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**TAFESILAFA'I:  
EXPLORING SAMOAN ALCOHOL USE AND HEALTH WITHIN  
THE FRAMEWORK OF FA'ASAMOA**

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

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## **Abstract**

This study seeks to establish how cultural change is transforming Samoan perceptions of alcohol and its role in social life by comparing understandings of, attitudes to, and patterns of alcohol use in successive generations of Samoans to establish how these are changing, and how trends in alcohol use might be expected to affect Samoan health status. It examines the complex relationships between alcohol and culture, and how such relationships interact to influence health. As well, it explores how Samoan culture, *fa'asamoa*, has changed since contact with Europeans, how, these changes have influenced Samoan people's perceptions and use of alcohol, and the role alcohol now plays in Samoan social life. Moreover, the thesis documents the social history of alcohol in Samoa since the nineteenth century, and explores the roles of some of the Europeans in shaping Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and its use. Additionally, it examines the commercial and political economic interests of early European agencies in Samoa such as beachcombers, traders, colonial administrators, and missionaries which impacted on and influenced, to a considerable extent, Samoan people's drinking patterns.

The study uses a qualitative methodological approach, utilizing qualitative interviewing as the main method of gathering data and various other methods to supplement the data. The sample population included Samoan men and women, of various religious denominations, drinkers and abstainers, born and raised in Samoa and in New Zealand. Unstructured interviews with thirty-nine participants, and eight key informants were conducted in Apia, Auckland, and Christchurch. The key informants included: a bishop of the Church of Latter Day Saints, the Samoan Police Commissioner, and the Secretary of the Samoan Liquor Authority who were interviewed in Apia; a pastor/lecturer of the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa who was interviewed in Pago Pago, American Samoa; while two Samoan-born medical health professionals, a pastor of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, and one New Zealand-born woman researcher were interviewed in Auckland.

The study found that alcohol and the drinking of it has secured a place in the social life of Samoans in the islands and in migrant communities such as those

in Auckland, and to a lesser extent, Christchurch. It also found that while older women's and men's experiences and attitudes to alcohol differ significantly, particularly those born and raised in the islands, some similarities in the attitudes and practices of younger people towards alcohol, especially those born- and raised in New Zealand have emerged.

## Thesis Title – An Explanation

According to Rev. Sione Eli, of the Methodist Mission in Australia,<sup>1</sup> *Tafesilafa'i* was one of Samoan war goddess, Nafanua's four war clubs, the others being: *Ulimasao* or Guide with Safety; *Fa'auliulito* or No Mercy; *Fa'amatemategatau* or Source of Knowledge; and *Tafesilafa'i* which he interprets as Strike with Courtesy. It is this duality of meaning of striking, but with courtesy, in which the term *Tafesilafa'i* has been used in this thesis title. For example, *Tafesilafa'i* has been used in a symbolic sense as a weapon that could inflict serious harm, yet at the same time, it can be a symbol of and proxy to the traditional use of 'ava when Samoan people meet. Fa'atili Fuai'ava, Chairman of the Auckland Samoan Advisory Council, for example, suggests that *Tafesilafa'i* could be used as a possible title to the thesis because of the current use of alcoholic beverages by some Samoan people when they meet and when socializing instead of the traditional 'ava. He observed thus:

These days when people meet for the first time after a long time, they would most probably have a drink of alcohol as a token of joy and goodwill and all the best intentions and values which were celebrated with 'ava. But we also know that if we abuse alcohol then it can be detrimental to health and can cause many bad things as well as other adverse consequences.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Olo Elise Puni<sup>3</sup> of Health Star Pacific Trust, Auckland, said the use of *Tafesilafa'i* in the title of this alcohol thesis context, as symbolizing a weapon, and as a beverage which has gained popular use among some Samoans instead of 'ava, is not inappropriate. He argued that alcohol can be perceived and interpreted as an object with dual functions: On the one hand, it is used for socializing and conviviality and other positive functions. Yet on the other hand, alcohol has been abused by some people to the extent that it has caused serious economic, cultural, social and health problems for many individuals and Samoan families in the islands and in migrant communities as well.

---

<sup>1</sup> I was alerted to Rev Eli's translations of Nafanua's war clubs by Seuseu Fata Pito, University of Auckland, who kindly volunteered this information from a presentation by Rev Eli, of the Australian Methodist Mission, a copy of which is in the possession of Fata's wife, Eseta Fa'alogo of Pakuranga.

<sup>2</sup> Fa'atili Fuai'ava, of Lotofaga and Otahuhu, Chairman of the Auckland Samoan Advisory Council.

<sup>3</sup> Olo Elise Puni is an orator from the village of Pu'apu'a, Amoa i Sisifo, Savaii.

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Several people and organizations contributed to the effort which made this thesis possible. I am especially indebted to the Samoan men and women participants and key informants in Samoa, American Samoa, Christchurch, and Auckland, who shared their stories, knowledge, and experiences, which helped make this happen. To you especially, and all other people who contributed in every other way to this project, please accept my sincere appreciation and heart-felt thanks and gratitude. *O le agaga o le fa'afetai e le mafaitaulia.*

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# Chapter One

## INTRODUCTION - ALCOHOL, HEALTH, AND FA'ASAMOA

*All cultures possess a set of attitudes toward the ingestion of alcoholic beverages, and some rigidly define expected and prohibited behaviours while drinking (Pittman, 1967: 5).*

*Like salt, it [alcohol] is toxic if taken in excessive quantities but, also like salt, it is also refined or diluted and consumed with other substances to make them taste good and to make people feel better (Heath, 1995: 1).*

Samoan culture is, like all cultures, changing and this study seeks to establish how cultural change is transforming Samoan perceptions of alcohol and of its role in social life. It explores how Samoan culture, *fa'asamoa*, has changed since contact with Europeans and how, these changes have influenced Samoan people's perceptions and use of alcohol. It will do this by comparing understandings of, attitudes to and patterns of alcohol use in successive generations of Samoans to establish how these are changing, and how trends in alcohol use might be expected to affect Samoan health status. The thesis examines the complex relationships between alcohol and culture, and how these interact to influence the health status of Samoans.

This study will contribute to the scholarship on alcohol on Samoan people's health and wellbeing. The study explores how the culture shapes patterns of alcohol consumption, which in turn influence patterns of alcohol related harm. Elucidating Samoan people's perceptions and attitudes towards alcohol, the act of 'drinking' alcoholic beverages, and their level of awareness of the effect of alcohol on health, may help to explain why some Samoan people do not drink, some drink moderately, while others drink excessively. Moreover, the study of the cultural underpinnings of alcohol consumption can help to explain why certain intervention strategies designed to encourage drinking in moderation, such as the Host Responsibility approach, may have limited impact on certain sectors of the Samoan population in Samoa and in New Zealand.

## **Objectives and Aims of Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine relationships between culture and alcohol consumption among Samoans in both the 'home' islands and in New Zealand. This is broken down into five tasks which are to:

- Establish how Samoan culture defines alcohol, and acceptable and unacceptable patterns of alcohol consumption,
- Establish how cultural change is transforming perceptions of alcohol and its role in Samoan social life,
- Explore the perceptions and attitudes of various groups of Samoan people towards alcohol consumption,
- Examine the perceptions and attitudes of Samoan people towards drinking in moderation and host responsibility,
- Establish the level of awareness among Samoan people of the effects of alcohol on their physical and mental health, and economic and social wellbeing.

## **Central and Additional Research Questions**

Several questions are posited at the outset to help focus and guide this inquiry in achieving its aims and objectives. Central to this inquiry is whether Samoan people's drinking behaviours 'violate traditional norms' which Macpherson and Macpherson (1990) suggest, causes certain sorts of illness among Samoan people. This necessitates the examination of 'traditional' customs and norms, and the ways in which alcohol use might conflict with these, and affect the health and well-being of Samoan people.

In conjunction with the central question, and as important, are the following which are listed here in the order in which they will be addressed.

- How have Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol been influenced by European agents and agencies?
- How has alcohol impacted on the core values and central elements of *fa'asamoa*?
- How have Samoan customs and traditions changed as a consequence of the incorporation of alcohol into Samoan social life?
- What purposes in Samoan society are currently served by the drinking of alcoholic beverages?

- To what extent have Samoan people's drinking behaviours been shaped by the environment in which they have been introduced to, and socialized into, alcohol use?
- How do the lifestyles and worldviews of New Zealand-born and island-born Samoans, differ in relation to alcohol consumption?
- Why do some Samoan people drink excessively, some drink moderately, while others do not drink at all?

Each of these questions, and the answers to them, frames a chapter of the thesis. Each chapter then focuses on the empirical data on a particular theme. This strategy of addressing individual questions separately by examining a particular theme has, in turn, determined the structure of the thesis. In fact, each of these questions individually, addresses at least one of the objectives of this thesis. The strategy, however, does not necessarily mean that individual chapters do not overlap; nor are they treated exclusively of each other. The reader will find that the threads of discussions in the individual chapters do overlap and crossover frequently, and in most cases, individual chapters and the thematic discussions supplement and complement each other throughout the thesis.

### **Academic Rationale for the Study**

Scant attention has been paid to the effect of alcohol on Pacific people's health. As a consequence, the literature contains a number of observations which, on the surface at least, seem to raise more questions than they answer. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, the information available shows that Pacific people will often drink until there is no alcohol remaining, or until they can drink no more (ALAC, 1997; Ministry of Health, 1997). Among Pacific drinkers, more than a third drank in a manner that put them at risk of future mental health problems. Yet, paradoxically, the Ministry of Health (1999) survey also found that over fifty percent of all Pacific adults reported no alcohol intake in the 12 months prior to the survey.

There is a paucity of information on alcohol and Pacific people. In *An Overview of Drugs in Oceania*, for example, Mac Marshall (1987a) argues that despite the steady growth of information about alcohol and drug use

throughout the United States and other places since 1970, very few studies have focused on alcohol and drug substances among Pacific Island people. Marshall laments the 'woefully limited and outdated information about the uses of traditional and introduced drug substances in the Pacific Islands' despite the fact that alcohol and drug research now exists as a legitimate scholarly focus in anthropology.<sup>1</sup> This scarcity of information about Pacific peoples' attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and the social, cultural, and economic factors which influence, and impact on their health needs to be addressed. This study therefore, attempts to contribute to the limited scholarship on alcohol and Pacific people by examining drinking patterns, and the attitudes and behaviours of Samoan people towards alcohol and alcohol use.

Whilst there is overwhelming agreement in the literature that alcohol was not found in Oceania at the time of first contact with Europeans (Marshall, 1979; Lemert, 1979; Casswell, 1986; Heath, 1991), the limited information available indicates that in the intervening two hundred years, it has become widely available and increasingly popular among Pacific people throughout the region. The findings from this study will illustrate that alcohol and its consumption has also become a significant 'social problem'<sup>2</sup>, and a phenomenon which now threatens the traditional social and authority structures that are paramount to maintaining the integrity of Samoan culture or *fa'asamoa*.

Yet, Samoan people's relationship with alcohol and the use of alcoholic beverages has not been well documented. A review of the literature on alcohol studies among Samoans reveals that very few studies have focused on alcohol and its consumption by Samoan people. This seeming lack of

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<sup>1</sup> Marshall, however, notes that since the 1970s knowledge of alcohol's place in Micronesian societies 'has been enhanced by Carucci (1984), Mahoney (1974), Marshall (1979b), and Marshall & Marshall (1975, 1976), as has our knowledge of the different ways alcoholic beverages influence people in Papua New Guinea ...' (1987a, p. 13).

<sup>2</sup> Merton (1976) notes that a social problem is a perceived discrepancy between what is and what people think ought to be – between actual and social values and norms – which is regarded as remedial. My use of the term 'social problem' here is consistent with its usage by participants in this study, who referred to alcohol and its consumption both in Samoa and in New Zealand, as a social problem. The Samoan Commissioner of Police, the Secretary General of the Western Samoa Red Cross, and several others referred to the problems stemming from alcohol consumption generally as 'social problems'. The concept of 'social problem' will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.

interest in documenting such a pervasive and a problematic activity among Samoans, both in the islands and in New Zealand, needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. Understanding Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and alcohol consumption, and the detrimental consequences of its abuse for both *fa'asamoa* and health and general wellbeing of several generations of Samoans now living in New Zealand, is a starting point for initiatives to help alleviate their poor health status. This study aims to contribute to our understanding of culture's influence on health by examining attitudes and behaviours of members of one ethnic group, the Samoan people, as part of the larger group of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, towards alcohol and its relationship with their culture and health status.

### **Personal Rationale for the Study**

During this research, people asked why I selected alcohol and Pacific people's health as a thesis topic. At first, I was a little bemused but then I realized that some who asked had little idea that some Pacific people's future physical and mental health were at risk because of their drinking. Moreover, many people were unaware that some Pacific people's drinking was causing problems for families' finances, families' viability because of domestic violence, and other alcohol-related problems. After several attempts at formulating explanations, I was able to explain that I wanted to understand how and why alcohol was affecting the lives of Pacific people. From then on, I knew it was really very important to try and understand why some Samoan people drink 'to get wasted', others drink moderately, while some do not drink alcohol at all.

While I was contemplating doctoral studies, I became involved in a quite minor role at the 1999 Pacific Spirit Conference, sponsored by the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC).<sup>3</sup> The Conference brought together Pacific people from throughout New Zealand who worked in the area of alcohol and drugs, health and social research, mental health, and people

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<sup>3</sup> ALAC is a crown owned entity which operates under the Alcohol and Liquor Advisory Council Act 1976. It was established in 1976 following a report by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Sale of Liquor, and is funded by a levy on all liquor imported into, or manufactured in New Zealand for sale (ALAC 2003 Corporate Profile).



from other health-related areas. By the end of the conference, and after listening to these Pacific professionals, service providers, and community workers discuss and debate issues around alcohol and drugs, public health and other health-related topics, I was convinced that there were huge issues around Pacific people's alcohol and drug consumption which needed further exploration.

When that chance attendance at the Pacific Spirit Conference led to a further opportunity to conduct a small pilot project on alcohol and Host Responsibility among Pacific people, I started to review the literature and realized the enormity of 'alcohol' as a contributor to the social problems in many societies and different cultures, and the scarcity of information about alcohol and Pacific peoples, it was no longer difficult to explain to the curious people why alcohol and the health of Pacific peoples was a very important and interesting thesis topic. I remain convinced of the importance of these issues.

### **Discourse on Culture, Alcohol, and Health**

The discourses on culture and alcohol suggest that sociocultural factors that inform people's drinking patterns and behaviours must be understood if we are to understand fully how alcohol affects human behaviour (Heath, Waddell & Topper, 1981). Heath and Cooper (1981) argue that, 'the study of alcohol in world cultures has a significance that transcends even the enormous concern with health and social welfare that dominates most of the writing that deal with drinking in any modern society'. Heath (1987a: 46), moreover, notes that in most societies, drinking is essentially a social act, and, as such, it is embedded in a context of values, attitudes, and norms (1987a: 46). Furthermore, Heath argues that, 'The drinking of alcohol beverages tends to be hedged about with rules concerning who may and may not drink how much of what, in what contexts, in the company of whom, and so forth' (Heath, 1987a: 46).

Marshall (1979a, 2003b), Lemert (1979), Heath (1991), Casswell (1986), and several other writers have pointed out that only Pacific Islanders, and most of the North American indigenous people, had not discovered the manufacture of alcoholic beverages on their own. But after nearly two centuries of

exposure to alcoholic beverages it is clear that alcohol has secured a permanent and central place in the cultural, economic, and social fabric of many Pacific people's lives, including those people in the fast-growing Pacific communities in New Zealand.

But very few studies have focused on Polynesian people's alcohol use. Fewer still have looked at either Samoan people's drinking patterns or their attitudes and behaviours around alcohol. One of the few studies on alcohol and its consumption among Samoans is the cross-cultural examination of the pathology of drinking among three Polynesian societies, including Western Samoa in the early-1960s by American sociologist, Edwin Lemert (1979). Lemert studied drinking pathology among Polynesians in Tahiti, Cook Islands and Western Samoa, and concluded that while alcohol consumption spread quite early throughout most of Polynesia, Samoa 'remained as a kind of brooding citadel of sobriety until quite recent times' (1979: 194). Moreover, Lemert argued that drinking in Western Samoa was unintegrated with basic Samoan values and therefore, was directly inimical to the Samoan way of life. He posited that: 'Samoan drinking lacks all but the basic elements of patterning, is without ritual, and seldom if ever, has it been the basis of village- or district-wide festive behavior' (1979: 198).

Lemert's study identified drinking in Samoa as a negative case insofar as Ullman's hypothesis<sup>4</sup> is concerned, 'for here is a society in which drinking practices are unmitigated culturally and disruptive in extreme, yet addictive drinking has not developed' (Lemert, 1979: 207). Ullman's proposition was that 'rates of alcoholism, in the sense of addictive drinking, will vary indirectly with the degree to which drinking customs are well established and consistent with the rest of the culture' (Ullman, 1958).

Some forty years after Lemert's study, however, alcohol is widely available to, and consumed by, people throughout Samoa. In attempting to shed some light on how Western Samoa has become a place where drinking is pervasive, where alcohol is widely accessible and has become a major

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<sup>4</sup> Ullman hypothesized that when there is conflict of values with regard to some behavior, some psychological product, ambivalence, may exist prior to any direct experience with the behavior (1958: 48-54).

contributing factor to social problems including serious crimes, it is useful to consider briefly, one of the questions posited earlier: What traditional customs and norms are invoked to sustain relationships crucial to maintaining order and control within contemporary Samoan society?

This question has been expanded on in Chapter 6, by exploring whether Samoan people's alcohol consumption violates 'cultural norms' that underpin the traditional lifestyles of Samoans, which Macpherson and Macpherson (1990) suggest, could cause illness. Suffice it here to point out that central to the Macphersons' proposition, with regards to alcohol and Samoan people's wellbeing, is the concern that when people become drunk, they 'say and do things which disturb social relationships' which are crucial to maintaining social equilibrium. For the Macphersons, 'the normal, and desired, state of human wellness ... occurs when the relationships between natural, social, and supernatural worlds in which humans live are in equilibrium' (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1990: 148). The consumption of alcohol by people in responsible positions, such as the heads of Samoan *'aiga* and law-makers of *fono a matai* or village councils, has been perceived by many participants as contrary to the cultural norms of *fa'aaloalo*<sup>5</sup> or appropriate respect, and *vafealoalo'i* or interpersonal relationships, both of which elements are crucial in maintaining the *mamalu* or dignity of *fa'asamoa*. I present next, some working definitions of the three main topics to be examined throughout this thesis namely: alcohol, health, and culture.

### **Definitions of Terms and Concepts**

In social science and social research, concepts and terminologies can have multiple meanings. Sometimes, concepts have been used in different contexts by different people for different reasons; to explain certain points of view, or to articulate particular perspectives and meanings. Hence, the importance of providing specific definitions for particular contexts to ensure that concepts are used as consistently and unambiguously as is possible.

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<sup>5</sup> Macpherson and Macpherson (forthcoming) refer to the concept of *fa'aaloalo* 'more correctly, to pay deference or to show appropriate respect to others'. Macpherson, C & Macpherson, L. (in preparation), *The Nature and Limits of Traditional Dispute Resolution Processes in Contemporary Western Samoa*, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland.

For instance, in Samoan culture or *fa'asamoa*, rituals, metaphors and allegories often infer meanings and nuances (Tuiatua, 1994; 1995), which can easily be misinterpreted, sometimes with devastating consequences to both parties involved. Definitions, therefore, become even more crucial in the context of *fa'asamoa*. But as Baumann (1996) notes, definitions need not be judged by their truth value, but by their usefulness, 'This should be stressed in order to prevent an otherwise fatal misreading of the argument: to point out that a word carries different meanings in different discourses is not to call one discourse true and the other false' (Baumann, 1996: 11).

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol, culture, and health, are the three central concerns of this thesis. Alcohol<sup>6</sup> is widely used in various contexts throughout this discussion. Firstly, the term 'alcohol' has been used extensively to refer to 'ethyl alcohol'. Yet in sections of this thesis, especially in Chapter Four, some of the secondary data may refer to 'ethanol alcohol' by the use of other terms - italicized here for emphasis - such as *liquor*, *alcoholic liquor*, *alcoholic beverages*, and *spirits* or *beer*. Secondly, and to add to the confusion, the term 'alcohol', some of the literature cited refers to 'alcohol' when using the term *prohibition* or temperance movement. Thirdly, there is the occasional use of the term 'alcohol', as in the drinking of *methylated spirit* and *perfume* by some participants in the study refers to methyl alcohol. Where *methylated spirit* or *perfume* are referred to as alcohol, the reader is cautioned that the alcohol in these two cases, is 'methyl alcohol' not 'ethyl alcohol'. Whilst a determined effort has been made to avoid confusion over the terms alcohol, 'alcoholic liquor' or 'alcoholic beverages', alcohol throughout this thesis - except in the rare occasions where the drinking of methylated spirit and perfume is referred to drinking alcohol - may be interpreted as referring to 'ethyl alcohol'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Also known as ethanol, ETOH, or C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>OH, Heath, 1995, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Under the Samoa Amendment Act (No 2), 1956 – an Act to amend the Samoa Act, 1921, "Intoxicating liquor" means alcohol and any liquor containing alcohol, but, except as may be otherwise provided by any Ordinance or regulation, does not include: (a) perfumery or medicinal preparations containing spirit; (b) methylated spirit and other preparations containing spirit but not suitable for human consumption; (c) fermented or other liquor which on analysis is found to contain three or fewer parts per cent of spirit proof (Liquor Commission, 1953).

### ***Alcohol as a Cultural Artifact***

Alcohol has also been referred to as a cultural artifact. David Mandelbaum (1965a), for example, in his now classic article on cross-cultural understandings of alcohol use, shows that the form and meanings of drinking are culturally defined:

Alcohol is a cultural artifact; the form and meanings of drinking alcoholic beverages are culturally defined, as are the uses of any other major artifact. The form is usually quite explicitly stipulated, including the kind of drink that can be used, the amount and rate of intake, the time and place of drinking, the accompanying ritual, the sex and age of the drinker, the roles involved in drinking, and the role behavior proper to drinking (Mandelbaum, 1965a: 281).

Moreover, Mandelbaum (1965a) has argued that 'it is useful to ask what the form and meanings of drink in a particular group tell us about their entire culture and society' (cited in Marshall, 1979: 124).

### ***Culture***

Culture has been defined in a myriad ways by various people in different contexts. Amongst the most widely used definitions is Burnett Tylor's (1871) classic definition as, 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (1871: 1). For Kluckhohn (1962), 'Culture regulates our lives at every turn; from the moment we are born until we die there is, whether we are conscious of it or not, constant pressure on us to conform to certain types of behavior' (cited in Macpherson & Macpherson, 1990: 19).

Anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, defined culture as 'a framework of beliefs, expressive symbols, and values in terms of which individuals define their world, express their feelings, and make their judgements'. Culture, according to Geertz, 'is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action' (1973: 144-145). Similarly, and closer to home, Macpherson and Macpherson (1990: 19), noted that 'culture shapes the way in which we see and experience our world'. Culture, according to the Macphersons 'constitutes a resource which we create and

on which we draw, consciously and unconsciously, to comprehend our social and physical environments and our place in them' (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1990: 19). More particularly, and at the centre of this thesis is the notion of Samoan culture, referred to throughout as *fa'asamoa*, the 'Samoan way', which is discussed next.

### ***What is Fa'asamoa?***

*Fa'asamoa*, or the Samoan way as the term is generally glossed, refers to the traditional ways and customs of the Samoans. The missionary linguist Pratt (1861) defines *fa'asamoa* as acting according to Samoan customs. Former Samoan Prime Minister, Tupua Tamasese, referred to *fa'asamoa* as 'a body of custom and usage ... a mental attitude to God, to fellow men and to his surroundings. It is a distinctive lifestyle. It is not the physical make-up, 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' (cited in Field 1991: 20).

Samoan historian, Malama Meleisea refers to *fa'asamoa* as the term used by the Samoans for their political and economic system, a framework for action based upon the social structure of the *aiga*, the *nu'u*, and the *pule* of the *fono a matai* (Meleisea, 1987). *Fa'asamoa* is founded on the *fa'amatai* or council of chiefs, and its *pule* or authority over the affairs of the village, or *nu'u*. As well, it is based on the *ta'ita'iga* leadership by a *matai* of his or her 'aiga, or family, and the 'aiga *potopoto* or extended family. These institutions are crucial to the maintenance of the *mamalu* or dignity of *fa'asamoa*, and are also central to the conservation of *vafealoalo'i* or reciprocal, and interpersonal relationships, elements which are highly valued within *fa'asamoa*.

Throughout this thesis, *fa'asamoa* refers to, 'a framework for action based upon the social structure of the *aiga*, the *nu'u*, and the *pule* of the *fono a matai*', and as all the other traditional customs, practices, and spiritual and cultural values of Samoans, and the concomitant 'worldview, lifestyle, and language' (Macpherson, 2004: 165) within which they are embodied.

## **Health**

Health is another surprisingly elusive concept, which can in some settings, be defined quite broadly, and in others has quite specific meanings. Seedhouse (1986), for example, suggested that definitions can never be the 'last word', because they are informed by theories which change over time. Seedhouse further argued that 'health does not have a core meaning waiting to be discovered' and therefore, that there is no undisputed example of health. Howden-Chapman and Cram (1999), however, have argued that a specific definition of health and well-being is fundamental to a discussion of the determinants of health.

The National Health Committee (1998) argued that the low socio-economic status of Pacific people in New Zealand explains much of their poor health status. The Committee noted that cultural and ethnic factors also contribute to population health inequalities and to Pacific people's poor health status. Moreover, the Committee stated that culture must be recognised as a central determinant of health among different ethnic groups.

In general, our understanding of the role of culture as a determinant of health is not as developed as our understanding of many socioeconomic factors. However, culture should be considered separately from social determinants. For many groups, particularly ethnic groups, culture is central to their health and well-being, quite apart from socioeconomic factors (National Health Committee, 1997: 8).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health broadly, as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 1948). Other cultural interpretations of health, such as those of Maori and Pacific peoples, tend to be even more holistic (National Health Committee, 1997). The Maori word 'hauora', for example, incorporates into this WHO definition, concepts of wairua (spiritual), whanau (family) and hinengaro (mental) aspects, as well as cultural elements such as land, environment, language and extended family (Durie, 1994).

Likewise, Pacific people share the Maori perception of health and believe that spiritual wellbeing is essential to health. Laing and Mitaera (1994) for

example, note the complexity of Samoan and Cook Island peoples' perspectives on health in their respective cultural contexts, and highlight the centrality of family, and culture in their definitions of health and wellbeing (1994: 298-322). Furthermore, the emphasis in most Pacific cultures of spirituality, and other cultural elements such as land, and social relations are just as important, if not more so, to the health and wellbeing of Samoans. As Kinloch (1985) notes, 'the health of a Samoan individual is so interwoven with the predicament of the social group as to be almost indistinguishable from it' (1985: 15).

Similarly, Felix Keesing (1934), argued that health activities among the Samoans are an arduous and delicate undertaking necessitating for their effectiveness an intimate understanding of the people and their culture. Keesing noted that for Samoans 'matters of physical well-being are bound up in the whole interpretation of life, with its framework of thought and of religious conceptions, above all with its fears, deep-rooted in the cultural patterns and in the psychological experiences these have produced' (1934: 375). For the purpose of this thesis discussion, health will be defined as 'a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being' (Ministry of Health, 1997: 20).

To achieve the objectives of this study, I will explore how Samoan culture shapes patterns of alcohol consumption and how this, in turn, influence patterns of alcohol related harm. I will examine, for instance, the relationship between alcohol and culture, to show why certain intervention strategies, designed to minimise various risks associated with high consumption, may have limited impact on certain sectors of the Samoan community. Samoan culture celebrates the values of generosity, hospitality, and reciprocity which collectively promote a social and cultural environment which encourages displays of largesse and munificence. A program such as 'Host Responsibility', which stresses managing and limiting others' alcohol intake, albeit in their interests, sit uneasily alongside such values and I expand on these in Chapter 9. I move now to a brief profile of Pacific people in New Zealand and, in particular, the Samoans who have been the focus of this study.



## Pacific Peoples in New Zealand

The Pacific population in New Zealand has grown from 2,200 in 1945,<sup>8</sup> to a little over 100,000 in 1981,<sup>9</sup> to almost 232,000 in 2001.<sup>10</sup> A joint report by Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, on the economic status of Pacific peoples in New Zealand<sup>11</sup> indicates that the growth of the Pacific population has been one of the defining features of New Zealand society in recent decades.

**Table 1.1: New Zealand Census Counts by  
Island Population Estimate<sup>(1)</sup>**

Ethnicity	New Zealand Census Count	Pacific Island Population Estimate
Samoaan	115,017	170,900
Cook Island Maori	52,569	19,300
Tongan	40,716	99,400
Niuean	20,148	1,900
Tokelauan	6,204	1,500
Tuvalu Islander	1,965	10,000

(1) Estimate at mid 2001 prepared by the South Pacific Commission Demographic / Population programme

**Source: Statistics New Zealand**

The Pacific population, with a median age of 21, is young, and nearly 2 in 5 people are aged under 15 years. And whilst the Pacific population is youthful, the count of people of Pacific ethnicity aged 65 years and over has doubled between 1991 and 2001.<sup>12</sup> The majority of the Pacific population - about 58 percent - were born in New Zealand. It is a diverse population made up of people from many different ethnic groups occupying a range of social and economic positions.

### ***Demographic Characteristics***

<sup>19</sup> <[http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/prod\\_serv.nsf/](http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/prod_serv.nsf/)>

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Health, (1997). *Making a Pacific Difference: Strategic Initiatives for the Health of Pacific People in New Zealand*, Wellington: Ministry of Health.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics New Zealand, 2001 *Census of Population and Dwellings*.

<sup>11</sup> *Pacific Progress: A report on the socio economic status of Pacific Peoples in New Zealand*, Wellington: Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs

<sup>12</sup> Statistics New Zealand, 2001 *Census Snapshot 6*.

At the 2001 Census, one in sixteen people in New Zealand (6.5 percent) claimed Pacific ethnicity, an increase of 39 percent from the 1991 Census. This increase is lower than the growth rate of 55 percent in the Pacific population achieved between 1986 and 1996. Two in three people of Pacific ethnicity in New Zealand lived in the Auckland region, with 1 in 4, or 72,378 of them living in Manukau City. Auckland Central was home to 47,619, while 23,241 Pacific people lived in Waitakere City.

### ***Projected Future of Pacific Population***

From the above data, it is clear that Pacific people will continue to be a demographically significant sub-population within the New Zealand. Statistics New Zealand projections estimate that the Pacific population will reach 414,000 in 2021. This is an increase of 152,000 or 58 percent over the population of Pacific ethnicity of 232,000 at 30 June 2001.<sup>13</sup>

The annual growth rate of the Pacific population is projected to slow from 2.7 percent in 2002 to 2.2 percent in 2021. However, the Pacific population will still grow at a faster pace than the total New Zealand population. Consequently, the Pacific share of the total population is projected to rise from 7 percent in 2001 to 9 percent in 2021. The faster growth of the Pacific population compared with the total population is mainly due to the much higher birth rates and younger age structure of the Pacific population. Although Pacific fertility rates are assumed to decline, Pacific births are projected to increase from 8,000 in 2002 to 10,700 in 2021 because of the increase in the number of Pacific women in the childbearing ages (15–49 years).

The age structure of the Pacific population will undergo changes reflecting the combined impact of reduced fertility, gains in longevity and the ageing of the Pacific population. Statistics New Zealand has projected that by 2021, half the Pacific population will be older than 24 years, compared with a median age of 21 years in 2001. But this will still be significantly younger than

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<sup>13</sup> This is according to series 6 of the latest Statistics New Zealand National Pacific Population Projections (2001(base) – 2021).

the total New Zealand population, projected to have a median age of 40 years in 2021, up from 35 years in 2001.

Other significant increases projected for the Pacific population by 2021 will occur in the following age groups:

- Pacific people aged 65 years and over will almost treble – from 9,000 in 2001 to 25,000 in 2021.
- Pacific working-age population (defined as those aged 15-64 years) is projected to increase by 65 percent from 153,000 in 2001 to 252,000 in 2021.<sup>14</sup>
- The number of Pacific children (0-14 years) is projected to rise steadily during the 20-year projection period, increasing by 36,000 to 136,000 in 2021. Their share of the population is expected to decrease from 38 percent to 33 percent over this period. However, Pacific children are projected to make up about 17 percent of all New Zealand children in 2021, compared with 11 percent in 2001.<sup>15</sup>

Statistics New Zealand recognized that the Pacific population is diverse. While these projections have been based on the numbers identifying with various Pacific ethnic groups, which sub-totals have been shown in Table 1.1, there were also 15,549 people who identified with more than one Pacific ethnicity.

### ***Samoan People in New Zealand***

Samoans were the single largest Pacific ethnic group living in New Zealand at the time of the 2001 Census. Between 1996 and 2001, the Samoan population in New Zealand increased by 12 percent, slower than the 19 percent growth for the period between 1991 and 1996 (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). In 2002, the geographic distribution of the Samoan

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<sup>14</sup> This age-group is of particular interest to this study because it is young people within this age group range, especially young men drinkers aged 15 to 24 years, who reported drinking in a hazardous manner (Ministry of Health, 2001: 14).

<sup>15</sup> This increasing share of Pacific children, according to Statistics New Zealand, reflects the higher birth rate of the Pacific population. And whilst the number of Pacific deaths will also increase from 900 in 2001 to 1,300 in 2021, the Pacific share of the total population is projected to rise from 7 percent in 2001 to 9 percent in 2021 (Statistics New Zealand, National Pacific Population Projections (2001(base) – 2021)).

population was almost unchanged from 1996, with the greatest concentration, 66 percent, of the Samoans in the Auckland urban area. Of the Samoans living in the Auckland region, 1 in 4 live in Manukau City.

**Table 1.2: Geographical Distribution of Samoan Population, 2001**

Urban Areas	Auckland	North Auckland	Hamilton	Palmerston North	Wellington	Christchurch	Dunedin	Other*
%	66	2	1	1	17	4	1	8

\*Represent rest of Samoan population in other urban areas of New Zealand

*Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2003*

Two other concentrations of Samoans were found in Central Auckland, and Waitakere City. The Wellington urban area was home to 17 percent of Samoans of which 6 percent lived in Porirua while 5 percent lived in Lower Hutt. In the South Island, 5,100 or 4 percent of all Samoan people lived in the Christchurch urban area.

**Table 1.3: New Zealand and Overseas-Born Components of Samoan Population Resident in New Zealand in 1996**

Age Group	New Zealand Born (%)	Overseas-Born (%)	Total (%)
0-4	26	2	15
5-9	21	3	13
10-14	14	6	11
15-24	23	14	19
25-34	11	23	16
35-44	4	22	12
45-54	1	16	7
55-64	0	8	4
65+	0	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Statistics New Zealand 1998, Cited in Macpherson, 2004: 175.*

In the context of this thesis which examines alcohol and its use or non-use by some Samoan people, religious affiliation, or non-affiliation, was considered a useful variable in participant selection. This was based largely on a hunch, influenced by my own personal experience, claims of people in my

community networks and people with whom I socialize that religious affiliation and drinking patterns are connected. There are popular stereotypes that mainly Catholics drink and that adherents of denominations such as the Latter Days Saints (LDS), and Seventh Day Adventists abstained. In-between those two extreme positions were the majority of Samoans who are Presbyterians, Reformers, Methodists, and other smaller denominations with a range of drinking patterns, varying from heavy drinking to abstinence.

### ***Religious Affiliations***

Compared to the general population, Pacific people in New Zealand are a relatively religious group. In 2001, for example, only 12 percent of the Pacific population stated they had no religious affiliation. This compared to almost a third of the New Zealand population. Only 9 percent of Samoan people stated they had no religious affiliation. Of the 90 percent of Samoans with a Christian religion at the time of the 2001 Census, 28 percent were Catholics, followed by Presbyterians at 24 percent. Other religious denominations popular with Samoans include the Methodists and Pentecostals at 10 percent respectively, and the Latter Day Saints at 9 percent. As well, other Christian religions such as the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) also have adherents among Samoans. Overseas-born Samoans were more likely to report a religious affiliation than those born in New Zealand. For example, in 2001, 97 percent of Samoans aged between 45 and 64 reported to have a religious affiliation, whereas the equivalent proportion for those aged between 25 and 34 years was 91 percent (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). To explore the possibility that alcohol use and religious affiliation are connected, the sample had to include people from a range of religions.

### **Alcohol and Pacific Peoples in New Zealand**

Alcohol has secured a firm foothold in the lives of many New Zealanders, including those of Pacific ethnicity. Yet, not a lot is known about the attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and its consumption by Pacific people in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The modest number of studies on the effect of alcohol on the health of Pacific people living in New Zealand include Banwell's (1986) exploration of the place of alcohol in the lives of Cook Island women; Neich and Park's (1988) examination of the perceptions of some

Samoan women in Auckland. The latter study concluded that alcohol does not have an important place in the Samoan women's lives. However, the authors recognised that because of the style of drinking and drunken behaviour of many Samoan men, alcohol has very important negative effects for women and that many Samoan women's lives were adversely affected by their husbands' or fathers' use of alcohol.

Another study which explored alcohol and its consumption by Pacific peoples in New Zealand was that by Graves et al., (1979a). This study examined the ethnic differences in alcohol consumption among Maori, *Papalagi*, and Pacific Islanders at public bars in Auckland, and found no basis for the widespread stereotype among white New Zealanders at the time that Polynesians could not 'hold their drink'.

### ***Recent and Current Studies on Alcohol and Pacific People***

More recent studies on alcohol and Pacific people include the qualitative exploration of the place of alcohol in the lives of Pacific people, by ALAC and the Ministry of Health (1997). Two smaller pilot studies which examined Samoan and other Pacific people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol, and the level of their awareness of the effect of alcohol on health and wellbeing (Lima, 2000; Siataga, 2000), were commissioned by ALAC in 2000.

Currently, a National Population Survey of Pacific People's Alcohol, Drugs, and Gambling has been conducted in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and a Report is expected by July, 2004. This national survey has been conducted under contract between the Ministry of Health, and a Pacific-owned entity which has sub-contracted the survey's implementation to the SHORE Centre, of Massey University. The survey is of major significance in terms of Pacific research in New Zealand, and perhaps internationally, for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is the only national survey of its kind to be conducted specifically for Pacific people in this country. Secondly, there has been involvement of Pacific researchers throughout the process; from the conceptualization stage, through the contractual procedures, implementation, the analysis and writing process, and to the dissemination of the report's findings to Pacific communities. Thirdly, Pacific researchers and other health professionals have worked

alongside SHORE Centre researchers to implement the survey. To get the survey up and running, the research process involved training Pacific peoples as interviewers and research assistants in the use of either CATI or CACI methodology.<sup>16</sup> Finally and perhaps most importantly, the survey questionnaire has been translated into four Pacific languages, Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, and Cook Island Maori and data gathered in those languages. It is anticipated that the summary of the findings will also be translated into the same languages during the dissemination process. A Pacific Community Advisory Group, consisting of Pacific professionals and community workers, has also been involved at an advisory level throughout the project.

Additionally, other studies which examine Pacific people and alcohol are currently underway, or have recently been completed. ALAC, for example, recently funded an examination of alcohol drinking patterns by students among Pacific groups within New Zealand (ALAC, 2004a). A study of Niuean men's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol (Nosa, forthcoming), and an exploration of young Niuean women's behaviours around alcohol and alcohol consumption (Jackson, forthcoming), will contribute to the scholarship on Pacific people and alcohol. But more needs to be done, especially around young Pacific people's drinking and in terms of their attitudes towards drinking responsibly, and in regards to harm reduction. Organizations such as the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC), ALAC, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA), have been proactive in encouraging research and intervention projects, the training of Pacific researchers, and promoting initiatives to address issues around alcohol and Pacific people. In due course, all these initiatives will, with vision and good intention, together with an expanding workforce of well-trained Pacific researchers and other professionals, will be able to provide culturally appropriate, credible research and quality services on alcohol for Pacific people in New Zealand.

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<sup>16</sup> CATI is computer-assisted telephone interviews, the main method of gathering data for the project. CACI, computer-assisted cellphone interviews, involves interviewers going out in the field to try and locate families without landline phones who may have otherwise been excluded by the exclusive use of CATI.

## **Samoans and Alcohol**

As noted earlier, there is not a lot of data on Samoan people's understanding of, and attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and its consumption, either in the islands or in New Zealand. Lemert's cross-cultural study of forms and pathology of drinking in Polynesia referred to earlier, noted the lack of alcoholism 'in the sense of addictive drinking, with personality changes and serious organic pathology' among full-blooded Polynesians, including Samoans (cited in Marshall, 1979a: 195). Lemert posited that the 'absence of organic pathology among heavy drinkers in Polynesia' may be attributed to the fact that indulgence stimulates appetite. He stated that it wasn't 'unusual for a late-carousing Samoan to disturb the whole household rummaging around for food before he goes to sleep' (Ibid, p. 206). This study will reveal that this situation has since changed considerably in the intervening years.

An ALAC-funded pilot study which explored drinking in moderation and host responsibility among Samoan people in Auckland (Lima, 2000), revealed similar findings to Neich and Park's aforementioned study (p. 18). This pilot study comprised two focus groups: one of island-born women and one New Zealand-born women from a Reformed Samoan Church group in Auckland. Participants raised serious concerns and identified problems related to their husbands' drinking including: domestic violence; asthmatic attacks following heavy drinking sessions; not coming home on pay days; and not heeding medical professionals' advice to abstain because of the deleterious effect of alcohol on health.

### ***Alcohol and Samoan Health***

Within a Samoan health context, the impact of alcohol on health cannot be understood in the context of the individual because invariably, the individual's drinking behaviour impacts on the health and well-being of the spouse, children, members of the extended family and the community at large. Examining how culture influences the contexts in which alcohol is consumed and Samoan people's reaction to the use of alcohol would, I believe, be useful to inform how, when, and where effective intervention strategies to raise awareness and promote drinking in moderation among Samoan people might be focused.



Traditionally, health care in Samoa was the responsibility of members of the extended family and traditional healers. Over recent times, however, the health practices and beliefs of Samoans living both in Samoa and abroad, and the values underpinning them, coexist alongside Western scientific medicine in response to illness. Samoans' believed that the good health they enjoyed 'in the period before contact with Europeans was a result of their using the resources in their natural environment and of living a lifestyle which was natural for them' (Macpherson & Macpherson: 1990: 149), and that introduced beliefs, foods, and other practices disturbed Samoans' balanced existence and patterns of health and illness. And as the Macphersons note, apart from specific illnesses, 'Europeans introduced other things which contributed to a more general deterioration in the health of the Samoans' (Ibid, p. 152). Most of the illnesses which existed among Samoans in earlier times, at least until contact with Europeans, were held to be caused by various gods' displeasure with human conduct. 'The belief that *aitu*, or spirits, had the power to cause illness gave rise to a set of beliefs about their role' (Ibid, p. 38). This positioning of illness as being caused by spirits is articulated by Capra (1982), who argues that in non-literate cultures throughout the world, 'the origin of illness and the process of healing have been associated with forces belonging to the spiritual world' amongst which is 'the phenomenon of shamanism' (1982: 334).

Alcohol consumption among Samoan men was described by Neich and Park (1988), as the 'all or nothing' drinking style. The ALAC-Ministry of Health (1997) study referred to earlier, identified a similar pattern of drinking among other Pacific people.

... when Pacific people drink, the intention is to drink until the alcohol is finished or until a person can drink no more. There are no limits on the quantity of alcohol consumed. Thus, although drinking may not happen every day or even every week, when it happen, sessions can be very long (ALAC-MoH, 1997).

Similarly, a pilot study which explored drinking behaviours and awareness of the effect of alcohol on health among some Samoan people in Auckland (Lima, 2000) found that many Samoan young men drink to 'get wasted'. The pilot study shows that there are both differences and similarities in the

drinking behaviours of New-Zealand-born and Samoan-born male drinkers. However, some young people were more aware than older people of changes in their fathers' attitudes and conduct after using alcohol. Furthermore, younger people were more aware of the harmful effect of alcohol on their own and their parents' health, and of the negative effect of alcohol on families' income and social cohesion, which they say were important in the maintenance of good relations within family units. There was a general perception among young people that drinking alcohol irresponsibly resulted in drink-driving fines, traffic accidents causing injury, fights and violent crimes which resulted not only in serious problems for the individuals concerned, but to family members and within their communities.

Interestingly, a number of participants in the pilot study suggested that 'alcohol was not bad', but it was the actions of individuals who drink alcohol, that made it bad. This perception was common across the spectrum among males and females, older and younger, New Zealand and Samoan-born participants. This same qualification that 'alcohol is not bad' was common among male participants who consume alcohol. Strict abstainers, however, adamantly reject any good qualities in alcohol insisting that the negative consequences of alcohol consumption and all the social problems which result from alcohol and drunkenness have affected many Samoan people's health and well-being. So why do some Samoan people drink while others abstain? And why do some drinkers drink 'to get drunk' while others drink in moderation? In order to reply to these questions, it is necessary to examine the underlying factors that lead some Samoan people to drink while others elect to abstain.

