidates the focal and specific role as well as influence of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand.

3.6. SUMMARY

The heart of social work involves four conceptual domains

which according to Hepworth and Larsen (1990) include the purpose and objectives of the profession; values, ethics and a philosophy of direct practice; knowledge base; methods and processes employed in direct practice. The section on the development of social work in New Zealand was important in providing a knowledge base to understand that such developments have a direct bearing on Samoans through their lifestyles, skills and culture. For example, the role of the *aiga* structure became relevant as part of the decision-making process when the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act was introduced in 1989. In another context, *fa'asamoa* became the main thrust through the involvement of Samoan agencies in promoting and teaching Samoan cultural programmes to inmates and convicted offenders administered by the Community Correction Offices and the Prison institutions. *Ifoga* as a cultural ceremony has features of restorative justice because *ifoga* aims to promote peace, harmony and the restoration of the wellbeing of victims and their families.

Furthermore, the conceptual framework proposed by Hepworth and Larsen formed a basis to imply a sense of challenge to agencies and Samoan social workers alike. For instance, if the statistical evidence¹¹ on Samoan offending is taken into

11 Justice Statistics (1992) Tables 3:24 and 3:25 pp. 95-96.

consideration, then the implication from such evidence becomes a challenge to both agencies and the Samoans. The agencies should use this evidence as a guide in their planning and development to adopt and invest in preventative measures against dysfunctionality and offending.

The section on social work from a Samoan perspective clarifies two distinct viewpoints between the Samoans in Samoa and those living in New Zealand. Table Three summarizes the characteristics of social work from the viewpoints of those in Samoa, while Table Four contains the descriptions of social work from the perspective of Samoans living in New Zealand. Table Three has implications relating to groupwork, voluntarism, the involvement of *aiga* and *matai*; the village *fono* and the virtue of '*tofa ma le fa'autaga loloto*' which refers to being cautious and wise when a person makes a decision. By comparison, Table Four has implications relating to the notion of professionalism which is characterized by technical skills, scientific knowledge and specialised training. Despite the influence of professionalism in association with social work, *fa'asamoa* is seen to have a place in social work activities in New Zealand. The issues raised in section 3.5 were introduced to broaden our knowledge and understanding of social work

practices from a Samoan perspective. The discussion confirmed the relevance of *fa'asamoa* skills in dealing with Samoans through social work in New Zealand. The discussion also implied that *fa'asamoa* cannot be treated in isolation from the influence of professional requirements imposed by the Code of Ethics and the rules set by the New Zealand Association of social workers.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORETICAL EXPLANATION OF THE ROLE OF FA'ASAMOA IN SOCIAL WORK

Theoretical traditions need to be examined towards developing an understanding of the nature and the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand. The key theoretical traditions - including Ethnic Sensitive Theory, Pyschodynamic Theory and Ant-racist Theory - are examined in sections One, Two, Three and Four below. Section Five summarizes the key points highlighted in each of the preceding sections.

4.1. THE THEORETICAL TRADITIONS RELEVANT TO THIS STUDY

In Chapter Three the theoretical conception of Hepworth and Larsen's (1990) was useful in articulating the nature of social work and its implications on Samoans. In that conception, reference was made to micro, mezzo and macro variables as part of the ecological framework to highlight the inextricable links between the individual and the environment when one interacts with the other through social work.

However, the aim of this Chapter (Four) is to examine Ethnic

Sensitive, the Psychodynamic and Anti-racist Theories as additional theoretical approaches towards developing an understanding of the nature and the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand.

The ethnic sensitive theory was chosen because of its cultural orientation in focus and approach. As *fa'asamoa* is predominantly a 'cultural' system, the ethnic sensitive approach provides a challenge to confirm that *fa'asamoa* must be fully recognised, because it is ethnically empowering, therapeutic, practicable and effective in facilitating a two-way working relationship with Samoans through social work in New Zealand. The role of ethnic sensitive theory, in this thesis, is to provide a theoretical explanation of the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work for the benefit of Samoan and non-Samoan social workers alike.

Psychodynamic theory, on the other hand, was chosen because of its psychological implications on Samoans in the field of social work. The psychodynamic framework is relevant because of its role in empowering Samoan social workers and counsellors whose work involves educating and rehabilitating Samoan clients.

As *fa'asamoa* needs to be fully recognised within the context of social work in New Zealand, anti-racist theory was chosen to provide the ideological framework to guide Samoans and statutory agencies in New Zealand on the appropriate action to adopt in response to the needs of Samoans and the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand. The next section examines each of the theoretical traditions in detail and the contributions they provide in explicating the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand.

4.2. ETHNIC SENSITIVE THEORY

Ethnic sensitive theory is distinctive because of its theoretical and practical orientation to placing an emphasis on people's ethnicity, cultural identity and social class. It focuses on the significance of the social existence of ethnic groups; the diversity of cultures; the social structures of the family; religion; rituals; celebrations; language; class; and sense of peoplehood. These are all significant, because they affect the way social workers practice and they shape social workers' perceptions of themselves and others. The proponents of ethnic sensitive theory, including Devore and Schlesinger (1981, 1991) and Sue and Sue (1990), agree that cultures, ethnicity,

language and people's physical features are integral to people's lifestyles, social behaviours and survival. This has been confirmed by research in which the ethnic communities in America, the United Kingdom and Canada were involved (Devore & Schlesinger, 1981, 1991). By comparison, these communities have much in common with the Samoan community in New Zealand because of their experiences as migrants, the crises they encounter, and the life cycles they experience within their host environments. Ethnic sensitive theory, therefore, is relevant to Samoan social workers from an ethnic perspective through the influence of key components, that is, the role of ethnicity; obligation and sensitivity; strength and coping capacities. These components contribute towards an understanding of the nature of *fa'asamoa* and the role of *fa'asamoa* in the field of social work in New Zealand.

a) The Role of Ethnicity

Ethnicity as a concept involves the study of people's cultures, values, attitudes, needs, modes of expression, behaviour and identity (Jalali, 1988). *Ethnicity* has been a popular concept in modern times, because it involves understanding the development and bases of labelling and contrast applied to

groups and categories of peoples. As a phenomenon, *ethnicity* cannot separate itself from the study of self-identity systems, stereotyping systems, class systems, systems of resource competition, and systems of political and economic domination and change.¹² Although the focus in this study concerns Samoan ethnicity and its influence on Samoans in the field of social work, the point needs emphasising that ethnicity in the general sense is significant because of its influence in highlighting the role of cultural persistence and change, the maintenance and crossing of established boundaries, and the construction of boundaries that both separate and bind people in myriad ways.¹³ Thus, for the purposes of this study *ethnicity* as a framework is used as a lens to view and understand the role of *fa'asamoa* and its influence on Samoan social workers in New Zealand.

The questions of '*who am I in the ethnic sense?*' and '*why is it important to know who I am, where I was born, the culture to which I belong, and the beliefs and values which I uphold as part of my culture?*'¹⁴ are fundamental issues in the study of ethnicity. From a social work perspective, it is equally fundamental to ask why these questions are important to a

12 See further commentary in *Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology 1995*.

13 See other comments in *Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology 1995*.

14 Ideas adopted from the ethnic sensitive theory by Devore and Schlesinger, 1981 and 1991.

Samoan social worker or to a Pacific Island social worker for that matter. To know that I am Samoan, the culture to which I belong and where I have been, makes me aware of where I want to go in the future. Under the influence of *ethnicity*, cultural identity, knowledge of ancestral roots and certainty of direction are all important issues that affect the perception of Samoan social workers and shape the way they practice in social work. Without this knowledge of self and others, it is difficult to be aware of and to take responsibility for the emotions and attitudes towards others and the Samoan clients in the context of social work. *Ethnicity* in this regard is likened to the *umbilical cord* that connects the Samoans to their cultural roots which is the source of influence on their perception of themselves and others, and the basis of their conduct and behaviours.

Fa'asamoa is the *umbilical cord* that connects Samoan social workers to their village roots, their ancestors, their matai, their aiga, their rituals, their ceremonies, their values and their beliefs. It also gives Samoan social workers the basis to think and behave as Samoans. Without the *umbilical cord* of *fa'asamoa*, the role of *aiga*, religion, *matai*, rituals, ceremonies and language in social work would be diminished in significance. However, as these variables cannot be separated

from the phenomenon of self-identity of Samoans as a people and as a social group in New Zealand, *fa'asamoa* as an *umbilical cord* plays a powerful role in connecting Samoans with their cultural roots. These connections can draw Samoans together and can create a psychic bond, a feeling of peoplehood, cohesion, solidarity and sense of identity among themselves in New Zealand.

In terms of social work from a Samoan perspective, this means that Samoan social workers and Samoan clients are connected by the *umbilical cord* of *fa'asamoa* which leads to an *empowering* working relationship. This relationship is a framework purposed to benefit Samoan clients. Placing an emphasis on the importance of *Samoan ethnicity* makes clients and social workers feel Samoan, safe, empowering and empowered, which are all relevant to their well-being and personal growth. According to the proponents (Devore et al, 1991) of Ethnic Sensitive Theory, the power of ethnicity through ceremonies and cultural activities should also be promoted through public policy, statutes and research in order to give recognition and credibility to their existence and role in social work.

b) The Influence of 'Ethnic Sensitivity'

Ethnic sensitive theory plays a significant role in reminding Samoan social workers to be sensitive to and aware of issues that underpin crises faced by their clients. Devore and Schlesinger (1981,1991), for example, refer to the issues of *inequality*, *poverty* and a sense of *powerlessness* as the commonest issues affecting clients in this regard. Using the ethnic sensitive approach, a Samoan social worker has an obligation to draw on the general knowledge of human behaviour and dispositions, generated by these issues, to enable them to elicit a remedy for such problems and the daily trauma faced by clients from a sense of personal failure, hostility, the threat of desertion and economic strain (Devore and Schlesinger, 1981).

Whether or not the ethnic sensitive framework has a role to play to resolve some of these problems, warrants questioning. The implication from the ethnic sensitive theorists (Devore et al, 1981, 1991) reaffirms that unless ethnicity is found to be the cause of these problems, then such problems cannot be resolved by an ethnic approach alone. In the Samoan context, it means that unless *fa'asamoa* is proven to be the cause of the

crises faced by Samoans in New Zealand, it would be inaccurate to assume that *fa'asamoa* is the sole approach to overcome problems faced by the Samoans in New Zealand. Furthermore, if *ethnicity* is to blame for the economic crisis faced by Samoans (and the Pacific Island peoples in New Zealand) then it is misleading to believe in this out of the wider context comprising *poverty*, *inequality* and sense of *powerlessness* faced by society at large. From a wider perspective, in view of these factors, it is necessary to investigate how *poverty*, *inequality* and *powerlessness* impact on the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand.

If poverty, for example, is caused by the influence of *ethnicity* - through obligations and commitments to kin and large families - can this provide a basis to understand the role of *fa'asamoa* within social work? Also, if *fa'asamoa* is to blame for the economic crisis of Samoans, as indicated by Graves and Graves (1985) in their analysis, then what can be drawn from this analysis? According to the data produced by Graves and Graves, Samoans are generous people in terms of the monetary donations they provide to support their relatives and community projects. What Graves and Graves (1985) have failed to explain is that the level of generosity within the context of

fa'asamoa is based on 'alofa' (sense of charity), a variable of the Samoan Heart, which imbues the Samoans to give generously to their people. *Alofa* is based and influenced by a number of factors. This includes the influence of *aiga* which is powerful in Samoan society. The stronger the bond (*faia*) a Samoan has with his or her *aiga*, the stronger it becomes for this person to feel obliged to give to the *aiga*. "Giving" in this sense does not necessarily mean financial in terms of donation and support. It could also mean sacrifices in terms of a person's time, voluntary labour and energy spent on family affairs. The implications of this are that *fa'asamoa* is a communal system because of the scope it provides for people to share and contribute collectively as a unit. *Fa'asamoa* means, in this regard, making sacrifices for others and living a life to serve others rather than one's own self.

Fa'asamoa, built on the above mentioned *philosophy*, explains the reasons that Samoans work effectively in groups; that matai leaders are served (*tautua*) by their subordinates; that Samoans give away much money, at times more substantially than they can afford; that families accept relatives and grandparents living with them despite the limited space available in their homes; that Samoan children are obliged to

care for their elderly parents; that nieces, nephews and cousins are all raised within the same household; and the reasons that Samoans give very substantial support to the development of their churches in New Zealand. Most Samoan social workers are familiar with all these issues as they have grown up in the context. Reflecting the ethnic sensitive approach, the knowledge drawn from this background relevantly explains the relationship between *fa'asamoa*, poverty, inequality and powerlessness experienced by Samoans in New Zealand.

Without this knowledge base, a social worker can consequently misjudge or unwittingly attribute attitudes resulting from the physical and environmental adversity to the cultural or individual traits of that person (Sue & Sue, 1990) and vice versa. Sue and Sue (1990:14) explain what they mean by referring to a sample case of a 12 year old to illustrate the confusion that could easily develop where a social worker lacks knowledge of those ethnic factors. The 12 year old was dealt with by a school counsellor who mistakenly assumed that the cause of the child's problems was related to an innate trait, rather than the effect imposed by physical and environmental adversity:

Jimmy Jones is a 12 year old Black male student who was referred by Mrs Peterson because of apathy, indifference, and inattentiveness to classroom activities. Other teachers have also reported that Jimmy does not pay attention, daydreams often, and frequently falls asleep

during class. There is a strong possibility that Jimmy is harbouring repressed rage that needs to be ventilated and dealt with. His inability to directly express his anger had led him to adopt passive aggressive means of expressing hostility, ie, inattentiveness, daydreaming and falling asleep. It is recommended that Jimmy be seen for intensive counselling to discover the basis of the anger.

Having conducted interviews and research, the counselor discovered that the basis of Jimmy's problem was not due to 'ethnic laziness traits,' rather it was extreme poverty where hunger, lack of sleep, and overcrowding served to diminish his energy level and motivation. Fatigue, passivity and fatalism were more a result of poverty than of some innate trait.

If a Samoan child were involved in a similar situation in New Zealand, would it be possible to link poverty with *fa'asamoa* in this context? In other words, could *fa'asamoa* be blamed for this child's state of poverty? Obviously, if the parents of this child had given away money more than they should have to the church or in support of a kin in a crisis, for example, then the ability of this family to afford food and clothing necessary for the welfare of this child had diminished. The family had played a role in creating poverty for this child.

Similarly, what if a student were to be occupied, on a fulltime basis over 5-6 weeks, with cooking for mourning gatherings because she had felt it to be her first duty to the family even

though to her family her education was of the utmost importance? Should *fa'asamoa* in this regard have been blamed for her failure to do well at school? As most Samoan students are almost always tied into large extended families, they are intensely conscious of wider family obligations, and most of them try to juggle these with their studies.¹⁵ If students in this category had felt distracted from their academic studies or failed in their examinations because of the demands and obligations placed upon them by their *aita*, who should have been blamed for such crises?

As these examples do suggest that *fa'asamoa* to an extent plays a role in contributing to poverty, inequality and sense of powerlessness among Samoan students, they generate the necessity to question whether *fa'asamoa* as a system should be blamed for these crises, or the people themselves be blamed for their own misfortunes? On the one hand, the *fa'asamoa* system makes people feel obliged to respond in these particular ways; on the other hand, the people should have taken more caution in managing the pressure imposed on them by such a system. The implication is that *fa'asamoa* and the Samoans are to blame for their own misfortunes.

¹⁵ Example drawn from case studies on Pacific Island Students' Academic Achievement Collective. 'Coconuts begin With a 'C': Pacific Islanders At University,' in *Many Voices: A Journal of New Zealand Settlers and Multicultural Education Issues*, (October 1993), v. 6:6-10.

However, the problematic can also be resolved through *fa'asamoa* from within, reflected in the Samoan saying '*e fofo a e le alamea le ala mea*' which implies 'that the people who cause an injury are the very people who can fix the same injury.' If *fa'asamoa* becomes too burdensome, then the cause of the burden must be assessed and identified within the respective components of *fa'asamoa*. For example, if the *aiga* or the church is the source of stress to an individual member of these institutions, then the responsibility of this individual is shared with other members until such time as the individual is ready to resume full responsibility of commitments. According to the ethnic sensitive framework, the effect of *fa'asamoa* in this regard has been restructured in order to accommodate the needs for this individual's concerns to become a collective responsibility. Such an approach gives the individual space and time-off to recuperate while the group as a whole takes care of that person's responsibilities. The cost to the group is, on the basis of this approach, far less because of the collective participation of group members in sharing such responsibilities. When *fa'asamoa* is utilized in this manner, it becomes a source of empowerment for the Samoans.

c) Strength and Coping Capacity

The discussion in this section implies the need to be aware of and sensitive to the sources of strength and the capacities for coping, associated with ethnic groups and the role they play in the social existence of ethnic members. Strength and coping capacities are driven by ethnic values which encapsulate and emulate the *spirit of ethnicity* and *peoplehood* in each ethnic community. In the *fa'asamoa* context, the role of *aiga* is a source of strength and support for many Samoans. As Kramer et al (1994) describe, *aiga* is a powerful factor in Samoan society. Under the ethnic sensitive framework, a Samoan social worker should work to strengthen the original family structure and try making it more functional than to try changing it (Sue & Sue, 1991). This implies that *aiga* as a unit can be used as part of *group therapy approach* where members make a contribution collectively towards the welfare and the well-being of *aiga* members in both the spiritual and the material sense. A Samoan without an *aiga* is a person with no sense of foundation and support. Proponents of ethnic theories (for example, Devore et al, 1981, 1991) also highlight the role of *rituals* and *celebrations* as cultural factors which are a source of support and strength for ethnic communities. Ceremonial and ritual activities remind the Samoans of their history, ancestors,

values, arts, beliefs and protocols. These are positive developments to the well-being and the existence of Samoans in New Zealand. Religious beliefs are treated by the Samoans as a source of strength and a sense of empowerment. The Samoans are not alone in their attitudes towards religion, because the ethnic communities overseas adopt the same attitude. The Hispanic groups in America accept the Catholic religion as a source of comfort in times of stress (Yamamoto & Acosta, 1982). There is a strong belief in the importance of prayer, and most participate in Mass.

The Hispanic groups have the view that sacrifice in this world is helpful to salvation, being charitable to others is a virtue, and that one should endure wrongs done against one (Sue & Sue, 1991). Drawing on the ethnic sensitive approach, a social worker or counsellor must, therefore, be sensitive to the influence of religion when dealing with clients. A client with strong religious beliefs may, for example, be better off referred to an agency that runs community programmes which involve counselling or educational activities where a registered church pastor or a priest has a role to play. Many Samoan agencies in Auckland integrate religion as part of their counselling programmes, as religion is fundamental to the social existence

of the Samoan community in New Zealand.

Other sources of comfort and strength, that ethnic sensitive theorists highlight, include language nest programmes, the use of art, music and folklores, sports and recreational activities. *Aoga amata* is the Samoan version of *kohanga reo* which aims at providing language skills for pre-schoolers who are of Samoan heritage. This programme is not restricted to Samoans only; in fact the opportunity is extended to any person who is keen to learn Samoan.

