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**THE CULTURAL PRESERVATION OF TONGA :  
TRADITIONAL PRACTICE AND CURRENT POLICY**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy in Social Policy  
at Massey University

**Sōsefo Fietangata Havea**

February 1996

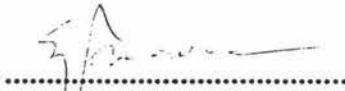
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This thesis is dedicated to my late  
grandmother, **'Ilaisaane Fakatupu-'i-taua Havea**,  
whose interest in education was highlighted  
in her dying wish.

### DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work otherwise acknowledged



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February 1996

## ABSTRACT

Social policy has developed as a discipline since the 1940s, with the coming of the modern welfare state. As a discipline or field of study, social policy has concentrated its vision on modern institutions of government, the constitutional, political and administrative process involved in providing for the welfare of contemporary welfare states. Tonga is an example of an independent State which has grafted a contemporary State onto a highly specialised Polynesian society. With these dual heritages, the question of maintaining Tonga's unique and rich cultural heritage is extremely significant, especially in the context of challenges to the monarchical and aristocratic control of government. This issue is doubly significant because the monarchy has become a crucial element of Tongan tradition, as well as the instrument for maintaining Tonga as an independent nation state, a member of the United Nations and a participant in a large number of international agreements with the obligations these bring. This thesis surveys the institutions which are involved in cultural preservation in Tonga, and contrasts a fundamentally indigenous institution, the kava ceremony, with imported legislative and administrative institutions. It is argued that in dealing with a non-western society, adopting a substantially western form of government, there is a need to examine not just the formal institutions of policy making but also the traditional institutions which continue to influence both the structure of government and its policy objectives. Understanding the interconnection of these different institutions is fundamental to understanding the way that policy, or more importantly, policy reform can be effected.

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The best production is a product of best sacrifice and struggle. What else one can do better - a best of its own, its a best for all, and to live to learn and to die to know.