### ***Alcohol in Various Samoan Contexts***

From the preceding discussion and in the chapters to follow, it will be shown that Samoan people perceive alcohol and its role within *fa'asamoa* and Samoan social life in different ways. Similarly, Samoan people's experiences with, and attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and the drinking of it, are varied. The empirical data analyzed and discussed in greater detail in chapters 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9, will show the diversity of experiences and perceptions of New Zealand and island-born Samoans to alcohol. Not

surprisingly, some Samoan people perceive what it is to be Samoan and define and understand their roles within *fa'asamoa* differently. The divergence evident in the ways in which people outline Samoan identity, the notion of what it is to 'be Samoan', and to a lesser degree, the values embodied within the concept of '*fa'samoa*', is also evident in relation to alcohol and its consumption. Some of these issues have been identified as themes which both frame, and are discussed in, the analytical chapters.

Firstly, I examine the beliefs, behaviours and attitudes towards alcohol of Samoans living in Samoa and, more specifically, the motivations, expectations, and patterns of drinking, and how abstainers perceive drinking within Samoan society. Secondly, I will explore the beliefs, behaviours and attitudes towards alcohol of some island-born and raised Samoans now residing in New Zealand. This strategy will assist in discerning whether the place and environment of socialization are factors which impact and influence Samoan people's drinking practices and general attitude towards alcohol.

With regards to Samoans' drinking, Lemert argued that while Samoan drinking 'indirectly expresses some of the values of Samoan culture, it is much more conspicuously a mechanism or device through which individuals in group settings find release for a variety of unintegrated feelings and impulses' (1979: 198) which has evolved under conditions of continuous prohibition. Moreover, Lemert noted that the consequences of intoxication in Samoa directly threaten or destroy cherished values which are central to *fa'asamoa*:

Samoan society ... successfully absorbed Christianity, resisted foreign domination, and maintained its village-based social organization relatively intact. Its conservative emphasis is revealed by the values placed on conformity, acceptance of group decisions, ceremonial compliance, and politeness in interpersonal interaction (Lemert, 1979: 203).

Lemert further argued that the dominance of these Samoan values 'is guaranteed by a prompt and rough system of social control', administered by the *matai* and that 'respect for the *matai* who make and carry out decisions is crucial to its continued functioning' (1979: 203).

One of the themes to be explored in this study is the extent to which Samoan people's drinking behaviour has been shaped by the place and environment in which the drinker had been introduced to and had learned about alcohol. This raises the question of whether the attitudes and behaviours towards and the experiences with alcohol of New Zealand-born Samoan people differ from those Samoans who learned to drink and were socialized in Samoa. To discern differences and similarities in the attitudes and behaviours of the two groups the following questions are posed. How do New Zealand and Samoan-born and raised men and women respectively define the act of drinking alcohol, and what cultural values and norms influence their drinking practices and behaviours? How do New Zealand- and island-born Samoans understandings of *fa'asamoa* differ, and does that have any bearing on their attitudes and behaviours to alcohol and alcohol consumption?

### ***The Rapidly Changing Context of Alcohol Use***

This study will also explore how rapid social change in both Samoa and New Zealand may be transforming the perceptions of alcohol and its role in Samoan social life. The discussion will identify some of the changes and continuities in the *fa'asamoa* during the last century or so, and ascertain whether the significance of elements crucial to the maintenance of *fa'asamoa*, such as *fa'aaloalo* or appropriate respect, *loto alofa* or kind-heartedness, and *vafealoalo'i* or interpersonal relationships, may have changed since contact with the Western world. Finally, I will examine how, social relationships between individuals and within groups in various Samoan communities in different settings, maintain cohesion in the social structure of *fa'asamoa* and whether the consumption of alcohol, which Lemert (1979) argued, was inimical to Samoan values, has impacted on Samoan social organization in general.

The thesis has limitations which must be outlined here. One of the major limitations is the ambitious nature of the project. Collecting data from three research sites was demanding, and resulted in constant search for financial resources to carry out fieldwork in Auckland, Christchurch, and Apia. The

availability of resources clearly affected the amount of data which could be collected. However, the information gathered from the three research sites reveals some very interesting contrasts and similarities in Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and alcohol use, which I hope justify the effort. However, and in hindsight, in terms of time and the demand on financial resources, perhaps the fieldwork for this thesis could have been confined to two research sites. The question, then, though academic at this stage, is which of the three research sites could have been left out and on what basis and with what consequences?

### **Thesis Outline**

This chapter has provided an overview of the thesis, its aims and objectives; the problems to be examined; and has outlined the rationale, scope, and limitations of the study. The discussion has also provided some working definitions of the main terms and concepts to be used throughout the thesis.

Chapter 2 is an expanded review of the literature. It expands on some of the general literature outlined in this chapter and formulates and contextualizes the questions to be asked in the thesis. The chapter will expand the gaps in the Pacific and Samoan literatures, which frame the questions this thesis will attempt to answer.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the methodology, and of the methodological issues and constraints encountered. These include the range of methods used, the rationale for selecting the three research sites for the study, discussion of 'Western' research frameworks and methodologies, and some observations on what I see as methodological challenges and some of the ethical dilemmas faced by indigenous researchers using Western methods and research frameworks while working with, and among indigenous or non-Western communities.

Chapter 4 provides a backdrop to the roles of alcohol within Samoan people's lives and their social organization by discussing the influences of various groups of Europeans, which included beachcombers, traders, missions and

the missionaries, and later the colonial administrations, on the formation of Samoans' attitudes to and use of alcohol.

Chapter 5 provides a social history of alcohol in Samoan society and a historical context for the contemporary problem. It focuses on how a substance made its way from the periphery of Samoan social organization to its centre in less than 200 years. It documents the introduction of alcohol to Western Samoa in the early-nineteenth century, and traces its growing significance on *fa'asamoa* and within Samoan social life. I argue that what happened over a century and half ago, at a place where the recording of events and social life were documented by different people from different perspectives and agenda needs to be re-analyzed with caution and impartiality. It is suggested that a social history of alcohol in Samoa is important because of the lack of scholarship on what has become an important and significant aspect of Samoan social life.

Chapter 6 examines the way Samoans understand and practice *fa'asamoa* in the islands and in migrant communities in New Zealand, and how and whether alcohol has impacted on the values and norms of *fa'asamoa*. The discussion also explores the differences in attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol of Samoan-born and raised and their New Zealand-born and raised counterparts.

Chapter 7 examines the impact of economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors, on Samoan's drinking patterns and attitudes towards alcohol and outlines and attempts to explain some of the the variety evident within these areas.

In chapter 8, the proposition that the social and health problems prevalent in Samoa are a consequence of widespread availability of alcohol is explored. The chapter examines the recent changes in ownership of the Samoan brewery and the concomitant social and health problems which some participants suggested, would continue to impact on Samoan people's lives.

Chapter 9 briefly deals with minor themes and issues which emerged from the interview data, and which were not covered in the discussions of the main

themes. It also identifies gaps in the analysis and points out areas to be addressed in the conclusions or in future projects.

Chapter 10 draws the chapter discussions together and offers some conclusions based on the research findings. It also reviews the thesis discussions, posits alternative explanations, summarizes implications for scholarly understanding of the field, and offer recommendations for further research or changing methodologies, and ways forward for alcohol research and other health, cultural, and social issues raised in the thesis.

## Chapter Two

### **A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURES – ALCOHOL, CULTURE, AND HEALTH**

*... drinking cannot be understood solely within the framework of disease and deviation. The patterns of alcohol use, function, and meaning are enormously influenced by the cultural context in which drinking occurs (Bacon, 1976: 3).*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews the relevant literatures and discourses on alcohol, culture, and to a lesser degree, health. It discusses some social theories and theoretical debates in the research on culture and alcohol studies. The chapter also expands on some central concepts used throughout this thesis, and examines the value of sociocultural approach in identifying and exploring links between its central themes.

#### **Theorizing and Reflections**

If theorizing in the social sciences is defined as generalizing or conceptualizing the social world 'beyond what we can see and measure' (*Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*), then it is not hard to see why theorising must surely be one of the main attractions for those who work in the social sciences. Theorising the social world sounds exciting to the novel student of the social sciences. C. W. Mill's (1959) sociological imagination or 'way of looking at the world that can see connections between the apparently private problems of the individual and important social issues' (*Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 1994: 420*), left a vivid impression in my own thinking since I encountered it in introductory sociology nearly ten years ago.

Theorizing for the sake of letting loose one's imagination, or to 'join in the theoretical fun' as a faculty member in my department puts it (Craig, 1997), can be fun, and at the same time, somewhat daunting. But empirical research is still needed to test 'propositions', to explore 'models' and to



'prove' or 'disprove' theories. The empirical aspect of research, for me at least, adds flavour to the research process.

Some social commentators have used epochal landmarks of history - such as 'turn of the new millennium' - as useful points in time to 'evaluate the current state of the world, assess prior developments and suggest new and enlightened ways forward' (Hunt & Barker, 2001: 166). If these reference points are important, in as far as they lead us to re-assess our practice, then, the start of this new millennium would seem an appropriate one at which to re-consider the state of our discipline. Thinking about issues raised by Mills 50 years ago, or by Durkheim one hundred years ago, or Socrates still earlier can stimulate one's imagination in unanticipated and exciting ways. However, theorizing, still needs to be harnessed to be relevant to the task at hand, which is what I will be trying to do in the next few pages.

### **Theories and Theoretical Frameworks**

Nigel Gilbert (2001) has argued that 'theory' has become increasingly difficult to define with any certainty, since it can refer to quite different things in different contexts (2001: 2). The *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* defines theory as '... an account of the world which goes beyond what we can see and measure. It embraces a set of interrelated definitions and relationships that organizes our concepts of and understanding of the empirical world in a systematic way (1994: 666).

Early sociologists such as Durkheim (1893) advocated the autonomy of sociology. Gordon Marshall noted that one of Durkheim's concerns was to establish 'a science of sociology with its own subject-matter, methodology, and explanatory models' (Marshall, 1998: 176). Contemporary writers in both sociology and anthropology have, however, increasingly advocated collaborative approaches and multidisciplinary cross-theory building.

Sociologists have increasingly avoided the temptation to believe that there is a single theory or a single explanation of human conduct. Merton argued for theoretical pluralism, noting that when sociologists speak of theories they do

so in the realisation that, 'no single theory can account for all social problems; instead, various theories often complement each other' (1976: 40).

According to Pertti Alasuutari (1996), 'theories do not suggest how to explain this or that phenomenon, but they provide different viewpoints to social reality' (1996: 372). And whilst theories and theoretical frameworks may provide inspiration for the researcher, a particular theory or hypothesis 'should not prevent the researcher from gathering different observations about the case as comprehensibly as possible' (Alasuutari, 1996: 373).

One way of ensuring this, is to avoid over-dependence on the theoretical and methodological repertoires of a single discipline. Marshall, Ames, and Bennett (2001), for example, argued that theory in the social sciences is not bound to singular disciplinary approaches. While reviewing anthropological perspectives on alcohol and drugs at the turn of the twenty-first century, these authors advocated a 'hybrid vigor' in alcohol and drug studies. They argued that it would 'be foolhardy for researchers to wear blinders to theoretical advances that arise in sister disciplines, thereby closing off the prospect of contributing to collaborative, cross-disciplinary theory building' (2001: 161). The authors concluded that:

If those who examine the cultural phenomena surrounding alcohol and drug use can advance the analysis of empirical data to higher levels of social science theory, if the analysis of ethnographic data is then integrated with findings derived from other methods, and if the resultant combination produces an innovative conceptual framework that has applied potential, then that will truly be a masterpiece (Marshall, Ames & Bennett, 2001: 161).

### **A Case for Multidisciplinary Approach to Alcohol Study**

The argument for such an approach is particularly strong in the case of alcohol, the study of which necessarily involves scholarship of a range of disciplines. Heath (1991) has argued that for many years, 'the proposition that the study of alcohol must necessarily be a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or transdisciplinary venture' has been widely accepted by some researchers (1991: 126). Moreover, in a review of anthropological and sociological perspectives on alcohol as a reinforcer, Heath (1990) suggests

that no single disciplinary perspective is adequate to understand the interaction of alcohol and the human animal. Heath argues that the study of alcohol inherently demands a multidisciplinary approach, combining biological, psychological, and sociocultural or behavioural methods and concepts (1990: 265-266).

Yet, despite increasing rhetoric about the value of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary efforts, both in the social sciences in general and in the field of alcohol studies, Heath (1991) notes that 'there appears ironically to have been increasing rather than decreasing compartmentalization' during the latter half of the twentieth century (1991: 137). This, Heath argues, limits disciplines' ability to contribute as fully as they might to the debates.

Hunt and Barker (2001) in their critique of contemporary anthropological research on alcohol stated that anthropologists have failed to meet the theoretical, methodological and holistic standards of anthropology, and to integrate perspectives from other disciplines. Furthermore, Hunt and Barker posited that 'the overall impact of anthropology research in the alcohol and drug fields in the United States can best be described as patchy' (2001: 171). But as Marshall, Ames & Bennett (2001) noted, 'Some anthropologists and qualitative social scientists who are seasoned researchers in the field may find this harsh critique rather difficult to stomach' (Marshall, Ames & Bennett, 2001: 154).

But there are other risks in overdependence on a single discipline's paradigms. Robin Room, a leading sociologist in the alcohol field, for example, criticized anthropologists for fostering 'problem deflation', for deemphasizing the problematic side of drinking and systematically underestimating 'the extent of alcohol problems in Third World societies' (Room, 1984: 170). Room claimed some anthropologists were members of the 'wet generations' with liberal leanings towards alcohol issues, and possessing no previous history in alcohol studies. Room also noted that the de-emphasis of the problematic side of drinking by anthropologists 'is not only a matter of oversight, but rather tends to be inherent in a functional

perspective' (1984: 171). For Room, a functionalist perspective is biased towards the 'gains' side of the equation. For example, Room argued that:

From Durkheim onward, the emphasis tends to have been on the hidden gains behind apparent losses, where what seems to a casual observer to be peculiar, pointless, or cruel behavior towards an individual or a subgroup is argued to be functional for the maintenance of the group as a whole

In alcohol studies ... the function of drinking perhaps most often cited is in the maintenance of social cohesion or conviviality. The gain in prestige or reaffirmation of solidarity for those included may be matched by a prestige loss or alienation for those excluded (Room, 1984: 171).

Anthropologist, Linda Bennett (1984), commenting on Room's criticism of ethnographic studies of alcohol as 'problem deflation' and characterization of anthropologists as members of a 'wet generation', argued that while Room's paper raised issues which were 'wrong' and 'superficial', he nevertheless provided a welcome service to 'encourage social scientists to take stock of some basic assumptions about alcohol and alcoholism in conducting and interpreting their research' (1984: 179). Furthermore, Bennett argued that discussions such as Room's would be constructive in demonstrating 'relative strengths of various disciplines and methods in addressing different problems' in alcohol studies. Bennett concluded by arguing for 'intermingling methods and approaches' and for 'increased cross-disciplinary cooperation' (Ibid, p. 180).

Despite the rhetoric about methodological advantages of multidisciplinary, there has been a tendency to favour certain methodologies for political rather than epistemological reasons. Heath (1975), for instance, noted as unfortunate 'the fact that survey research has taken on a methodological rigor and has won the advantages that go with large-scale quantification' which, he argues, is viewed by many 'as the only relevant enterprise in the social sciences' (1975: 137). Furthermore, Heath argued that qualitative research is appreciated when 'focused on thematic representations ... but carries little weight with funding agencies as a means of understanding human behavior in natural settings' (Ibid, 137). Over recent years, however,

as Casswell recently commented, research using a qualitative approach has been gaining momentum, and have been widely funded.<sup>17</sup>

Heath (1975) has also argued that 'although there is considerable overlap between the concerns and approaches of anthropologists and sociologists, there are also differences, at least in terms of emphases' (1975: 5). This raises the question of whether there is a theoretical approach which can readily incorporate insights derived from a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches employed in a range of social sciences.

### ***The Public Health Approach***

One such approach that is often employed in the study of alcohol and the concomitant social and health problems is the public health perspective. The literature has shown that alcohol and the attendant social and health related problems impact significantly on individuals, communities, economies, and nations in both Western industrialized economies and developing societies (Room, et al. 2002; Rehn, Room & Edwards, 2001). Room et al., (2002), have argued that a public health approach to alcohol problems in developing societies should neither be 'based on doctrinaire opposition to alcohol use nor on the self-interest of those who profit from it'. Rather, these authors argued that a public health approach needs to, 'employ effective policy levers to ... minimize the risks of alcohol use' (2002: 217).

Rehn, Room and Edwards (2001), noted that a public health policy on alcohol should be integrated with all other health planning, nationally and locally. The authors argued that action on alcohol can no longer be viewed as some kind of optional extra. 'Policy must take into account the total drinking population, in order to define the scope of public health action' (2001: 77). Furthermore, the authors contended that: 'The overall strategy for alcohol policy must be to create an environment that helps people to make healthy choices and renders unhealthy choices more difficult or expensive' (2001: 78).

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<sup>17</sup> Sally Casswell, Personal Communication, February, 2004.

### ***A Sociocultural Approach***

Heath (1975) contends that a sociocultural functionalist approach which 'focuses on the society or the culture as a sort of organism' with various institutions or component parts 'facilitating, maintaining, adapting, or adjusting the societal and/or cultural organism as a whole' is a model which can lead to the integration of insights from a range of disciplines and disciplinary models and to a heightened awareness of the ways in which a range of social institutions may be linked and may contribute to social practice (1975: 50). In a critical review of the sociocultural model of alcohol use, Heath noted that

The sociocultural model derives from the view, now widely accepted in the social sciences, that human behaviour is the complex resultant of an interplay of biological and historical factors, including interaction among systems that can be distinguished as those of the culture, the society, and the individual (Heath, 1975: 1).

Heath (1975) distinguished two different emphases in functionalism: (a) the sociocultural approach; and (b) the individual approach which tends to focus on the individual as its unit of analysis. (1975: 50). In distinguishing the two functional approaches, Heath distinguished at least two different emphases in functionalism:

One approach focuses on the society or the culture as a sort of organism, and assays to spell out the functions that various institutions, beliefs, behaviours, or other component parts play with respect to facilitating, maintaining, adapting, or adjusting the societal and/or cultural organism as a whole. The other approach tends to focus on the individual as its unit of analysis, and tries to discern the functions that institutions, beliefs, behaviours, or other aspects of sociocultural system play with respect to the adjustment and adaptation of the individual (Heath, 1975: 50-53).

The distinction is pertinent and often useful. However, many of the anthropologists who have written in any detail about alcohol and culture seem to consider the sociocultural and the individual approaches within a functional model to be complementary, and use either or both, depending on what order of 'fact' they are trying to explain (Heath, 1975: 50-53). Heath

noted that one of the most broadly applicable propositions about why people drink was formulated by a psychiatrist and an anthropologist, in such a way as to combine 'functions' from both the social and individual points of view. MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969), for instance, stated that in cross-cultural perspective, '... the state of drunkenness is accorded the status of at least a partial time out ... the option of drunken 'Time Out' affords people the opportunity to get it out of their systems with minimum of adverse consequences' (Heath, 1975: 53).

Heath further noted that 'in spite of the apparent value of some alternative approaches to the understanding of drinking and drunkenness, functional interpretations continue to predominate in the social science literature, often incorporating important aspects of perspectives that have been proposed as alternatives (1975: 53).

The approach has been promoted mainly by those in anthropology and sociology doing research on alcohol consumption. In a generalized overview and critical assessment of sociological and anthropological research on drinking, American sociologist Lemert (1969) observed that the body of sociocultural research on drinking available in the 1960s 'had grown in substance and sensitivity to theoretical and methodological issues' (1969: 56). But Lemert also argued that what was available was 'uneven with regard to the breadth and depth of the accumulated data and also with regard to their reliability' (1969: 56). He noted that the limitations lay not so much in the model, as in problems of definition, the inconsistency and lack of clarity in many of the key concepts, and scepticism about the validity of instruments which was endemic in sociocultural research on drinking.

Heath (1977) suggested that the confusion 'derives from different kinds of norms, different kinds of cross-cultural studies, different kinds of ethnic groups, and different kinds of problems' (1977: 5). In the case of the use of central concepts such as 'norm', Heath argued that drinking studies are by no means unusual in the fact that the term 'norm' is used in vague, and sometimes varied, senses. Heath identifies three types of norms:

- norms as rules **of** behaviour – what is locally considered to be the normal or typical way of thinking and acting;
- norms **for** behaviour –what is locally considered to be the good or right way of thinking and acting; and
- norms which derived **from** behaviour –what a trained and relatively objective reporter discerns as the ‘real’ way most members of the population actually do think and act (Heath, 1977: 5-6).

Heath also noted that another ‘fundamental and recurrent weakness’ in sociocultural writings on alcohol was the tendency to make comparisons between incomparable categories. As Heath has stated, ‘if this problem besets all sociocultural studies, it becomes more acute in cross cultural ones’ (Heath, 1977: 6). The problem of definition in sociocultural research was also identified by Heath who argued that the multiple meanings given to cross-cultural studies is another ‘semantic pitfall’ in the sociocultural literature (1977: 6).

### **The Sociocultural Model**

Heath, Waddell and Topper (1981) have argued that if we are to understand fully how alcohol affects human behaviour, the sociocultural factors that inform people’s drinking patterns and behaviours must be taken into account. The voluminous literatures on culture and alcohol have highlighted the need for, and acceptance in recent years, of a ‘sociocultural model’ when studying alcohol use. Heath (1988) has, more recently, articulated the emergence of a sociocultural theory and a plethora of models of alcohol use and argued convincingly, that ‘social and cultural perspectives are important for an understanding of the environment or setting’ (Heath 1988: 356).

The contention that sociocultural factors must be central when studying drinking patterns and behaviours gains support from Mandelbaum (1965), who argued that culture influences drinking patterns. Mandelbaum stated that as a whole culture changed, so do the drinking morés of its people:



In many societies, drinking behaviour is considered important for the whole social order, and so drinking is defined and limited in accordance with fundamental motifs of the culture. Hence it is useful to ask what the form and meanings of drink in a particular group tell us about their entire culture and society. In a complex modern society, made up of many subgroups, the drinking patterns of each subgroup or class may reflect its characteristics as well as the cultural frame of the whole society (Mandelbaum 1965a: 281).

Heath (1981) agrees that the value of this approach is not just academic, but is practical 'inasmuch as it facilitates insights about education, prevention, and treatment' (1981: 358). Awareness of the value of sociocultural explanations, and the possibilities which they offer for social intervention however, is not new, and has come to be widely accepted in recent years. Over fifty years ago, for example, American sociologist R. W. Bales (1946) identified three social and cultural variables that can influence the rate of alcoholism, and posited that a society's actual rate was the result of their interaction (cited in Heath 1988: 359). Studies such as these offer valuable insights into the possibilities of policy intervention. Additionally, Heath (1975) contends that one of the predominant concerns in most ethnographic studies since the 1930s 'has been to go beyond descriptive reporting, and to delineate the functional relationships of society, culture, and the individual, in whatever conceptual or analytic categories were chosen for the description' (Heath, 1975: 359).

It is clear from the foregoing paragraphs that sociocultural functionalism is a useful general model within which the relationship between alcohol and society has been studied, but it does not exhaust the range of explanatory models which have been used to theorize and model more specific aspects of this relationship.

