Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Lupe Fa‘alele: Releasing the Doves:
Factors affecting the successful operation
of Samoan Businesses in
New Zealand.

A thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology.
Massey University, New Zealand.

Ma’atusi S Vao‘iva Tofilau
2018
COPYRIGHT

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

I dedicate this thesis to my late grandmother Vaolele Vaoiva Tofilau who has passed before the completion of this study. You motivated me to keep going and cheered me on this journey from beyond. This is for you.
This thesis explores levels of Samoan entrepreneurship in New Zealand. It identifies unique challenges and opportunities Samoan entrepreneurs face when establishing businesses in a migrant setting. There is a growing body of knowledge in New Zealand on ethnic businesses, in particular, what constitutes an ethnic business, what facilitates and impedes their success, and the contribution they make to the New Zealand economy. Samoan entrepreneurship, however, remains an academic terra nova. Little is understood about what Samoan entrepreneurship looks like; is there a typical Samoan business, for example; what sorts of challenges do they face when negotiating and navigating cultural and business challenges in the New Zealand business environment; and what does this all mean in terms of success in both the business and community contexts? This thesis considers a qualitative research approach to investigate the lived experiences of Samoan entrepreneurs in New Zealand. The research draws on the experiences of fifteen male and six female Samoan entrepreneurs. The participants interviewed for this study included entrepreneurs who were born and educated in Samoa, those born in Samoa and partly educated in both Samoa and New Zealand, and entrepreneurs born and educated in New Zealand. The research examines how entrepreneurs differ from one another in the way they operate their businesses and the manner in which they negotiate their obligations towards family, religion, community and business responsibilities. Earlier literature on ethnic entrepreneurship has emphasized the importance of ‘social embeddedness’ of entrepreneurs in their social and community networks as key factors in operating a successful business. This study however looks to build on and extend this concept to a mixed embeddedness focus that highlights the combination of cultural, institutional, structural elements of the business environment and relevant strategies that entrepreneurs use to create a successful business. The findings in the study emphasize that the mixed embedded approach produces more successes and a variety amongst Samoan entrepreneurs especially when they negotiate the requirements of both fa’ā-sāmoa in conjunction with the institutional and the regulatory responsibilities of the New Zealand business environment. The implications of these findings would be valuable for other migrant operated businesses in New Zealand.
Acknowledgement

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the contributions and support of many people during this study. Special thanks to Dr Paul Perry for your guidance and attention to details that help shaped this thesis. I am also grateful to Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Dr Helen Leslie and Dr Fiva Fa’alau for the supervision given for this work. I wish to offer my gratitude to my previous supervisors Emeritus Professor Cluny Macpherson and Dr Ann Dupuis who started this journey with me but retired before it was completed. Special thanks to then president Tauiliili Aigamaua, the Malofie members and a number of Samoan elders whom I consulted on Samoan culture in relation to this research. Your knowledge was very invaluable as it added more understanding of issues that enforced on me the responsibility to acknowledge the importance of Samoan values. To Gauta Nai Ulu and Faigafale Vaoiva, Leota and Vao Pauga, I am indebted to all your support during this journey. To Tofilau Russell Vaoiva, thank you for your conversations on some of these study issues. To all my family as there are too many of you to mention, thank you all for your support and much love during this journey. I would also like to thank Leanne, Karl, Vince and Dewer Monaghan for all your support and being there during this project.

Faafetai mo le tapua’iga.