Drawing on the ethnic sensitive approach, the development of the *aoga amata* should be promoted and recognised, as their influence can produce substantial positive and satisfactory results for the benefit of Samoans. There are institutions in New Zealand that are now integrating Samoan as part of their educational curriculum and programmes which aim at those who need to learn Samoan as a skill and for practice. Other organisations and institutions are conducting programmes based on Samoan culture and language as part of their cultural strategies for rehabilitation and reformation purposes. Similarly music, art and folklore are also encouraged by the ethnic sensitive approach, because they provide the scope and space

for strength and comfort for people. Some organisations in New Zealand use these as part of their therapy programme to engage people and to allow people to express their emotions and sentiments (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

Folklore and traditional music are used by some agencies as another type of method to remind people of their ancestry: who they are and the strengths they have as a people. The church community and some City Councils in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch have sponsored sports tournaments, recreational and cultural festivals to recognise and celebrate the diversities of talents, skills and cultures in New Zealand. One of the regular events now happening on the secondary school scene in Auckland is the annual cultural festival where Maori and Pacific Island groups come together to participate in songs, dances and art, each according to its own style, rhythm and cultural orientation. Art also involves the performance of skits, *faleatu* (comedy), fashion shows, publications and poetry.

All the above mentioned activities contribute to the general welfare of Samoans living in New Zealand, and deserve to be supported and recognised at whatever levels they occur. Thus, the role of *ethnicity* plays a powerful influence in these

developments, and underlies the significance of allowing space, time and opportunity for these developments to occur and be highlighted. Proponents of ethnic sensitive theory prefer to see these developments encouraged and adequately resourced because of the positive impact they produce for ethnic people in particular, and society at large. In terms of this thesis, the above discussions reconfirms that *fa'asamoa* as an ethnic approach needs to be fully recognised and supported because it is ethnically empowering, therapeutic, pragmatic, effective, natural and experiential in facilitating a two-way working relationship with Samoans in New Zealand.

4.3. PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY

While the nature of this approach is fundamentally Western in tradition, it is relevant in this thesis because it gives Samoan social workers the opportunity to integrate and adapt certain aspects of *fa'asamoa* to which Samoan social workers and Samoan clients could relate. The term "psycho" in this context refers to the person's mind, spirit and soul, whereas "dynamic" is used to describe forces or factors that bring changes to the person's social existence. Thus psychodynamic theory in this context refers to the interplay of psychological and dynamic

factors that determine the physical growth, change and development which a person experiences in life (Samuda and Wolfgang, 1985; Devore et al., 1981).

Thus, the influence of psychodynamic theory in this study is significant, because it provides the scope in which to apply those aspects of *fa'asamoa* that heavily influence the manner of social functioning of Samoans in social work. Such aspects include the practice of *fa'aaloalo*, the psycho-cultural treatment of Samoan women as '*tuafafine*' by Samoan men; the use of *lotu maualalo* (humility); the power of *gagana Samoa*; mataihip; *lotu* and *aiga*.

The key components of psychodynamic theory that are significant to this study include the problem-solving set; the person's identity and the non-authoritative set (Sue and Sue, 1990).

a) The Problem-solving Set

Fundamentally, this set involves the process where a counsellor, for example, requires to *redefine* and *reconstruct* the life cycle of a client primarily to identify those aspects of the

person's life cycle which represent the crucial points of change, the life experiences that promote health and wellbeing, and the psychodynamic factors that impede growth and learning (Samuda and Wolfgang, 1985; Devore and Schlesinger, 1981). This approach requires a Samoan social worker to establish whether or not the present crisis is linked to the person's past or present circumstances. The process involves intensive interviews, and probing the person to give as much information as possible to the counsellor. It allows the Samoan social worker the opportunity to connect the Samoan client with *fa'asamoa*; and also involves the analysis of a person's mind as well as the person's social conduct. This part of the process involves the assessment of the person's background, life history, and present circumstances. The aim of the exercise is to identify possible linkages between the person and outside forces that affect the person's development in life.

Thus, when a Samoan counsellor asks a Samoan client to produce some information on 'their parents,' the village to which they belong in Samoa and the matai title of their family, the approach is psychodynamic because the counsellor in this regard is paying attention to the dynamic interplay between this person's *fa'asamoa* background and the stages of life that this

person has been through in New Zealand. In practice, the counsellor is using the psychodynamic process within the *fa'asamoa* framework to define the cause and effect of the client's crisis and the appropriate actions to overcome such crisis.

b) The Identity Set

The aim of this set is to create a link between Samoans and their cultural roots especially those who are faced with problems of identity crisis in New Zealand. If a Samoan client is faced with this problem, then it is not unusual for Samoan counsellors to engage a Samoan client in the process of reconstructing the *aiga* environment to which the client belongs. Part of the process also requires the counsellor to probe the client with the following questions: Where were you born, in Samoa or in New Zealand? Which *aiga* do you belong to? Who is your father? Is your father a *matai*? How many in your family? Do you have relatives in New Zealand? Are you married? Do you have children? What is your village in Samoa? Do you hold a *matai* title? Do you speak Samoan? Do you go to church? Which church? When was the last time you were in Samoa? Have you been to Samoa? Do you play sports? What do

you do in your spare time? Do you speak Samoan? What do you spend your money on, and so forth. These are all important questions which guide Samoan social workers and Samoan counsellors to obtain cultural information from their clients, and to make the necessary connections between clients and their Samoan roots. Such knowledge would help a Samoan counsellor to reconstruct *where* the Samoan clients have come from, *where* they have been, *where* they are at present and *where* they would like to go from now. Information about these connections is relevant to the process of redefinition and reconstruction of what is best for the client. This process of psychodynamic theory becomes therapeutic when it creates a positive effect on Samoan clients to appreciate and feel proud of their Samoan identity. Thus the psychodynamic component of this approach relates to the interplay between the individual and his or her Samoan environment. It also relates to the effect of past and present; and the effect of psychological and environmental factors on the person whom these factors aim to change to achieve relief and a sense of empowerment.

c) The Non-Authoritative Set

As social workers and counsellors are psychologically seen by

clients as people with legitimate authority, the influence of this perception creates a series of notions in the minds of clients. For example, clients may either obey or disobey the authority, or they may regard the authorities as instruments of institutional racism; or accept the authorities as credible people to work with. In view of the first two notions, a social worker - from a psychodynamic perspective - is required to behave in a less authoritative manner when dealing with clients. The way in which Samoan social workers demonstrate this principle in New Zealand relates to the practice of downplaying the use of matai protocols which stress, among other things, the traditional rules of addressing people according to their matai names, social status and place of origin in Samoa (*fa'alupega*). Matai practitioners in New Zealand regard this form of social behaviour an act of humility and modesty, and not an act of disrespect (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). The influence of this approach makes Samoan social workers look credible and trustworthy in the eyes of Samoan clients in the field. Clients also tend to be co-operative and supportive by the influence of this approach.

4.4. ANTI-RACIST THEORY

The main focus in this section is to examine the implications of anti-racist theory on Samoan practitioners in New Zealand, and the links between the anti-racist theory and *fa'asamoa*. For the purposes of this section, anti-racist theory is a theory aimed at addressing racism and discriminatory practices that disadvantage women, Maori, disabled people, ethnic minorities and migrant communities living in New Zealand. Some of the principles underpinning anti-racist theory include *equality* and *fairness* for all people. Williams (1989), for example, associates some of these principles with *equal opportunities programmes* which aim at recognising the needs and aspirations of ethnic minorities and migrant communities in Great Britain. Recruiting more staff of different ethnic backgrounds and investing more resources in ethnic programmes at schools, local governments and community projects are some of the attempts that Williams recommends to promote equality and fairness in recognition of the skills and cultural diversities of people living

in Great Britain. In New Zealand, the State Sector Act 1988 instigates the same principles in recognition of the needs and aspirations of Maori, women, disabled people and ethnic minorities pursuant to Section 56 of this Act. Such principles are part of the good employer provisions imposed on employers to promote equal employment opportunities for the focused groups. In addition, concerns against institutional racism are addressed in the *Puao-Te-Ata-Tu Report* (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986) which defines 'institutional racism' as

(t)he outcome of monocultural institutions which simply ignore and freeze out the cultures of those who do not belong to the majority. National structures are evolved which are rooted in the values, systems and viewpoints of one culture only. Participation by minorities is conditional on their subjugating their own values and systems to those of the system of the power culture.

These examples and developments reflect *anti-racism* in their goals and objectives, which also has a direct bearing on Samoan social workers in New Zealand. The implications of Section 56 of the State Sector Act 1988 are that the needs of Samoan social workers in the state sector must be addressed and resourced adequately as part of their staff training and development. This, in turn, implies an obligation on the part of the employer to provide time, space and support for the development of networks, seminars, workshops and cultural

supervision for Samoan staff. *Fa'asamoa* skills should also be recognised under the good employer provision, because knowledge and understanding of *fa'asamoa* is relevant to social work in New Zealand. If *Samoan* is spoken predominantly as a medium of communication between Samoan social workers and Samoan clients, then *gagana Samoa* (language) is a skill that must be funded by the employer. The employer should also provide some monetary support for Samoan staff whose needs require cultural supervision and training in Samoan protocols and values. Some of these programmes are now taught at Universities and Polytechnics in New Zealand. Thus, Samoan staff who are interested in these courses should be encouraged by their employers to attend.

Where the level of *supervision* by qualified Samoans is unavailable, then the role of *fa'asamoa* can diminish to the point where it becomes irrelevant and insignificant in the delivery of social work and social services to the Samoan community in New Zealand. Hall (Cited in Fiona Williams, 1989:105) has forewarned against this type of development, because he sees it as a manifestation of one of the various phases of colonial and imperialist development that reproduces the subordination of non-whites in society. Proponents of anti-

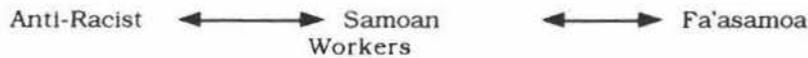
racist theory (for example, Ben-Tovim et al, 1986) regard the lack of incentives and resources to attract non-whites in society as an attempt to marginalise the meeting of demands by minority groups. From a Samoan perspective, a move such as this in New Zealand is seen as a breach of the good employer obligation under the State Sector Act 1988. It is also seen as an act of neglect and failure to account for racism: not recognising the significance of *fa'asamoa* as a cultural construct and as a system that is relevant in the delivery of social work and social services to the Samoan community. In this context, training should place a focus and an emphasis on how to assess and challenge the procedures in dealing with abuses of *fa'asamoa* and how to promote the role of *fa'asamoa* in the field of social work.

Fa'asamoa can also be promoted through the involvement of Samoan elders as mentors to Samoan workers who need guidance and supervision on *fa'asamoa*. Stubbs (1985) and Williams (1989) suggest the recruitment, by social service departments, of minority workers in significant positions as one way, not only to respond to the needs of minority clients, but also to reach those alienated parts of the community which white social workers cannot reach. Despite the need to recruit

more minority workers, Brah and Deem (1986) still think that the assessment and the selection procedures must be closely monitored to ensure that the most suitable people are selected for the jobs.

The Link between Anti-racist Theory and *Fa'asamoa*

My reconstruction below illustrates the link between *anti-racist theory* and *fa'asamoa* in the context of social work in New Zealand.



The two factors (Anti-racist theory and *Fa'asamoa*) are linked through the existence of Samoans in social work. Through the skills and practices applied by Samoan social workers when dealing with Samoan clients, their families and the Samoan community, *fa'asamoa* must be recognised and fully integrated as an agent of anti-racism both within the private and the state sectors in New Zealand. *Fa'asamoa* skills - such as the ability to speak and read Samoan; knowledge of *fa'asamoa* protocols and values; and the ability to use *fa'asamoa* as a means to network with elders, matai, church ministers and the Samoan community - ought to be supported as part of the anti-racist

policies that recognise the existence of Samoans in social service agencies in New Zealand.

The influence of anti-racist theory is, therefore, important as it raises in people the awareness of *fa'asamoa* and its role in social work. Rather than treating *fa'asamoa* as an irrelevance, *fa'asamoa* is now looked upon as a living system which is ethnically empowering and experientially significant to social work and Samoans in New Zealand. It is noteworthy that the influence of anti-racist theory provides the scope and the opportunity for *fa'asamoa* to become relevant and significant to the development of social policy and the delivery of social services or social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

4.5. SUMMARY

The ethnic-sensitive tradition is important because of its emphasis on peoples' ethnicity, cultural identity and social class. The main focus concerns the social existence of ethnic groups; the diversity of cultures; the social structures of the family; religion; rituals; celebrations; language; and the sense of peoplehood. The three key components of ethnic sensitive theory - namely the role of ethnicity; obligation and sensitivity;

strength and coping capacities - contribute towards an understanding of the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand. The role of Samoan ethnicity draws Samoans together, makes Samoans feel closer to one another, provokes a sense of empowerment within Samoans, and raises the awareness to promote *fa'asamoa* through public policy, statutes and research.

Samoan social workers have an obligation to draw on the general knowledge of human behaviour and dispositions generated by factors such as poverty, inequality and powerlessness. Knowledge of these factors informs the remedy for the daily trauma faced by Samoan clients. In using poverty, inequality and powerlessness as the bases for analysis, a further glimpse into the nature of *fa'asamoa* within the context of social work is provided. For example, this thesis discussion of 'poverty' has led to the discussion of 'alofa' (sense of charity and love) which is a value of *fa'asamoa* that has a powerful influence on Samoans in relation to the practice of 'giving.' *Alofa* would not have been mentioned in this thesis if 'poverty' had not been discussed at all. However, the discussion of 'poverty' had also prompted the need to explain the philosophy of *fa'asamoa* that underpins the practice of 'alofa' and 'giving'

which are parts of *fa'asamoa* essentials within the context of Samoan society. The philosophy of *fa'asamoa*, in this context, indisputably means that *one must live for others' or the tradition of living a life to serve others rather than your own self.*

Furthermore, the influence of the ethnic sensitive theory reminds Samoan social workers not to ignore the power of *fa'asamoa* components such as *aiga*, rituals, celebrations, language, folklore, art, music and sport that strengthen and support Samoan communities in New Zealand. This thesis argues, amongst others, that such components need to be supported, resourced and recognised at whatever levels of society in which they occur in New Zealand. The role of all these components play a positive effect on the well-being of Samoans, and they also facilitate a two-way working relationship between Samoan social workers and Samoan clients in New Zealand.

The use of psychodynamic theory enables a Samoan social worker to adapt certain aspects of *fa'asamoa* to link Samoan clients with their Samoan heritage, working within the paradigms of past, present and future situations as part of the process of redefining and reconstructing the problems faced by

clients, and the resolutions for such problems.

Finally, for *fa'asamoa* to be recognised and to be transparent in the delivery of social work practices, social service agencies must provide the necessary support for Samoan social workers to practice *fa'asamoa*. The support base in the light of this development has to take into consideration some of the ideas espoused by anti-racist theorists (for example, Williams, 1989; Stubbs, 1985) who argue in favour of the principles of equality and fairness as reflected in the policies of equal employment opportunities. Such policies are aimed at recognising the needs and aspirations of minorities and migrant communities through the recruitment of ethnic staff and the investment of more resources in ethnic programmes. In addition, *Fa'asamoa* and anti-racist theory are linked through the existence of Samoans whose needs must be recognised in accordance with the anti-racist approach. In terms of *fa'asamoa* skills under this approach, the skills ought to be supported from an anti-racist perspective because of the connections between Samoan social workers and Samoan clients through social work and social policy (a thesis study of social policy is beyond the scope of this research) in New Zealand.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODS

The research methods applied to this study are influenced by a number of factors. First, there is the research issue in question that

social work in New Zealand is influenced by *fa'asamoa* and that *fa'asamoa* therefore plays an important role in social work, which must not be ignored.

The second factor of influence derives from the theoretical implications, of which some have already been alluded to in Chapter Four. Theory provides the framework that guides the way the participants are to be approached, and shapes the design of the questions as well as the content of the interviews.

Thirdly, is the notion of the '*Samoan factor*' which influences and dictates how one Samoan reacts to another Samoan in the field. The '*Samoan factor*' in this regard represents a combination of aspects, ranging from the influence of '*being Samoan*' to the sentiments of '*goodwill*,' the '*agaga fesoasoani*' which is the spirit of '*willingness to help-you*' with this project. The values of *fa'aaloalo* (respect & politeness) and *alofa* (sense of charity) also form the philosophical base which directs the *fa'asamoa* approach applied to this study.

For the purposes of this chapter, the research question is briefly discussed in section One. Section Two examines the theoretical implications which also have an influence on the methods applied to this study. Section Three focuses on the sources of data and information which include the role of the participants and the review of the literature. Section Four focuses on the research process which facilitates the methods used in the collection of data and information for this study. The final section summarizes the key points discussed in the preceding sections.

5.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

The key question is, does *fa'asamoa* play a role in social work in New Zealand and how does *fa'asamoa* shape the manner in which Samoan social workers conduct their role in the field? In addition to those, is a series of other related questions which are relevant to this study. For example, what is *fa'asamoa*? And what is *social work*? Is *fa'asamoa* the main factor of influence on Samoan social workers in the field? Which aspects of social work allow *fa'asamoa* to be more transparent? Is the influence of *fa'asamoa* an advantage or a disadvantage to Samoan social workers? What can we learn from the experience of other ethnic

social workers both in New Zealand and overseas? While these are very basic questions, they are in fact extremely important to the design and the process of this study. Without an understanding of *fa'asamoa* and social work, it is difficult to establish the relationship between *fa'asamoa* and social work, and the influence of one on the other.

While many of these questions are fundamental to this study, other questions also intrude. For instance, can *fa'asamoa* be used as a tool to cure and overcome some of the social problems faced by Samoans in New Zealand? Can a framework based on *fa'asamoa* be developed to assist non-Samoan social workers to understand and facilitate their work with Samoan clients? All these questions, pursued in the fieldwork, generate a link between this Chapter and the discussion of the data in Chapter Six.

5.2. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Ethnic sensitive theory has an influence in raising awareness of and sensitivity to the notion of who should be selected as participants for cross-cultural studies (Sue & Sue, 1990). This is important, from the *fa'asamoa* perspective in relation to this

study, because of the need to confirm the validity and the realities regarding *fa'asamoa* and its role in social work. This, in turn, leads to the idea of selecting participants who are Samoan by ethnicity. As ethnicity, from a theoretical perspective, focuses on the significance of people's cultures, values, attitudes, behaviours and identities, the methodological framework places great emphasis on these aspects from which the appropriate research process has been developed to suit this study. Details of these aspects will be discussed more fully later in this section.

Also, the discussion on poverty and *fa'asamoa* in Chapter Four, for example, provides another perspective to inform us more about the nature of *fa'asamoa* within the social work context. The theoretical implications of this discussion makes it necessary to design the relevant questions to ask participants to comment on the relationship between poverty, inequality, powerlessness and *fa'asamoa* in order to develop an understanding of the role of *fa'asamoa* in these contexts, and to assess the impact of these factors on Samoan clients. Similarly, the theoretical implications of psychodynamic and anti-racist theories influence the design and the nature of questions that probe the participants to comment on their experiences in terms

of the *fa'asamoa* approach applied. For example, because of the influence of anti-racist theory, the participants are asked to comment on the level and the quality of cultural supervision and training they receive from the agencies to which they belong. Similarly, drawing on the psychodynamic theory, the participants are asked to comment on the Samoan clients' experiences associated with their past and present circumstances, and their future aspirations. Such experiences empower a Samoan social worker to redefine and reconstruct a course of action suited to the needs of the client. As ethnicity plays a powerful influence on Samoans, the participants are invited to disclose some examples to demonstrate how *fa'asamoa* affects the manner in which Samoan social workers perform their role in the field. The reality of some of these examples is fully disclosed in Chapter Six.