One consequence of adopting this model is that it points to a voluminous literature generated over a number of decades by scholars from a number of disciplines and using a variety of methodologies. The only common thread which runs through this large, disparate literature is its connection with the explanation of the social and cultural causes and consequences of alcohol use. The purpose of the review of this literature is not to produce a single

unified model which embodies all of these ideas and establishes linkages between them. It points to the tools which have been used by earlier scholars in this field and may serve to identify those which may be valuable in this project. Each of these tools can provide means of disassembling particular elements of the problem set for this project, and so the review which follows sets out to create a 'tool kit' which is available as I set out to understand the social and cultural origins and consequences of Samoans' use of alcohol.

### ***The Notion of Alcoholism***

The importance of the sociocultural, and the concomitant requirement of terminological consistency, becomes apparent in the difficulty of conceptualising such basic notions as the 'excessive consumption' of alcohol. For example, should 'excessive' be determined by reference to the 'social' or 'medical' consequences of consumption of a given amount of alcohol? Is alcoholism a 'social' or a 'medical' condition or both, and what implications does this distinction have for intervention?

Cahalan and Cisin (1976) posited three alternative models for studying alcoholism: (a) the 'disease' model; (b) the 'vice' model; and (c) the 'social problem' model. The authors argued that the primary motive for the disease model of alcoholism is to get 'the derelict alcoholic more decent treatment than being dumped into the drunk tank in the city jail only to repeat the same process until illness' (1976: 104).

Noel Chrisman (1985) has argued that in the United States, alcoholism is a major health problem that affects most families in some way and vexes most health practitioners. It is a moral and spiritual problem, 'stimulating concern and outcry from the nation's pulpits' (1985: 7).

In *Drinking Behavior and Drinking Problems in the United States*, Cahalan and Cisin (1976) have argued that: 'American values and attitudes about drinking are not merely of ... humanistic interest, but are central to understanding the dynamics of American drinking behavior and current social and health problems related to alcohol' (1976: 78).

The concept of 'alcoholism' as illness or disease is somewhat problematic, and has been used to refer to drunkenness and as a label for 'addictive drinking' in some societies. Mandelbaum (1965), for example, argued that 'alcoholism' is not the same as drunkenness, and posited that: 'Alcoholism in the sense of abnormal, addictive, pathologically compulsive intake is not the same as drunkenness, which can be quite normal culturally, and should not be confused with the standard drinking practices of any society' (1965: 287).

In *Phases of Alcohol Addiction*, E. M. Jellinek (1962a), noted that with the exception of specialists in alcoholism, most professionals and the lay public use the term 'alcoholism as a designation for any form of excessive drinking ... instead of as a label for a limited and well-defined area of excessive drinking behaviours' (1962a: 356-357). This conceptualization of alcoholism as a disease, according to Jellinek 'becomes extended to all excessive drinking irrespective of whether or not there is any physical or psychological pathology involved in the drinking behaviour' (Ibid, p. 357).

Other commentators have encouraged anthropologists to pursue the 'disease notion of alcoholism'. Linda Bennett (1988), for example, in her assessment of the prevailing trends in the anthropology of alcohol research, called on anthropologists to distinguish the disease notion of alcoholism from other terms such as 'drunkenness, problem drinking and alcohol-related problems'. Bennett also argued for the development of 'the bio-cultural perspective, especially when compared with the extent of socio-cultural research'. Bennett concluded her overview by stating that anthropologists needed to do more bio-cultural research involving biological and cultural anthropologists designing joint projects with specialists from other disciplines such as human genetics in order to conduct studies that incorporate meaningful biological and cultural variables (1988: 119).

### ***Functional and Dysfunctional?***

If the definition of alcoholism is problematic, a similar definitional problem emerges in determining whether alcohol is 'functional' or 'dysfunctional' and how indeed one would answer this question. Straus (1976), for example, contends that it is both functional and dysfunctional. When used moderately,

for many people alcohol can provide relief from tension, worry, or pain, and a pleasurable sense of well-being, relaxation, and conviviality. But when used in circumstances that are socially inappropriate, or in amounts that exceed an individual's capacity, the intoxicating properties of alcohol can cause serious problems ranging from incidental drunkenness and its consequences to problem drinking and alcoholism (Straus 1976: 215). But what may be functional for the individual, that is relaxation and a sense of well-being, may be dysfunctional for various individuals and groups which are affected by the individual's use of alcohol.

### ***A 'Political Economy' Approach***

Another theoretical approach used by some researchers to examine alcohol and health is that of a 'political economy' (Saggers & Gray, 1991; Gray & Saggers, 1994; Singer, 1986). A political economy approach to human social behaviour, according to Roseberry (1988), takes as its starting point the complex web of political and economic relations that constitute the environment in which individuals and social groups exist' (cited in Saggers & Gray, 1998: 85). Political economy has also been defined as a form of critical theory. Robert Cox, for example, argues that political economy 'analyses historical structures which are the ways reality is defined for different peoples in different eras - that is, the frameworks within which people interact with nature for the satisfaction of their needs' (1995: 35).

A range of political and economic factors, for instance, may influence access to alcohol, the ways in which alcohol is used and by whom. This approach typically involves demonstrating a connection between social position and a set of experiences and expectations or a given form of behaviour, and identifying the ways in which political and or economic factors structure these. In the case of alcohol, a political economist might ask what political and economic factors lead to the increased availability of alcohol to various groups within a society, what are the consequences of increased access for various groups, and what structures these? These are crucial considerations because they structure the contexts within which groups and individuals make decisions and formulate views on norms around alcohol consumption.

Employing a 'political economy' approach in their previous work with indigenous Australians, Siggers and Gray (1991), Gray and Siggers (1994) noted that 'this approach is not popular - largely because of its materialist emphasis'. The authors, nevertheless, posited that a political economy approach 'is best able to explain the difference in health status of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples' (Siggers & Gray, 1998: 84). Furthermore, these authors argued that the political economy approach explains 'differences in patterns of alcohol consumption and related harm between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, and that it directs our attention to the ways best able to reduce that harm' (Ibid 84-85). In a later chapter, for instance, I explore how political independence and economic development orthodoxies such as import substitution led to the creation of an aid-funded brewery in Samoa, which in turn increased the availability of inexpensive liquor within Samoa and transformed the options and the drinking behaviour of a nation.

### ***Dependence and Power***

Another approach which relates alcohol use to political and economic power is what Heath (1975) referred to as dependence and power. Heath identifies studies by Bacon, Barry & Child (1965); McClelland et al., (1972); and Lemert (1964), which gave explicit attention to power in the alcohol studies literature. As Heath (1975) noted Lemert's 'interpretation of the way in which young Samoan men use drinking as a means of protesting the ceremonial and authoritarian traditions of the island is one of the most unequivocal' (1975: 54) example of power as a motivation for drinking.

This reference to power as a motivation for drinking among Samoan *taulele'a* or untitled Samoan men in Lemert's investigation of drinking in Polynesian societies was discussed in interviews with some participants in this study and is reported in more detail in Chapter 5. Suffice here to note that alcohol and the drinking of alcohol in Samoa, at least at the time of Lemert's study, was sometimes used as the means to an end: a vehicle through which a *taule'ale'a*, and even younger village *matai*, who may have felt aggrieved by the village council of chiefs, or some more powerful person in the village, expressed their defiance by knowingly behaving inappropriately, while quite

aware of the consequences of his actions. Lemert described such a scenario thus:

A fairly common occurrence is for a drunken taulelea [sic] to stand at one end of a village and shout drunken defiance and challenge to any and all who wish to test him in combat. This, even when not motivated by hostility towards the matai, is nevertheless a desecration of Samoan custom, an insult to the whole village particularly to the matai. In other instances drunken young men parade in front of the chief's house, which is sacred ground, shouting insults and threats. In some cases, matai have been attacked physically (Lemert, 1979: 204).

In her studies of Australian Aboriginals, Sargent (1973) suggested that alcoholism 'is used to discredit Australian Aborigines so that they may be further controlled'.<sup>18</sup>

Aborigines, it is often asserted, suffer from a predisposition towards alcoholism. The idea of 'self-inflicted disease' absolves others from guilt, and Aboriginal self-destruction would be convenient for some. Drinking as white men do has become a symbol of equality, a style of life to be emulated if blacks are to achieve equality and acceptance. Drinking with their own people is a reinforcement of solidarity and warmth of feeling towards their fellows - just as it was for white men. The alcohol problem is basically one of the depressed way of life, the abysmal economic conditions, the historical deprivation of their own culture, and lack of opportunity to compete in the white culture (Sargent 1973: 186).

Dependency theory, according to Marshall (1979b), 'initially seems to hold the key for helping us understand Trukese drunken comportment since those who have probed the Trukese psyche tell us that unfulfilled dependency needs account in large measure for the personalities typical of Trukese adults' (1979b: 107).

In terms of the power theory, Marshall (1979b) explained that: 'The gist of the power theory is that people drink alcoholic beverages to attain feelings of personal strength and power and that high levels of drinking will be found in those cultures where average individual concerns about power are high'

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<sup>18</sup> Sargent notes that the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs has had stated, "Alcohol is the greatest present threat to the Aboriginals of the Northern Territory, and unless strong immediate action is taken they could destroy themselves' (Parliament 1978, cited in Sargent, 1983, p. 186).

(1979b: 109). Marshall also noted that 'the power theory has a certain attractiveness as an explanation for why Trukese drink' (1979b: 109). He explained that 'young men are very much concerned with establishing themselves as powerful persons characterized by courage and strong thought' (1979b: 109). Marshall, however, cautions that:

Much of the aggression that comes out in Trukese drunkenness is not directed at building a public reputation for manliness. Rather it is an opportunity to strike back at someone without the likelihood of direct or immediate reprisal. ... Being drunk gives a young man unusual control over others because it allows him to act and communicate *his* definition of relationships while being culturally viewed as irresponsible (Marshall, 1979b: 110).

### ***Symbolic Capitalism***

Another approach which connects the use of alcohol with the maintenance of social relationships is that which represents alcohol as a form of symbolic capital which can be shared as a form of 'social investment'. In his study of drinking among the Australian Aborigines of Mt Kelly, Collman (1979) argued that 'drinking among contemporary Australian Aborigines is a major way they construct their social relationships with each other' (1979: 208). Collman noted that Aborigines in Alice Springs 'try to develop funds of credit to counter the long-term uncertainties in their sources of livelihood by spending current surplus income on liquor for the general communities within which they live' (Ibid, p. 208). He concluded that liquor is a major form of what Bourdieu (1977: 181) calls 'symbolic capital':

Once one realizes that symbolic capital is always credit, in the west [sic] sense of the world, i.e., a sort of advance which the group alone can grant those who give it the best material and symbolic guarantees, it can be seen that the exhibition of symbolic capital (which is always very expensive in economic terms) is one of the mechanisms which (no doubt universally) make capital go to capital (Collman, 1979: 208).

### **Alcohol-Related Problems**

The sociocultural model which this study has adopted requires us to look beyond the practice of alcohol consumption, to the consequences of that practice. Just as a range of institutions may shape the patterns of consumption, these practices may, in turn, have consequences for the

institutions themselves and for linkages between them. Beyond the norms which surround drinking practices are a series of social consequences of alcohol consumption. These practices have consequences in spheres which are unrelated to those in which alcohol consumption occurs. These consequences may be direct and obvious or indirect and less obvious. They may affect the individual, the social networks into which they are connected and the state in which they reside in different ways.

The problem lies in establishing the nature of linkages between alcohol and the social problems. In their authoritative book, *Alcohol Policy and the Public Good*, Edwards et al., (1995) argued that the phrases 'alcohol problem' or 'alcohol-related problem' contain an assumption of causality within which lurk complexities (1994: 4-5). The authors, for example, identified problems experienced by the individual drinker under separate headings relating to physical, psychological, and social domains. As well as the more classic alcohol-related physical pathologies often listed in textbooks, the authors stressed the importance of the extent and diversity of acute adverse consequences of drinking. These include: 'trauma resulting from road traffic and other types of alcohol-related accidents; injuries from fights; acute medical complications (acute pancreatitis or alcoholic hepatitis, for instance) and so on' (Edwards et al., 1995: 6).

### ***Drinking as a Social Problem***

Edwards et al, (1995) also noted that there are many social problems resulting from drinking and include: failure in work performance, absenteeism, dismissal, unemployment, and accidents in the workplace (1995: 7). Moreover, Edwards and colleagues state that drinking can also result in debt, housing problems, or extreme destitution (Ibid, p. 7).

Bacon (1976a) has argued that research interest in drinking behaviour 'has been largely dominated by a social-problem orientation and has focused mainly on deviant aspects of drinking' (1976a: 2). Bacon also noted that 'interest has concentrated on drunkenness rather than drinking, and drinking as deviance rather than drinking as social behaviour' (Ibid, p. 3). Furthermore, according to this contention, 'alcohol is directly or indirectly



implicated in various types of offending, including crimes of violence, and drink driving (Ibid, p. 7).

In Australia, the 'social problem' orientation, according to Collmann had dominated the analysis of drinking among Aboriginal people in the 1970s.

In particular, the use and alleged abuse of liquor has been viewed as a symptom of the 'breakdown of traditional society'. According to this view, Aboriginal drinkers selfishly gratify themselves at the expense of meeting their obligations to their families and the wider community. As a result, the physical health of individuals deteriorates, and the community as a whole becomes disorganized (Collmann, 1979: 208).

Margaret Sargent (1976), focused on 'alcoholism' as a social problem when formulating her 'Theory of Drinking' framework. According to Sargent, 'one way of achieving this is to regard alcoholism as deviance or as an aspect of social disorganization' (1976: 342-343). Sargent distinguished between the 'alcoholic' and the 'heavy drinker' by applying the characteristics of high consumption; deviant behaviour; and labelling, to distinguish the two. Behaviour which lies outside the range of socially acceptable behaviour in a given group of society may be said to be deviant, and may be regarded as breaking the unwritten rules, that is, not conforming to the social norms (Ibid, p. 343).

### ***A Sociological Conception of 'Alcoholism'***

In her sociological explanation of alcoholism as an alternative viewpoint to the illness conception, Sargent (1973) argued that:

... alcoholism is a type of behaviour involving alcohol consumption in excess of the average range, and deviant behaviour, that is non-conformity to certain group norms especially the non-fulfilment of social roles. This way of life is perceived by members of the society as constituting a social problem implying a need for intervention, and is labelled 'alcoholic'. In many cases, at the same time as a person is thus labelled, he is rejected by employer or family, or segregated in hospital or gaol, and he is thus confirmed in the deviant role (Sargent, 1973: 32).

Sargent contended that the sociological model seems to be more workable than the medical model whether in treatment, research, education, or social

policy. She conceded, however, that the aetiology of alcoholism does not necessarily include sociological factors only, acknowledging that psychological are also essential to her sociological conception (1973, p. 29).

Not everyone however, has focused on problematic aspects of drinking. Brissett (1978), for example, rejected the presumption that heavy drinking is problematic. Brissett argued that heavy drinking can be, in many ways, functional for the drinker and 'there are a number of social-psychological benefits, over and above the pharmacological effects, that make heavy drinking a more positive experience than is usually thought' (1978: 13-14). Brissett further argued that

... we are not asserting that heavy drinking is some sort of individual panacea to this absurd world in which we live. In fact, on a larger societal level, it may well be that the prevalence of heavy drinking mitigates any serious attempts at significant social change. In this sense, heavy drinking can be viewed as a crutch of the status quo. It enables people to 'put up' with some rather dehumanizing and objectionable conditions in society (Brissett, 1978: 13-14).

### ***Social and Cultural Factors***

In an early international overview of social and cultural factors in drinking patterns, Pittman (1967) argued that some social scientists had until recently, 'ignored the importance of drinking practices and behaviours ... for understanding the social and cultural context in which drinking pathologies develop' (1967: 3).

Bunzel's (1940) well-known study of the role of alcohol in two Mexican cultures 'that seeks to explain why people in a particular culture drink and comport themselves in a particular way' (cited in Marshall, 1976: 3), argued that 'the use of alcohol can only be understood in the total configuration of unique cultures' (Lemert, 1956: 311).

### ***Drinking as Deviant Behaviour***

Merton (1976) referred to deviant behaviour as a social problem which involves significant departures from norms socially assigned to various statuses and roles: 'What constitutes deviant behavior in any one case is not

unequivocally clear for, as we have repeatedly noted, people sometimes differ widely on social norms' (1976: 28).

Merton further contended that 'deviant behavior' is a morally neutral term. He argues that in order for 'deviant behavior to remain a useful concept rather than merely a moralizing phrase', there must be a distinction between two major kinds of deviant behaviour: 'nonconforming behaviour' and 'aberrant behaviour'.<sup>19</sup> Merton also noted that, whereas nonconformers challenge the legitimacy of the norms they violate, and aim to change them, aberrants try to hide their violations, and wish merely to escape the sanctions rather than to change the rules (1976: 29-30).

Durkheim's more general functional analysis suggests that 'deviance fulfils a number of important functions, one of which is to bring about change: today's deviants are signs of tomorrow's world' (*Oxford Dictionary of Sociology: 1994: 157*). But Durkheim also notes that: 'This is not true of all deviance – some is apologetic and fits readily into the existing social order. But deviance that is radical, challenging, and threatening is often so precisely because it suggests a different vision of the social world' (*Ibid*, p. 157).

For Parsons, one source of deviant behaviour in society will derive from the fact that socialization at one stage of the life cycle probably sometimes positively unfits the person for the roles he must assume in a later stage (Holton & Turner, 1986: 18). However, deviance may also result in situations in which norms relating to particular forms of activity are unclear to those who are required to abide by them. The lack of clarity may result in circumstances in which, for instance, a migrant is unaware of the accepted patterns of alcohol consumption in the society in which they have settled. In this case, deviance may be a temporary phenomenon, and, as local norms become apparent, through some form of secondary socialization, the migrant's

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<sup>19</sup> Merton distinguishes nonconforming behaviour from aberrant behaviour. 'Nonconformers are public dissenters who challenge the legitimacy of the norms they violate and aim to change them, and are generally acknowledged as having disinterested, valued purposes; they appeal to the society's highest values rather than its particular rules. Aberrants try to hide their violations, acknowledge that they are wrong, and wish merely to escape the sanctions rather than to change the rules. In contrast to nonconformers, they are identified by most people, if not by the law, as self-interested and they are concerned only with satisfying their private cravings' (1976: 42).

behaviour may change to conform to local norms. In other cases, however, the norms and practices themselves may be changing and 'deviance' may be in part a consequence of instability of the norms themselves, a condition referred to as anomie.

### ***Deviance and Anomie***

Stephen Pfohl (1994) identified two related versions of the anomie perspective. He referred to one version as that of Durkheim's who viewed deviance 'as a state of normlessness in which nobody knows the rules' (1994: 252). The other version of anomie theory is what Pfohl defined as 'a discrepancy between socially engendered goals and the availability of legitimate means to achieve such goals' (Ibid, p. 252). This definition of anomie has some similarities to what Dressler (1990) referred to as 'lifestyle incongruity'. The concept of lifestyle incongruity, according to Dressler is the discrepancy between an individual's attempt to live a modern lifestyle and the actual availability of economic resources to support such a lifestyle.<sup>20</sup>

Another explanation of deviance is that promoted by Albert Cohen (1968), who referred to deviance as a 'very mixed bag' because of the manifold varieties of behaviours that violate widely accepted rules of conduct. From this point of view, deviance includes illegal use of violence, indulgence in a variety of distinct vices, illegal or merely unethical conduct, among others.

### ***Deviance as Normal***

But some writers have referred to deviance as normal. Pfohl (1994), for example, has argued that 'the functionalist perspective on deviance is unique in that it emphasizes the positive contributions of deviance' (1994: 223). According to this contention, something 'is defined as functional if it has positive consequences for the organization of society as a whole'. If on the other hand the consequences are negative then it is 'dysfunctional' (Ibid, p.

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<sup>20</sup> Dressler suggests that as societies change, higher social status comes to be associated with the ownership of material goods (e.g., automobiles, televisions, home furnishings, refrigerators) and the adoption of cosmopolitan behaviours associated with the European and North American middle classes. However, even a rapidly expanding developing economy cannot meet the needs or desires of all individuals for upward mobility. Consequently, some individuals will be less successful than others in adopting a modern lifestyle with limited economic resources (Dressler, 1990).

223). Pfohl also noted that Durkheim and other functionalists have argued that 'deviance contributes to social order in several ways: by setting moral boundaries, strengthening ingroup solidarity, allowing for adaptive innovation, and reducing internal societal tensions' (Ibid, 224).

### ***Deviance as Social Pathology***

As early as the middle of the nineteenth century, deviance was described as a type of social pathology by Auguste Comte, and later by some social Darwinists, for example, Rosenberg, Stebbins & Turowetz, (1982). These authors defined deviance as 'individual maladjustment, a pathological response to the stresses of urban living in industrial society (Rosenberg, Stebbins & Turowetz, 1982: 7). According to Rosenberg and colleagues, sociologists later added their own propositions to this model, defining deviance as 'a departure from the norms of an organized society, where organization rests on a consensus among its middle class on central values. Deviance is personal disorganization in this organized community, the remedy for which is change of the offending person' (Rosenberg, Stebbins & Turowetz, 1982: 7).

### ***Social Disorganization***

Merton referred to social disorganization as 'the whole composite of defects in the operation of a social system ... It can be thought of as the composite resultant of various social dysfunctions' (1976: 37) which he defined a social dysfunction as 'any process that undermines the stability or survival of a social system (Merton, 1976: 37). Several studies have identified alcohol consumption as a contributing factor in the social disorganization of some societies. In some cases, it is not simply the availability, but a change in the availability and type of alcohol, which produces disorganisation.

In an historical treatment of the effect of acculturation on alcohol use among the Bantu tribes of Southern Africa, Bertram Hutchinson (1979) commented on the traditional importance and integrated use of beer among the Bantu peoples until the intrusion of Europeans. Hutchinson argued that convivial beer drinking among the Bantu people was usually a group activity, and beer consumption took place frequently. It played a central part in the cementing

of old and the creation of new friendships, and in reinforcing the ties which linked kinsmen together. 'Such everyday conviviality, while it had important social functions, had no ritual meaning. Nevertheless, the conduct of the beer drink was strictly regulated. ... The beer drink gave refinement to daily life, and a man anticipated with pleasure the opportunity which marriage would give him of offering this hospitality to his relatives and friends' (1979: 329-330).

Hutchinson also noted that at all times of its consumption, beer had a significance beyond that of mere personal indulgence. He argued that 'Bantu traditional culture illustrated strikingly how alcohol may be made subservient to the strengthening, rather than the weakening of group cohesion' (1979: 330). Moreover, he noted that social control of personal behaviour during the consumption of alcoholic liquors was exercised by society in three ways: 'through the subconscious inhibitions implanted in childhood; by the requirement that drinking take place in company and not alone; and by the linking of alcoholic beverages with ritual observances' (1979: 339). Hutchinson added that 'since beer was the only alcoholic liquor beverage with which they were familiar, to control its use was to control all the circumstances in which, traditionally, alcohol could be consumed' (Ibid, p. 339).