God Bless you all.
# Table of Contents

1 Title Page ..............................................................................................................i  
2 Copyright..................................................................................................................ii  
3 Dedication..................................................................................................................iii  
4 Abstract.....................................................................................................................iv  
5 Acknowledgement.....................................................................................................v  
6 Table of contents......................................................................................................vi  
7 List of tables and figures...........................................................................................ix  
8 Glossary of Samoan words.........................................................................................x

**Chapter One: Introduction**.....................................................................................1  
  1.1 Motivation for undertaking the study .................................................................1  
  1.2 Background to the study......................................................................................6  
  1.3 Key terms used ...................................................................................................8  
  1.4 Research aims and research questions...............................................................9  
  1.5 Brief overview of the research design................................................................10  
  1.6 Importance of the study: The gaps in the literature........................................10  
  1.7 Structure of the thesis .......................................................................................12  

**Chapter Two: Literature Review**..............................................................................15  
  2.1 Definition of entrepreneurship............................................................................16  
  2.2 Conceptualising ethnic entrepreneurship.......................................................22  
  2.3 Embeddedness of ethnic entrepreneurs in social networks..............................26  
  2.4 Towards a model of ethnic entrepreneurship..................................................30  
  2.5 Gaps in the literature .......................................................................................41  
  2.6 Conclusion.........................................................................................................42  

**Chapter Three: My Journey**....................................................................................43  
  3.1 The beginning of my journey..............................................................................44  
  3.2 Life in New Zealand............................................................................................49  
  3.3 Education..........................................................................................................57  
  3.4 Identifying entrepreneurship...............................................................................58  
  3.5 Discussion.........................................................................................................62  
  3.6 Conclusion.........................................................................................................67  

vi
Chapter Four: Methodology .............................................................. 68
4.1 The guiding principle of the research ........................................ 69
4.2 Ethical approval process ........................................................... 80
4.3 Research process ................................................................. 82
4.4 Data analysis ....................................................................... 89
4.5 Limitation and weaknesses ...................................................... 91
4.6 Summary ............................................................................ 92

Chapter Five: The Influences of Family on Samoan Businesses in New Zealand ................................................................. 93
5.1 The family and ethnic entrepreneurship ..................................... 94
5.2 The Samoan family and business in the Migrant community .... 98
5.3 Alternative solutions to supporting family apart from employment ... 117
5.4 Discussion ........................................................................ 121
5.5 Conclusion ....................................................................... 125

Chapter Six: Religion ........................................................................ 126
6.1 Religion in Samoan society ...................................................... 127
6.2 Religion in the migrant Samoan community ......................... 136
6.3 Religion and business in the migrant community ................... 143
6.4 Discussion ........................................................................ 159
6.5 Conclusion ....................................................................... 162

Chapter Seven: Community ............................................................. 164
7.1 Community in Samoan society ............................................... 165
7.2 Business and the migrant Samoan community ....................... 178
7.3 The extend of the entrepreneurs involvement in the community ... 181
7.4 Discussion ........................................................................ 194
7.5 Conclusion ....................................................................... 201

Chapter Eight: Business Environment ........................................... 203
8.1 Business environment ............................................................ 203
8.2 Marketing and financial strategies for Samoan businesses .. 210
8.3 The Challenges fa’a-sāmoa impose on businesses .................. 219
8.4 Discussion ........................................................................ 225
8.5 Conclusion ....................................................................... 228

Chapter Nine: Discussion ................................................................. 229

Chapter Ten: Conclusion and Recommendations ......................... 245
Appendix A: Proverb definition.................................................................253
Appendix B: Information sheet...............................................................255
Appendix C: Research ethical approval....................................................257
Appendix D: Research participants.........................................................258
Appendix E: Business backgrounds of participants...................................259
Appendix F: Interview questionnaire.......................................................260
Appendix G: Participant consent form.....................................................264
References.................................................................................................265
List of tables & figures

1 Status of self employment and employers for Pacific and Samoan peoples in New Zealand ................................................................. 36