Thus far, the cultural implication imposed by ethnic sensitive theory has placed an emphasis on the significance of *fa'asamoa* protocol and values which in practice tended to be more meaningful from the participant's viewpoints. For example, to enter into an interview with an elderly Samoan participant, the *fa'asamoa* approach guided by *fa'asamoa* protocol and values becomes more meaningful than otherwise. Imagine an interview

with an elderly matai conducted in English, and based on an impersonal question and answer type approach. Not only would the flow of the interview be disrupted, but the quality of the data and information would be distorted as a result of using this approach. The participants would be more than willing to share their experiences if Samoan were used and the value of *fa'aaloalo* (politeness and diplomacy) applied.

As the link between *fa'asamoa* and the research process is to be elucidated further in this Chapter, *fa'asamoa* up to this point of discussion has shown to have influenced the research process in the following manner. First, as *fa'asamoa* is fundamental to this study, the ethnicity of the participants then becomes critical in selecting the people involved in the research. Second, most of the questions are blended in the *fa'asamoa* fashion that was comfortable and meaningful to the participants. Samoan is used to motivate and induce the participants to respond appropriately. Third, *fa'asamoa* values and protocols are integrated as part of the *fa'asamoa* approach adopted when matai participants are interviewed.

5.3. SOURCES OF DATA AND INFORMATION

For the purposes of this study the two sources, from which the data and information were obtained, derived from the participants who were part of the research group and from the literature review which also contributed other bodies of knowledge regarding the nature of *fa'asamoa* and social work. The participants' contributions through their testimonies and experiences as Samoan social workers, and through their articulation of *fa'asamoa*, have added meaning to this study.

5.3.1. The Participants

Only those who are Samoan by ethnicity were selected to be part of the research group for the purposes of this study. It would not have been suitable to include those who are non-Samoan to be part of this study, as the focus is on the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work. Asking a non-Samoan to reflect on *fa'asamoa* from this person's perspective as a social worker would neither be fair to the person who is not Samoan, nor would it do justice to *fa'asamoa* to be judged or represented by a non-Samoan person. The ethnicity factor plays an important

role in the selection of the participants for this study. The selection of participants takes into account other factors also, such as: who should be selected to be part of the research group? What criterion should be used to select them? Why should they be selected? How should they be approached? These are questions of significance and they, therefore, have an influence and a role to play in the collection of data and information for this study.

5.3.2. Who to Select as Participants in the Research Group

The participants involved Samoan social workers in New Zealand, and matai (including a non-matai) practitioners in Samoa. There were thirteen participants altogether. Seven are still based in New Zealand and six live in Samoa. Table Five below is a summary of the participants' background (for example, agencies and/or villages to which they belong) in New Zealand and in Samoa.

Table 5: Participants' Background In New Zealand and In Samoa

<i>NZ Participants</i>	<i>Agencies</i>
1 social worker	Prison Service (female)
1 social worker	Youth Justice
1 social worker	Children & Young Persons Families Service (F)
1 social worker	Community Youth Justice Agency
1 social worker	Pacific Island Drugs & Alcohol Counselling
1 social worker	Pacific Island Education Resource Centre
1 social worker	Fesoasoani Community Trust

<i>Samoa</i>	<i>Backgrounds</i>
1 Matai	Deputy Head of the State of Samoa
1 Matai	Afega village resident
1 Matai	Retired Head of Agricultural Dept
1 Matai	Public Trust Office
1 Matai	Nofuoli'i village/Justice Department
1 Non-Matai	Female, resident of Lalovaea area/Public Servant

The participants in New Zealand represent a mixture of those working in statutory, voluntary and quasi-statutory agencies. Quasi-statutory agencies, in this context, are agencies which partly rely on government funding for their existence and functionability. 'Voluntary' on the other hand, refers to community trusts and incorporated societies which rely entirely on their own efforts, and which sometimes receive grants and sponsorships from the state and the private sector to support the services they provide for the Samoan community.

The participants in Samoa also represent a mixture of those working in the public sector and the *Matai* practitioners in the villages. These participants in Samoa are *Matai*, except one who is a female public servant from the area of Lalovaea. The female participant has agreed to be part of the research group because of her interest in this study, and has felt obliged as a woman to make her views known through this study. This particular participant won a scholarship to study in Australia for three

years. With a Bachelor of Arts degree, she now works in the Public Trust Office in Samoa. She stated that her views represented the 'voice' of modern women of Samoa. 'Modern,' in this context, refers to Samoan women who are young in age, liberal and progressive in thought, attitude and conduct.

Despite the professional backgrounds of the participants in Samoa, the matai practitioners all live in their own villages as their fixed abode. This means that they are fully entrenched with *fa'asamoa* and that *fa'asamoa* predominates their lifestyles in the villages.

In New Zealand, there were two female participants who both worked in statutory social service agencies based in the Auckland area. None of the women participants was a Matai. Of all the New Zealand participants, four were Matai, of whom one worked in a statutory social service agency, two in quasi-statutory agencies and one in a Community Trust. All of the New Zealand participants were born in Samoa, and have been in New Zealand for a minimum of 15 years. All except two, have no tertiary qualifications.

5.3.3. The Manner of Selecting Participants

The participants were selected on the basis of gender, matai status (opinion leadership status), age, knowledge, experience, the area in which they were located and the agencies they represented. The *gender* factor is significant as it necessarily includes the perspectives and experiences of the female social worker in this study. Although the participants are all Samoan, there is still a need to confirm whether the manner in which the participants conduct their practice is shaped by 'gender,' *fa'asamoa*, or both.

Furthermore, as *matai* is one of the significant institutions of *fa'asamoa*, the notion of mataiship in terms of matai status and matai experience was critical in selecting the participants in Samoa. Without understanding the nature of matai, including its implications and effects on Samoan society, it would be difficult to appreciate the connection and the influence of mataiship on social work activities in Samoa.

Similarly, knowledge of *fa'asamoa* and the locality where such a knowledge is practised are also of importance, because they both have an impact on the manner in which social work practices are delivered by Samoan social workers. However, one

needs to ask: does *fa'asamoa* shape the way in which a Samoan social worker operates through the knowledge of *fa'asamoa*, or is the person's mode of operation the effect of the environment? These considerations had certainly provided a basis upon which the participants were selected for the purposes of this study.

Hence, the following procedure was applied to **the manner of selecting** participants based in New Zealand. Initially a list was drawn that contained all the names of Samoans known to be active and to have a profile in the social work field in the Auckland area. This process took into consideration factors relating to their gender, knowledge of *fa'asamoa*, agency, profile and matai status. From 50 names on this list, individual contact was made by telephone to indicate the intention and the background of this project. (A letter was also sent to these people individually to confirm the details and the discussions to be had with them on the telephone). This letter is set out as Appendix 3. A talk back programme, on the Pacific Island Radio station, AM531 in Auckland, informed the Samoan community about a public inquiry - by the Commissioner for Children and Young Persons - into the incident which involved the *Fa'afouina*

Trust in Otara¹⁶. As *fa'asamoa* was referred to by the Trust as one of their given explanations to justify the use of force relating to this case, an invitation was then extended to listeners to contact me - regarding their views on *fa'asamoa* and its role in the delivery of social services in New Zealand - after the talk back. Of the 50 names on the initial list, 10 were selected as a result of this radio talk-back programme.

The names of people who had failed to respond to my initial letter were eliminated from the list. The lack of response to the letter was taken to mean, from my perspective, that such persons had declined or refused to be part of this project. Continuously pestering people to co-operate, or asking for their support, is culturally insensitive from a Samoan perspective. It can be safely assumed, therefore, that those who had returned their written responses showed that they were willing to be part of this study.

From the responses to my initial letter a revised list was drawn, comprising 25 names. These were people who had indicated

16 I was one of the consultants to the Commissioner for Children and Young Persons Inquiry into the Fa'afouina Trust incident. The incident was a public affair, broadcast on television in New Zealand where a young Samoan boy had been physically beaten, by the Trust Co-ordinator and her associates, as a form of discipline. The government appointed the Commissioner for Children and Young Persons to conduct an investigation into such an incident.

their support for and enthusiasm in this research. From this second list of ideal candidates for this project, about 20 names were selected of those whom I believed were the 'ideal' candidates for this project. From this list of 20 names, 10 were female, ranging from the age of 25 to 55, six were born in Samoa, and four were New Zealand born Samoans. Three out of 10 worked in voluntary agencies and seven worked for statutory social services. All of them had an interest in *fa'asamoa* and its role in social work.

The other 10, from this list of 20 names, were male candidates who had also come from different social backgrounds, and all of them Samoans. Some worked in voluntary agencies while the majority worked for statutory and quasi-statutory organisations. Of the 10 male candidates, three were born in New Zealand and seven in Samoa. The youngest of the candidates was 28 and the oldest was 65. All of the candidates also showed an interest in *fa'asamoa* and its role in social work in New Zealand.

With these remaining people to work with, a pilot run of interviews was undertaken, with time towards the end of 1996 for correcting and refining the list of questions and issues to

present to the final list of candidates. The exercise was a worthwhile educational curve for me, and it was enlightening for the candidates. From the pilot interviews, about nine were further eliminated from the list of 20 names, under the category of 'ideal' candidates, because they had moved out of Auckland or changed their careers. The ones who had changed careers also indicated a change of heart about being a part of this project. That effectively reduced the list down to 11. Of the remaining people, five were female and six were male candidates.

To confirm details for the full interviews to take place, a second letter was sent to all the 11 people, with instructions to sign a consent form attached to each letter. The forms were all returned, signed by the candidates. During the three week period of conducting interviews, two of the female candidates were further eliminated from the final list. One had changed address and the other had changed country. The female candidate who changed address was eventually located through contacts made with her relatives and work colleagues in Auckland. Although she had agreed to be interviewed, she failed to turn up at the appointed venue for an interview. Contacts with the relatives she stayed with revealed that she had moved

permanently to another city. On the final week of interviews, one other female candidate changed her mind about being interviewed for this project. Unfortunately, she did not state the reasons for her decision, except to suggest fear of the unknown. That effectively left two female candidates in the end whose contributions added meaningful values to this study.

The manner of selecting participants based in Samoa was different from that conducted in New Zealand. Initially, the names of those living in Samoa were foregrounded by the community who held these persons in high regard in terms of their background and involvement in the community. For instance, the second day in Samoa, I approached a friend, who is a senior public servant, for his insights and advice based on his knowledge of the local people and the protocols of *fa'asmoa*. This friend also knew them and had developed a network with some of them, through involvement in the public service. This, in turn, linked me to the public service employees interviewed for this study. Others - such as the Matai in Afega village, the retired head¹⁷ of the Department of Agriculture and the Deputy Head of State¹⁸ - were contacted through a '*Matai-broker*' who

17 There are more than two retired Heads of the Department of Agriculture, so the anonymity of the one involved in this study remains intact.

18 Similarly, there are 3 deputy heads of State (Sui Ao) who make up the Council of Deputies at present. Again, the anonymity of the one involved in this study remains intact.

had known them through involvement in local and community projects. The *matai-broker*, as a liaison person, spoke on behalf of the researcher. The use of a *matai-broker* in this instance effectively, appropriately and quickly developed the confidence and the trust of the local matai in the researcher personally, in support of this project. It was the matai-broker's profile and credibility that facilitated the 'automatic' acceptance of the researcher by the local matai. The people, contacted initially for this project, all took part in the interviews within a week of my stay in Samoa. The interviews in Samoa were necessary for comparative purposes regarding knowledge of *fa'asamoa*, for the social work practices the participants applied, and for the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work.

5.3.4. The Research Process

While the process is Western culture in terms of its design, the delivery and the presentation of the process was purely Samoan. For example, the delivery of the interviews and the discussions with the participants was conducted predominantly in Samoan. The format of the questions and the manner of communication were also influenced by *fa'asamoa* values of *fa'aaloalo* (politeness and deference), the principle of *amiofa'atamali'i* (diplomacy), and

the tradition of *tofa ma le utaga loloto* which is the sense of dignity and sensitivity. For example *fa'aaloalo*, in the context, influenced my manner of communication with participants as detailed below. I first acknowledged their *mamalu* (dignity) according to the status of their matai titles. Their approval was also sought to allow me to speak freely, without using much of the matai protocols that dictate the nature of discussions and interviews. The *amio fa'atamali'i* principle, in this context, has influenced me not to be too assertive or controversial with my participants in Samoa. Throughout the interview process, attempts were made not to be too imposing, but conciliatory in approach. Humility and modesty are virtues of the principle of *amio tamali'i* that guided me through the interview process. Finally, the tradition of *tofa ma le utaga loloto* raised the awareness that in the face of questions being put too directly across, the participants could be intrusive and intimidating. The influence of this tradition has nevertheless shaped the manner in which the discussions and the interviews with the participants were conducted. It was this tradition that allowed me to use this *circle the wagon*¹⁹ approach, questioning and probing participants to *spit out* the information and data. Both the participants in New Zealand and those in Samoa were treated with the same respect, sensitivity, humility and modesty

¹⁹ Commonly known as the 'round about way,' or being indirect in one's approach.

based on the principles of *fa'atamali'i* (diplomacy) and *tofa loloto* (*sensitivity*).

Another approach could be considered, that is, one using letters²⁰ to inform and advise the participants about this study, and requesting participants to sign consent forms²¹ - as part of the Western approach of dealing with Samoans in the context of this study. In New Zealand, such a process would be the most effective way of liaising with the participants after the initial telephone calls have been made to them. The letters to participants in New Zealand were written in English. Using English as a medium of communication was most appropriate to explain the nature of this study to them, as it was easier to explain in English some of the concepts and terminologies such as 'research,' 'role,' 'social work practice' for which the Samoan version employs the longwinded or the excessively wordy way. The use of the English language in this context of this study was, therefore, the only way to avoid the risk of confusing or misleading participants.

Communication by letter with participants was also appropriate within the New Zealand context as they preferred to treat all

²⁰ See Appendix Three.

²¹ See Appendix Two.

such communication in a professional and formal manner, given the bureaucratic culture of the agencies to which they belonged. If an interview was to be conducted during working hours, for example, it would be appropriate for the participant to refer such a letter to the supervisor or the manager of the agency. This allows the supervisor or the manager to make necessary arrangements to release the participant from duty, to be interviewed for the purposes of research. Although in principle this requirement was necessary, none of the participants was obliged to conform to such protocol, because in their views the interviews were part of their work as Samoan social workers in the field.

The participants in New Zealand were also presented with the consent forms and the interview guides²² in relation to this research. The consent form was a statement of their agreement to be interviewed in compliance with the ethical requirements of this research, whereas the interview guides pre-warned the participants regarding the questions and issues that they would be asked to respond to at the interviews. The interview guides give them time in advance to prepare for the interviews. The situation with the participants in Samoa was different. For example, the initial contacts with them did not happen until

²² See Appendix One.

the day after I had arrived in Samoa. For a number of reasons it was not possible to pre-select the participants, from New Zealand. Firstly, it would have been seen as too vague (or less meaningful) to communicate with the participants by way of a letter without first seeing them in person, for their consent. Secondly, there was a natural compulsion to approach the participants personally, as part of the protocol of *fa'asamoa*. Personal appearance - rather than a letter or a telephone call - would be more appropriate according to *fa'asamoa*, as I had not known the participants beforehand. All these I had known from experience as a Samoan. Thirdly, personal contact gave the participants a chance to *sound me out* about this study. Thus, actually conducting research in Samoa, rather than research from a distance, was imperative.

5.3.5. The Manner of Conducting Interviews

The interviews were constructed to incorporate qualitative research techniques, with a preference for including unstructured and semi-structured styles of interview which used open ended questions to allow the participants to express their ideas and experiences more fully. Morgan (1983:27-28) describes this approach as 'empathic ethnography,' because it is

an attempt to get inside the situation being studied and to reconstruct it from the members' perspective.

He further states that the researcher in this respect plays the role of learner and attempts, through interviews and examination of evidence, to understand the shared divergent pattern of meaning that underlie interactions. Sarantakos (1993) uses the term 'sympathetic introspection' to describe the same approach to understanding the values and meanings that underlie human interactions. Cannon et al (1991) prefer to use these approaches when issues such as 'race' and 'ethnicity' are dealt with in social research, as it is one of the ways to overcome the intentional exclusion of Blacks, working class women, problems of bias and non-representative samples: to overcome the problematic by penetrating a situation being studied and by having such a situation reconstructed from its people's perspectives. While the above mentioned aspects are crucial to the qualitative style of interviewing, the emphasis should however be on the role of *fa'asamoa* in delivery and manner of articulation of such aspects through the interview process. To have disregarded this significance would have led to

failure. As a matter of courtesy, for example, although the matai participants in New Zealand tended to be more flexible in using their matai titles by which to address them, the choice was made to address them by their *matai* titles as a way of respecting their heritage and *mana*. The same attitude and treatment of respect were accorded to participants in Samoa. As a matter of fact, all these I saw as an obligation on my part and as a requirement of *fa'asamoa* in accordance with its protocols and values. Those without matai titles, I addressed by the first names, which they preferred.

The interviews were, therefore, conducted largely in Samoan. An interview schedule was organised and used only to guide and assist the interview process. It was also prepared to inform the participants about the areas to be covered by the interview. The areas and the questions in the interview schedules, written in English and delivered in Samoan, were prepared to probe and steer the interviewer through the selection of what to focus on during the interview process. The interview schedules themselves were applicable to the participants in New Zealand only. Both English and Samoan were used at the interviews

with the participants in New Zealand. Out of seven people interviewed in New Zealand, five were interviewed at their residence and two on their worksites.

The participants in Samoa were not presented with interview schedules, prior to an interview. By the time participants in Samoa were interviewed, the questions and the areas requiring the participants to respond to at the interviews had been memorised. To ask the participants in Samoa to study the study-guides before the interviews would be construed as intrusively putting them under undue pressure. However, it was appropriate to interview them spontaneously as this type of interview with participants in Samoa was more or less 'social talk,' less like an interview. By and large, the interviews in general were informal, conversational and friendly; in short, user-friendly.

Before an interview took place, permission had been sought from the participants for the use of a tape recorder during the interview process. All except one gave their consent. The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour. The interviews with the participants in Samoa were longer, ranging from 30 minutes to two hours. The participants in

Samoa were keen to cover other issues, in addition to the topic. Many used stories, legends and proverbs as ways of explaining their viewpoints. One participant went to lengthy details describing a murder incident that had happened in his village. The story itself took him almost an hour to tell. Culturally, it is rude to disrupt a matai from deviating from the topic, so provisions were made for these variations to happen. However, I found that the longer I let them tell these stories, the more I came to appreciate the framework of *fa'asamoa* in which the participants in Samoa operated. The user-friendly approach, intrinsic to the *fa'asamoa* framework, is hereby self-validating as a legitimate and academic research approach.

After each interview, related tapes were replayed to ensure that I had recognised all the details needing to be interviewed, while still fresh in my memory. It was also important to refresh the memory, as a reminder of the interview contents whenever the sound system made it difficult to hear and follow through for clarity and accuracy of participants' expression in words, phrases and sentences. The only aspects unable to be transcribed were the voices, the background sounds and the body language the participants made during the interview. The transcription, a process of great significance, I myself performed

- rather than someone else who was not present during the interview - by writing it down manually; having it typed by a third person selected for that person's knowledge and expertise of Samoan. A confidentiality agreement²³ had been signed to prevent the person from passing on, to anybody other than myself, any information or data obtained from transcribing the tapes for this study. All the interview tapes were and still are stored in a safe and secure place.