Since contact with Europeans in southern Africa, however, the equilibrium of traditional Bantu society, according to Hutchinson, was disturbed by 'changing the manner in which beer was produced and consumed, and by introducing wine and ardent spirits hitherto unknown to the Bantu people, and to whose unfamiliar potency they fell victim' (1979: 330).

### ***Alcohol and Social Control***

Parsons (1968) has posited that social control is 'the general process by which such discrepancies between the expectation system and actual behaviour are minimized' (1968: 353). James Coleman (1991) noted that much of social theory is concerned with social control, and much of the theoretical work on social control is concerned with those control mechanisms characteristic of primordial social organization.

Alcohol use can undermine established forms of social control by 'freeing' people to challenge social norms in various contexts. The role of alcohol in undermining established forms of social control can be readily seen in societies in which alcohol becomes available, and in which it is possible to track connections between increasing alcohol use, the transformation of norms and challenges to social control. Indeed, this is the case in the Pacific in which the incorporation of alcohol into daily life has resulted in the transformation of both social norms and social control. Concern with the effects of alcohol use on social order can, in turn, lead societies to control the availability and use of alcohol to protect social institutions and to minimize the costs of intoxication and drunkenness. The purpose and style of control may vary from one society to another.

Lemert (1962), for example, put forward four models of control for alcohol: prohibitory, educational, regulatory, and the substitution of functional equivalents (1962: 560-567). Others have recognized that the control of alcohol use, especially in complex societies, became a huge burden on states' resources, to the extent that in some Western societies, a variety of social movements had arisen to cope with the economic, social, psychological, and physical costs of heavy alcohol consumption (Pittman & Snyder, 1962; Pittman, 1967). In the United States, for example, Gusfield (1962) noted that organized efforts to control and limit drinking have been persistent since the nineteenth century (1962: 102).

Generally, the literature shows that societies with heavy alcohol consumption and drunkenness require greater measures of social control of drunkenness and alcoholism than societies with moderate drinking patterns. One of the most cited examples of sobriety and low rates of alcoholism and other drinking pathologies is among US Jews despite high alcohol consumption and widespread drinking among American Jewish communities (Bales, 1944; Snyder, 1962).

In the Samoan village setting, alcohol control becomes significant when the village's organization and cohesion are disturbed by drinking and

drunkenness. In *Sala'ilua*, Brad Shore (1982) examined 'the functional organization of Sala'ilua and the system of regulations and activities through which village groups exert influence over the lives of the villagers' (1982: 99). Shore argued that the village organization of Salailua is 'highly structured and that lines of authority are clearly drawn for the kinds of joint activity of villagers.

There are within the village two fundamental and irreducible sources of authority. One is the *matai* council; the other is the church and pastor. Normally, the pastors work closely with village chiefs to run the village, and cooperate in supporting each other's authority in various village activities. ... Sometimes chiefs and pastors may conflict directly, when a pastor seeks to exert his considerable influence in political dispute or intervene where a chief would normally have jurisdiction (Shore, 1982: 107).

Over twenty years have elapsed since Shore outlined this clear structure. In that time, alcohol has become more widely available and in chapter 6, I discuss the ways in which these Samoan village institutions of social control have been influenced by increasing alcohol consumption.

### ***Socialization as a Social Process***

Howard Blane (1976), referred to socialization in its most general sense as 'those psychological and social processes whereby individuals from early infancy onward become fully functioning and accepted members of their society; learning is postulated as the basic process underlying socialization' (1976: 524).

Similarly, Merton (1976) referred to socialization as 'the acquisition of the attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge needed to fulfil social roles or to modify them effectively' (1976: 27). Merton also noted that the socialization process is 'a prominent source of disorganization'. He argued that 'rapid social mobility for the individual or rapid social change in the social system often occur without adequate resocialization of individuals involved in these processes' (Ibid, p. 27). According to this perspective, people simply do not know how to behave in their newly acquired statuses or in radically changed social situations. For Berger and Luckman (1966), there are two types of socialization: primary socialization which involves learning sequences that



are socially defined; and secondary socialization which is 'the internalization of institution-based 'sub-worlds' (1966: 154-159). These authors argue that: 'Socialization is never total and never finished' (1966: 157).

Socialisation is particularly relevant to the study of alcohol use because amongst the attitudes and beliefs which are internalised are a series which relate to the nature of alcohol, its role and consequences in social life, norms relating to consumption and behaviour. MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969), for instance, have argued that drunkenness in some societies 'takes on the flavour of "time out" from many of the otherwise imperative demands of everyday life'. As such, the authors concluded that drunken comportment is an essentially *learned* affair (MacAndrew & Edgerton, 1969: 86-88). Over the course of socialization, people learn about drunkenness what their society "knows" about drunkenness; and, accepting and acting upon the understandings thus imparted to them, they become the living confirmation of their society's teachings (MacAndrew & Edgerton, 1969: 88).

At the centre of this thesis is the question of whether socialisation of Samoans born and raised in Samoa and New Zealand respectively reflects the norms relating to alcohol in each of those societies. Does socialisation 'fix' beliefs about and attitudes to alcohol, or does some form of re-socialization occur when people move from one society to another?

### ***Cross-Cultural Research on Drunkenness***

Peter Field (1962) contends that the cross-cultural method of research has several important potential advantages for extending our knowledge of drinking behaviour (1962: 48). Horton's (1943) classic study which examined 'the correlation of diverse variables in large samples of societies throughout time and space' (Heath, 1991: 133), concluded that 'the primary function of alcoholic beverages in all societies is the reduction of anxiety' (Horton, 1943; Field, 1962; Marshall, 1979b; Heath, 1991). Horton's study presented an anxiety theory of drunkenness which according to Field, 'proposed that a major factor determining the degree of drunkenness in a society is the level of anxiety or fear among the individual members' (Field, 1962: 49).

In a re-examination of Horton's cross-cultural study of the functions of alcohol in primitive tribes, Field (1962) asserted that the 'hallmark of this approach was the explanation of complex socio-cultural phenomena in terms of individual drives - especially frustration or anxiety' (ibid, p. 49). His research is, however, one of the very few reporting an important relation of any kind between the level of anxiety in a society and any aspect of alcohol use. Indeed, it is the only social research cited in recent review of the most important research evidence that alcohol reduces fear (ibid, p. 49). Field's study entitled *A New Cross-Cultural Study of Drunkenness*, critiqued Horton's method and suggested that the 'relation between drunkenness and acculturation indicates an underlying process of loosening of a traditional social organization, not increased anxiety (1962: 58).

### **Functions of Drinking**

The literature shows a range of functions which alcohol serves in individual's lives and in various cultures. Some of the earlier studies on alcohol which focused on 'primitive' cultures emphasized, among other functions the role of alcohol in the reduction of anxiety Bunzel (1940), Horton (1943), Bales (1945), Lemert (1954), Heath (1958), Sangree (1962). Later studies have expanded the range of functions somewhat.

David Pittman (1967) has pointed out two basic categories within which social scientists have classified the functions of drinking. The first is the Functional School's categorization as: (a) integrative for the individual and the social system; (b) anxiety-reducing, particularly for the individual; and (c) disintegrative for the social system and the individual. The second category is that advanced by Bales (1962) in which alcoholic beverages can serve one or more functions for cultural groups such as: (1) religious; (2) ceremonial; (3) hedonistic, and (4) utilitarian.

While a number of scientific investigations implicitly assume 'that all the effects of drinking in a society serve to increase disorganization', Sargent (1973) contends that alcohol can play a 'eufunctional' part in promoting group cohesion and facilitating social interaction (1973: 34). Similarly, Heath notes

that one of the most frequently cited function of alcohol consumption is its important value of promoting social cohesion or conviviality or what he refers to as 'symbolizing social unity' (Ibid, p. 35).

The function of alcohol use in creating new social groups is one of the more commonly cited reasons why people in different societies drink. Sargent (1973) cites Brunn in *Drinking Practices and Their Social Functions*, that

Drinking, among other things, makes the process of getting acquainted with people easier, owing to the free flow of information occasioned by drinking. It also seems clear that drinking facilitates communication between members of different statuses within the same social system, which in term strengthens informal norms, relaxes the rigours of bureaucracy, and contributes to the smooth functioning of a social system (Brunn, p. 263) cited in Sargent, 1973: 34.

The functions of alcohol use in reducing anxiety, getting people acquainted and promoting conviviality are also common among people in Oceania. The Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research's (IASER) Alcohol Research Project (Marshall 1982), noted that '[p]urchasing and consumption of alcohol - especially beer – have become widespread symbols of sophistication and modernity in contemporary Papua New Guinea' which is part of 'alcohol's appeal as an item of exchange' (1982: 12). Furthermore, alcohol has been perceived 'as an escape from the boredom that characterizes life in the village today compared with the excitements of living there in the past' (Walter, 1982: 435). But some authors (Schwartz and Romanucci-Ross 1979; Walter, 1982) have argued that the function of alcohol today is much more than this. As Walter (1982) argues, 'It is an escape not simply from ennui but from social anonymity. It provides the individual a temporary promotion to a new identity and status of significance and importance (self-perceived though it may be)' (1982: 435). Furthermore, Walter notes that alcohol 'enables a catharsis, a letting off of steam, without disrupting the social structure' (Walter, 1982: 436).

This study explores the ways in which Samoans in Samoa and in New Zealand use alcohol. It will also explore the ways in which Samoans believe

alcohol use serves various 'individual' and 'societal' functions outlined above, and the ways in which these shape the ways various groups of Samoans use alcohol. These linkages are outlined and discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

### **Alcohol in Oceania**

During the past four decades, alcohol has increasingly found its way into the lives of indigenous peoples of Oceania. I alluded in Chapter 1 to Marshall's concern about the scarcity of information on alcohol studies in the Pacific region. In a 1976 review of alcohol and kava studies in Oceania, for example, Marshall noted that there had been 'very few investigations of drinking behaviour among Pacific islanders':

In reviewing this neglected aspect of social science research in the Pacific, it is hoped that the demonstration of how much is not known regarding the place of alcohol in the cultures of Oceania and in Pacific history will inspire others to gather data on these important subjects (Marshall, 1976: 103).

By 1987, more than ten years after making the above observations, Marshall was still lamenting the 'woefully limited and outdated' information on alcohol and drugs in the Pacific Islands (Marshall, 1987a). He also noted that only rarely have drugs in Oceania captured the attention of anthropologists. Marshall (1976), however, also acknowledged as an exception, the studies by Lemert, an American sociologist with established research interests in alcohol studies, setting out specifically to study alcohol and culture in the Pacific (1976: 104). In his study 'Pathological Drinking in Three Polynesian Societies' referred to earlier, Lemert developed a three-fold typological categorization of 'patterns of drinking associated with major cultural values, aspects of social structure, and historical circumstances in Polynesia' (1976: 106).

Whilst Marshall noted some limitations in Lemert's pioneering work<sup>21</sup> such as: (1) the inadequate length of time he spent in the three Polynesian

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<sup>21</sup> Marshall notes that Lemert 'spent approximately thirteen months in the Pacific during 1959-1960, nine of which were devoted to a study of interethnic differences in uses of alcohol among employees of eleven sugar plantations on the 'Big Island' of Hawaii. The

societies studied; (2) the 'crude categorizations' of drinking patterns in the societies investigated; and more importantly, (3) Lemert's lack of fluency in the local languages, he conceded that Lemert had gathered a valuable 'array of data upon which later workers can build' (Ibid, 1976: 108).

Marshall noted the need for further investigations of the 'very useful array of data' from the solid groundwork on drinking in Oceania laid out by Lemert. Marshall identified some matters which Lemert raised that should be investigated further including:

- the relation between patterns of kava drinking and patterns of alcohol consumption;
- the relation between colonially imposed prohibition restrictions and type of drinking;
- the implications of alcohol consumption for relations between the sexes and between members of the same sex;
- the relation between status rivalry, political factionalism, and drinking;
- the relation between participation in a wage-work economy and drinking behaviour;
- the association between drunkenness and criminal acts;
- the effects of mission policies on drinking patterns and frequencies;
- the association between cycles of work and play and drinking;
- the connection between diet and values on eating and obesity and absence of organic pathology deriving from excessive alcohol consumption (e.g. cirrhosis of the liver); and
- the role played by guilt in excessive alcohol consumption.

Marshall also argued that whilst there have been other studies on alcohol and drugs in Oceania during the past two decades, research on alcohol and other drugs in the region was needed to keep pace with rapidly changing realities. Unfortunately, with rare exceptions, this work has not been done for most locations and, sadly, Samoa is a typical case.

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remaining four months were spent travelling and gathering data on drinking behaviour in Western Samoa, the Society islands, and the Cook Islands.' This research, Marshall notes 'resulted in a paper on 'Drinking in Hawaiian plantation society' (Lemert 1964) and two other papers based on his four-month trip elsewhere in Polynesia (Lemert 1962, 1964).

## Drinking in Samoa

In his study of drinking pathology in Polynesia, Lemert stated that drinking in Samoa at the time of his study lacked all but the basic elements of patterning, was without ritual, and 'was seldom, if ever the basis of village- or district-wide festive behaviour'. Moreover, Lemert noted that 'Western Samoa most clearly exemplifies a Polynesian society in which the consequences of intoxication directly threaten or destroy cherished values which are central to *fa'asamoa*, the ' Samoan way'. Furthermore, he noted that the paramount chiefs and the Samoan Minister of Police at the time were concerned that 'drinking' was the most serious problem they had in Samoa at the time (1979: 203).

The literatures on alcohol and alcohol consumption suggest that the consequences of alcohol consumption are not usually disruptive for most persons in a society where members have had sufficient time to develop a widely shared set of beliefs and values pertaining to drinking and drunkenness. Marshall, (1979b), for example, has argued that 'peoples who have known alcoholic beverages for centuries ... have integrated these beverages into the fabric of their lives in nondisruptive and positive ways' (1979b: 452). Marshall further observed that 'social and physiological problems with alcohol are consequent on insufficient time to develop a widely shared set of assumptions about the place of alcohol in society' (Ibid, p. 453).

Marshall's observations are germane to the problems and experiences of Samoan people and alcohol consumption in Samoa. The very basic patterning which Lemert reported probably reflects the fact that for a long period, from the 1830s until Samoa's independence in 1962, the availability and consumption of alcohol in Samoa was severely constrained. Few Samoans had ready access to alcohol and there was neither opportunity nor motive to consider how it might be integrated into the fabric of Samoan social life. In fact, as this study will establish successive missionary and colonial administrations set out to actively discourage Samoans from integrating alcohol into their social fabric. As independence approached, the former Samoan Chief Justice, Marsack (1961) observed that Samoans were not yet educated in the drinking of alcohol. Marsack suggested that perhaps 'in time,

and after some distressing experiences' Samoans would acquire 'a safe and sound technique around alcohol' (1961: 169).

Some forty years after Lemert's study, alcohol is more widely available and is still a major social problem in Samoa which is implicated in most crimes reported to the Police. During my fieldwork in Samoa in 2001, the Commissioner of Police, stated that alcohol was the major contributing factor in traffic accidents, domestic disputes, and other serious crimes, including murder. The Commissioner also noted that alcohol, along with illicit drugs especially marijuana, were affecting the *mamalu* or integrity of the *fono a matai*, the council of chiefs in many Samoan villages.

Yet, despite the general concern about the level and impact of alcohol use on Samoan society, little is known about the patterns of alcohol consumption. There is little published research and apparently little unpublished research. This fact defined the first task of this project which was to gather data on the range of patterns of alcohol use in contemporary Samoa, and social norms and values which underpin them and on the ways in which Samoans see these patterns. This involves, in short, an account of the ways in which contemporary Samoan culture embodies alcohol use and the historical context in which these have formed. These provide a picture of the circumstances in which Samoans have come to think about and have learned to use alcohol at various times since contact. It concentrates on the most recent five decades of this process, since these have shaped the experiences and attitudes of both those in Samoa and those who have migrated. The following paragraphs seek to understand the relationship between Samoan culture and alcohol, and how alcohol use among Samoans have been embedded in Samoan culture in the islands and here in New Zealand.

### ***Samoan Culture***

Cultures comprise a worldview and an associated lifestyle. The worldview 'sets out' and 'explains' the nature of relationships between a range of individuals, groups and social and physical phenomena and prescribes

'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' forms of personal and group conduct all of which are reflected in adherents' lifestyles.

Worldviews 'set down' the place of alcohol in a society and when, where, how and who consumes it, in what quantities and within what limits. The uses of alcohol occur within cultural contexts which shape when, where, how much, by whom and with whom alcohol is consumed. Worldviews set down 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' forms of conduct and establish views on the consequences of alcohol consumption.

These cultural judgements on alcohol use and consumption will have a significant impact on patterns of consumption and in turn, on the incidence and prevalence of alcohol-related harm within populations. Any successful attempt to intervene in or to change patterns of alcohol consumption must understand which cultural values and norms influence the patterns if they are to successfully target change. Lemert's (1979) work on drinking by Samoans concluded that

... values are a crucial factor in understanding the forms, cultural integration, and pathology of drinking. It also argues that the study of values must be supplemented by study of organization and social control in order to determine which values and costs become dominant in a society or are brought to bear in drinking situations' (Lemert, 1979: 207).

However, Samoan culture is, like all cultures, changing and this study also seeks to establish how cultural change is transforming the perceptions of alcohol and its role in Samoan social life. It will do this by comparing understandings of, attitudes to and patterns of alcohol use in successive generations of Samoans to establish how these are changing and how trends in use might be expected to affect health status.

### ***Oceanic Migration and Alcohol Use***

Since Marshall (1976) advocated more research on alcohol's impact in Oceania, the parameters of the problem have expanded rapidly. As people from the islands of the Oceania region have increasingly settled around the Pacific rim, discussion of alcohol and drug use in Oceania needs to cover



also the use of these substances in these expatriate communities. The nature of connections between 'home' and 'expatriate' communities are such that practices in each are rapidly transferred to the other as people move frequently and regularly between the various nodes in these increasingly transnational societies. Amongst the practices which are transferred and transplanted are those relating to alcohol consumption, and to understand what is happening within Oceania, a study must also understand what is happening in expatriate communities on the rim and how these are linked.

So how do the social and economic circumstances in various places influence the ways in which the bearers of a culture refract that culture? More specifically how do alcohol use patterns differ in 'home' communities and those that settle abroad? In his study of the Hmong Drinking Patterns in the United States, Joseph Westermeyer (1985) noted that while a small literature had begun to document the changes in drinking practices that occur in association with acculturation, one of the questions which remained unanswered was: What occurs to the drinking patterns of those who migrate to a markedly different sociocultural milieu? Westermeyer also noted that the Hmong drinking patterns in Laos 'had been stable and highly uniform' and had always occurred in a social context. In migrating to the United States, however, 'they underwent major shifts in work, family relationships, occupation, social status, and (for most) religious affiliation' (1985: 374). He argued that in the United States, the former social imperative for the Hmong to drink has weakened considerably, and their previous highly uniform drinking patterns have given way to new drinking patterns, as well as characteristics of abstainers and drinkers (1985: 376).

### ***Drinking in New Zealand***

Pacific migrants underwent similarly significant transitions from close, rural village societies in which norms and values were clearly articulated, to larger, more anonymous, urban industrial cities in which the norms and values were less obvious and less clearly articulated. In those circumstances, one might have expected a similar transition from clearly defined patterns of alcohol use to more diverse patterns which reflected the new social and economic milieux.

A study of alcohol consumption among different ethnic groups in New Zealand by Graves and his colleagues (1979b) which included groups of Pacific islanders, including Samoans, noted that the findings of a Royal Commission Report on the Sale of Liquor in New Zealand,<sup>22</sup> reflected a 'widespread stereotype among white New Zealanders that Polynesians can't hold their liquor' (1974: 1). The Commission Report stated that:

The strong community ties of their home environment are lacking in New Zealand and drinking on licensed premises is the social environment to which they turn. The relatively higher incomes they earn in New Zealand, too, often are spent in hotel bars with resulting intemperance and other social problems arising (NZ Royal Commission on Liquor, 1974: 58).

Graves et al. (1979b) also contended that:

This stereotype, an echo of the North American 'firewater myths' (Leland 1976) where another British conquest of indigenous hunters and gatherers took place, has similarly complex historical, social and psychological roots. Its usual justification, however, based on casual observations of Polynesian public drinking behaviour: incidents of drunken violence by Polynesians have been seized on by press and politicians where expressing a highly emotional concern about the future of this rapidly growing segment of New Zealand's population (Graves et al. 1979b: 1).

In conclusion, Graves et al. (1979a) found that:

... the more moderate levels of alcohol consumption observed among European drinkers are not the result of moral virtue, but of learned patterns of interpersonal behaviour which limit their participation in group drinking, and thus limit as well the influence of various drinking rituals which govern the behaviour of **all** drinkers who participate in such groups, regardless of their ethnic background (Graves et al. 1979b: i).

But while evidence, like that of Graves and colleagues, suggests that Samoan drinking patterns may well change in migrant settings, they do not all change in the same direction. This study will show that a range of patterns emerges among Samoan migrants and raises the more general question of why some Samoan people drink and others do not. This suggests that it is

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<sup>22</sup> Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry, *The Sale of Liquor in New Zealand, 1974*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1974; p. 58.

not the norms of New Zealand society alone which shape the emerging patterns, which raises the question of how is alcohol consumption perceived within *fa'asamoa*? It may be that the emerging patterns form at the intersection of New Zealand and Samoan societies' values and norms and reflect various combinations of these influences.

### ***The Possibilities of Comparison***

With information on the drinking patterns which exist in contemporary Samoa, and those which develop in Samoan communities abroad, it is then important to identify factors which may explain the range of patterns that are found within Samoa and among Samoans abroad.

Some of this comparative work has already been done. An ALAC-funded pilot study that explored drinking behaviours and awareness of the effect of alcohol on health among some Samoan people in Auckland (Lima, 2000), showed that there are both differences and similarities in the drinking behaviours of New-Zealand-born and Samoan-born male drinkers. Samoan men's drinking behaviours differed in terms of where the individuals or groups have been socialised, and how and when they had acquired their experiences of alcohol. The ALAC pilot study data also indicated a difference in the level of awareness about the effect of alcohol on health between Samoan males and females. There was a general perception that alcohol itself was not bad, but that it was the ways individuals used alcohol which made it bad. This perception was common amongst both males and females, older and younger, and New Zealand-born and Samoan-born participants. The pilot study provided a tantalising glimpse into the variety of perceptions among Samoans and suggested some of the variables which may have produced it. This thesis sets out to document and explore both the observed variety, and some of the variables, which seem to be associated with it in greater detail.