2 Characteristics of study participants.................................................85

3 Entrepreneurs who employed family members................................100

4 Entrepreneurs who did not employ family members.......................108

5 Entrepreneurs who employed family members selectively...............113

6 Entrepreneurs who supported family other than employment........115

7 Church memberships in Samoa....................................................127

8 Church affiliation in the New Zealand Samoan community..............135

9 Entrepreneurs who supported religion..........................................144

10 Entrepreneurs who did not support religion..................................151

11 Entrepreneurs who supported religion selectively......................155

12 Entrepreneurs who supported community..................................180

13 Entrepreneurs who did not support community...........................186

14 Entrepreneurs who supported community selectively..................190

15 The influences of legislations and Council bylaws on businesses.....205

15 Figure 1: Diversity amongst Samoan entrepreneurs......................237
# Glossary of Samoan words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samoan Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aganu'u</td>
<td>Sāmoan culture and traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ali'i</td>
<td>high chief or titular chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āiga</td>
<td>the nuclear and extended family unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āiga potopoto</td>
<td>extended kin group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aitu</td>
<td>spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ālofa</td>
<td>compassion, also payments for Congregational Church pastors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amio fa’atamāli’i</td>
<td>noble ways and behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ae taga’i</td>
<td>to view or observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āoga a le faifeau</td>
<td>pastor’s school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asiga malaga</td>
<td>visitation to a travelling party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aso fanau</td>
<td>birthdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aualuma</td>
<td>unmarried, widowed or separated women of a village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aumaga</td>
<td>untitled men who provide service to the village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFKS</td>
<td>Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’aāloālo</td>
<td>courtesy respect and politeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’aafaletui</td>
<td>special meetings called by executive mātai to discuss matters of great importance for the village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’aipoipoga</td>
<td>wedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’akomiti</td>
<td>women committee activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’alupega</td>
<td>expression and recognition of chief titles and genealogical origins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’alavelave</td>
<td>lifecycle events or cultural events that involve the exchange of goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’ali’i</td>
<td>getting angry or annoyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’amavaega</td>
<td>departing occasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’amātai</td>
<td>mātai system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’amanuiaaga</td>
<td>blessings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’amaualuga</td>
<td>boastful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’asalaga</td>
<td>penalty imposed by the village fono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’a-sāmoa</td>
<td>Samoan customs, traditions and its institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’atamāli’i</td>
<td>behaviour suitable for the aristocrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa’aaulaula</td>
<td>teasing and pestering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faifeau</td>
<td>church minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fale  Samoan house
faletua ma tausi  chief's wives
faufautua  advise and consult
feagaiga  covenant between a brother and sister. Used in religion to refer to the relationship between ministers and their congregations or the village and the church
fia-palagi  wanting to be western
foa'i  gifts for the pastor
fono  meeting
fono a tina  womens meetings
fuaō  gunnets
galu  wave or breakers
ia seu  to direct
itūmalō  district
lotu  church or religion
lotonu'u  serving ones village
lupe fa'alele  dove in reference to (Genesis 8:11).
mafutaga a aiga  family gathering for special events
malu  funeral
mālōfie  Association of tattooed men and women or the pe’a
manu  birds
mātaitei  chief or titled person
Nafanua  Samoan Goddess
nu'u  village or polity with its own precedence
palagi  a white person
peleti  money payments for Methodist pastors
puīāiga  a closely related family group
saofa'i  conferring of matai titles
laoa  term for the resident of the talking chief or tulafale
lau susuga  respectful addressing for many ali’i titles
talanoaga  conversation either formal and informal
tapuaiga  religion
taulele'a  untitled men who serve the village requirements
tautua  Services to family by untitled persons
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tausi-āiga</td>
<td>continuous service for the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tausi-feagaiga</td>
<td>serving the church pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tausi-nuu</td>
<td>committing and providing services to ones’ village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tulāfale</td>
<td>talking chief or orator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tusigaigoa</td>
<td>village census, a fundraising mechanism used by villages and churches to raise funds for church projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uo uo foa</td>
<td>friends at times and bleeding heads the next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>va-fa’aleaiga</td>
<td>family connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>va-feūloāloa’ i</td>
<td>mutual respect in all socio/political relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>