5.3.6. Ethical Guidelines

The formal letters informed and reminded participants of their rights, and the ethical guidelines adopted by this study. They were reassured of the confidential protection of their identities; of their data and information to be used only for the purposes of this study; of publication of information and data during the course of this study requiring their input and approval; and of a copy of the result of this study being made available to them at their request. Furthermore, the participants (particularly those in New Zealand) were also reminded that they had the right to withdraw from this study at any point of the process, if they so wished. At the conclusion of each interview I obtained, from the participants in Samoa and in New Zealand, their postal address

²³ See Appendix Four.

in case I needed to seek their consent for required publications of data or information of this study.

The participants in Samoa and some in New Zealand did not see the notion of confidentiality as an issue with regard to this study. Eleven out of thirteen were less concerned in publishing their names in this study. The participants in Samoa preferred to associate their names with the comments they made in this study; the same sentiments were indicated by the majority of the participants in New Zealand; and they did this by ascribing pride to the juxtaposition of viewpoints and names of originators.

One of the traditions of *fa'asamoa* that emerged from the interview process was the practice of *lafo* which is a Samoan tradition of making a donation, ranging from \$10 to a \$100 to the person's interviewed. Such a practice had raised some questions in my own mind about its ethical acceptability from a research perspective. However, giving some thoughts to the philosophy of *lafo* and its significance in the Samoan context had led to a convincing consideration of *lafo* as part of qualitative research techniques in working with Samoans. *Lafo* is quite acceptable in *fa'asamoa*, so there was an obligation to

use *lafo* with the participants in Samoa only. *Lafo* did not pose an ethical problem because of the timing and the philosophy involved in its presentation. For example, *lafo* was presented only after the interview and, often, the participant did not know whether they would be presented with a *lafo*. The majority of the participants were slightly surprised. All of them displayed self-denial to accept *lafo* at first. After having explained to them that *lafo* in this context was not a payment for their contributions, but merely a token of appreciation for their support, they replied, '*O lau pule lea, fa'afetai le alofa ma le agalelei*' which means '*This is your authority, thank you for your love and generosity.*'

However, not all of the participants would readily accept *lafo*, as some of them preferred to regard their input and contributions as a form of voluntary service in support of another person's study. None of the participants in New Zealand expected *lafo* to be given in return for their contributions. From their perspectives, *lafo* could be seen as a form of '*asking for a special favour.*' *Lafo*, in the context of their viewpoints, was unnecessary as their input to this study was a voluntary contribution to knowledge for the benefit of others with an interest in *fa'asamoa* and social work. So, *lafo* is not the driving

force for them to be involved in this project, rather it is a willingness to provide information and wisdom for the benefit of other people.

Lafo should be presented in such a way so as not to make participants feel that it was a form of payment. If *lafo* were presented to them as a payment, this could make them think that the true value of their service had been diminished or undermined. On the other hand, it could be said to the participants that *lafo* in this regard was not a payment for their service, but merely a small gift (*meaalofa*) to acknowledge their support for and assistance with this project. Thus, *lafo* was not a key factor motivating participants to cooperate with this study; rather it was the realm of altruism.

5.4. SUMMARY

Chapter Five began by posing a range of key questions to keep this study in focus. The questions are outlined in section 5.1, and they influence the manner in which the interview questions and process are constructed. Such questions are important to steer the interview process on its focal path to obtain data and information relevant to this study. The issues and questions in

section 5.1 also set the scene for feedback provided by the participants in Chapter Six.

The section on the theoretical implications in 5.2 is significant, because the discussion in this section provides the theoretical knowledge base to generate the relevant questions for the participants. For instance, if the discussion on poverty, inequality and powerlessness had not been canvassed in this study, there would not be an awareness of the need to ask participants about their experiences regarding the influence of the church and the aiga in creating poverty amongst the Samoan community. The influence of ethnic sensitive theory, psychodynamic theory and anti-racist theory also creates the framework of guideline for what to ask and what to seek during interviews with participants. Anti-racist theory, for example, has given rise to the participants being asked their comments on the quality of cultural supervision and training provided by agencies for Samoan social workers. In other words, this research work is keen to find out, from participants, the extent of commitment and sensitivity given by their agencies to support them as Samoans in their capacities as social workers. The influence of ethnic sensitive theory, in the context, also provides a basic reminder of the significance of ethnic protocols

and values which must be recognised and complied with during the interview process. Such an influence has raised consciousness of *fa'asamoa* protocols and values in *fa'aaloalo* (politeness), *fa'atamali'i* (diplomacy) and *tofa loloto* (sensitivity), which all play an influential role in communicating with participants.

The participants were selected on the basis of their Samoan ethnicity, knowledge of *fa'asamoa* and social work, matai status and gender. There were two procedures applied to the selection of participants in New Zealand and in Samoa. The New Zealand context involved the establishment of the candidate list, the use of letters and the telephone as instruments of communication with the candidates, the use of the consent forms and interview schedules in preparing the participants for their interviews.

The selection of the participants in Samoa did not require the use of these procedures, however. The Samoan context relies heavily on the personal appearance and the role played by the matai-broker and the senior public servant. The profile and the credibility of these men have persuaded the participants to lend their support to this study. Also, the *goodwill* existing among the participants, the *matai-broker* and the *senior public servant*,

has facilitated a *special bond* to be developed between the researcher and the participants in Samoa. The development of a special bond has also featured in dealings with the participants in New Zealand. I believe that the effect of this special bond plays a major role in making the participants tolerant to and supportive of this research.

The interview style was the same for both Samoa and New Zealand. *Fa'asamoa* protocols were used in both contexts. For instance, the matai participants were addressed by their matai titles in respect of their heritage and mana. All the interviews were conducted in Samoan. The participants were also consulted about usage of the tape recorder at the interviews. Interruptions were kept to a minimum even though some of the discussions in the interviews were unrelated to the topic.

The content of the data was proof-read many times to ensure that every word had been recorded from the tapes. Where the contents, phrases or words were unclear, the tape recorder was played over and over again until the correct word or saying was verified. The interviews were manually transcribed, and the typing was completed by another person who had signed a confidential agreement.

The ethical guidelines were documented for the participants in New Zealand, while the same guidelines were verbally explained to the participants in Samoa. Dealings with the participants in Samoa were predominantly verbal, while the emphasis was on writing when dealing with the participants in New Zealand. Communication in writing suited the bureaucratic nature of the New Zealand situation, while the personal approach was the dominant feature for establishing contacts with participants in Samoa. The participants in New Zealand and in Samoa created the impression that they were less concerned with the notion of confidentiality and the need to be consulted, should the need arise to publish some of the findings of this study. Those participants were less concerned in this regard, because they had confidence in the quality of the data and the information which they had provided for this study.

While *lafo* could be an issue of debate amongst the Samoan social workers in New Zealand, *lafo* is certainly a norm of *fa'asamoa* which is truly 'qualitative' and 'altruistic' in its philosophy and practice.

Chapter Six examines the influence of *fa'asamoa* on social work and the role which *fa'asamoa* plays in the delivery of social

services and social work in the field. A series of other questions are also examined, such as how *fa'asamoa* shapes the manner in which Samoan social workers fulfil their role in the field. Is *fa'asamoa* the key factor that influences Samoan social workers in the field? Which aspects of social work allow *fa'asamoa* to be more transparent? Does the influence of *fa'asamoa* advantage or disadvantage to Samoan social workers? What parallels can be drawn from the Samoan experience, compared with the experiences of other ethnic people in New Zealand and overseas? Can *fa'asamoa* be used as an approach to overcome and empower the Samoans in New Zealand? Can a *fa'asamoa* framework be developed to assist non-Samoan social workers who have Samoan clients under their supervision?

CHAPTER SIX

FA'ASAMOA - NEW ZEALAND AND SAMOA CONTRASTS IN PRACTICE

Being central to this thesis, this chapter focuses on the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work. It embodies the feedback and the testimonies from participants which relate to their experiences and knowledge of *fa'asamoa* and its role in social work. The findings in this chapter form the basis for analysis of whether there is a link between theory and practice regarding the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand.

This chapter is, therefore, designed and structured to communicate and articulate feedback from participants to fully appreciate the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work. Section One revisits the definition of *fa'asamoa* to gain an appreciation of the manner in which participants understand and relate to *fa'asamoa* in their practices, as *fa'asamoa* is a complex concept and its role cannot be appreciated unless its meaning is understood first. Section Two discusses and outlines the influence of *fa'asamoa* and the contexts of social work in which *fa'asamoa* plays a role. The key points from the preceding sections are summarized in the last section.

6.1. THE PARTICIPANTS' MANNER OF DEFINING FA'ASAMOA

In Chapter Two, Tables One and Two imply that there are two sets of participants' perspective of the meaning of *fa'asamoa* to them. The two lists being different does not signify that either is wrong - they are both correct. However, the extent to which the characteristics, in these Tables, are used to apply to social work vary between the participants in Samoa and those in New Zealand. The participants in New Zealand are highly influenced by the characteristics of *fa'asamoa* outlined in Table One, whereas the characteristics in Table Two are more influential on the participants based in Samoa. The degree of variation and the extent of the influence of *fa'asamoa* on the participants are caused by a number of factors. For example, the participants in New Zealand seldom apply the characteristics of *fa'asamoa* in Table Two in their social work practice because of the type of Samoan clients they deal with and the context of social work in which they are involved. Take the role of oratory, for example, as part of *fa'asamoa* in making contacts with Samoan clients and their families. According to the participants in New Zealand, *oratory* (*lauga*) as a formal medium of social communication with Samoan clients is seldom used during interviews, client assessments, counselling or in the delivery of educational programmes for clients. In addition, the elaborate

engagement of *rituals* and *ceremonies*, as outlined in Table Two, does not often occur as part of social work in which the participants in New Zealand are involved. This implies that the role of *fa'asamoa*, as indicated in Table One, can be less formal and more flexible than the role of *fa'asamoa* implied in Table Two. Under the implications of Table One, the participants in New Zealand can still comfortably operate as social workers whether or not they hold matai status. Conversely, under the influence of Table Two, the roles and the activities are highly specialised which restrict those without matai status from being involved.

Furthermore, the two Tables also imply another dimension surrounding the role of *fa'asamoa* within the two countries. For example, *fa'asamoa* in Samoa represents the dominant culture of values and systems by which offenders are sanctioned and victims are supported. If a dispute occurs in a village, the Council of Chiefs and Orators is charged with the responsibility of dealing accordingly with the people involved. This makes the role of *fa'asamoa* in Table Two critical and fundamental in influencing the occurrence of reconciliation, restitution and restoration. The role of *fa'asamoa*, therefore, becomes the basis of the village system and people's actions in Samoa. Thus,

fa'asamoa is part of the whole system that controls and motivates the people in Samoa. Unfortunately, *fa'asamoa* is not the dominant culture that influences the nature of social work in New Zealand. As Table One indicates, the emphasis is 'cultural' because of the clients and the role such features of *fa'asamoa* in Table One play in promoting it through social work.

6.2. THE INFLUENCE OF FA'ASAMOA

The features of *fa'asamoa* commonly applied by the participants in New Zealand in their practices are represented by the values of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), the sentiments of the *Samoan Heart*, the role of *Aiga*, *Lotu* (Church), *Matal* (Chiefly system) and *Gagana* (Language). All these have a role to play and an influence to wield on Samoa social workers in conducting their practices in New Zealand.

- a) ***Fa'asamoa protocol and value of fa'aaloalo (respect, politeness, deference)***

Fa'aaloalo is a *virtue* and a *value* of *fa'asamoa* which is often ascribed to have the same meanings as the concepts of respect,

politeness, etiquette, courtesy, deference and diplomacy. However, in the Samoan world, *fa'aaloalo* is much more complex and elaborate in its practice and application. As O'Meara (1990:35) indicates,

the Samoans are known for their elaborate social and political etiquette. Because of this politeness, they are sometimes thought to be a serene and easygoing people. The elaborate etiquette is designed however primarily to prevent slights or political confrontations, for wounded pride can quickly explode into anger.

So, *fa'aaloalo* is a significant variable, as part of *fa'asamoa* protocols and values, that has a powerful influence on the way Samoans conduct their social behaviours towards one another in New Zealand. Another manner of understanding the effect of *fa'aaloalo* in the general sense is to look at a number of examples which demonstrate the manner Samoans conduct themselves in public and within their own Samoan community in New Zealand. Specifically, pertinent examples are given in Table Six below.

TABLE 6: CHARACTERISTICS OF FA'AALOALO BASED ON THE PERSPECTIVES OF PARTICIPANTS IN NEW ZEALAND

Eating and standing in front of seated elders is unacceptable;
 Standing and talking to an elder who is seated is bad manners;
 Children are expected to retreat into the dining room to prepare a cup of tea or food when visitors are around;
 Children or young adults are not expected to be part of the discussions with visitors, except in the company of their parents and adults;
 Children and young people are expected to obey their parents;
 Disobeying parents or answering back is rude and impolite;
 Restraint from being direct and open about one's feelings is probably to do with *fa'aaloalo*;
 Be nice to people regardless of how much you dislike them;

Commit to do something despite one's ability to afford it;
 A brother cares for his sister as an obligation for life;
 Church ministers are treated as special people as they are God's
 agents;
 One matai respects another matai through their titles and chiefly
 status;
 Formal meetings of Samoans give recognition to the status of matai.
 (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

These examples show that *fa'aaloalo* is extensive in terms of its influence and practicalities, having the power to influence Samoans in a variety of ways, as summarized in Table Seven below.

TABLE 7: EFFECTS OF FA'AALOALO ON PARTICIPANTS IN NZ.

Restrain the Samoans from actions that might be rude or offensive;
 Discipline children to play certain roles;
 Create a system of reciprocity between parents and children;
 Induce people to perform certain obligations to others;
 Impose a sense of commitment to beliefs and values;
 Conform people to observe and respect protocols and space.

(Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

A breach of *fa'aaloalo* in any of the above mentioned situations brings about violence, reprimand, retaliation, dispute or embarrassment to people. In terms of social work, when the participants in New Zealand were asked to describe what *fa'aaloalo* meant to them, the following responses were given as summarized in Table Eight.

TABLE 8: CHARACTERISTICS OF FA'AALOALO FROM A SAMOAN SOCIAL WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE IN NEW ZEALAND

Respecting clients despite the nature of their offending;
 Treating clients and families with dignity;
 Being polite and sensitive to people;
 Having the right attitude and willingness to help people;
 Being modest and humble;
 Being prepared to accommodate other people's interest and wishes;
 Self-denial of frustration, anger and disappointment;
 Being uncritical and less aggressive in attitude.

The emphasis with which the participants apply these values in their practices varies from one to another and from one social context to the other. For example, *fa'aaloalo* can be demonstrated through one's attitude towards the clients; or through the communication techniques used on clients and their families; or through a display of tolerance, empathy, sensitivity and understanding when interviewing, counselling and conducting meetings with clients and their families. One of the participants testified that

when I meet with a Samoan couple in my office, I often start with a welcome such as this, 'Talofa and welcome to you and your wife, it is a pleasure to meet with you today.' Because of *fa'aaloalo* I treat this couple as human beings, and if the offender is a matai I'd have to acknowledge his matai title and the village to which he belongs in Samoa.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

At times, metaphors and images are used by Samoan social workers to demonstrate their sense of *fa'aaloalo*, humility and

sensitivity to clients. Two of the participants confirmed how they effectively employed these to develop a good working relationship with Samoan clients. For example, one of the participants used the word *auauna* (servant) as a metaphor to demonstrate his sense of humility towards an elderly matai client whom he was dealing with,

It's a pleasure working with you, as I'm here as an *auauna* to you.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

According to that participant, he used the term *auauna* as it was appropriate, from his perspective, to make this client feel that the person being dealt with is another human being, and the practitioner is not a person with stature and authority. Also, the connotation of the word *auauna* gives the impression that the client is dealing with somebody who is humble and 'down to earth.' In addition, the word creates sentiments of warmth and personal understanding that bind the client and the participant in a harmonious working relationship where the client perceives the participant as if one of his own children. This approach effects a sense of ease and freedom to share intimate information with the participant. The value of *fa'aaloalo*, therefore, commits the participants to this approach and to the development of these relationships in working with

this client. The goodwill that develops from these relationships flows on to other members of the client's family who also play a role in the support and the implementation of the programme that the participant has put in place for this client.

In another example, the frameworks of *feagai* (unwritten code between a brother and a sister) and *tama-afafine* (father-daughter) were used by a female participant in New Zealand to demonstrate her sense of *fa'aaloalo* to her elderly and male clients. She also sensed that this was necessary in establishing rapport and trust with her clients. Whenever she visited her male clients who commenced greeting and addressing her with oratory and with formal *fa'asamoa* (see Table Two, for instance, '*aflo mat lau afloga... welcome to your ladyship*'), she immediately replied,

Please, don't go into all those formalities as I'm only a daughter or a sister to you

(Interview with a Female Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

The words *afafine* (daughter) and *tuafafine* (sister) had been deliberately used in the context to imply that she was not a bureaucrat as such, but someone who was part of the extended family or cultural group to which her clients also belonged.

These frameworks or images, therefore, create a sense of belongingness and peoplehood among Samoans, both as clients and as non-clients of the same institution. These approaches deinstitutionalise the formalities associated with the role of the female participant, which is significant from the clients' perspective. Using such approaches also develops an environment of friendliness, community and trust, particularly at a worksite where the clientele is predominantly male. As this participant was the only female Samoan in this institution, the Samoan male clients naturally regarded her as a *tuafafine* (sister). They had also regarded her as their *feagaiga* (covenant) which in the Samoan tradition compelled Samoan males to make sacrifices for their sisters and protect them. Thus, through the influence of *fa'asamoa*, the participant and her male Samoan clients were drawn together as a cultural group within a complex institutional and hierarchical workplace. She fully believed that without the influence of *fa'asamoa*, her work and practice as a social worker would not have been a success (Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997). She also believed, however, that if she had allowed the *formalities* of *fa'asamoa*, as emphasised in Table Two, to dominate her relationship with her male clients, she would have found it difficult to deal with them because of her gender and the

context of the environment in which she was working. If she had followed through the *fa'asamoa* path according to the characteristics set out in Table Two, it would have created a distance between her and her male clients which made it difficult to achieve a sense of *Samoanhood* between them. However, this had not occurred simply because she had followed the *fa'asamoa* path set out in Table One, suited to her style of practice, her personality, her place in the environment, and the clientele with whom she was working. Under the influence of *fa'asamoa* of Table One, clients were more open and willing to disclose their true feelings and viewpoints to her. From her perspective, she feels safe and comfortable working under the influence of *fa'asamoa* of Table One, especially in an environment where her clientele is predominantly male.

Fa'aaloalo also has an influence on the interview process within the New Zealand context. One of the participants testified that

when I interview Samoan clients, I don't hurry them to give me their name, date of birth, social and domestic background. The approach and the language I use reflect my sense of *fa'aaloalo* which obliges me to be polite and sensitive in my approach. So, rather than saying to them 'give me your name, date of birth and address,' I'd say to them 'I need to know, please, your name and date of birth.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

This example is very similar to the one made by another participant who interviewed an elderly couple,

I'd slow down my pace and took my time to speak with this couple. I explained to them who I was and what my role was. They asked me which village in Samoa I'd come from; when did I come to New Zealand; did I have kids; how many; and so forth. I freely shared all that information with them. As we talked, I laughed, joked and asked them questions. Sometimes, it felt as if I was not conducting an interview, but I found this approach effective and enriching.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

Again, this example reflects the characteristics of *fa'asamoa* in Table One which allows the participant to be flexible, less structural and more interactive with her clients, in comparison to the traditional and formal interaction implied in Table Two. The role of *fa'asamoa* suits this participant and her clients. It is noteworthy that this participant has also followed the pathway of *fa'asamoa* in Table One even though the clients were older than herself. Given the age and the social background of this couple, one would think that the pathway set out in Table Two would have been more suitable to follow than that in Table One. The example had implied, however, that this participant was also maximising the best of all the characteristics of *fa'asamoa* in Tables One and Two to empower her to work effectively with this couple. Without doubt, the response from the clients in this context indicated their appreciation of her skills of *fa'asamoa* despite her age, gender and lack of *matai* status as a Samoan.