### ***Alcohol in a Samoan Health Context***

Traditionally, health care in Samoa was the responsibility of members of the extended family and traditional healers. Macpherson and Macpherson (1990) have suggested that illnesses which existed among Samoans in earlier times,

at least until contact with Europeans, were held to be caused by spirits. Illness, according to the Macphersons, was thought to occur when one or more cultural norms which underpin the traditional and natural lifestyles of Samoans are violated. More recently the health beliefs and practices of Samoan people living in Samoa and abroad, and the values underpinning them, coexist alongside Western scientific medicine in response to illness. In terms of contemporary use of alcohol, the Macphersons (1990) observed that:

The basis of the concern with liquor is that it leads people to say and do things, which disturb social relations. People who become drunk go beyond acceptable bounds and cause damage to both property and relationships, which take some time to repair. Drunkenness may cause varying degrees of tension among people who may be only indirectly involved (Macpherson and Macpherson, 1990: 153 ).

### ***Alcoholic Beverage called 'Ava***

Evidence that liquor or alcoholic beverage wasn't available in Samoa until its introduction by Europeans, offered in the preceding chapter, could be best illustrated by the lack of a Samoan term for alcoholic liquor when it was introduced to the islands. However, a beverage known as 'ava, widely known in the Pacific as kava, was available and was, in fact, thoroughly integrated into Samoan social ritual. When liquor was introduced to the archipelago, the Samoans called it 'ava which suggested that the two beverages were seen by Samoans to be related. I turn now to a brief discussion of the relationship between liquor and 'ava, focusing on the Samoan terms 'ava *papalagi*, *ava malosi* or 'ava 'o'ona which Samoans use to refer to alcoholic liquor. Liquor or alcoholic beverages are generally referred to in Samoan by the generic term 'ava 'o'ona (poisonous kava), 'ava *malosi* (powerful kava), or 'ava *papalagi* (Europeans' kava). However, the distinction between the two forms of beverage is clear from the use of a range of other terms which are routinely used to distinguish between the ceremonial beverage and the more recently introduced forms of alcohol.

At the time of Lemert's (1979) study liquor was referred to by some Samoans as '*mea miti*' or something to sip, and was used to induce workers to carry out tasks of clearing and planting in small plantations. This practice of offering alcoholic beverages especially *fa'amafu*, home-brewed beer, to

recruit workers for various tasks has persisted although the use of *'fagu malosi'*, powerful bottle, a Samoan term for hard liquor such as whisky, rum, gin, or vodka which are relatively cheaper and widely available in neighbouring American Samoa, has become a more common means of recruiting labour for certain kinds of work in Western Samoa.

Alcoholic beverages have yet to be accorded a formal name although all the above terms are used by Samoans to refer to alcoholic liquor. *Pia* or beer has often been used as a generic term to refer to alcoholic beverages, whether it is beer or liquor.<sup>23</sup> Some of those who consume alcoholic liquor would sometimes refer to 'having a drink' as *fa'amalosi tino*, to strengthen the body, or just *inuga*, a drinking session. It is only when a question is asked what they were drinking, would there be an explanation of what type of 'drink' was drunk.

Some participants in this study suggested that the word 'ava was used to refer to alcoholic beverages because there was no Samoan word for alcohol or alcoholic liquor when it was introduced by Europeans, Samoans at the time may have been inclined to refer to it as 'ava because those who drank it, primarily European settlers, may have come together for its consumption, as Samoans did when 'ava was consumed. In the absence of a Samoan term for the newly introduced drink, therefore, some participants suggested that Samoan culture - traditionally a culture with elements of respect and dignity - may have equated the Europeans 'drink' with the Samoan 'ava, hence the reference to it as *'ava a papalagi*, or white man's 'ava.

Gilson's (1970) observation that the Samoans preserved their dignity around alcohol could be interpreted as a direct comparison to resident Europeans' deplorable attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol as discussed previously.

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<sup>23</sup> In June 2003, a Samoan Draft of ALAC's Guidelines for the Safe Use of Alcohol was workshopped in Auckland. One of the more noticeable features of the draft is the use of the term 'Pia' a literal Samoanized translation of beer, as the generic term to refer to alcohol, whether beer or hard liquor. This is quite a telling example of the lack of a Samoan term for alcohol after all these years since its introduction into Samoa by Europeans. This lack of a Samoan term for alcohol, however, is not totally surprising because in other Pacific cultures, like that of the Koragur Village, in the East Sepik Province, of Papua New Guinea, for example, villagers 'often refer to both beer and hard liquor as *rian*, the vernacular term for water' (Smith, 1982: 276).

His reference to alcoholic liquor as the *'ava papalagi*, the white man's kava, suggests that was the name Samoans gave for liquor at the time of Gilson's own study. Other terms such as *'ava 'o'ona*, or poisonous kava, would have derived from public announcements by the Director of Health during the time of New Zealand administration 'that alcohol was a poison, and therefore, was not an aid to good health' (Marsack 1961: 164). Further discussion of the significance of this 'naming' and of the lack of a term for liquor in Samoa, is provided in Chapter 6.

### ***The Availability of Liquor***

During the past three decades or so, visitors to Samoa would have witnessed the increasingly easy accessibility of alcoholic beverages, and the pervasiveness of its consumption throughout the islands of Samoa. Yet until the early 1960s, Samoan 'natives' weren't even allowed alcoholic liquor in their possession let alone consume it. Whilst it is commonly accepted that liquor has found a place within the social life of Samoans and most other Pacific Island cultures in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 1996), there has been little systematic research into either the changes or their social consequences. Despite major changes in the manufacture, distribution, availability and use of liquor in Samoan society, there is not a lot of published information on the social history of alcohol in Samoan society. This proved a major problem since this thesis required information on historical patterns of availability and use, as a platform for the discussion of more recent changes. The discovery of the paucity of material meant that this thesis has had to document the social history of alcohol and alcohol consumption, and to explore the connections between this transformation and the emergence of alcohol as 'social problem'<sup>24</sup> among Polynesians both in the islands and in Samoan migrant enclaves which have formed in metropolitan societies

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has examined a range of available theoretical approaches and models which have been employed in the study of the central concepts of

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<sup>24</sup> Jamrozki and Nocella (1998) see social problems as an integral part of social life. 'The term 'social problem' applies to social conditions, processes, societal arrangements, or attitudes that are commonly perceived to be undesirable, negative, and threatening certain values or interests such as social cohesion, maintenance of law and order, moral standards, stability of social institutions, economic prosperity or individual freedom' (1996:1).

alcohol, culture and health. It has highlighted a sociocultural perspective, derived from functionalist theory, and has argued that despite critiques, it has proven valuable in leading us to look for linkages between a wide range of social institutions and phenomena which have been shown to have been connected with both the consumption of alcohol and the consequences of its use.

This adoption of this model led into voluminous literature on alcohol studies and the frameworks used by theorists from various disciplines in the study of alcohol, culture and health. The disparate disciplinary origins of the material reviewed in the chapter has made it impossible to integrate all of this material into a single, unified model and indeed, given the breadth of ideas canvassed, this is not surprising. This review has, however, provided a wide range of conceptual, terminological and methodological 'tools' which have been used in sociocultural studies of alcohol use and which are available for this project.

The chapter also examined alcohol, culture, and health discourses, and outlined the function of alcohol and drinking in society in general and more specifically in societies in Oceania generally, and in Samoan society in particular. It has argued that as the societies of Oceania become increasingly 'transnational', and Samoan society in particular, as a result of migration and settlement, an understanding of what is happening in Oceania depends increasingly on an awareness of what is happening in expatriate enclaves beyond Oceania's traditional boundaries. The function of alcohol within Samoan social life and the concomitant social and health problems were also highlighted. This summary has shown also that alcohol has established its place in Samoan society within a relatively short time. An understanding of alcohol's place in contemporary Samoan society depends, in turn, on an understanding of the circumstances of its introduction to Samoa by Europeans in the nineteenth century. This provides a backdrop for the analysis of the empirical data from the fieldwork data chapters to follow.

## Chapter Three

### **METHODOLOGY**

*... all empirical researchers should be sensitive to theoretical debates, just as theoreticians should be sensitive to the problems of empirical research (Giddens, 1996: 67).*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the approaches utilized in this study. Firstly, it examines qualitative interviewing as the main approach to data collection, identifies other methods used, and methods which would have been appropriate, and which I had intended to use in this study. I argue that 'triangulation', the use of more than one research strategy, can usefully be used to conduct research among Pacific people. Secondly, I outline the rationale for adapting an intra-cultural approach, in which data about alcohol and alcohol consumption in a particular ethnic group were collected from three different research sites for this study. Thirdly, I discuss the rationale for selecting the variables of age, gender, place of birth and socialization, and religious affiliation, to select participants for this research. Fourthly, I draw attention to some of the methodological issues and challenges often encountered when researching among Pacific people, and highlight some ethical and methodological difficulties faced by some indigenous researchers doing fieldwork amongst their own people. I argue that Pacific people's values in terms of their languages and traditional customs and practices, for instance, should be paramount when planning and implementing research among Pacific population groups. Finally, I argue for the use of secondary data for research, especially in constructing historical accounts where crucial information is not available from primary sources. The value of this approach is evident in the history of alcohol in Samoa which is the focus of the next chapter.

#### **Qualitative Interviewing**

Fontana and Frey (2000) have argued that interviewing 'is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human



beings' (2000: 645). Interviewing as a means to acquire information is so extensively used in the United States today that Atkinson and Silverman have referred to the United States as 'the interview society' (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997). Furthermore, Holstein and Gubrium (1995), have contended that the interview is no longer limited to use by social science researchers or police detectives; it is a 'universal mode of systematic inquiry' (cited in Fontana & Frey, 2000: 646).

The study uses a qualitative methodological approach, utilizing qualitative interviewing as the main method of gathering data and various other methods to supplement the data. Qualitative interviewing described by Burgess (1991) as 'conversations with a purpose' usually refer to in-depth semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing. Qualitative interviewing has been widely used as the main method for data gathering (Mason 1996; Gaskell 2000). Rubin and Rubin (1995), state that qualitative interviewing 'is a way of uncovering and exploring the meanings that underpin people's lives, routines, behaviours, feelings etc' (cited in Arksey & Knight, 1999: 32). As well, Arksey and Knight argue that interviews, especially qualitative interviews, 'allow for understanding and meanings to be explored in depth' (1999: 32).

### ***Why Interviews?***

Qualitative interviewing was deemed appropriate as the main method for gathering data for a variety of reasons. Initially, I had considered using focus groups as the main method of data collection, to be supplemented by key informant interviews. I had used focus groups previously to gather data for a pilot study which had explored the attitudes of some Samoan people in Auckland towards alcohol consumption, and the level of awareness of the effect of alcohol on their health and wellbeing. The three focus groups had included: a mixed tertiary students' group; a Samoan Church women's group; and a traditional Samoan village men's group. The data gathered for that pilot study were rich and diverse. The personal experiences shared within the focus group setting were surprisingly frank, somewhat novel, and also entertaining. But organizing those three focus groups was a challenging and onerous task, and this and other experiences from the groups in that earlier study persuaded me towards face-to-face interviews.

In the earlier project, some discussions were dominated by one or two individuals in the group while some shy individuals tended to be inconspicuous in group interaction and did not contribute much to the discussion. Some ethical challenges in terms of gaining consent; and having to postpone the discussions once or twice because of people's unavailability at agreed times made focus groups a time-consuming exercise. Whilst I agree with Goss and Leinbach (1996), that focus groups provide the opportunity for participants 'to be valued as experts, and to be given the chance to work collaboratively with researchers (1996: 115-123), I am also mindful of the sensitive nature of the topic, and that the group setting may have discouraged some potential participants from participating fully and truthfully in these settings. These factors contributed to the decision not to use focus groups for this study.

### ***Types of Interviews***

Authors (Fielding & Thomas, 2001; Fontana & Frey, 2000) have identified three main types of qualitative interviews: structured or standardised interviews; semi-structured or semi-standardised interviews; and unstructured or non-standardised interviews. In a structured interview, the interviewer asks all respondents the same series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories. Respondents receive the same set of questions asked in the same order, and there is very little flexibility in the manner in which the questions are asked or answered (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Semi-structured interviews involve the interviewer asking 'major questions the same way each time' but may change the order questions are asked, and may probe for extra information (Fielding & Thomas, 2001: 124). As well, the interviewer can reformulate the research instrument or rephrase questions depending on the level of understanding of the respondent (Ibid, p. 124).

The third type of interview commonly used in qualitative research is the unstructured or non-standardised interview. Fielding and Thomas (2001) noted that this type of interview best fits Lofland and Lofland's (1994) definition of the research interview as the 'guided conversation' (2001: 124). Earl Babbie (1992) noted that an unstructured interview 'is an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of

inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in a particular order' (Babbie, 1992: 293). Babbie further argued that: 'An unstructured interview is essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent. Ideally, the respondent does most of the talking' (1992: 293). Fielding and Thomas noted that the main point of difference between the unstructured and the semi-structured interview is that the interviewer in a semi-structured interview asks the major questions the same way all the time. In the unstructured interview setting, however, interviewers would have a list of topics which they want the respondent to talk about, but would be able 'to phrase the questions as they wish, ask them in any order that seems sensible at the time'. The interviewer in this latter interview setting, these authors noted, may 'even join in the conversation by discussing what they think of the topic themselves' (Ibid, 124). This latter aspect of the unstructured interview, where the interviewer is able to join in the conversation, was useful in interviews where participants were initially reluctant to share certain information, or in a few cases during my fieldwork, participants did not feel their points of view would be important, and could contribute meaningfully to the study.

Furthermore, Fontana and Frey (2000) have argued that 'unstructured interviewing can provide a greater breadth of data than the other types, given its qualitative nature' (2000: 652). The authors also noted that there are different types of unstructured interviews namely: oral history, creative interviewing, postmodern interviewing, and gendered interviews (Ibid: 656-658).

### ***Unstructured Interviews***

For this study, unstructured interviews were the main method of gathering data. At the outset, I proposed to use semi-structured interviews as the main method used to gather data, but after three pilot interviews, I realized that some of the questions which were to be asked later, were addressed in earlier responses. There were also notable, and disruptive, pauses in the interview, while I tried to ascertain whether certain issues which came up in the latter half of the interview schedule had been covered in the earlier responses. So rather

than sticking with the semi-structured nature of the initial interview plan, it was felt that an unstructured interview format would be more appropriate, but keeping close attention to issues which needed to be explored. In this way, the rights of participants to respond to the issues at their own pace, and to give answers in their own words and in a language they were comfortable with, and in any sequence they chose, were in accordance with the *fa'asamoa* protocols of *vafealoaloa'i* and *fa'aalobalo*, mutual respect and deference. As Alasuutari (1995) aptly stated:

If you study structures of meaning, the way in which people conceive of and classify things, the material has to consist of texts where they have to speak about things in their own words, not of questionnaires where they have to answer predefined questions by choosing predetermined alternatives (Alasuutari, 1995: 42).

### ***Interviewer Bias***

One of the limitations of unstructured interviews as a method of gathering data is 'the effects interviewers may have on validity and reliability of the data' (Fielding & Thomas, 2001: 138). Fielding and Thomas, for example, have noted that interviewer bias has been levelled particularly at unstructured interviews, but this charge can often be overstated. They point out Selltitz and Jahoda's (1962) suggestion that 'much of what we call interviewer bias can more correctly be described as interviewer differences, which are inherent in the fact that interviewers are human beings and not machines' (1962: 41). This, however, is a rather unnecessary and unfair generalization because whilst each researcher has a particular strategy which he or she applies when doing research to ensure the methods and data is valid and reliable, different circumstances and varied research contexts may determine how adaptable and flexible researchers as human beings can be.

In my own case, for example, being a Samoan-speaking, middle-aged, man with tertiary education, interviewing participants some of whom were people I knew well, and others who may have been influenced by someone else who I knew, to be available to be interviewed, may have influenced people's responses. A middle-aged man, a former Auckland resident, whose family members in Auckland I knew travelled to Apia from another island to be interviewed. He would probably not have travelled such a long distance but

for the fact that he felt obligated to participate in my study. His daughter had indicated to him before I went to Samoa that it might be quite useful for my research if his personal views on alcohol as a former heavy drinker, who was currently an abstainer, were shared in the interview.

### ***Audio-Recording***

Alasuutari has argued convincingly, that compared to 'detailed notes made by the interviewer, a tape-recorder is a superior device' (1995: 43). But, recording qualitative interviews can be disconcerting and difficult at times. This difficulty was noted by Fielding and Thomas (2001), who argued that whilst it is important to 'push hard' to tape record interviews, 'care should be taken over the decision to tape record when interviewing members of vulnerable groups' (2001: 135). Whilst some researchers have argued that tape-recording can be a safe method of ensuring that an accurate record of the interview is kept, others have argued that a tape-recording of the interview 'only records the verbal side of the situation' (Alasuutari, 1995: 43).

In this study, all thirty-nine participants and eight key informant interviews were audio-taped with their permission. When the study was introduced and explained, people were informed of the researcher's desire to make an audio recording of the interview. They were also advised that they were not obligated to agree to have the interviews recorded, and that the tape-recorder could be turned off at any time they wanted.

Prompts were used where necessary although once the interviews began there was little need for prompting. Instead, redirecting the narratives towards particular issues which were more relevant to the thesis was occasionally necessary. This unstructured format enabled me to share my own experience on some of the topics discussed. At times, sharing my own experience about certain aspects of what had been asked gave some participants the confidence to respond to the questions. However, I was also mindful that by sharing my own personal experiences about some of the issues, participants may have felt obligated to share information they may have been reluctant to divulge. In certain circumstances, where the information shared was of a sensitive nature, and wasn't particularly relevant to the topic, participants were

reminded that they could request the deletion of any information they had divulged within a certain period of time, if they changed their minds about their responses.

Although several participants were initially reluctant to take part, none of the participants requested the withdrawal of information. In the course of the interviews, at least five participants requested that the tape-recorder be turned-off momentarily, while they shared information which they preferred not to share with anyone else, or to have reported in the study. In one interview with a former 'heavy drinker', which was conducted inside a large shopping mall, the participant wept several times during the interview and the tape had to be turned off at least four times, while he collected himself. Each time that the tape-recorder was turned off, the participant was reminded of his rights to relinquish sensitive information, or to terminate the interview if he wished.

### ***Transcriptions***

All of the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, by the author. Fielding and Thomas (2001) defined verbatim transcription as the process of writing down everything the respondent says:

Verbatim transcription offers the advantage that all possible analytic uses are allowed for. You may not know what will be the most significant point of analysis when you are doing transcription; doing it verbatim means you have not lost any data that may later become significant (Fielding & Thomas 2001: 135).

Verbatim transcribing is, compared to selective transcribing, laborious and time-consuming. However, some authors have argued that 'even if you plan to be selective with most of the interviews, you should still transcribe the first few verbatim'. These, they argued, will 'help guide your analysis and probably reveal lines of analysis' you may not have thought of before (Fielding & Thomas, 2001: 135). The argument for full transcriptions of interviews is supported by Burningham and Thrush (2001), who noted that full transcription of interviews provides the best record of an interview and enables other researchers to scrutinise or re-use other people's data (2001: 185). This last reason for full transcriptions, I believe, is very important when

doing research on a topic that hasn't been examined much, among a minority population group within a larger national population.

### **The Doctrine of 'Informed Consent'**

Informed consent is generally taken to mean that those who participate in research have the right to know that they are being researched, and that they have actively given their consent. According to Bulmer (2001), the 'doctrine of informed consent is a very important general principle, which is a linchpin of ethical behaviour in research' (2001: 49). Informed consent requires that participants are well-informed about what the aims of research how information they provide is to be treated and analyzed, who may have access to the information, and more importantly, that they are not obligated to participate in the research. As Christians (2000) has argued, 'research subjects have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of experiments in which they are involved' (2000: 138), and that deception should be absent, and privacy and confidentiality should be assured.

These issues are typically spelt out in the Participant Information Sheets, and explained by the researcher(s) before the research process begins. The process can also be problematic in certain contexts. For example, in some settings, such as small communities in which people know most everyone else including the researcher, some people may feel obliged to participate because they know the researcher. In similar circumstances, a potential participant who may not necessarily want to participate, but may have been approached by someone else and asked to be part of a research may similarly, feel obliged to do so. Although these issues may be beyond the control of the researcher, they need to be considered, especially to ensure all participants have actively given their consent to participate.

Training in research methodologies typically includes coverage of the ethical requirements of research and of the obligation to ensure that the safety of those who participate in research is safeguarded. Research institutions typically set out their requirements and responsibility for the oversight of the process is usually assigned to institutions' Human Subjects Ethics Committees which ensure that minimum standards are set and met in all projects, but there

are good practical and ethical reasons for going beyond these minimum requirements. Bulmer (2001) for example noted that, 'Conventional accounts of social research stress the need to cooperate with informants, establish trust, create empathy between researcher and subject, and be relatively open about what one is doing' (2001: 48).

At the University of Auckland, one of the requirements of ethics applications for fieldwork conducted among ethnic minority groups is that Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms, and Interview Guides are translated into the language of the group to be studied (See Appendices I, II & III). Where research is carried out in other states, additional ethical approvals may be required by bodies with responsibility for research oversight. In my own case, because I am of Samoan heritage, I was not required to seek permission to do fieldwork in Samoa, and was covered by the project's approval. However, I still required permission of the Speaker of the Samoan Parliament to gain access to Parliamentary Hansard Record.

### ***'Pair Interviews'***

Beside the individual interviews, four 'pair interviews' - where an interviewer interviews two participants at the same time - were conducted. Arksey (1996) refers to these as 'joint interviews' and noted that these have been used since the 1970s. 'Joint interviews' for Arksey can also include two interviewers questioning one respondent, or two interviewers questioning two respondents (1996: 2). This strategy is sometimes a matter of choice, and in others, is a situation forced on the interviewer. The potential benefits of such an approach are that interviewees may yield more information as they are stimulated by each other's responses and add to them in ways which might not occur if each was interviewed separately. The potential downside of this strategy, however, is that each person's presence may influence what the other is prepared to reveal, and that some self censorship limits what is revealed in ways which might not be the case if individuals were interviewed separately.

Of the four pair interviews conducted for this study, three were husband-and-wife couples - one in Apia and two in Auckland. One of the Auckland pair



interviews was with a young couple where the man is New Zealand-born and the wife was Samoa-born. The fourth pair interview was with two New Zealand-born young men in Christchurch. Two of the couples and the two male young friends requested they be interviewed as pairs. In the third couple interview, the circumstances of the interview setting determined the unanticipated pair interview. The setting of this particular interview is set out below.

### ***To Interview or Not ...? Decision Time in the Field***

When the wife was first contacted by telephone to ask whether she would be available to be interviewed, she was told she was to be 'the only person' to be interviewed. This was re-emphasized when she was contacted on the second occasion, closer to the interview date. However, on arrival at the couple's house, both the wife and husband were waiting and greeted the interviewer in the usual customs of *fa'asamoa*. This was not entirely unexpected. It would have been inappropriate, somewhat unbecoming behaviour on their part if the husband had not been on hand to greet the researcher, a Samoan man, especially if he was at home at the time.

