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**Sustainable Rural Livelihoods,
Micro-Enterprise and Culture in the Pacific
Islands: Case Studies from Samoa**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
in
Development Studies
Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

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2006**

Abstract

This thesis is about the relationships between sustainable livelihoods, micro-enterprise and culture in Samoa. The 'sustainable livelihoods approach' provides a basis for analysis. The research focuses on one livelihood strategy, micro-enterprise, in order to illustrate and explain issues that are important in supporting sustainable livelihoods in Samoa. Micro-enterprise is regarded as a livelihood strategy that, if successful and sustainable, can support livelihood outcomes for rural Samoan people, and reduce poverty.

The sustainable livelihoods approach is reviewed and the thesis argues that culture is integral to sustainable livelihoods, but existing theory and frameworks do not incorporate cultural aspects in a way that provides a sound theoretical basis for this research, or any sustainable livelihoods analysis. The thesis argues that culture is interwoven into each of the components of the sustainable livelihoods framework, and in fact culture is a context in which livelihoods exist. Each of the components provides an entry point for analysis of the relationships between culture and livelihoods. This concept was used as a basis for an analysis of rural livelihoods in Samoa, where *fa'aSamoa* was found to be interwoven with almost every aspect of rural livelihoods in a complex and influential way. A revised definition of a sustainable livelihood, and a revised framework were then developed which were more appropriate for this research. A strength of sustainable livelihoods theory, and the related frameworks, is that the theory embraces flexibility, and could thus be adapted to incorporate cultural aspects in this way.

The thesis reviewed business enterprise in Samoa, and described the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and business enterprise. The research revealed both harmonies and tensions between *fa'aSamoa* and business which influenced the success and sustainability of business enterprise. Two 'types' of small and micro-enterprise were identified in Samoa (with a continuum between): *private sector* enterprises and *traditional 'sphere'* enterprises. 'Traditional sphere' enterprises, in order to be sustainable, normally operate *within* the cultural context of *fa'aSamoa*, ensuring that relationships, trust and harmony within the family and community are maintained and social and cultural assets, which provide a sense of identity and security, are sustained.

The field research described in the thesis focused on two separate groups of micro-entrepreneurs in Samoa, fine mat weavers and village-based coconut oil producers. The case studies described the outcomes the micro-entrepreneurs aspire to, the risk, adversity, and challenges they face, and the work of the non-government organisations (NGOs) that support them. The case studies illustrated and further developed concepts developed in previous chapters, and also demonstrated just how the relationships between *fa'aSamoa* and sustainable livelihoods were expressed in practice. In the fine mat weaving case study there was considerable harmony between *fa'aSamoa* and the livelihood strategy. However, in the village-based coconut oil case study there were some tensions between *fa'aSamoa* and the venture that were causing vulnerability.

The thesis concluded that understanding the relationships between culture, and sustainable livelihoods is critical for ensuring that good judgements are made about development intervention and policy. The revised sustainable livelihoods framework, and the concept of using the components of the frameworks as multiple entry points for analysis, provided an appropriate and useful theoretical framework for understanding the relationships between *fa'aSamoa*, sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise in Samoa.

Key words: Pacific Islands; Samoa; micro-enterprise; sustainable livelihood; culture; *fa'aSamoa*; private sector; enterprise; development; fine mats; coconut oil; co-operative

Acknowledgements

Firstly, many thanks to my supervisors Professor John Overton, Dr Barbara Nowak and Dr Susan Maiava for your knowledge, comments and suggestions, and especially to John for your support and help in the final stages.

To all the field research participants in Samoa, thank you. Your willingness to talk with me and answer my questions is very much appreciated. You taught me so much. Particular thanks to Mrs Adimaimalaga Tafuna'i and Dr Walter Verneulen for supporting my research with WIBDI and METI micro-entrepreneurs in Samoa. Thank you to Mrs Eseta Poleka for all your help. To all the Samoan participants - I trust that the interpretation of your comments was accurate and in the context for which it was intended. Any misinterpretation is entirely my responsibility.

Thanks also to my colleagues at Lincoln University, where I have taught off and on over the past few years. I am grateful to the Lincoln University international rural development students – your questions, discussion, experiences and insights have been important. Thank you to my friends for keeping me grounded and happy in everyday life, supporting me, and putting up with my unsociable existence in the final stages of the thesis. Special thanks to my family - Shahar, Melanie, Emma and David.

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Glossary of Samoan terms used in this thesis

<i>aiga</i>	family (extended beyond nuclear family)
<i>alofa</i>	love, compassion
<i>aualuma</i>	daughters and sisters of <i>matai</i>
<i>'aumaga</i>	untitled sons and brothers of the <i>matai</i>
<i>fa'alavelave</i>	crucial lifecycle events that involve traditional exchanges of goods, for example weddings, funerals, induction of <i>matai</i> title, church dedication.
<i>fa'amatai</i>	chiefly system
<i>fa'aSamoa</i>	Samoa way of life
<i>fale</i>	house
<i>faletua ma tausi</i>	wives of the <i>matai</i>
<i>fono</i>	meeting of village <i>matai</i> (village council)
<i>'ie o le mavaega</i>	farewell funeral fine mat from son or daughter-in-law's family
<i>'ie o le measulu</i>	children's farewell funeral fine mat.
<i>'ie o le nofo</i>	name for a fine mat presented at a <i>matai</i> investiture by the host family
<i>'ie toga</i>	traditional name for very fine mats in samoa
<i>'ie samoa</i>	modern name for Samoan very fine mats
<i>'ie o le mal</i>	the national fine mat
<i>iiniini</i>	name sometimes given to a fine mat
<i>lalaga</i>	coarser mats that are used for functional purposes
<i>lau</i>	leaf (of <i>pandanus</i> plant in this thesis)
<i>matai</i>	person who has a chiefly title
<i>mea samoa</i>	Samoa things
<i>moe i le aufuefue</i>	name sometimes given to a fine mat
<i>niu</i>	less mature green drinking nut of the coconut
<i>palagi</i>	non Samoan person, usually westerner
<i>pepeve'a</i>	name sometimes given to a fine mat
<i>pipii i le elele</i>	name sometimes given to a fine mat
<i>popo</i>	mature brown nut of the coconut
<i>pule</i>	authority
<i>tamaiti</i>	youth and children
<i>tautua</i>	service
<i>va fealoa'i</i>	social respect

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Aid
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CVI	The Composite Vulnerability Index
DBS	Development Bank of Samoa
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DME	Direct Micro Expeller
EU	European Union
GA	Gender Analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ICA	International Co-operative Alliance
IDS	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (UK)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IRD	Inland Revenue Department
METI	Matuaileoo Environment Trust Incorporated
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MIP	Microenterprise Innovation Project (USAID Programme)
MIRAB	Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprise
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
NZODA	New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development
OSP	Oil Seeds Production New Zealand
PIP	Policy, Institution and Process
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPA	Pacific Platform for Action
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal

SBEC	Small Business Enterprise Centre
SCOPE	Samoa Coconut Oil Production Enterprise
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
SPBDF	South Pacific Business Development Foundation
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environmental Programmes
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USP	University of the South Pacific
WB	World Bank
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organising
WIBDI	Women in Business Development Incorporated
WOSED	Women's Social and Economic Development