Fa'aaloalo is also transparent in a group conference context in New Zealand. For example, *fa'aaloalo* is shown in the manner in which the co-ordinator conducts the *fono* (conference), how he addresses the attendees, and in the manner that advice is given to members of the family involved. According to one of the participants,

I showed my *fa'aaloalo* by not imposing any of my own values and ideologies on the clients, nor would I pressure them to follow this or that. Even if I disagree with the parents in giving away so much of their time, money and energy to the church and less to their children, I'd still talk to them in such a way as not to offend them, their beliefs and emotions. In a subtle way, I'd remind them about their obligations as parents and their duties in accordance with the law.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

This example reveals that the participant was tactful in not making the parents feel alienated and humiliated by this experience. As he was aware of the trauma that parents and their children went through in their experience with the Criminal Justice System in New Zealand, he tried to be less burdensome in the manner he treated them and co-ordinated their family group conferences. Instead of shifting the blame on parents and ridiculing the role of parents with their children, he guided and informed where they might have gone wrong and how they might approach such wrongs. He drew on his experience, as a Samoan, to compare and to differentiate

between *fa'asamoa* and the Criminal Justice System, in an attempt to make the clients recognise their responsibilities and obligations. Without knowledge and experience of the social structures of *matai*, *aiga* and *lotu*, for example, he would have felt incapacitated in performing his role effectively. From the perspective of this participant, it was *fa'aaloalo* and the ethnicity factors that also drove him to treat Samoan clients in this manner.

These examples illustrate that *fa'aaloalo* is a *fa'asamoa* virtue which influences, drives and directs Samoan social workers to respond and react sensitively towards Samoan clients. *Fa'aaloalo* is, from these examples, delivered involuntarily despite the status of the clients and the situations which they represent. The examples also imply that *fa'aaloalo* is reciprocal in nature which draws people together and binds them to good working relationships based on goodwill, common courtesy, sensitivity and dignity. Thus, through the influence of *fa'aaloalo*, *fa'asamoa* is verified as a factor that shapes the nature and the manner Samoan social workers conduct their practices in the field.

b) **The Samoan Heart**

The Samoan Heart represents the emotional and the intellectual characteristics of *fa'asamoa*. These are developed and connected with other components of *fa'asamoa* including the social structures of *aiga*, *lotu*, *matai* system, *gagana*, values and protocols, and the Samoan way. The participants in this study in New Zealand have attributed the following characteristics to the Samoan Heart, as summarized in Table Nine.

TABLE 9: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMOAN HEART FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN NEW ZEALAND

The spirit to conquer and be competitive;
 Loyalty to another Samoan;
 Allegiance to support and identify with other Samoans;
 Be staunch and steadfast to be true to your identity as a Samoan;
 Be proud of being a Samoan;
 Having the guts to do well no matter what.

In Samoan, phrases such as *loto nu'u* (to feel or have the heart for your village or country) and *o ou mama na* (literally meaning *those are your lungs*) often imply the breath of life or good fortune in wishing somebody good luck. Also, *lotoa* (fearless) and *fiatagata* (pride) are a few examples which highlight the manner in which sentiments of the Samoan Heart are understood by Samoans generally. From another perspective, the Samoan

Heart as a concept can also be understood from comments such as,

The Samoans also think through their hearts, and use their instincts and feelings in most of the decisions they make.

(Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

Although many Samoans also think with their heads, the implications of this quotation highlight the significance of emotionality and the effect it has on people and humanity. The 'Heart' can lead people to undertake certain activities which are either positive or negative. Many Samoans are motivated to support their kin because of either blood relation or some other connections (*faia*) through marriage, adoption, the church, or the village. When Samoans turned out in great numbers to support and cheer for Manu Samoa,²⁶ they were drawn together by the strength of the Samoan Heart of *loto nu'u* (sense of patriotism) and by the common bond created through the influence of Samoan ethnicity. Similarly, the Samoans who were present at David Tua's latest fight in California were chanting, 'Go Samoa! Samoa! Samoa! (Live Show, TV2, 1997), to indicate their sense of pride in one of their own countrymen doing well in boxing at international level. Those who do well in

²⁶ Refers to the National Rugby Union Team of Samoa.

sports and in other professions are giving substantial credibility to Samoans, and their success is also the success of all Samoans. Success stories such as these are powerful role models for young Samoans; and social workers use them for motivational and inspirational purposes when dealing with young Samoan offenders. According to one participant,

I use the same sentiments and success stories to appeal to young people of Samoa. When I talk to them, I don't talk to them using intellectual and academic approaches as they don't get through to them. However, I talk to them, to their hearts, and they'd hear me from their hearts.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

However, a note of caution was offered by some participants in New Zealand who claimed to have kept an eye on the Samoan Heart as this could be powerful in motivating Samoans to get involved in illegal and anti-social behaviours. Said a participant,

With Samoan young offenders, they all offend in groups. Most of them would say, 'I was there to defend my brother, sister or cousin'.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

This is not uncommon to most Samoans when they are cornered in situations such as kin members requiring their

support and help. To use the colloquial expression 'blood is thicker than water,' the thicker the 'blood' is, the more difficult it becomes for a Samoan not to be involved in defending or protecting his or her own kin. There are those who prefer to go to the rescue of their kin and then worry about the consequences later. Others fall into trouble when they fail to put their Samoan Heart to good use. When they are stressed, they become angry and violent, causing their heart to inflict harm on others. Explained a participant,

When it gets to the stage where a family is under stress from financial difficulties that bar them from meeting their family commitments, some parents take out their stress on their kids who end up being hit or physically mistreated by their parents.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

The above mentioned example is not uncommon, and the Samoans are not alone in this regard. The analysis by Bathgate et al (1994:86) demonstrates that the Heart component of most Pacific Island cultures has been a source of stress and economic depression to most Pacific Island families in New Zealand. The analysis by Graves and Graves (cited in Bathgate et al, 1985) finds that Pacific Island peoples

are more likely to run out of money and receive a notice from a debt collector and are more likely to have had relatives living with them or experience the death of someone close to them. These situation stressors all follow from their larger families

and obligations to kinsmen, both financially and through hospitality, which put a strain on their resources even though their incomes are roughly comparable to those of their European neighbours.

From a social work perspective, rather than treating the Samoan Heart from a negative perspective as Graves et al (1985) have portrayed, the Samoan Heart is used positively by some participants as a paradigm to connect Samoan citizens with their heritage and cultural identities. The connection is necessary, in the views of some participants, to liberate young Samoan offenders from the confusion and the crises they face concerning their identities and survival in New Zealand society. According to the participants in the Criminal Justice area, while the majority of young Samoan offenders are clear in their own hearts as to what their parents have taught them since their childhood, the confusion is in their heads. For instance, while most Samoan parents instil in their children a sense of fear of God and of having respect for their parents and elders, many of these children become confused because of the traditional demands placed on them by their parents, as opposed to the demands of modern society on the individuality and the freedom to live independently. However, when the Samoan Heart is used to connect these young people with their experiences back in the village, at school and with the church,

participants in New Zealand have no doubt that the influence of the Samoan Heart has led them to place emphasis on the cultural development of their clients through induction of their clients to learn about *fa'asamoa* paths outlined in Tables One and Two of Chapter Two.

c) **The Influence of Aiga and Matai**

Any Samoan client is expected to belong to a family that has *matai* who are the trustees of that family. As leaders, they have considerable influence on numbers of their kin. In situations where the *matai* do not exist, the parents, aunt, uncle or the oldest members of the *aiga* assume the role of the *matai*. This is not uncommon in most Pacific Island cultures where status and ranking are determined by age, seniority, experience, birth and gender (Barker, 1993). It is expected, therefore, that the *matai* or those with influence assume a leadership role in almost any occasion where family members are involved as a group.

One of the responsibilities of the *matai* is to assemble *aiga* members required to participate in a project that may necessitate the input or contribution of kin members collectively. Although kin members are expected to be rewarded

for their efforts, this is not the primary motivating factor leading to family involvement. Kin members are involved because of their loyalty and allegiance to their families. Many also feel obliged to give because of their sense of duty and commitment to their *matai*. Quite a number of participants are aware of this background, and understand the influence of these factors on Samoan families. For example, 'giving' is usually influenced by *faia* (connections to other kin) and *tautua* (service), a form of obligation placed on kin members towards their *matai* leader. Knowledge and awareness of these factors occasion the participants to feel placed in a better position to work effectively with their Samoan clients in the field. Cultural knowledge and linguistic skills further enhance their abilities to work with Samoan clients and their families. The participants have now fully maximised the influence of these factors to enhance their role in the field. As one participant said, *fa'asamoa* in these respects become clearer when

I do my assessment for example. I have to pick out the head of the family even though he or she does not live there. Whoever are the key people of that family, I'd target them to assist.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

A similar revelation was made by another participant in New

Zealand who engaged the assistance of the *matai* in assembling members of his *aiga* to a family group conference. In this particular case, the participant said that he had to

ring the *matai* of the family who then assembled members of his *aiga* to the *fono*. Because of his influence, many of his *aiga* turned up. The *matai* also provided other relevant information about his family members who didn't necessarily have to be consulted for their consent. Throughout the session, it was the *matai* who provided all the answers on behalf of the parents of this child.

(Interview with a New Zealand Participant, 1997).

This is an example where the *matai* acted as the spokesperson for the entire family even though the parents of the child were present at the group conference. Although the questions were directed to the parents of the child concerned, the parents preferred to allow the *matai* to speak on their behalf. The parents were also readily prepared to abide by whatever arrangements the *matai* made on their behalf; the decisions made by the *matai* would be honoured without questions. From the social work perspective, the Samoan social worker was able to work with the family because of his understanding and background knowledge of the *matai* and the *aiga* systems. He was able to blend the role of the *matai* and that of the family members with the requirements of the Judiciary System in order to arrive at a satisfactory outcome. This demonstrates the role of experience and skills that this participant had; his knowledge

of *aiga* and *matai* which influenced his attitude, manners and style of facilitation in dealing with this family.

There are other examples which demonstrate that even in difficult situations, the social structures of *aiga*, village and *matai* can still be adapted to achieve the necessary results for the benefit of Samoan clients. In one particular instance, one of the participants had to search for the *aiga* of a child who was on her caseload and whose mother was Samoan. Given the limited information she had on the background of this child, she began by identifying the family name of the mother and the village where the woman might have come from in Samoa. The information she gathered led her to approach some of the people from the same village who lived in Auckland. Although they did not know this family, they recommended her to speak with one of the elderly *matai* who might know the family. Because of this *matai*'s knowledge of the families in his village and the events which happened to their lives in the past, he was able to reconstruct some clues that led the participant to contact the Police Department in Samoa for further assistance. This *matai* was also agreeable to his name (title) being used as a reference to make the necessary connections with the people in the village, to secure their co-operation and support. The Police in Samoa

was then able to initiate contacts with those concerned in the village, whose details and information led to the identification of the family concerned. In turn, members of this family in Samoa provided the necessary information that the Police in Samoa passed on to the participant in Auckland who then made the necessary contacts with the kin members of this child's mother in Auckland.

Because of the participant's knowledge of her own people, their anxieties, moods and passions, and their sense of temperament, she was tactful and calm in her approach to the case. As a Samoan, she believes that when it comes to issues involving people or adopting a person into a family, such a case should not be taken lightly. Because of her knowledge of *fa'asamoa*, she has assumed that the initial meeting with this family would not be easy. Furthermore, she has taken into account that once the family knew about this child as one of their blood relations, emotions would be high. There would be mixed feelings. For example, some would cry, others would be excited, and some others would feel surprised at having to meet one of their own kin for the first time. The participant in this case also anticipated the possibility of a formal dialogue taking place between the family and her as a representative of the

Department. Traditionally, the formal dialogue is a ritual of *fa'asamoa* as a feature of any significant social occasion. Her knowledge of *fa'asamoa* and understanding of her people alerted and prepared the participant to act appropriately. As she did not have a *matai* title, she then hired the service of a *matai* practitioner who accompanied her to their first meeting with the family. This was the only part of the process where she had to do this. This part of the process is a feature of *fa'asamoa* implied in Table Two of Chapter Two. The ceremonial presentation was taken care of by her *matai* colleague; and immediately after the ceremonial presentation, the participant spoke about the legal and departmental procedures. In the closing process of this first meeting, the *matai* practitioner closed off with a brief farewell speech to the family. This social worker's thinking, networking and engagement of the *matai* practitioner as her spokesperson all demonstrate relevant components of *fa'asamoa* which influenced the way this Samoan social worker performed her role.

d)

Lotu or Religion

Lotu is interpreted to mean either the 'church' in the physical sense, or a set of 'christian beliefs' based on Christ as the centre

and the foundation of Samoa as a people and as a society. In the context of social work, *lotu* plays an important role in dealing with the Samoans as individuals or as a group. There are many aspects of *lotu* that the participants have integrated as part of their work and practice in dealing with Samoans. For example, prayer as a component of *lotu* is a powerful activity that some participants use as part of the process when counselling those in grief or at a loss. Although praying has a religious base, it is used as a ritual to keep Samoan clients focused, motivated and inspired psychologically and emotionally; and to influence the way they think and respond to therapy or programmes for their growth and sense of empowerment. When a Samoan counsellor quotes a reading from St John 14:1,

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also,

as part of prayer, the counsellor is developing a sense of confidence in the client's mind that there is hope beyond this life, to make the client think that life on this earth is worth living for (Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

While *lotu* in this respect is an integral part of working with Samoan clients, participants in New Zealand prefer to restrict the role of *lotu* to counselling purposes only. However, where it is appropriate to make reference to or quote an example or story from the Bible that reinforces a theme or message which empowers or inspires clients, then using a biblical story is not uncommon to many of the participants in New Zealand. Offenders convicted of assault are reminded of the story of Jesus, at the time of crucifixion, to illustrate the qualities of Jesus as a leader and to recall his sense of humility. Stories such as this are used to counsel victims as well about the qualities of humility, the strength of hope, and the power of self-control. Samoan men convicted of assault because of anger, despair and lack of self-control are often familiar with biblical stories because of their religious background and christian upbringing (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

Biblical references are also used as part of the process to reconstruct a philosophical base to explain why anger, or action based on anger, is not acceptable from the perspective of *lotu* and *fa'asamoa*. Some participants quote as part of their logic against anger, using quotations as from the Book of Ephesians (Chapter 4, verses 25 to 29) to support and justify the

discouragement of anger:

- 25 No more lying, then! Everyone must tell the truth to his fellow believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ.
- 26 If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day.
- 27 Don't give the devil a chance.
- 28 The man who used to rob must stop robbing and start working, in order to earn an honest living for himself and to be able to help the poor.
- 29 Don't use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you.

Biblical quotations such as these are incorporated into the delivery of *apoapoaiga* (counselling) and rehabilitation programmes conducted by a substantial number of participants who specialise in anger management of Samoan male clients. They use the principles from these verses to influence the clients to reconsider their ways with a view to change. Using the Bible in this manner is, more often than not, more effective to produce positive results than putting a client through a 12 week programme of intensive cultural training.

Again, *lotu* in another context involves the role of the *faiifeau* (church pastor) when the *faiifeau* conducts an *apoapoaiga* (counselling) for individuals and families in grief, at a loss, in anxiety or experiencing a sense of hopelessness in their lives.

This role is often played during hospital and home visits, or at funerals. The *fai-feau* and the role of *lotu* become even more powerful when the pastor acts as a mediator, or when religion is used as a mechanism to establish peace among people from different cultures at crisis. The use of religion in this way is best illustrated by an incident involving the Tongan and the Samoan communities in South Auckland in 1993.²⁷ Two Tongan boys had been killed by a car driven by a Samoan youth from Mangere. Despite the tension that consequently built up between the two communities, it was the power of *lotu* (religion), amongst other factors, that brought the two communities into harmony. As described by Consendine (1995:10),

The deeply held Christian beliefs of both communities meant that they recognised each other as belonging to the one family of God that even national boundaries and culpable action should not place at risk. Hence the faith of the families and the communities generally meant that reconciliation and healing could be achieved even before the processes of the law got fully under way.

Thus far, when *lotu* or religion is used effectively in these respects, it has the support of the participants in New Zealand. When *lotu* is used by Samoans to promote humiliation, abuse and physical violence, however, it compels a challenge. *Lotu* in

²⁷ *The New Zealand Herald*, 21 December 1993. Also cited by Consendine, 1995.

the negative sense has been described by one of the participants as follows:

There are Samoan families who use the Bible as an authority to justify the use of physical methods of disciplining their children. At times when I ring in, I find that the parents are never home, because they have gone to church, gone to a church fono (meeting) or choir practice while the kids are at home by themselves. So, the church is taking up a certain amount of resource, finance, time and taking away the parents from the kids.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

Lotu is seen, therefore, to be negative when it places an obligation on the families to feel that they have to be at church all the time, and when it would not be as harmful and wasteful if going to church is restricted to only once or twice a week with less than an hour in each session. As Samoan social workers are familiar with the influence of the church on most Samoan families, they feel obliged - as part of their duty - to advise, direct and place clients on the path that minimises risks and damages created by the influence of the church.

The substantial number of participants in New Zealand, who are familiar with the manner the church has been 'Samoanized,' (Ngan Woo, 1985) are in a better position to advise and direct Samoan clients on issues involving church. The conception of the church being 'Samoanized' refers only to the physical and

the administrative manner in which Samoans have treated *lotu* as part of the Samoan way of life. Rather than having a horizontal structure where the *faiifeau* is treated as an equal of other members of the church, the Samoans through their traditional hierarchical structure have accommodated and placed the *faiifeau* at the apex of the Samoan society ranking system. *Faiifeau* hold the status of high and paramount chiefs in the social fabric of Samoan society. The Samoan community looks up to them as their leaders in both the spiritual and the physical sense. *Faiifeau* in New Zealand are, therefore, powerful people. Samoan social workers who are aware of the system and the power base, upon which the church operates, have been able to use the church effectively in their practice. As the church is part of denominational networks which Samoan social workers use from time to time in support of community services as well as rehabilitative and educational programmes for Samoan clients, the delivery of educational programmes on healthy lifestyle is sponsored by the church community whose facilities are accessible for Samoan clients to use. One such *faiifeau* in South Auckland chairs the Trust Board of an organization which provides social services for young Pacific Island peoples who have special needs relating to education, lifestyle and family planning. The role of *lotu* becomes utilitarian when it

complements the role of social work within the Samoan community. The Samoan social workers are equally aware of the delicate nature of working with the church community in New Zealand, however. For example, the participants have alluded to the fact that dealing with the church community must be handled with great sense of caution and sensitivity. Social workers must not make the church community feel threatened or undermined. Once they feel challenged regarding their role and existence in the community, the sense of goodwill and co-operation will be lost. However, the participants in the context are more in favour of adopting a conciliatory approach and a less confrontational style in order to maintain a good working relationship with the Samoan church community in New Zealand.

e) **The Samoan Way Through Gagana**

The participants in this study identified *gagana Samoa* or the use of the Samoan language as a crucial ingredient of their work in working with Samoan clients. According to one Samoan proverb, '*E le mou le tatou gagana aua tatou te le'i folau mai vasa*' - our language will not vanish as we did not sail from oceans afar - (Nu'uiali'i Mulipola Mailo Saipele, 1994:1). In a recent

research project, Tamasese et al (1997:13) note that

(f)or all people, the language which best interprets and explains the realities of their world view can be said to be their first language, their language of identity and belonging. Their world view can be said to be their first paradigm, the social construct which houses and maintains their identity and which gives meaning to their belonging. A primary function of language can therefore be said to be a vehicle which communicates the way in which individuals and collectives of people perceive, interact, and respond to the world in which they exist. More significantly, within language the underlying values, norms, mores - the belief systems of that culture - are transmitted.