But following the initial exchange of greetings and speeches - part of the cultural protocols – and a fundamental part of the rapport building process in research with Samoan people, it would have been appropriate for the wife to indicate to her husband to leave so the interview could begin. After several attempts to hint politely, at the need for the 'interview with the wife' to commence, but faced with the seeming reluctance on the part of the couple to separate, I reluctantly commenced. Flatly telling the husband to leave the table might have achieved the end, but would have been an inappropriate approach. That would have been culturally problematic as well, as that could have been interpreted as disrespectful and an inappropriate 'slap in the face' of the husband in whose house the researcher was a visitor.

The Information Sheet and Consent Form were presented to, and sighted by the wife, after which a further explanation of the provisions for confidentiality of the information about to be imparted and the participant's right to withdraw at any time were outlined. Throughout this process, the husband remained at

the interview site,<sup>25</sup> even though the questions were directed solely at the wife at this early stage. Again, before the consent form was signed, it was hinted to the husband that only the person who signed the consent form could take part in the interview. Even, at this stage, as the consent form was signed and the tape-recorder was turned on to record the interview, the husband remained at the table. At that point, the researcher had to decide whether the interview should go ahead or whether to call it off. Eventually, the interview was conducted, but only after stopping momentarily while getting the husband to sign the consent form, and to formally agree to be part of the pair interview.

The above scenario is not uncommon when doing research among older members of some groups. It could be interpreted, within a symbolic interactionist point of view, as individuals interacting 'to produce and define their own definitions of situations' (Denzin, 1989: 5). Whilst working on a pilot study which explored the drinking behaviours and level of awareness of the effect of alcohol on some Samoan people in Auckland, in June 2000, a similar scenario occurred although, in that case, the wife was reluctant to leave. On that occasion, the wife had not even signed a consent form to participate when she started to interject. But it would have been rude to ignore the wife's point of view and comments volunteered, in relation to the matter in discussion. The practical problem was the manner in which the wife started to dominate the interview as the husband reluctantly deferred to some of her points of view. Of more methodological concern, however, was the ethical status of her comments.

### **Participant Observation**

Participant observation was also used to gather data for this study. Some of the observations were carried out explicitly for the purpose of gathering information for this research. Others were made during social events such as birthday parties, weddings, or community celebrations in the community, in which I was involved through kinship, church, or other community social networks.

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<sup>25</sup> The couple and the researcher were seated at the large dining table. There was no other person present in the house except for the couple and the researcher.

In Samoa in 2001, I conducted participant observation at a night club where younger people usually 'hang out', with the explicit purpose of observing young people's behaviours, their interactions among peers, the types of alcoholic beverages they consumed, and to establish whether anecdotal evidence that under-age patrons were drinking alcohol there was correct. During my second trip to Samoa in August 2003, I attended the Silver Jubilee Anniversary of the main newspaper in Apia, where alcohol was 'flowing freely'.<sup>26</sup> In this case, I attended as a co-founder of the newspaper, and not specifically to gather data. Throughout that pleasurable social event, there were drinks aplenty and food in abundance. People of all ages, political leaders, church leaders, men and women, young and not so young, town elites, villagers, and even overseas visitors enjoyed what I thought was a thoroughly enjoyable social function without a hint of any trouble or disturbances, which used to punctuate those kinds of events in Samoa, two or three decades ago. During those earlier years in Samoa at large functions of this nature, people used to get drunk and fights and quarrels were not infrequent.<sup>27</sup>

In Christchurch in 2002, I visited a working men's cosmopolitan club in a working class suburb, a place where a number of Samoan men usually go to drink, to play pool, and to socialize. This visit was explicitly for the purposes of observation of public drinking. Throughout this research, however, I also attended Samoan social occasions such as weddings, birthday parties, an unveiling ceremony, and graduation celebrations in Auckland. I also socialized with friends at bars; at a friend's office where a 'core group of mates' meet to talk and drink alcohol and watch rugby on 'Sky' television; at hotels and restaurants for meals, and at a nightclub. At most of these functions and

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<sup>26</sup> Over seven-hundred invited guests including politicians and government leaders, representatives of the diplomatic missions in Apia, business leaders, members of the general public from around the Apia town area as well as from some outer villages attended.

<sup>27</sup> Could it be that Samoans, who, in the twilight of the New Zealand colonial administration were noted as 'not educated' in the use of liquor by the 1953 Liquor Commission, may now be 'educated' in alcohol use? I argue that former CJ Marsack's (1961) supposition that perhaps in time 'and after some possibly distressing experiences', Samoans would acquire a safe and sound technique around alcohol 'and then everyone in Western Samoa may have access to all forms of intoxicating liquor' (Marsack, 1961: 169), has proven correct. Whilst it is true that there will always be people who may never be 'educated' in the use of alcohol in relation to the 'norms of society's expectations of alcohol use' and therefore may be perceived as deviant drinkers, this is also the case in other societies including Western or complex societies. This is true in the case of some Samoan people's drinking and attitudes to alcohol.

locations alcohol would have been consumed, and in most occasions I would have been a participant observer and an active member of the 'crowd' as well. These social occasions have also influenced my own perspective as the researcher and an active participant in the social setting. I expand on this particular aspect of researcher/participant in a later chapter. I mention it here to underscore the fact that the researcher is also a member of society, and as such, is a participant in the research environment.

Another important source of material for this study was my everyday interaction within the Samoan community in various contexts, in which I encountered a series of unsolicited observations on alcohol and its consequences. These, Macpherson<sup>28</sup> has reminded, were often informal and unanticipated and, at other times, in conversations which could not be avoided in the course of everyday life. This informal material processed and internalized by the researcher as a member of society, adds significantly to the material formally collected for the study.

### ***Secondary Data***

Fielding and Thomas (2001) have argued that the

Key to successful qualitative analysis is the need for the researcher to become thoroughly familiar with the data and to devise a practical system that enables rigorous comparison to be made between interviews while retaining the context of data within each interview' (Fielding & Thomas, 2001: 137).

Familiarity with the data, however, takes another meaning when the researcher is working with more than one data set. This becomes more challenging when the data have been collected in a language other than English. In this case, the data sets were from the three research sites and were in both English and Samoan.

### ***Documentary Research***

Part of my fieldwork in Samoa in 2001 and 2003 involved a search for relevant literature and documents pertaining to alcohol prohibition laws introduced by

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<sup>28</sup> Cluny Macpherson, Personal Comments, February, 2004.

early Europeans, and the subsequent colonial administrations in Samoa of, first the Germans, and later New Zealand. Both the German colonial administration during the first decade of the twentieth-century, and New Zealand's administration from 1914 to the late-1950s, introduced prohibition laws. The changes to the liquor regulation régime which followed Samoan independence in 1962 were significant and had also to be documented, using secondary source material. Most of the secondary data were gathered from the Samoan Parliamentary Hansard record, library indexes, and archival newspaper searches, during fieldwork in Apia, Samoa and in American Samoa in 2001. A second visit to Apia in September 2003 was required to confirm dates and details of Parliamentary debates on the 1971 Liquor Act, and subsequent liquor legislation in Samoa. Additional material for this study has been gleaned from other historical, anthropological, political, and sociological publications, public health surveys on alcohol consumption, as well as journal publications and other electronic sources.

The review of secondary data and relevant literatures was also greatly aided by the inter-loan service and various on-line electronic databases at the University of Auckland Library. Arguably, the range of methods and sources of data used in this study lends support to the contention (Denzin, 1970; Jick, 1983; Arksey & Knight, 1999) that triangulation has become a prominent aspect of research strategy.

### ***The Issue of Language***

Efforts to accommodate the use of multiple approaches and languages in Pacific research projects have already begun and appear, at least at this early stage, to be successful. Studies among Pacific people in New Zealand which have used more than one research method for gathering data include the exploration of the roles and responsibilities of Samoan men in reproduction by Anae et al. (2000). In that study, Anae and colleagues used three different research methods: life story interviews, key person interviews and focus groups (2000: 7). Another study which uses the multi-method approach is the current National Pacific Islands Drug, Alcohol, and Gambling Survey (Ministry of Health, 2004). The survey uses CATI as its main survey strategy but to ensure that Pacific people without landline telephones were

not entirely excluded in the survey, CACI has been used to maximize randomness of the survey, and in an attempt to try and reach Pacific people without telephones at home. In the latter case the CATI and CACI strategies also used multiple Pacific languages.

### ***E-mails***

Another method which was to have been used to collect data for this study is that of electronic-mail (e-mail). Selwyn and Robson (1998) have argued that using e-mail as a potential research tool 'offers researchers many advantages such as easy access to world-wide samples, low administration costs (both financially and temporally) and its unobtrusiveness and friendliness to respondents'.<sup>29</sup> Selwyn and Robson, however, also noted that whilst using e-mail as a research tool 'eschews the conventional constraints of spatial and temporal proximity between interviewer and respondent', this method is constrained by its limited and biased population of users (Ibid, 1998). E-mail interviews have been used in research for a number of years now.

Sometimes, especially when working with population groups which are widely dispersed, such as Pacific Island populations, other communication methods need to be considered. E-mailing is another strategy that could be used for research with dispersed and highly mobile Pacific communities. There are, however, some limitations on this strategy. Firstly, written communication in general, and e-mail use in particular, is likely to be more widely used within certain sectors of Samoan society than others. Younger New Zealand-born Samoans are more likely to use, and to be comfortable with, the medium than are older people and those resident in Samoa where telecommunication charges are high, and the system is frequently unreliable. Secondly, Samoa is a society in which such e-mail interviews could only follow the establishment of personal trust and rapport between researcher and participants, which has generally to occur in one or more face-to-face meetings. This issue is relevant in the Samoan situation and influenced my decision as to how and when to use this approach.

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<sup>29</sup> Selwyn, Neil. and Robson, Kate (1998), "Using E-mail as a Research Tool" in *Social Research Update*, issue 21. <[www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU21.html](http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU21.html)>

## **A Case for Triangulation in Data Collection**

Several methods were used, and others were considered, to gather data for this study. This use of multiple strategies is what Arksey and Knight (1993), have called triangulation of methods, and occurs 'where researchers use a variety of methods to gather data' (1993: 19). These authors contended that although triangulation is not an end in itself, the effort involved in triangulating research methods, if feasible, can enhance a study. The authors also noted that data gathered using triangulation 'might yield an interpretation that offers a new perspective on the research question, one that is far more interesting than you could have envisaged at the outset' (1999: 31).

In advocating triangulation, and broadly defining it as 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon', Norman Denzin (1970, 1978, 1989), argued that 'the sociologist should examine a problem from as many methodological perspectives as possible' (1989: 234). Denzin suggested that defining triangulation as the use of multiple methods in the study of the same object is only one form of the strategy. 'It is convenient to conceive of triangulation as involving varieties of data, investigators, and theories, as well as methodologies' (1989: 236-237). Furthermore, Denzin noted that:

By combining methods and investigators in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator or one method. ... triangulation of method, investigator, theory, and data remains the soundest strategy of theory construction (Denzin, 1989: 236).

Denzin identified four basic types of triangulation: data triangulation; investigator triangulation; theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation (1989: 234-247). Similarly, Jick (1983) argued that the overall strength of the multi-method design is that it 'allows researchers to be more confident of their results. ... It can stimulate the creation of inventive methods, new ways of capturing a problem to balance with conventional data-convention methods' (1983: 145). Furthermore, Jick stated that triangulation 'may also help to uncover the deviant or off-quadrant dimension of a phenomenon' (1983: 145) and can lead to a synthesis or integration of theories. Triangulation, according to this perspective, 'may also serve as the

critical test, by virtue of its comprehensiveness, for competing theories' (1983: 145). But Jick also conceded that triangulation is not without its shortcomings. He noted, for example, that replicating a mixed-methods package is exceedingly difficult. He argued that if the research 'is not clearly focused theoretically or conceptually, all the methods in the world will not produce a satisfactory outcome' (1983: 146).

### **Ethics in Research**

For Seedhouse (1988) 'ethics is concerned with how men and women ought to live their lives'. However, Seedhouse cautions that it is a mistake to think of ethics as a single coherent body of knowledge and opinion about what is right and what is wrong. Nor is ethics a discipline in which pure blacks and whites can be uncovered and then applied forever without questions (1988: 18).

There are, however, ethical considerations which need to be considered when using any research method. For example, Babbie (1992) argues that ethics is typically associated with morality, and both deal with matters of right and wrong (1992: 464). According to Bulmer, ethics 'is a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better ...' (Bulmer, 2001: 45).

### ***Research Ethics in Developing Countries***

In an insightful article on the ethics of performing research in developing countries, Professor Benatar argued that, 'the widening economic and health gap between rich and poor countries can be narrowed through excellence in research, the performance of which, nevertheless, must adhere to sound ethical principles' (Pang, 2002: 1145). Benatar (2002) advocated a broader role for ethical review committees, beyond standard ethical evaluations, and notes the weak and under-resourced ethical review capabilities in developing countries.

Ethical merit embraces respect for the dignity of research subjects (their integrity, privacy, safety, and human rights – hence the need for informed consent), the imperative to minimize risk, to balance risks against benefits, to make appropriate recompense for time, to provide



compensation for any injury which may occur during the research, to protect confidentiality ... and to avoid conflict (Benatar, 2002: 1134; cited in Pang, 2002: 1145).

It is clear from the foregoing quotation that ethical merit embraces respect for the dignity of people who participate in research. This respect for the dignity of participants, I believe, should be mutual and reciprocal on the part of the researchers in their relationships with those that are subjects of research. Just as there is an expectation for mutual respect among researchers, so should there be reciprocal and mutual respect between researchers and research participants as Benatar advocates.

### ***Ethics in Pacific Research***

Ethics, defined as embracing respect for the dignity of research participants, closely corresponds with the concept of *fa'aaloalo*, or appropriate respect, which I have argued in an earlier chapter is a valued characteristic embodied both within *fa'asamoa* and other Pacific Island cultures. Appropriate respect for people's dignity, or *fa'aaloalo*, is one of the 'defining characteristics which set the Samoan apart from men of other races' (Marsack, 1961: 22). According to Marsack, the 'Samoan' has a sense of humour and 'appreciative of the funny side of a situation; but on the subject of his personal dignity no joke is tolerated' (1961: 22). These observations are echoed by another New Zealander, McKay, who spent most of his working life as an employee of the New Zealand Colonial Administration in Western Samoa. McKay wrote of Samoans' view of life, as follows:

... a Polynesian view of life is not one of places, nor does it yearn for possessions; it is filled with people. ... Today, as in the past, in Samoa and among the thousands of Samoan migrants in New Zealand, the underlying motivation is pride – pride of self – of family, and of race. It is an easy sitting pride, which looks unselfconsciously at other people. Inherently, a proud people see value in dignity, and they expect recognition, from strangers and among themselves (McKay 1968: 6-7).

Part of many Samoan people's pride that McKay alludes to above is pride in fluency in, and extensive understanding of the Samoan language. Throughout most of New Zealand's colonial administration of Samoa, and for a decade or two immediately following Western Samoa's independence, use of the

Samoan language was discouraged in most schools. Teachers were instructed to encourage children to speak English, not Samoan, at school. This approach was so successful that by the 1970s, some secondary schools were obliged to set up special classes to teach Samoan language and culture in Samoa. It is somewhat ironic that in New Zealand over recent years, many Samoan parents have had to put their children through Samoan Language Nests to ensure children stayed connected to *fa'asamoa* through language. This is also true of Tongan, Niuean, Cook Islands, and more recently, Tokelauan and Tuvaluan parents in New Zealand. There has been a significant growth in the number of Pacific Language Nests and Pacific Pre-schools set up in locales with large Pacific populations throughout the Auckland metropolis, and in other centres which have a significant Pacific presence. The establishment of Pacific language medium preschools, modeled on the earlier Maori *kohanga reo* or language nests, have been promoted, and supported, in early childhood education policies of the last decade or so. Not surprisingly, at least in the area of research, respect for the dignity of participants has been recognized as an important ethical consideration in research with Pacific people, and requires the researcher to carefully consider methodologies which may be particularly appropriate, and inappropriate, for research among Pacific communities.

This should be reflected in the use of Pacific languages through the research process. The opportunity to speak in the language in which one feels they can most clearly and accurately express their views, experiences and beliefs is an important part of this respect. Depriving people of this choice, and expecting them to use a language with which they may be less familiar and less confident, is to deny them the respect which is clearly central to ethics, and the right to put their views with the clarity they would want. More importantly, it denies them the right to be heard in ways which they would choose to be heard.

One of the difficulties that some researchers come across working with Pacific communities in New Zealand, is the issue of language use, or non-use. The number of Pacific languages spoken by a diverse Pacific population in New Zealand adds to the difficulties, and costs, of carrying out research among this population. This arises from the costs of translation of research

documentation and instruments, the employment and training of interviewers, translation of interview data, review of analyses and findings, and the compilation and dissemination of reports. Some allow the complexity and cost which the use of multiple languages imposes on research to shape research designs. While the use of one language may simplify and reduce the costs of a project, to make such decisions for convenience, or for reasons of cost, is not only unethical but practically problematical.

This linguistic diversity need not, and should not, become an insurmountable barrier when designing and implementing research projects among Pacific communities in New Zealand. The first National Population Survey of Pacific People's Alcohol, Drugs, and Gambling Survey in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2004), has been translated into the four main Pacific languages: Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, and Cook Island Maori. Translating important resources and research information and processes from English to Pacific ethnic languages is vital if 'excellence in research' as advocated in the foregoing quote by Benatar (2001) is to benefit vulnerable population groups.

### ***Fieldwork Experience***

This study benefited from using both English and Samoan languages as media for interaction between the researcher and participants. Interviews were conducted in either English or Samoan, and in both languages, depending on what the participants felt comfortable with. With the exception of seven interviews with older adults in Auckland and Apia which were conducted entirely in the Samoan language, a significant number of interviewees used both English and Samoan as bi-lingual participants drifted from one language to the other. Where all, or part of, the interviews were conducted in the Samoan language, relevant quotes from the transcripts were translated into English before analysis.

But there are pitfalls in using and working across languages. The most significant of these is the difficulty of translating from one language to the other in a manner that is accurate, appropriate and retains the nuances in the original 'text'. Some of the older participants were complimentary about the use of the Samoan language for this study and noted that they were more

comfortable about participation because they didn't have to converse in English.

### **Sample Selection**

The purposive sample of thirty-nine individuals, comprising twenty-three men and sixteen women, was selected to include respondents who have attributes that are likely to influence their beliefs about, attitudes to and use of alcohol. While the focus of the thesis is on the attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and its use by Samoan people who drink, there was also a need to explore the experiences, beliefs and attitudes of the Samoan population which abstains from drinking alcohol. Hence, the need to include abstainers, drinkers and former drinkers in the study. Participants in this study were also selected on the basis of age, gender, country of birth and socialization, and on religious affiliation. Another criterion used in the selection of the sample was the need to interview people who have been free to drink, or abstain, or both, over a number of years, and who were in a position to reflect on their conduct over that period. This led to the selection of Samoan people who were over the age of twenty-five years. This decision is a notable limitation of this study since it cannot speak to the formation of attitudes to alcohol during early adolescence.

### ***Sample Distribution***

Of the twenty-five New Zealand-based participants, seventeen were interviewed in Auckland while eight were interviewed in Christchurch.

### ***Auckland***

The Auckland sample included seven women and ten men. Three women and one man were New Zealand-born, while the rest were born in Samoa. Two of the Samoan-born women came to New Zealand with their families as two-year-olds, one in the 1950s and the other in the 1970s. Of their religious affiliations, 2 were Seventh Day Adventists, 2 were Roman Catholics including a priest, 1 was a Methodist, 1 a Baptist, 1 a Quaker, 1 a member of the Pacific Islands Church, 6 were members of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS), 3 were members of the Reformed London Missionary Society (RLMS). Ten of the participants are in the older age

category 45 years and over while seven are in the younger group (between 25 and 34 years).

### **Christchurch**

The Christchurch sample included three women and five men. Two of the women and three men were New Zealand-born. The Samoan-born participants, one woman and two men, were in the older age group while their New Zealand-born counterparts were in the younger age group. Two participants were Catholics, two were from the PIC, one was Baha'i, and the other was a member of a pentecostal church. Two of the men, one older Samoan-born formerly a member of the PIC, and a younger New Zealand-born man, were not members of any church group at the time of the interviews.

### **Samoa**

Of the fourteen participants interviewed in Samoa, six were women and eight, men. The participants were of various ages although there was a significant bias towards the older age group (45 years and over). There were seven drinkers, five abstainers, and two former drinkers. Most are adherents of several religious denominations although two older women, who grew up in the CCCS, weren't active in the church anymore.

### **Other Characteristics of Study Sample**

Other characteristics of the sample population show the diversity of backgrounds of participants in the study. For example, five women and four men participants and key informants have *palagi*, or European, spouses or partners. Only three women and two men were single at the time of the interviews. Among the participants is a father, daughter, and son-in-law group.

Another characteristic of the sample population which is coincidental is the difference in the number of *matai* participants compared to non-*matai*. Of the twenty-three male participants fourteen are *matai* while nine are non-*matai*. A breakdown of the number of *matai* at the three sites shows that seven of the eight male participants in Samoa are *matai*; five of the ten male participants

in Auckland and two of the five males in Christchurch are *matai*. Of the five non-*matai* men participants interviewed in Auckland, two are CCCS pastors and one is a Catholic priest. Only one woman participant was a *matai* at the time of the interviews.

### ***Age Distribution***

For analysis purposes, the participants were categorised into two age groups: (a) young adults aged 25 to 44; and (b) older adults aged 45 and over. This sub-categorization is an attempt to trace whether older adults who were socialised earlier and who had more years of life experience behaved and consumed alcohol differently to younger adults who were socialised later and who had less life experience. Another reason for breaking up the age variable into two categories was to determine whether the patterns of drinking and attitudes to abstention were different between the 'younger adult' and 'older adult' age groups. Of the total population of thirty-nine, thirteen were in the 'younger adult' age group, while the rest were in the 'older adult' group.

### ***Gender***

The literature is generally agreed that men are more likely than women, to consume alcohol. This generalization was put to the test by interviewing both men and women for this study to ascertain whether this was the case among Samoans. Of the eleven male participants and key informants<sup>30</sup> interviewed in Apia, and the sole key informer interviewed in American Samoa, only three have never drunk alcohol; two are former drinkers who have abstained from drinking for over ten years; one has recently abstained though he had a drink with the interviewer on one occasion; one declared 'abstention' although he drinks now and then; and the rest all drink alcohol, mainly beer.