Tamasese et al further explain that body language gives context and meaning to the message while Samoan 'speak' is a construct of the Samoan culture. Thus, as Tamasese et al (1997:13-14) explain,

(I)n communicating and/or transmitting information of importance, the Samoan language becomes less direct and tends towards an allusive style of language.

The elucidation was supported by the participants who agreed with Tamasese et al that the meanings and implications derived from 'body language' and 'body speak' must be carefully read and understood to avoid confusion and misunderstanding between clients and social workers. It would be a misfortune if this occurred even though the participants had acted carefully to prevent this from happening when dealing with their own people. The participants also believed that because of the language difficulties, inter alia, a large proportion of Samoan

clients prefer to work with Samoan social workers than otherwise (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). The need to speak a language-in-common is indisputable, from the revelations by participants whose clientele is predominantly Samoan.

Whether or not there is a link between language and defensive behaviours is an issue needing to be addressed. According to one of the participants in New Zealand, the link between defensive behaviour and the Samoan language is quite obvious. For example,

if a social worker fails to communicate an idea or concept in such a way for a Samoan client to understand, the reaction from that person is likely to be defensive or elusive.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

This participant continues to explain his point by using counselling as an example. Experientially, he has often come across Samoan parents who perceive counselling as something alien, embarrassing, unnatural, immodest and intrusive. As a Samoan, he understands why some Samoan parents feel uneasy about agreeing with the concept of undertaking parenting skills, particularly when recommended by social workers who are young, single and without children. According to this

participant, when clients are asked 'How would you as parents with several children feel when a single 23 year old *palagi* (European) social worker advise you to undertake counselling on how to look after your children?', this message - communicated in a realistic, direct and succinct manner to Samoan parents - would elicit negative reaction towards the blunt person who has questioned. Some Samoan parents may interpret 'counselling' as an activity for people with psychiatric problems. Others may see it as a way of exposing their weaknesses, so many would feel unsafe in having their pride and privacy interfered with. Some have reacted by posing questions and making comparisons between themselves and the social worker making the recommendation for counselling. As this participant explained, none of these problems would arise if the right language had been spoken and the concept properly communicated to parents in the first place (Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

So, when this participant was asked how he would approach a Samoan couple and request them to undertake counselling and parenting skills, he said that he would deliver the same message in a less direct Samoan way.

Rather than implying that the parents are problematic
I would explain to them the process and why counselling

is recommended. I would emphasise that undertaking counselling does not mean that they are irresponsible people, nor that they lack care or parenting skills. However, I would give them some information about children and parents, and how to improve relationships with their children.

(Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997).

According to this participant, although the approach he had used in this context was seen as a form of good social work practice, he still believed that the influence of *fa'asamoa* as culture had induced him into such practice. It is for his knowledge of *fa'asamoa*, he believed, that Samoan parents are more likely to cooperate, and if the advice given is less imposing than a direct, bureaucratic and official approach. As the above examples illustrate, *gagana* or language has the strength of influencing people's attitude and social behaviours if effectively and properly communicated in the accurate *fa'asamoa* way. In this context, the *fa'asamoa* way is *elusive* and takes a form similar to the 'circle the wagon' approach, but with deference, diplomacy and dignity.

6.3. SUMMARY

Section One has highlighted the two sets of perspectives on the meaning of *fa'asamoa* and the extent of the influence of *fa'asamoa* on the delivery of social services and social work by

Samoan social workers. Many of the participants in New Zealand are influenced by *fa'asamoa* features as summarized in Table One of Chapter Two. A substantial and significant proportion of participants in New Zealand hardly apply *fa'asamoa* features implied in Table Two, of Chapter Two. Participants in New Zealand prefer *fa'asamoa* features of Table One because of the type of Samoan clients they deal with and the context of social work with which the participants are involved in New Zealand. *Fa'asamoa* features of Table Two suit the practitioners in Samoa, because *fa'asamoa* requirements are more elaborate, hierarchical and specialised. Conversely, *fa'asamoa* in New Zealand is flexible, adaptable and horizontal in structure and approach. *Fa'asamoa* in New Zealand is one of many systems that has an impact on Samoans living in New Zealand. In Samoa, *fa'asamoa* predominates the nature of social work activities that occur in Samoa as a society. Thus, the review of the meaning of *fa'asamoa* in Section One clarifies the distinctive nature of *fa'asamoa* within the two contexts, in New Zealand and in Samoa.

The focus of Section Two concerns the influence of *fa'asamoa* on Samoans and social work practice in New Zealand. The influence of *fa'asamoa* is clearly transparent through the

components of *Fa'aaloalo*, the Samoan Heart, *Aiga*, *Lotu*, *Matai* and *Gagana*. In other words, these are the key components of *fa'asamoa* that play influential roles in social work activities in New Zealand.

Fa'aaloalo is definitely a component of the protocol and the values of *fa'asamoa*. Its features, from a general perspective, are outlined in Table Six, and its effects are outlined in Table Seven. However, from a social work perspective, the characteristics of *fa'aaloalo* are specifically outlined in Table Eight. The participants in New Zealand use metaphors and paradigms such as the *auauna* (servant); *tama-afafine* (father-daughter); *feagaiga* (covenant or bond) between a *tuagane* and *tuafafine* (a brother and a sister) within an agency setting. Such paradigms are aimed at deinstitutionalising the bureaucratic nature of the relationship between Samoan social workers and Samoan clients within a bureaucratic institution. Furthermore, such images or paradigms have an influence on the development of an environment of warmth, trust, a sense of peoplehood and Samoanhood with Samoan clients. Thus, *fa'aaloalo* is a virtue of *fa'asamoa* that certainly influences and shapes the manner and attitude of Samoan social workers in the field.

The Samoan Heart component represents the intellectual and the emotional attributes of *fa'asamoa*. The participants have used the Samoan Heart as a framework to effect rehabilitation programmes for young Samoan offenders. As a framework, the Samoan Heart was used to connect young Samoan offenders with their cultural roots, as a strategy for rehabilitation and the development of their personal growth. The framework integrates the use of Samoan role models for inspirational purposes, as an empowering technique for their people. The ultimate aim of this technique is to empower young Samoans to feel proud of their heritage and their potentials as a people in New Zealand. From the field interviews, there is a consensus among the participants that using the Samoan Heart as a technique is one way to overcome the identity crisis faced by young Samoan offenders in New Zealand.

The participants in this study feel privileged because of their knowledge and awareness of the *alga* and *matal* systems to which the Samoans have links in New Zealand. *Matal* influence was visible in assembling family members to a family group conference activity in Auckland. The role of spokesperson was also undertaken by the *matal* leader. Samoan social workers were able to blend the role of the *matal* and the *alga* into the

Judiciary System because of their knowledge of *Fa'asamoa* and the Judiciary System. One social worker has managed to maximize the influence of *aiga* and *matai* as a networking strategy to gain access to information and to kin members of one of the clients whom she has supervised. Dealing with the family of this client in the end requires the social worker to employ a mixture of traditional *fa'asamoa* implied in Table Two (Chapter Two), and the less formal structure of *fa'asamoa* implied in Table One (Chapter Two).

Lotu in the spiritual sense plays a role in social work through the counselling of those in grief, at a loss and in anxiety. Biblical stories and references are used appropriately to highlight positive human values of humility, hope and self-control. The aim of *lotu* in these respects is to influence clients to reconsider their lifestyles with a view to change for the better. *Lotu* has also brought the Samoan and the Tongan communities together after a tragedy that involved two Tongan boys who were killed by a car driven by a Samoan man in Mangere. The role of *lotu* in the context must be promoted and encouraged because of its effect in restoring peace, harmony and goodwill between the Tongans and the Samoans. However, when *lotu* becomes a disadvantage to Samoans, Samoan social workers see

themselves as having a duty to advise their clients on the appropriate path to minimize risks and damages imposed by *lotu*. Samoan social workers prefer the conciliatory rather than the confrontational approach in dealing with the church community to secure support and co-operation of the church within the Samoan community in New Zealand.

Gagana Samoa or the Samoan language is the most critical ingredient of the Samoan way as a component of *fa'asamoa* in working with Samoans in New Zealand. *Gagana* is crucial, because it interprets and explains the realities of the Samoan world view, identity and heritage from the perspective of Samoans. *Gagana* is social work practice, although it can be allusive and indirect, has the strength of influencing Samoans' attitudes and social behaviours if effectively delivered with deference, diplomacy and dignity.

The discussion in the next chapter relates to *fa'asamoa* practice framework which integrates some of the key features of *fa'asamoa* as discussed in Chapters Two and Six.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FA'ASAMOA PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

7.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on providing a practice framework which is a guide to principles, values and ethics, *fa'asamoa* characteristics and issues relating to working with Samoans in social work. Those unfamiliar with *fa'asamoa* should find the Chapter useful, the data and information being derived largely from contributions made by Samoan participants in this study.

Part One of this chapter discusses the philosophical and the structural elements of *fa'asamoa*, for readers' understanding of the framework of *fa'asamoa* in principle and implications in New Zealand. Part Two discusses a selection of characteristics, from the *fa'asamoa* perspective, which are relevant for communication purposes with Samoans. The aim of this section is to alert non- Samoan readers of some attributes and personal characteristics of Samoans, for the development of appropriate strategies and approach in dealings with Samoans. Some aspects in this section are further elucidated in Part Three and

Four, to focus on the values and ethics of *fa'asamoa*. As values, ethics and philosophy of direct practice comprise one of the domains of social work as a profession (Hepworth and Larsen, 1990), the discussions in the above mentioned sections necessarily introduces readers' awareness to these aspects of *fa'asamoa* when working with Samoans in New Zealand.

The final Part raises a series of issues that are imperative to be aware of in working with Samoans in the field. These issues derived from the experiences of Samoans in Samoa and those in New Zealand. An understanding of these issues is an attempt towards formulating a basis for improvement and recognition of *fa'asamoa* practice in social work in New Zealand.

7.1. FA'ASAMOA FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL AND STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Fa'asamoa is characterized by a series of philosophies and underpinnings which give the basis to Samoans' conduct and involvement in social and cultural activities. The most common include the philosophy of '*ola mo isi*' or 'live for others'; '*e le tufa'amauga pea se tasi*' or 'no person can stand like a mountain forever'; '*e sui faiga ae tumau fa'avae*' or 'although the style and

performance of *fa'asamoa* can be modified, in essence the foundation of *fa'asamoa* remains unchanged'; *e lele a le toloa ae maau ile vai* or 'the bird toloa can fly wherever it wants to, but always returns to the water for a swim'; and '*e fa'avae ile Atua Samoa*' or 'Samoa is founded on God'.

a) *Ola mo isi - live for others*

In the Samoan context, '*Ola Mo Isi*' implies a commitment to serve and recognise the needs of people other than the immediate members of one's own family. '*Ola Mo Isi*' is the opposite to '*Ola Mo Oe Lava*' which is '*Live For Oneself*'. *To live for oneself* implies a sense of *individualism* because the individual's interest is more important than the interest in others and the group as a unit whereas, '*Ola Mo Isi*' implies a sense of *community and collectivism* where the interest of the group is highly emphasised. It is most important, under the philosophy of '*Ola Mo Isi*', to recognise and conform with the majority decision by the group. *Mafulu*²⁸. an Auckland taxi proprietor from Manurewa who returned to Samoa to live, was murdered in Samoa because he refused to conform with the village codes and conventions enforced by the council of chiefs and orators of his village.

²⁸ The case was publicised even in New Zealand, as cited in Consendine (1994).

There are also, in association with the philosophy of '*Ola Mo Isi*', the characteristics of '*sharing*' and '*giving*' which, in this regard, are reciprocal - in a way a form of insurance - because the '*giver*' expects the '*receiver*' to return the goodwill and the favour when needed at another time. Without the philosophy of '*Ola Mo Isi*', Samoans would not be motivated to feel obliged to serve and respect their elders, church pastors, the *matai* head of the family and others in the community. '*Ola Mo Isi*' is generated by the sentiments of *alofa* (love and sense of charity), *faia* (kin relation), *loto fesoasoani* (heart of compassion) and *agalelei* (being kind), all of which are a part of the composition of the philosophy of '*Ola Mo Isi*', an essential component of *fa'asamoa*.

Although there are advantages associated with the philosophy of '*Ola Mo Isi*,' the impact of this philosophy on Samoans can be 'depressive' and 'corrosive' in practice. It could be argued that in practice the philosophy of '*Ola Mo Isi*' is a contributing factor to the economic depression and poverty faced by many Samoan families in New Zealand. For example, the impact of '*Ola Mo Isi*' becomes 'depressive' when it places an obligation on Samoans to give more than they can afford in terms of economics and finance. When the interests of the extended family and the church become demanding to the point of pressurising and

overcommitting members to sacrifice, the practice of '*Ola Mo Isi*' in this regard becomes one of the factors in the social and economic problems encountered by Samoans in New Zealand (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997).

However, another perspective can argue that the issue has nothing to do with the philosophy of '*Ola Mo Isi*', but with the way in which '*Ola Mo Isi*' is practised. '*Ola Mo Isi*', in theory, is communal and charitable, but must be nurtured within reason and appropriate to one's ability, affordability and resources in practice. In theory, '*Ola Mo Isi*' must be recognised and supported with a well-constructed structural base that matches the economic realities of members, their interests, and objectives in life. This structural base should adopt the *palagi* (European) framework, that is, incorporating a family unit into a business entity or into an incorporated society with a proper organizational structure and business plan. This structure retains the group tradition of *pule* (or *mana*) and leadership, while it gives the opportunity to define clearly the administrative role of the group. Those with the relevant expertise and training are given the task of managing the affairs of the group, while matai leaders and family members can still play a role in their capacities as board of directors, executive

members, advisors and decision makers. One of the advantages of this structure is that it gives the administrators the ability to organise fundraising activities towards building the economic infrastructure of the group. *Aiga* members are motivated to be involved in any form of fundraising, as they now feel accountable and committed to support their legal entity as a group. Many see this as a form of investment and/or insurance, because members can reap in one form or another the contributions they have made to the group. For example, when a member dies, the group as an incorporated society is likely to pay for all the costs incurred from this *fa'alavelave* or crisis, relieving members of the immediate family of the deceased from paying a major cost. The *aiga*, in this role, becomes charitable and benevolent; and the immediate members of this family would not feel offended or embarrassed, because they are part of the group. Besides, the payout by the group is part of this family's share for the sacrifices already contributed towards the development of the group. In this context, the argument is that the benefits have outweighed the costs incurred on members of the *aiga* individually. In practice, the effect has lessened the burden and the pressure placed upon members of the group. When members feel 'assisted' in this way, it is a welcoming sign of recovery which is the first step towards the process of

rehabilitation and *liberation* from frustrations and pressures that members have encountered before the group is legally incorporated. The incorporated body, therefore, provides the structural and the management framework to empower the traditional *aiga* unit to function effectively in New Zealand. If the *aiga* as an incorporated body is successful under its newly restructured format, then this would benefit members individually and collectively.

b) ***E le tu fa'amauga pea se tasi - no
person can be an island or stand like
a mountain forever***

The Samoans have used the abovementioned saying to reinforce their belief in the power of *aiga* as a support mechanism for their members in New Zealand. Unlike an island or a mountain, a Samoan person cannot live in isolation from other members of the *aiga*. A Samoan without an *aiga* is a person without an identity and pride. The contributions of other members of *aiga* reinforce the traditional structure and the existence of Samoans in New Zealand. A person isolated from the *aiga* is a 'lost' person with no real sense of strength and support. Thus far, this saying reaffirms the social structure of *aiga* which acts as a form of 'insurance policy' for the welfare and wellbeing of its

members. The same belief is also reaffirmed by the Samoan saying ' *e alu aso e sau aso*' which literally means ' *the day goes the day comes*' when a person's love and good work will be remembered by the recipients of such work. This saying also implies the reciprocal nature of how Samoans view the way they interact with other Samoans. Such views and beliefs are part of Samoan ideology which develops the basis for support and networking among Samoans in New Zealand.

- c) ***E sui faiga ae tumau fa'avae - the style or the delivery of fa'asamoa may modify, but the essence of fa'asamoa remains unchanged***

This saying confirms that *fa'asamoa* as a system has been through a phase of restructuring and changes brought upon Samoa by a whole range of developments which includes the influence of Christianity and industrialization since 1830. The changes were significant to the lifestyle and the social conduct of Samoans as a people. Clearly noticeable under the influence of the missionaries is modification to the extent Samoans conducted their traditional form of worship, organised their affairs and accepted God as their Christian leader, instead of *Tagaloalagi* who is the ancient God of Samoa (Malama Meleisea, 1987). The traditional status of *ietoga*, in redeeming Samoans

from death (*ie ole ola*), has also been replaced by the status of Jesus Christ whose death symbolises salvation for the people of Samoa.

Despite these changes, the saying '*e sui faiga ae tumau fa'avae*' remains a reminder to emphasise that although *fa'asamoa* is subject to modifications, the essence of *fa'asamoa* through its social structures of *aiga*, *lotu* and *gagana*; values and protocols; ceremonies; the Samoan way; and the Samoan Heart remains unchanged. While the manner in which these factors are functioning in New Zealand may change, the essentials and the philosophies of *fa'asamoa* cannot be changed. Thus, without the essentials and the philosophies of *fa'asamoa*, *fa'asamoa* as a living system is weakened to the point of being extinct.

d) *E lele le toloa ae maau i le vai - the grey duck toloa may fly over land, but always returns to water where it belongs*

This saying is similar to the expression '*there is no place like home*' to affirm the philosophical attachment Samoans have to their homeland. *Home* in this sense could also mean the Samoa community in the New Zealand context, or the *aiga* units, or the *mafutaga a Samoa* which is a place that gives Samoans a sense of belonging in New Zealand. These create an

environment to orientate Samoans to feel Samoan whenever they assemble as a community. As the bird *Tolua* feels at home in the water, so the Samoans feel at home within the confines of *fa'asamoa* and in the midst of other Samoans. Samoan social workers are aware of the significance and the impact of this environment on Samoan clients when the need arises to refer these clients to Samoan agencies for treatment and culturally rehabilitative programmes.

e) ***E fa'avae i le Atua Samoa
Samoa is founded upon God***

The constitution of Samoa refers to this saying as the motto of Samoa to reaffirm the belief that Samoans have in God, and as the *poutu* or the *central post* for Samoa as a society. The implication of this saying significantly deals with Samoans through social work. For example, the interview process or the assessment of Samoan clients must be designed to address the religious needs and the social background of clients. The questioning of Samoan clients must touch on these factors to prompt them to disclose the relevant data and information needed for their pre-sentence reports, or for the evaluation to meet their needs. Failure to address these factors shows lack of awareness and sensitivity which can lead to misrepresentation

of clients' precise needs and recommendation for the right course of action to be undertaken.

7.2. OTHER CHARACTERISTICS FROM THE FA'ASAMOA PERSPECTIVE FOR COMMUNICATION PURPOSES

The aim of this section is to introduce specific attributes and personal characteristics of Samoans as background towards the development of appropriate strategies and approaches when dealing with Samoans. The key include the characteristics such as *sense of humour, pronunciation of names, physical contact, silence, pace, diagram, assumption and the engagement of lay people.*

a) Sense of Humour

Having a sense of humour is therapeutic, relieving anxiety and reaffirming bonds of solidarity within the support group (Department of Health, 1986; Levy, 1973). Said this participant,

As we talked, I laughed, joked and asked them questions. Sometimes, it felt as if I wasn't conducting an interview. However, I have found this approach effective, enriching and good fun.

Sense of humour is empowering when it helps to facilitate a

two-way communication line between Samoans. Also, jokes must be used sparingly or appropriately to suit the context of the environment and the people in that environment. Whitaker (1984) advised the use of nicknames to facilitate communication with Pacific Island peoples if necessary, but with caution. It can be intrusive and insulting to use nicknames of people without their knowledge of the meanings and connotation of the nicknames being used.

b) Pronunciation of Names

Social workers are advised to make an effort to pronounce Samoan names correctly and accurately. Names are significant to Samoan culture as they contain meanings and values of important events or personal experiences in which people have been involved. *Matal* titles are sacred as they embody historical and significant events in which Samoans and their ancestors were involved, as well as their villages, districts and confederacies. While data and information are stored in computers in modern times, Samoans have used names, stories and legends which embody knowledge, data and information on their heritage, family titles and historical events.

To mispronounce a Samoan name is seen as a sign of disrespect, disregard and insensitivity. There are steps a person can take to prevent embarrassment or insult. One, is to check with the person directly the precise pronunciation of the name by which this person prefers to be called. Second, is to check with this person if the name is a *matai* title or not as there are individuals who prefer to be called by titles, not by Christian names.

c) Physical Contacts

A Samoan person feels at home if social workers introduce themselves with a handshake. A handshake gives the impression that social workers are not anonymous and remote, but simply ordinary people who are there to help. Metge and Kinloch (1978), as well as Whitaker (1984) observe the existence of this same feeling among Polynesians generally.

d) Silence

Sometimes silences indicate a person's state of mind or thinking process concerning an issue or a development that is of interest to that person. Samoans use silence sometimes to

disguise their true feelings on an issue or a topic (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand and in Samoa, 1997). At other times, silence can either be an expression of consent or abstention from wanting to be involved in a plan or an action. There are those who prefer to be silent until they are fully aware of an issue being discussed. Samoans at times maintain their silence as a strategy to defer a plan until others in the family are fully advised and consulted on the plan (Interviews with Participants in Samoa, 1997). Silence is sometimes used as a method of deferment to give *matai* a chance to think through an issue thoughtfully and carefully. This is reflected in the usual line that a *matai* speaks: '*ta'atia maia lou finagalo, se'i iai se taimi, ona logo atu lea*' - lay your request with me, and I will let you know in due course.

The literature (Metge, 1976; Whitaker, 1984) in this field also associates silence with the concept of '*Suamatamuli*' (shame) when people do not have the confidence to express themselves verbally to others. Judging people on this must be handled with sensitivity as some people have deliberately chosen to be silent while searching quietly for a connection between themselves and the world of others around them.

If a person appears reticent or shy, one of the methods in the Samoan way is to probe this person to talk about his or her Samoan background. A starting point is to ask this person some questions about his or her aiga, village, his or her church, or the matai title of his or her family. All of these represent the key components of *fa'asamoa* .

e) Pace

Samoans prefer not to be 'rushed over' or 'pushed around' without giving them the chance to adapt and 'acclimatize' first with their new environment. However, a social worker is expected to be proactive and to take the lead in making the necessary suggestions, and outlining the options for people to choose from. Such an approach is seen as less threatening than imposing too much on Samoans.

f) Diagram

Pictures and diagrams are acceptable to Samoans as ways of explaining and communicating complex concepts and are useful when explaining concepts such as surgery on the human body

which may involve a by-pass operation of the heart (Barker, 1993).

g) Assumptions

It must be emphasised that one should not necessarily assume that a Samoan client understands or knows everything concerning court proceedings, community based sentence administration, social policy developments, procedures, and social work processes. Repetition of knowledge is not an irritant to Samoans. It is culturally appropriate from the *fa'asamoa* perspective for a social worker to repeat a point several times to reinforce or to highlight a significant message for a Samoan client. It is better to err on the side of explaining once again than not to explain enough. In a cross-cultural context, it could be dangerous to assume what a Samoan person thinks without reaching an understanding of the world-view to which that person relates and belongs.

h) The Involvement of Lay People

The intent here is not to undermine the ability of lay people to translate and interpret. However, it needs to be emphasised that

the engagement of the services of people who, have been professionally trained in these areas, is preferable to avoid the risk of making serious mistakes or creating misunderstandings that can prove costly to clients or to agencies. The advice of Samoans with credibility is better sought in uncertainty, than to assume that those who speak Samoan are automatically proficient in interpretation and translation work.

7.3. VALUES OF FA'ASAMOA

The key for the purposes of this section includes the values of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *alofa* (love), *agamalu* (humility), *loto fesoasoani* (willingness to help), *osi alga* (commitment to family and kinship), *fa'akeristiano* (christian-like character) and *fa'amatai* (chief-like way). Many of these values also form the basis for ethical imperatives of *fa'asamoa* which are linked to the components of *fa'asamoa* in Figure One, Chapter Two.

a) *Fa'aaloalo*

Details on *fa'aaloalo* have been discussed in Chapter Six which explains how it is practised by Samoan social workers in different contexts in the field. In this section of Chapter Seven,

fa'aaloalo pertains to a value of *fa'asamoa* with many 'faces' which influence the manner in which Samoans conduct themselves towards one another. *Fa'aaloalo* is also a protocol of *fa'asamoa* which Samoans use as a means of communicating and promoting harmonious human relationships, not only amongst the Samoans themselves, but with other cultures in New Zealand. *Fa'aaloalo* is accorded naturally to another Samoan because of that person's ethnicity, gender, matai status - and the counterpart's credibility and knowledge of that person's background. While *fa'aaloalo* is considered as one of the attributes of good social work practice, Samoans regard *fa'aaloalo* a fundamental part of their 'elaborate etiquette', the basis of the *Fa'asamoa* way of life. This may create an impression in people's minds that sometimes Samoans are serene and easygoing people (O'Meara, 1990). However, from a Samoan perspective, it is an insult to define Samoans by merely their sense of *fa'aaloalo*; it is culturally and politically incorrect also to assume and impose such characteristics on Samoans without full knowledge of *fa'asamoa* and understanding of the nature of Samoans as a people. However, it needs to be emphasised that *fa'aaloalo* as a value of *fa'asamoa* must be treated with great sensitivity and awareness to prevent slights, or political and social confrontations with Samoans, for

wounded pride can quickly explode into anger (O'Meara, 1990).

b) Alofa

Samoans interpret *Alofa* to mean 'love' 'compassion' or 'charity'. There is a Samoan saying ' *e le na'o upu ma tala, a'o mea e fa'atino e iloa ai le alofa*'- it is not just words and stories that show one's love, but also action and sacrifice to which Samoans commit themselves as a physical manifestations of their love, compassion and sense of charity towards kin and other people. *Alofa* as a value of *fa'asamoa* is further promoted and reinforced by the biblical quotation from 1 Corinthians 13:1, which Samoans tend to use to justify the significance of *alofa* in the physical sense,

- 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
- 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

although such quotations were initially intended for the Corinthians. *Alofa* is also reinforced by other factors such as links (*faia*) with kin and bonds with other *aiga* members. When a crisis arises which involves a particular *aiga*, the power of

alofa overwhelms the extent to which Samoans commit themselves to help. The other motivating factor is the *faia* (bond) that causes Samoans to make sacrifices. Thus, the closer the *faia* (bond), the greater the level of commitment a Samoan person will give to the person in need.

c) *Agamalu*

While *agamalu* is commonly understood to be synonymous with humility or sense of modesty, 'Aga' literally means 'attitude' and 'Malu' means 'calm.' Thus, the word *Agamalu* infers a sense of calmness and stability of attitude towards the other person. *Agamalu* is also associated with attributes of 'being less arrogant' and 'more tolerable' with other people (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). *Agamalu* in this sense means making an effort to avoid embarrassing or letting down the other person despite that person's shortcomings and status. *Agamalu* is having the patience to tolerate a client whose physical odour or conduct, for example, can become a source of unpleasantness or embarrassment in dealing with that person. Thus, if Samoan clients refuse to speak out openly about their emotions and feelings, it may well be that it is their sense of *agamalu* (modesty or humility) that influences them to be silent

about their feelings. The influence of *agamalu* certainly directs social workers to acknowledge the *matai* status of their clients, and use the paradigms of '*auauna*' (servant), '*tama-afafine*' (father-daughter) and '*tuagane-tuafafine*' (brother-sister) relationships as the base of their social work practices. The details of these paradigms have been discussed in full in Chapter Six.

d) *Loto Fesoasoani*

Loto means *heart* and *fesoasoani* means 'to reach out or help the other person'. Such a value is strengthened by the Samoan philosophy of '*live for others*' (*ola mo isi*) which forms the basis of the extended family structure in Samoan society. *Loto fesoasoani* is charitable in nature as it implies a sense of sacrifice, giving and sharing without an expectation for compensation for such work. According to the 1995 census 13% of Samoans, in the age bracket of 15 and over, had been involved in work that benefited those outside their households or families (*Statistics New Zealand, 1995*). The Samoans, driven by the sentiment of *loto fesoasoani*, are often characterized as being committed, dedicated and sincere in what they do. Many Samoans are committed to the value of *loto fesoasoani* because

of their religious beliefs and concerns for the welfare of their *aiga* and their community. Such values also imply that the spirit of *lotofesoasoani* is a powerful influence which commits Samoans to be involved in voluntary work that forms a part of their everyday community life in New Zealand.

e) *Osi Aiga*

Osi in this context means 'embrace' or 'conform' to the influence of *aiga* in New Zealand. *Osi aiga* is a social prerequisite that determines identity and sense of belonging to *aiga*. The significance of this value must be recognised in social work practice because of its impact in raising the self-esteem of Samoan clients, and particularly young Samoan offenders with problems relating to their Samoan identities. The philosophical basis of this value derives from the principle of *tautua* - to serve others - which includes contributions made by the individual to the *matai* of the *aiga*, the church and to the extended members of the *aiga*. It is this value that determines the social worth of the individual to be promoted and recognised within the ranking structure of *aiga* leadership. Such quality is often a precondition in selecting an individual to the rank of *matai* leader or to a significant post within the *aiga* structure or

within the church. In the Samoan world, the way to the top is through *tautua*, as the Samoan adage says - *ole ala ile pule ole tautua* - the path to governance is through *tautua* or service. Thus, *tautua* is reinforced by the value of *osi aiga* and one cannot exist in isolation from the other. *Osi aiga*, therefore, has the power to influence a Samoan to place loyalty or allegiance to his or her *aiga*, sometimes in preference to their profession, sport or other commitments of their career path. There have been instances where Samoans have resigned from their professions and careers because of their loyalty to serve their *aiga* fulltime in their capacities as *matal* leaders (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). Terminating their service in fulltime employment allows *matal* leaders to dedicate their time and energies to manage the affairs of their *aiga* as part of their commitment to the principle and value of *osi aiga*. Managing the affairs of the *aiga* and representing *aiga* members are duties associated with *mata*ship. The *matal* roles in this regard are usually fulfilled in ceremonies such as *malu* (funerals), *fa'aipolpoga* (weddings), *fa'aulufalega* (dedication ceremony of a new church) and *tusigalgoa* (a group activity of fundraising). Involvement in these activities is time consuming which often contradicts with the usual requirements of paid employment in New Zealand. One of the participants used up

all his annual leave and sick leave to allow him time to fulfil his role, not only as the matai leader of his *aiga*, but as a leader of his church in New Zealand (Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997). Another participant was close to being sacked from his work because of the amount of time he had taken off work to attend to the affairs of his *aiga* in New Zealand and in Samoa (Interview with a Participant in New Zealand, 1997). Other participants had difficulty in supervising matai offenders because of the demands placed on them by their *aiga* to represent their *aiga* in matters of great significance away from their usual place of residence in New Zealand. All these developments are of great significance in relation to the value of *ost aiga* that must be understood in dealing with Samoans in the field of social work.

f) *Fa'akerisiano*

Fa'akerisiano as a value is modelled on the qualities of Christ as the centre of Christian living and lifestyle. *Fa'akerisiano* in this context is also synonymous with the sense of spirituality that connects to one's belief in God. The influence of this value induces Samoans to grant forgiveness to those who have committed crime against them and their families. An example of

this value is manifested in the ceremony of *ifoga* - a ceremony of forgiveness performed by the offender for victims and their families - which aims to restore harmony and peace among the offender, the victim, and the community. The use of prayers, rituals, singing and counselling is inextricably linked to the value of *fa'akerisiano* which plays a powerful influence on the community life of Samoans. Thus, *fa'akerisiano* is integral to social work practice and must be adequately resourced in the field of social work in New Zealand.

g) *Matai* value

The *matai* value includes the need to respect the *matai* status of the individual who has a legal²⁹ *matai* title bestowed upon that person by the *ai'a*. Under the *matai* value, the implication is that the title of that person must be acknowledged and properly pronounced as part of *fa'asamoa's* elaborate etiquette in the presence of family members, *matai* colleagues and dignitaries at public gatherings. *Matai* title-names should be properly pronounced, and it is not wrong or rude to ask people politely whether they are *matai* or not; if they are, then it is safer to ask how to pronounce their names properly. There are Samoans who

²⁹ Legal in this context means the title which has been officially registered with the Land and Title Court in Samoa.

prefer to be called by their first names even though they have *matai* titles, while others may be offended if their *matai* titles are not acknowledged, given the significance of the bestowal ceremony performed by their *aiga* and the public endorsement given to their titles by their villages and district confederacies. There are others who could not be bothered with the ceremonial address of their *matai* title-names when working in their capacities as social workers in the field (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). From the perspectives of these participants, less emphasis should be given to *matai* values when dealing with non-*matai* clients in the field. Placing too much emphasis on *matai* values can create a distance between a social worker and a non-*matai* client. Some participants prefer not to over-emphasise the use of *matai* values, to avoid the risk of developing such sense of inequality and clients' unwillingness to co-operate. Other participants allowed themselves to treat clients as equals as an act of humility and respect (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). However, sometimes the use of *matai* values can bridge the gap between Samoan social workers and their *matai* clients. Sharing a common status as *matai* develops a sense of identity in the minds of social workers and clients, a feeling of belonging to the same fraternity of *matai* both in New

Zealand and in Samoa. Sharing a common ground in this context is relevant to establishing links and trust with clients and their families in the social work field.

h) Gender Value

This relates to implications derived from assumed relationships based on gender between the '*tuagane and tuafafine*' (brother and sister) '*tama and afafine*' (father and daughter), or '*tina and atali'i*' (mother and son). These all represent the importance of gender as a cultural value to Samoans. The effect of this value is also discussed in Chapter Six. This value implies a sense of duty, on the part of Samoan men and women, to assume respect and care for one another.

7.4 ETHICS OF FA'ASAMOA

For the purposes of this thesis, the key ethical component of *fa'asamoa* includes the practice of *lafo* (gift), a variable of the Samoan Way; *fa'amaoni* (honesty and integrity); and the notion of '*fa'alilolilo*' (confidentiality).

a) *Lafo*

As *lafo* is usually presented as a gift at the end of a session with a group or an individual, normally without knowledge or expectation by the recipient for such gift, the value of *lafo* is, therefore, ethically acceptable in the context of *fa'asamoa*. Further comments on *lafo* have been provided in Chapter Five. *Lafo* is similar to a tip, except that *lafo* is usually presented at the end and is not regarded as a payment for service given. *Lafo* as a value is reciprocal in nature, because it symbolises the sense of goodwill and appreciation in return for the support and service being received. The value of *lafo* should therefore be recognised in social work practice because of its reciprocal significance in promoting goodwill when dealing with the Samoan community in the social work field.

b) *Fa'amaoni*

This value represents the attributes of honesty and integrity in dealing with Samoans in the social work field. *Fa'amaoni* also implies the need to advocate for Samoan clients who may have special needs that must be addressed adequately within a Department or an agency. If, for example, a client requires a

Samoan *fofo* (a traditional healer) in an institution, then the value of *fa'amaoni* requires the social worker to recognise the needs of this person, and the worker must advocate for *fofo Samoa* to be practised on this client within the confines of an institution. *Fa'amaoni* further implies that a Samoan social worker must take a neutral position to avoid being ridiculed for being biased in favour of Samoans in the field of social work. The value of *fa'amaoni* is also inspired by the influence of religion which emphasises 'good living morals of diligence, honesty and integrity.'

c) *Fa'alilolilo*

The Samoan version of confidentiality is '*fa'alilolilo*' which is a tradition of *fa'asamoa* that has been in existence long before the missionaries arrived in Samoa in the 1830s. It is quite common for Samoans to use references such as '*la gata ai i totonu o fale nei le mea ua tula'i mai*' (it must be kept and restricted within this house what has arisen) or '*teu ia lilo*' (must be kept or hidden discreetly) to indicate the long existing tradition of confidentiality in Samoan society. Furthermore, the Samoans have also been bound by this tradition, as a requirement to guard against public scrutiny of knowledge of their ancestry and

genealogical heritage. Exposing such knowledge for public consumption is dangerous, because it can lead to exploitation and misrepresentation of family titles and resources by non-kin.

However, it can also be argued that confidentiality is difficult to practice, given the extended family structure to which Samoans belong in New Zealand. What if a young Samoan woman refuses to inform her parents about her pregnancy, because of her young age and fear of being ostracised? Should the wishes of this young woman be respected or should the parents be advised of their daughter's pregnancy, against the woman's wishes? These are not easy questions to answer. Strictly speaking, the *fa'asamoa* approach requires the parents of this young woman to know about their daughter's pregnancy. After all, the young woman needs the support of her parents and the entire *aiga*. Her child also needs the support of the grandparents, uncles and aunts by way of child minding and caring. Under the *fa'asamoa* approach, it is important to uncover the exact reason for this young woman's refusal to tell parents about her pregnancy. A Samoan broker is probably required to liaise with the parents to minimise the risk of outbursts, retaliation or violence from the *aiga*. The parents must be advised of their daughter's rights as a parent to this child and the consequences

that could arise if violence is used in this instance. Preferably a church minister is the ideal person to perform the role of broker in liaising between the *aiga* and the daughter.

However, if this young woman insists on keeping her pregnancy as a secret from parents and *aiga*, then one of the requirements of *fa'asamoa* approach is that the wish of this young woman must be honoured. This requirement is derived from the *fa'asamoa* notion of '*pui-puiga*' or '*fa'amalumaluga*' - encirclement - which implies the principle of protection and support for the individual concerned.

By means of analysis, the use of a Samoan broker in the first instance is a requirement of the *fa'asamoa* approach to promote harmony and peace between the parties involved. The philosophy of this approach is based on the need for reconciliation, not division, between the parties concerned. This is also supported by the *fa'asamoa* notion of '*opogi*' - embracement- which requires *aiga* members to be united as a group. Such reaction is automatic under this approach. A Samoan will naturally indulge in this mode, making an effort to reconcile and repair that which has gone wrong between the parents and the daughter. Part of the process is to lobby the key

people that matter most in these relationships. However, having failed all attempts to secure a reconciliation between the parents and their daughter, the *fa'asamoa* approach requires that the wish of the daughter must be respected as a matter of priority. The *fa'asamoa* approach, in this regard, is built on the hope that given time, the dysfunctional relationship between daughter and parents will eventually be restored.

In addition to *lafo*, *fa'amaoni* and *fa'alilolilo*, *fa'asamoa* ethics also include the principles of *fa'aaloalo* (deference), *alofa* (charity), *agamalu* (humility), *fa'akerisiano* (spirituality), *amio tamali'i* (diplomacy) and *utaga loloto* (caution) for which further comments have been given in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

7.5 ISSUES EMERGING FROM THIS INVESTIGATION

The aim of this section is to identify the key issues that have emerged in the course of this thesis. This process significantly gives the background to struggles and concerns faced by Samoan social workers in the field. It also provides insights into the manner of operation in dealing with Samoan clients, and points to be aware of within the world of *fa'asamoa*.

7.5.1. Lack of Recognition of *Fa'asamoa*

From the outset, this thesis identifies four main areas where *fa'asamoa* has not been fully recognised. These include the conditions where there is (1) a lack of Samoan supervision in the area of training and development of the concept of *fa'asamoa* within Government Departments; (2) a lack of resources and compensation of *fa'asamoa* skills relating to the use of Samoan language in social service agencies; (3) inadequate literature and publications on *fa'asamoa* in the context of New Zealand social work; and (4) a dearth of official recognition by the New Zealand Criminal Justice System of *fa'asamoa* ceremonials such as *ifoga*.

7.5.2 Definition of *Fa'asamoa*

This thesis discovers that the term *fa'asamoa* is problematic because of the different versions that people use to describe *fa'asamoa*. This is clearly shown by the commentaries discussed in the literature review (Chapter Two) and the input of Samoan social workers as identified in Tables One and Two (Chapter Two). However, resolving the issue, this thesis has reconstructed the definition of *fa'asamoa* into two parts to

encompass all the essentials of fa'asamoa. Such a reconstruction is stated in Chapter Two, again.

7.5.3 Voluntarism versus Professionalism

These two phenomena have emerged in the course of discussions in the section on **Samoan Perspective of Social Work** (Chapter Three). The feedback from the participants portray two schools of thought, where one identifies 'social work' in line with the notion of 'voluntary' work that people perform naturally as part of their everyday life involvement within their families and the community. The other places emphasis on the notion of 'professionalism' where 'social work' is regarded as a profession because of its distinctive nature and the requirements associated with its performance. Although, the majority of Samoan participants in New Zealand support the viewpoints that link social work with the notion of 'professionalism,' the essence of their submissions supports the view that fa'asamoa is an integral component of social work as a professional activity in New Zealand.

7.5.4 Ethnic Dilemmas

Samoan social workers have agreed that time and time again they are faced with ethnic dilemmas in the course of their work in dealing with their own people. In the context, ethnic dilemmas are conveyed through a series of ways, and include questions people have raised, such as: Should a Samoan social worker compromise the rules to support another Samoan or a relative? What should a Samoan social worker do when the supervisor insists on maintaining the departmental line which may contradict with *fa'asamoa* beliefs and values? If there is a clash between 'being a Samoan' and 'being a social worker,' how would such a clash be managed? Should Samoan social workers in their role accept *sua* and *lafo*? Answers to these questions are fully discussed in Chapter Three.

7.5.5 *Fa'asamoa* As A Causal Factor of Poverty, Inequality and Powerlessness

The discussion in section 4.2 (Chapter Four) provokes the question as to whether *fa'asamoa* should be blamed for the economic crisis comprising issues of poverty, inequality and powerlessness faced by Samoans in New Zealand. The thought

is derived from an analysis made by Graves and Graves (1985) who assert that the generous nature of Samoans has contributed to the economic crisis they face in New Zealand. This thesis discovers that *fa'asamoa* plays a role in contributing to poverty, inequality and sense of powerlessness faced by the Samoan community in New Zealand. For example, *fa'asamoa* as a cultural system makes Samoans feel obliged to respond in particular ways when crises (*fa'alavelave*) arise within the *aiga*, church and the community. Further comments and examples are located in Chapter Four.

7.5.6 Attitude towards The Treaty of Waitangi

While the Treaty of Waitangi was beyond the scope of this thesis, the attitude of all the Samoan participants in New Zealand was by and large extremely supportive of Tangata Whenua in relation to the Treaty in New Zealand. There is, however, a general consensus among the participants that more publication is required to explicate the relationship between Tagata Pasefika and Tangata Whenua within the framework of the Treaty of Waitangi (Interviews with Participants in New Zealand, 1997). Clearly, from the participants' comments, there seems to be an understanding between Tangata Whenua and

Tagata Pasefika with regard to their ancestral and Polynesian connections within the cultural concept of whanaugatanga. However, the participants have indicated a very strong interest to learn more about the structural relationship between Tangata Whenua and Tagata Pasefika under the Treaty.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Focusing on the role of *FA'ASAMOA* in social work in New Zealand, this thesis has investigated the role of *FA'ASAMOA* in shaping the manner in which Samoans conduct their practices in the field of social work in New Zealand. It has also taken the initial task to clarify the two key concepts of *FA'ASAMOA* and *SOCIAL WORK* to keep the study in perspective. This thesis has discovered that the two concepts are not only perceived in different perspectives by Samoans, but that they also have different implications for Samoan social workers based in New Zealand and those in Samoa.

Against the many interpretations of the word *FA'ASAMOA*, this thesis has confirmed that the term *FA'ASAMOA* means the totality of the Samoan culture that represents the key components of the Samoan Heart, the Samoan Way, Structures and Institutions, Ceremonies, Protocols and Values. *FA'ASAMOA* is also validated, in this study, as a cultural system that facilitates the functioning of all these components, which necessitate the maintenance of good working relationships with Samoans within the context of social work in New Zealand.

Confirmed also is that *SOCIAL WORK* is regarded as a professional activity in which the Samoans are involved in New Zealand. However, there is unanimous support among the Samoan participants in New Zealand on the role and the need to implement *FA'ASAMOA* as an integral part in the delivery of social services and social work in New Zealand.

The Samoans in New Zealand prefer the less formal implementation of *FA'ASAMOA* in their social work practices because of the scope that *FA'ASAMOA* provides for flexibility and the development of closer interaction between Samoan social workers and Samoan clients. In contrast, Samoans in Samoa place an emphasis on the formal implementation of *FA'ASAMOA*, as *FA'ASAMOA* dominates their village and community life.

Despite these variations, the Samoans in New Zealand found the influence of *FA'ASAMOA* powerful and influential in the manner of their practice. This thesis, therefore, confirms the influence of *FA'ASAMOA* on Samoan social workers through the practice of *FA'AALOALO* (deference); and the involvement of the roles of the Samoan Heart, the *Aiga* (Family), the *Matai* (Samoans with chief titles), the *Lotu* (Religion), and the

Samoan Way by means of *Gagana* (Language). Furthermore, Samoan social workers have also been effective in applying *FA'ASAMOA* paradigms derived from the notions of *AUAUNA* (Servant), *TAMA* and *AFAFINE* (Father-Daughter Relationship) as well as *TUAGANE* and *TUAFAFINE* (Brother-Sister Relationship) to

- a) enhance the development of good, warm and harmonious working relationships with Samoan clients;
- b) effect a sense of ease and freedom to share intimate information with Samoan clients;
- c) evoke a sense of goodwill and support from families and those associated with clients;
- d) develop a sense of Samoanhood and bond with clients and their families;
- e) bring about a sense of duty and respect in Samoan men and women to assume mutual care and protection for one another;
- f) establish a safe and comfortable environment to work in;
- g) empower Samoans without matai experience to work with Samoans despite their age and social status; and to
- h) enable Samoan social workers to adopt an attitude of tolerance and commitment to make life less burdensome for clients.

This thesis has also verified the support from Samoan participants in New Zealand on the importance and the unavoidable implications of the Treaty of Waitangi in the

context of organisation and implementation of social services in New Zealand. Positive developments from the influence of the Treaty is evident from the inclusion of *AIGA* playing a significant role in the decision-making processes under the Children, Young Persons and Families Act 1989. *AIGA* is given prevalence, in a context similar to the role implied in *whanau* of Maoridom in New Zealand. In both the *AIGA* and the *WHANAU* frameworks, each is regarded as the primary channel through which difficulties would be resolved.

Nevertheless, despite the establishment of the *AIGA* framework under the Act, the need has been reasoned and found for more resources and recognition of *FA'ASAMOA* skills and knowledge in support of Samoan social workers involved in the delivery of social services under the Act. As a participant has confirmed, one still needs the support from management in terms of appropriate supervision and financial commitments; and it is no good employing people for their cultural skills and knowledge, but then drowning them all. There is a need for qualified Samoans and Pacific Island peoples to act as mentors and be involved in the delivery of training programmes on Pacific Island cultures and values.

Other participants have also expressed similar concerns about *FA'ASAMOA* not being fully recognised in the areas where training and development in statutory agencies on *FA'ASAMOA* concepts are inadequate; where *FA'ASAMOA* skills and knowledge are not compensated accordingly; where there is inadequate availability of published materials and literature on *FA'ASAMOA* and social work in New Zealand; and where there is a lack of full recognition of *FA'ASAMOA* by the New Zealand Criminal Justice System.

Without the implementation of qualitative research techniques (with a preference for incorporating the use of unstructured and semi-structured styles of interviews and open-ended questions, along with the use of empathic ethnography (Morgan, 1983) and the use of sympathetic introspection approaches (Sarantakos, 1993), the results would not have been possible for this study to obtain. The theoretical analyses in Chapter Four have also confirmed the significance of the role of Samoan ethnicity, and the methods applied to re-position Samoans within the context of their own culture, and the professional confines by which Samoan social workers are placed within their own agencies.

The review of theories and the reconstruction of *FA'ASAMOA*

framework in this thesis have revealed that *FA'ASAMOA* to an extent contributes to poverty, inequality and sense of powerlessness faced by Samoans in New Zealand. As a system, *FA'ASAMOA* makes Samoans feel obliged to respond in particular ways to life crises (*fa'alavelave*) confronting them in New Zealand.

Thus, this thesis concludes that *FA'ASAMOA* plays a vital and an influential role in social work in New Zealand and that *FA'ASAMOA* must be recognised and fully integrated into social work practice in New Zealand, because *FA'ASAMOA* is ethnically empowering, therapeutic, practicable, significant, effective, natural and experiential as a living system in facilitating a two-way working relationship with Samoans within the context of social work.

The following suggestions and recommendations, in the light of the above findings, are submitted to challenge and to raise awareness and actions in support of the role of *FA'ASAMOA* in social work in New Zealand.

With the growing number of Samoans represented in criminal statistics and served by the social service agencies in New

Zealand, the state and voluntary agencies should treat the employment of Samoan and Pacific Island peoples as a challenge to improve the delivery of social services and social work within the Samoan and the Pacific Island sector in New Zealand; and *FA'ASAMOA* skills should be compensated and supported through adequate training and resources.

In addition, Social Workers should seek the advice of Samoan elders, Matai and church leaders if unsure on matters regarding *FA'ASAMOA*. Samoan social workers should also consult the Code of Ethics on Social Work and the Rules, set by the New Zealand Association of Social Workers for guidance and information. Samoan social workers should be prepared to blend *FA'ASAMOA* with the relevant aspects of other cultures as a strategy to deal with issues faced by Samoans in the field of social work.

It is culturally correct by *FA'ASAMOA* to be bold and direct with a Samoan if this person imposes unreasonable demands. If at all possible Samoan social workers in New Zealand should not accept a *sua* or *lafo* presented to them in the course of their duty. However, Samoan social workers, or otherwise, should present a Samoan group or an individual with a *lafo* as an

acknowledgement for the voluntary service they give. Samoan social workers should use their discretion to promote the value of *IFOGA*, as part of the process of restorative Justice, in their practices in New Zealand.

As *FA'ASAMOA* is a contributing factor to poverty, inequality and the sense of powerlessness faced by Samoans in New Zealand, the registration of *AIGA* as incorporated societies under the Incorporated Society Act 1908 gives *AIGA* the legal mandate to qualify for sponsorship, grants, funding and other professional opportunities for the benefit of members. Where necessary, Samoan social workers should regard as their duty the need to challenge church leaders who impose harm and suffering on Samoan clients. Wherever possible, Samoan social workers should intervene in directing Samoan clients on ways to avoid being overburdened by *AIGA* and the church.

Social workers need to work with the church community because of the significant influence the church has on the Samoan community. The Church needs professional training and adequate resourcing for its role in the delivery of social services and social work .

Non-Samoan social workers should draw from *FA'ASAMOA* theoretical and ideological knowledge bases (see section One, Chapter Seven above) to further assist them in their understanding of Samoans in New Zealand. Additional characteristics of *FA'ASAMOA* as stated in section Two of Chapter Seven above, and *FA'ASAMOA* Values and Ethics (see sections Three and Four) should be consulted for guidance and insights on the nature of *FA'ASAMOA*. The issues foregrounded (in section Five of Chapter Seven) should also be considered an additional data towards the development of understanding of Samoans in the context of social work in New Zealand.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

1 AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE FA'ASAMOA

How would you define *fa'asamoa*?
(Ole a lau fa'aliliuga ole upu fa'asamoa?)

How would you describe *fa'asamoa* in New Zealand?
(O le a sau fa'amatalaga ole fa'asamoa i Niu Sila?)

How would you describe *fa'asamoa* in Samoa?
(O le a sau fa'amatalaga ole fa'asamoa i Samoa?)

How would you describe *fa'asamoa* in relation to social work in New Zealand and in Samoa?
(E fa'aapefea ona e fa'amatalaina le tulaga ole fa'aogaina ole fa'asamoa i galuega fa'a-social work i Niu Sila ma Samoa?)

Why is *fa'asamoa* significant to Samoan social workers in New Zealand?
(Le a le mea e taua ai le fa'asamoa i tagata Samoa o lo'o galuega fa'a-social work i Niu Sila?)

How much *fa'asamoa* do you know?
(Ole a le tele o lou silafia o le fa'asamoa?)

2 AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE SOCIAL WORK

How would you define or describe social work from a Samoan perspective? (E fa'aapefea ona e fa'aliliuina pe fa'amatalaina galuega fa'a-social work?)

Is there a difference between social work in New Zealand and social work in Samoa? (E iai se eseese o galuega fa'a-social work i Niu Sila ma Samoa?)

Is social work a profession? (Se galuega taua ona totoi ma amanaia le galuega fa'a-social work?)

What context of social work requires *fa'asamoa* and what

aspects of *fa'asamoa* are relevant in those contexts? (O a vaega o galuega fa'a-social work e talafeagai ai le fa'asamoa a'o a vaega ole *fa'asamoa* e talafeagai ona fa'atinoina?)

3 THE USE OF THEORIES

Do you use any theories and what are they? (E te fa'aogaina mafaufauga o nisi tagata e fa'asino ala ile fa'atinoga o lau galuega ae o mafaufauga o ai ia ete fa'aogaina?)

How do you see the role of theory in your work, as a social worker? (E iai se aoga o manatunatuga a isi tagata ile fa'atinoga o lau galuega?)

Is it theory that drives you and affects the way you practice, or something else? (Fa'amata o mafaufauga o isi na galueina ma unaina oe e galue ile auala o lo'o fa'atinoina ai lau galuega fa'a-social work?)

Did the knowledge from theories enhance your own knowledge of *fa'asamoa* and vice versa? (Fa'amata ole poto mai mafaufauga o isi na fa'amalosia atili ai lou lava silafia ole fa'asamoa, ma ua avea ai fo'i le fa'asamoa ma auala ua fa'alauteleina ai lou silafia o mafaufauga o isi tagata?)

How much support do you get from your workplace because of your skills as a Samoan? (O le a le tele ole lagolagoina o oe e lau galuega ona ole tomai o oe ile fa'asamoa ma le aoga ole fa'asamoa i lau galuega?)

4 THE ROLE OF FA'ASAMOA IN SOCIAL WORK

What specific elements of *fa'asamoa* are relevant to social work? (O a tonu lava vaega ole *fa'asamoa* e aoga i galuega fa'a-social work?)

What is the role of the Samoan Heart, Aiga, Matai, Lotu, Tu ma Aga Mamalu and ceremonies? (O le a le taua ole lagona Samoa, Aiga, Matai, Tu Ma Aga Mamalu ma sauniga *fa'asamoa* i galuega fa'a-social work?)

Would you give some examples where the role of these aspects of *fa'asamoa* is important? (E mafai ona aumai ni fa'ata'ita'iga e fa'amaonia ai le taua tele o vaega ia ole fa'asamoa?)

In which activities of social work would you apply these aspects of *fa'asamoa*, and how?

APPENDIX TWO: CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: "The Role Of FA'ASAMOA In Social Work in New Zealand"

I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in this study. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it is completely confidential.

I consent to the taping of this interview.

The tapes of the interview should be returned to me/retained by the researcher/lodged with a library of my choice after the researcher has completed his study.

I wish to participate in this study under the conditions set out on the Information Sheet.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX THREE: INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Project: "The Role Of Fa'asamoa In Social Work In New Zealand"

Researcher: Pa'u Tafaogalupe Lauta-Mulitalo

Contact Address and Phone:

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4/6 Rossgrove Tce
Mt Albert, Auckland
Work (09) 4439682 Home (09) 8152356

Dr. Michael A. O'Brien (Chief Supervisor)
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Massey University at Albany, Auckland, NZ.
Phone: (09) 4439765 Fax (09) 4439767

Fa'amatuainu F Tu'i Supervisor)
4 Thompson Street
Mangere East
Phone: (09) 2761135

Dr. Theresia L. Marshall (Supervisor)
6 Seahorse Place
Beachaven
Auckland
Phone: (09) 4833171

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

The study examines the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work in New Zealand. Is there a role of *fa'asamoa* when dealing with Samoans through social work and what influence does *fa'asamoa* have on Samoan social workers in the field? The study aims to raise a level of consciousness about the significance of *fa'asamoa* and its role in social work. This examination leads to the development of a *fa'asamoa* practice framework that non-Samoan social workers and students could use for their own benefit.

WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPANTS REQUIRED TO DO?

The participants are Samoan and they have been selected on the basis of

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WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPANTS REQUIRED TO DO?

The participants are Samoan and they have been selected on the basis of

their ethnicity, level of experience, knowledge, skills and the context of their involvement in social work. They will be asked to participate in an interview. The interviews explore the question of the role of *fa'asamoa* in social work, the experiences and the involvement of Samoan social workers in the field of social work in New Zealand.

The participants' consent for the interview to be taped will be requested and, if granted, the interviews will be taped so that their views are recorded accurately.

The interviews will take one to two hours.

The participants are advised on their rights which include:

- i Refusal to answer any particular question, and withdrawal from the study at any time;
- ii Asking any further question, about the study, that occurs during participation;
- iii Providing information on the understanding that it will be used only for academic purposes and that the information is confidential;
- iv being given access to a summary of the findings from the completed study its conclusion.

APPENDIX FOUR: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

(SIGNED BY THE TYPIST)

I _____ acknowledge that I will not use or
pass on to anybody, other than
the researcher, any information obtained while transcribing
tapes for this research.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

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