### ***Place of Birth and Socialization***

The place of birth and of socialization is another variable used for selecting participants for this study. Socialization, according to Pfohl (1994), 'teaches people to internalize the patterned roles necessary for achieving ordered social equilibrium' (1994: 234). The place and environment where a person is

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<sup>30</sup> This includes two male key informers interviewed in Samoa and one in American Samoa.

socialized influences a person's attitude and behaviour in life generally, and towards certain lifestyles and view of the world. For this study, it was supposed that the place of birth and socialization of participants either in Samoa or in New Zealand would shape and condition, to some degree, their understandings of the social world. If, as was supposed, Samoan culture was an important influence on attitudes to and use of alcohol, exposure to and familiarity with the *fa'asamoa* was likely to be significant. Those who were born and raised in New Zealand, for example, may not have been as completely exposed to the customs and practice of traditional Samoan culture as those who were born and raised in the islands. Moreover, the New Zealand-born Samoans who live in the Auckland region where Samoan customs and practices are widely followed, may be more exposed to traditional Samoan customs and practices than those who are born and raised, and socialized elsewhere in New Zealand where there are smaller Samoan populations and in which the *fa'asamoa* is not such a central feature of daily social routines. Hence the need for including New Zealand-born Samoans who were born and socialized in Auckland, home to the largest concentration of Samoan people, and a second location in New Zealand which may not necessarily contain as large a group of Samoan people. In this particular case, Christchurch one of the major cities in New Zealand, is home to the largest number of Samoans in the South Island, was selected as the other research site. And because most Samoan people originally migrated from Samoa, Apia naturally was chosen as the third research site for this study.

### ***Religious Affiliation***

The affiliation of participants to different religious denominations was considered to be a useful variable when selecting participants for the study. This was to account for the significant influence of the early missions and missionaries, which is discussed in more detail in chapter 5, in shaping Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and alcohol use. Whilst there was a conscious attempt to ensure that participants were selected from a cross-section of religious denominations, it was also felt necessary to include among participants others who did not belong to any particular religious denomination. This selective process of identifying

particular individuals based on their denominational affiliation or non-affiliation, whilst unavoidable, meant the purposive selection was 'targeted' and therefore, biased. The main three religious denominations in Samoa, the Catholics, Congregationalists, and Methodists, are well-represented in the sample population, even if not proportionately. Also important in the selection process was the need for participation of adherents of the SDA and LDS missions. These latter denominations are singled out for representation on the basis of the absolute abstinence approach to alcohol consumption within their respective church doctrines.

The Old Testament teachings of the Holy Bible (Leviticus 10:9), for example, guides the teachings of some religious organisations who note the widespread availability and use of alcohol in the scriptures. The parable in which Jesus changed water to wine at the wedding at Cana, in Galilee (John 2:1), was often mentioned by participants as an example that Jesus himself drank wine and as justification for some participants' use of alcohol, and the often-stated claim that it was not alcohol *per se* which was bad, but the individual who imbibed who made it bad.

While the study sample represents a range of religious denominations, some religious groups within which Samoan people worship are not represented. Nor is the sample population in this study a proportional representation of the main Samoan religious denominations. The requirement that the sample included a wide cross-section of the Samoan religious denominational groups, had to be offset against the need to ensure there was also appropriate representation of men and women, drinkers and abstainers, as well as both New Zealand-born and island-born respondents. While the sample selection achieved an adequate representation of younger and older participants, men and women, and drinkers and non-drinkers, as well as New Zealand-born and island-born participants, the non-representation of adherents of some religious groups in the sample is a stark omission. The omission of LDS representation in both the Auckland and Christchurch samples is significant because the LDS and the SDA missions, are two denominations with significant numbers of Samoan adherents whose



doctrines prohibit alcohol use. The sample in Samoa, however, did include a bishop and an older woman participant from these denominations.

### ***Key Informant Interviews***

Key informants are particularly important in studies of this type. They are in a position to report on their own views and conduct and in that respect are simply informants, but their professional locations also allow them to reflect, with a degree of authority, on the views and conduct of other individuals and groups with respect to alcohol. In this latter role, they may have access to a range of data on the subject and are, in this role, 'expert commentators' on trends in the use of alcohol and of its consequences. The use of such people provides additional and important insights into the more general question of how alcohol and social and cultural trends are connected.

The key informant interviews were conducted with individuals selected for their particular roles in health services, religion, law enforcement, alcohol legislation enforcement, and alcohol research in relation to Samoan people. In Samoa, three men; an LDS bishop, the Samoan Police Commissioner, and the Secretary of the Samoan Liquor Board were interviewed in Apia.

A male pastor/lecturer at the Kanana Fou Theological College, Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS), was interviewed in Pago Pago. The LDS bishop, who is a former heavy drinker, who at the time of the interview was officially posted in American Samoa, was visiting in Apia where the interview was conducted. The other two key informants consume alcohol. Four key informants were interviewed in Auckland and include; a New Zealand-born woman social researcher abstainer, and three Samoan-born men, two medical practitioners, and a pastor of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS). The pastor would accept a drink when offered at special occasions such as weddings for the purpose of 'toasting'. The younger of the two medical officers, who drinks moderately, normally works in Samoa but was visiting in Auckland when he was interviewed.

### ***Research Among One's 'Own People'***

A colleague who has worked in research projects in Samoan communities in New Zealand suggested I shouldn't have too much problem finding participants for my study, especially if I was interviewing in Samoan. Her comment was based on her previous experience working with older Samoans who insisted on using the Samoan language as the medium for research interaction. But being Samoan and doing research with and among Samoans can also be tricky. In fact, it can also be quite challenging at times, to the extent that you wonder why working among your own people needs to be so taxing. At other times the subtleties and nuances of cultural expectancies can be quite problematic and the contradictory demands on researchers to be culturally, and politically correct, and live up to community expectations, while being ethically appropriate can produce some ridiculous situations.

### ***Fieldwork Isn't Always Straightforward***

A sense of romanticism may overwhelm the novel researcher when he or she has to go 'overseas' to do fieldwork. It may have something to do with the excitement of a new adventure, of taking a step into the unknown world of research. Personally, I admit I was a little perturbed, somewhat uncertain about 'going overseas' to do fieldwork, which for me was 'going home'. I had been home many times before, but there was something different about going home to gather data for my doctoral thesis.

Because I didn't require any particular permission from the Samoan Government to do fieldwork there, as most non-Samoan researchers did then, my fieldwork trip was perceived by a couple of my colleagues as a case of 'privileged position'. However, gaining unimpeded entrance to Samoa, as one of my research sites, certainly did not mean everybody wanted to be interviewed for my study. Nor did my being Samoan translate into easy access to people who weren't available, or prepared, to be interviewed.

### ***Fieldwork Can Be Challenging***

When I arrived in Apia I wanted to get my fieldwork out of the way before catching up with friends and relatives. So getting my first interview, with an

old friend, out of the way the morning after I arrived was very encouraging. In fact, I felt quite pleased with myself when a non-drinking friend offered to be interviewed the next day, which was a Sunday. But after those two early interviews, I found myself struggling to secure further interviews, even with people whom I knew well. Some people were too busy with work at that time, but they indicated they could be available later. Some weren't too sure why I wanted to interview them about their alcohol consumption when I already knew about their 'drinking' anyway. A couple of 'old friends' were just suspicious about being interviewed by a Samoan person they knew, who was studying at a New Zealand university. Part of my problem was that I didn't want too many of my friends, especially those who 'drink', to know that I was back in town. So as much as I wanted to see and link up with close friends whom I hadn't seen for over ten years, I also needed to be inconspicuous and get on with my fieldwork.

As well as recruiting and interviewing participants and key informers, part of my Samoan fieldwork included a search for literature on alcohol and its introduction to Samoa and its integration into Samoan social life. I was interested in the policy of the colonial administrations of first, the Germans, and later New Zealand, finally the government of the independent Samoa, and how each had dealt with alcohol in Samoa. Between interviews, there was the Parliamentary Hansard Record, and the local and Pacific archives at the Nelson Public Library to search and review. But of course, Apia is a small town and I soon met up with friends and relatives, some of whom wanted to participate, and some of whom were not too interested to be part of my study. In 2003, a second field visit to Apia to cross-check some of the secondary and historical data proved valuable.

### ***The 'Awkward Stage'***

One of the major challenges which I encountered in the course of my fieldwork was the obtaining of formal consent, what I call the 'awkward stage' of doing research, especially with older Samoan participants. Unlike younger participants, at least in my experience doing research with Pacific communities, where getting people to consent and sign consent forms usually isn't a major issue, older participants are somewhat more reluctant.

Even when the process is explained in detail: informing older participants about their rights to refuse to participate, to terminate the interview at any time, and to withdraw information after a certain period of time, some people still hesitated when asked to sign the consent form.

Two older men agreed, at least initially, to participate in this study. They were about to be interviewed when I raised the issue of tape-recording the interviews, and invited them to sign the consent forms. The men asked why they had to sign their names if I wasn't going to mention names in the thesis anyway. They also asked if the audio-recording of the interview meant they could be implicated if something happened which could lead to their identities being revealed. Despite my assurances that the confidentiality of their identities would be secure, that only my supervisors and I would have access to the information, both men changed their minds and declined to participate in the study. The above instance, of participants having second thoughts about participating in research because of suspicion of ethical requirements designed, ironically, to protect them, is an ethical consideration which researchers need to address, especially among non-Western populations. It raises the issue of power relations in research generally, and the uneven power relationships between the researcher and the participants.

Admittedly, part of this 'awkward stage' of my fieldwork had to do with my own personal and cultural upbringing in a gerontocracy, where deference and respect for the older people are paramount in the maintenance of relationships. Among the central mores and values of *fa'asamoa*, for example, are the concepts of *fa'aaloalo* or appropriate respect, deference, and obedience for those who are older. To do otherwise may be seen as *le a'oa'oina* or untrained in good manners, *fia sili* or wanting to be better than others, or just stupid and uncouth.<sup>31</sup> Hence, my own awkwardness when requesting older participants to sign the consent form, usually after spending a fair bit of time engaging in rapport building, and gaining the trust of the older participants.

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<sup>31</sup> Macpherson and Macpherson, (In preparation). *The Nature and Limits of Traditional Dispute Resolution Processes in Contemporary Western Samoa*.

Part of this 'awkwardness' also had something to do with the fact that some of the older people I approached and spoke with about my research were really elderly: some were in their late-70s, and two were in their 80s. Making arrangements with potential elderly participants is another aspect of the recruiting and consenting process which had to be managed delicately, and with caution. This was necessary to ensure potential participants' own sense of appropriateness, and rights, weren't compromised if they were reluctant to participate for whatever reasons.

A partial explanation for this 'awkward stage' may have to do with earlier times in Samoa when there were people who were not able to read or write. Before contact with Europeans in the early-nineteenth century, Samoan culture was an oral culture. In fact it was the missionaries, particularly the LMS missionaries who turned it into a *gagana tusitusi*, written language. So in the latter part of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century, it wasn't uncommon for the odd Samoan who grew up in the traditional *fa'asamoa* to have been isolated from such learning environments, for one reason or another. Some of these people may not have been exposed to an environment where they would have been taught to read and write, usually at the pastors' schools, and later the 'Grade 2' Village Schools. Yet, while this was not a situation of their making, in a society in which literacy is prized for a number of reasons, the inability to read and write remains a matter of extreme sensitivity. The scenarios below, based on real cases, explain why.

A Catholic person growing up in a village with only a Protestant mission may have been reluctant to attend a Protestant pastor's school. Chances are that person may have fallen through the cracks of the elementary education system, and would have missed out completely on learning to read and write. Such a person would have been too embarrassed to have asked to be taught later in life. In fact, by the early twentieth century, a small number of Samoans were 'illiterate' in that learning environment, but brilliant and highly trained in all other social and cultural etiquettes and practice of traditional *fa'asamoa* and Samoan social life.

A friend I grew up with did not attend either the pastor's school or the 'Grade 2' village school, despite pressure from parents, friends, pastor and teachers. He was stigmatised and called names because he would rebel against being forced to be at school like every other kids, and so found himself doing all kinds of things and going places except where he was supposed to be, either at the pastor's or the Grade 2 school. He could neither read nor write because he was just not interested. But his oral language use and depth of knowledge of traditional Samoan customs and practices was by far, superior to other village young men. He later became a very able and articulate *matai* even though he still can't read nor write.

By the second-half of the twentieth century, there were elderly Samoan people who could neither read nor write. Hence, my reluctance about asking elderly people to read and sign my consent forms, especially where I was unfamiliar with their history. I wanted to include elderly people in the research sample, because they would have lived during German and New Zealand administrations, and may have some stories to share and experiences about the colonial policies in Samoa during the first half of the twentieth century. But I was also cautious not to put any elderly person in an untenable situation that could cause embarrassment or discomfort to that person should it transpire that they couldn't read or write.

Despite the precautions and careful observations, I still found myself in a couple of situations where asking an elderly person to read and sign my consent form became a delicate balancing act. I truly didn't want to offend by asking whether the person could read or write. Of course I could have just asked them to put an X in the appropriate spot of the Consent Form, which is what some Samoan people who could not write did when they had to 'sign' their names to some documents, at least up until Samoan Independence in the early-1960s. There were times when officials would request some people to put an *ekisi*, an 'X', as their signature. That could have been seen as condescending and rude if a particular participant could actually read and/or write. After two potentially embarrassing situations were avoided, through the intervention of some family members of those involved, I made discreet

enquiries about their ability to read or write so they could be invited to sign my consent form without unnecessary drama.

### ***Importance of Use of First Language in Research***

The above scenario highlights some of the barriers I have confronted over the years doing research among Samoan and other Pacific communities. Related to the illiteracy issue is the matter of language skills which also requires some brief discussion. An elderly Samoan person may be very literate in Samoan but quite 'illiterate' in English. This is another area that needs careful consideration when doing research with peoples with first languages other than English. Many indigenous peoples throughout the world may be literate in their native languages but illiterate in colonial languages. Samoans are no exception, although I have seen recent immigrants to New Zealand whose command of the English language may be quite inferior to those of many elderly Samoan people in this country.

My observations of some migrant communities which have sprouted up around the Auckland metropolitan area over recent years, and this includes some smaller recently-settled Pacific Island communities as well, suggests that many of these new immigrants have minimal English language skills. Samoans settled here earlier than some other Pacific groups and some of the earlier immigrants who came in the 1950s with limited command and comprehension of the English language have since assimilated into New Zealand society, to the extent that some of those older people who spoke very little or no English when they first came, have learned and acquired excellent written and spoken skills in the English language. Those elderly Samoans who emigrated during the '60s and '70s have attained different degrees of English language skills.

When my two sisters came from Samoa to live in Christchurch during the 1970s, they wanted my mother to come to stay with them and look after their children while they went to work to develop their own families and to help our family by sending money back to Samoa. After several years of enticing and cajoling by my sisters, my mother finally agreed to come and visit them and her grandchildren. But she didn't stay very long in Christchurch. She found

the place 'too cold' and she was keen to return to Samoa after a few months in the south. Whether it was really the cold weather which turned my mother off completely from wanting to live with her two daughters and their families, or whether it was her 'fear' of having to speak English to some *palagi* some of whom knocked on the door sometimes when she was the only adult in the house, and had to answer the door herself, I'll never know. Suffice to say that often, when she recalled her time in Christchurch with her daughters and her grandchildren, what she dreaded most was to have to open the door in case the caller was *palagi*, and she had to speak in her broken *Igilisi* to the strangers. She said it was not unusual for her to take her grandchildren to the door with her when someone knocked. It was as if having them with her may help her speak 'the language' better. When she finally returned to Samoa after spending several months in Christchurch, she swore she would never go back there, and she never visited New Zealand again. I often wondered whether she could have been enticed back to New Zealand if one of her daughters had volunteered to leave Christchurch to live in warmer Auckland. In fact, I think my mother was more fearful of speaking her *gagu pagupagu* or broken English, than she was of the Christchurch weather. Yet she attended school up to the end of Grade 2, and would have had a fairly average command of the English language among people of her generation. Proof indeed, that the inability of a person to speak or comprehend a foreign language can be quite daunting, for some people.

### ***Secondary Data Collection and Analysis***

A lot of the information required for this thesis, especially the following two chapters which together comprise a social history of alcohol in Samoa, required a review and analysis of historical and sociological literatures on Samoa. In this case, this was necessary because none of the participants were alive during the early phases of missionisation and colonisation when alcohol was first introduced to Samoa in the early nineteenth century. Indeed many informants were not alive during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during which first German, and then New Zealand, administrations wrestled with the regulation of alcohol. The data on both European and Samoan attitudes to alcohol and the regulation of its availability were, however, available in church mission, library and parliamentary archives. Material from



these sources made possible the reconstruction of the social history in alcohol which was not available from any other source and yet which is critical to this thesis.

Secondary analysis involves the utilisation of existing data, collected for the purposes of a prior study, in order to pursue a research interest which is distinct from that of the original work (Heaton, *Social Research Update*, Issue 22). Arber (2001) refers to secondary analysis as 'the re-analysis of existing survey micro-data collected by another researcher or organisation for the analyst's own purpose' (2001: 270). Arber further notes that,

One of the challenges of secondary analysis for the researcher is to use sociological imagination to construct theoretically informed research questions that can be addressed by somebody else's data – data that may have been originally devised and collected for very different purposes (Arber, 2001: 270).

Arber, however, cautions that in most cases, secondary analysis is a misnomer, since the process of secondary analysis of large datasets is more akin to 'primary analysis' (2001: 285). Furthermore, Arber points out that before undertaking secondary analysis, 'it is important to be aware of a number of potential pitfalls' (Ibid, p. 279).<sup>32</sup>

The material analysed formed for the most part, a body of reports from a number of bodies, and formed part of a mission and colonial record which was intended to describe and analyse the progress of their work to various 'parent bodies'. Inasmuch as some of the material on alcohol was influenced by the political and religious pressures which gathered around the issues of availability of alcohol at various times, it had already been distilled. However, the range of sources of data, allowed a degree of triangulation and allowed me to identify the positions of various bodies and some of the pressures which lay behind these. Some of this secondary analysis had already been undertaken by experienced academic historians of the period, and their analyses guided my own enquiries.

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<sup>32</sup> Arber notes that when considering a potential survey for secondary analysis it is necessary to subject its methodology to critical scrutiny. 'The secondary analyst needs to obtain as much documentation as possible about the collection of the survey data and be aware of any data limitation' (Arber, 2002: 279-281).

### ***Coding and Sorting of Data***

When the participant interviews were transcribed and printed, they were then manually sorted by research sites. The same process was repeated with all the key informant interviews. This was a time-consuming and tedious process. Different coloured highlighter markers were used to identify various topic areas as the transcripts were individually sorted and the initial analysis process began. It was realised at this early stage of the sorting and analysis of the data that this was going to be a long and laborious process. An opportune sharing of information with a colleague, who was working on her qualitative data at the same time using the Microsoft Word Processing Tables software to sort her data, resulted in a change of my own data sorting process. The colleague tutored me on the use of the software and, this application was subsequently used to sort the data.

The Microsoft Word Processing Tables Programme can sort qualitative data into theme areas. By asking for the data from the three data sets to be sorted into particular theme areas, the programme could group all the individual information which has been coded under those categories into themes. For example, one of the theme areas which I coded the data sets under was the impact of alcohol on norms and values of Samoan culture. Under this particular theme area, references and quotations coded under the impact of alcohol on norms and values of *fa'asamoa* would be sorted.

Data were manually sorted under the three broad categories of: (a) alcohol and alcohol consumption; (b) culture or *fa'asamoa*; and (c) health and wellbeing. Based on these three broad categories, sub-topics were generated as various issues emanated from the data. For example, under the alcohol and consumption category which was coded 'AA', thirty-nine sub-themes were delineated - AA01 to AA39. Under the culture category coded 'EE', nineteen sub-themes were marked out as EE01 to EE19. Similarly, from the health category coded 'SS' six sub-topics were delineated – SS01 to SS06. Although the data were categorized under these three broad groups, the data sets from the three research sites were deliberately individualized and retained as independent datasets. For example, all the Auckland transcripts were sequenced under NZ01 to NZ17, the Samoan data set

serialized as SA01 to SA14, and the Christchurch data set as CH01 to CH08. At that point, the series of the three different data sets were then posted manually under the three broad codes 'AA', 'EE', and 'SS' where they may seem to apply.

The process however, is not without its pitfalls which need to be checked and addressed separately to ensure all the individual participants' information and responses were posted under each relevant category. One of the limitations of this programme, and this is not unique to this particular programme, is that it will only sort and include the data which the researcher has entered into the tables. What this means is that because the researcher manually enters the data into the tables, the programme can only sort what has been coded and entered into the various categories. In other words, any and/or all information relevant to that theme area which had not been entered under that particular theme will not be sorted and therefore, would be excluded from the analysis. Another area of concern with this method of sorting data is the 'repeatedness' of certain material which may overlap. For example, data which may be relevant and useful to more than one theme area needed to be re-entered under all the other relevant categories in order for that data to be included in the data which have been sorted for analysis.

### ***Novice, Ignorance, or Both***

I have alluded to some of the limitations which may constrain a field research project of the 'novice' field researcher. The project also involved historical research and the fact that I was not a trained historian constrained this work. The following chapters, on the social history of alcohol in Samoa, need brief mention here. As well as the scarcity of historical information on alcohol in Samoa during the first half of the nineteenth century when alcohol was first introduced by Europeans, the documentation of a social history by the novice researcher untrained in historical research is a challenging task. As Tuchman (1998) aptly asks, how can a novice acquire a historical point of view, especially if she or he is dealing with unfamiliar materials? Fortunately, at least in this case, technological advances in library searches for references, the availability of self-instructional materials, as well as the support and

advice from supervisors who were committed to the project, makes the novice researcher's life a lot more bearable.

### **Chapter Summary**

The discussion has attempted to explain in as much detail as possible the methods used, and another which wasn't though could have been used, to gather data for this study. It examines briefly, methodological challenges and some ethical issues researchers often encounter working with and among Pacific communities. The chapter also highlights some of the challenges a non-Western researcher faces when working among his or her own people, and explains limitations of the methods used and some difficulties encountered during the sorting and coding of the data. It argues that culturally appropriate methods of doing research among Pacific communities require researchers to be respectful and considerate of, and responsive to Pacific community protocols and cultural conventions.

A significant portion of the chapter has been devoted to explain the concept of 'triangulation', and argued for the need for researchers to keep an open mind about triangulation, or using more than one method when doing research among Pacific communities. The discussion also noted that while triangulation has limitations, it has advantages which could enhance research in certain research contexts.

Finally, the chapter concludes with an admission of the researcher as a 'novice' which shouldn't discourage graduate students and others, especially members of minority groups to engage in, and be trained in the area of research, and research methodologies in particular.

# **PART TWO**

## **ALCOHOL AND SAMOA: THE BACKDROP**

### **Introduction**

This section contains two chapters which deal with the background to Samoan people's attitudes to alcoholic liquor. Chapter Four is a relatively straightforward exploration of the roles of some early Europeans which shaped the Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and its use. For example, it explores the general impacts of various European agencies on Samoan social institutions which controlled, or sought to control, Samoa from 1830 to the present. It looks at the distinctive and different impacts of various groups of people in this process of social transformation. The final part of this chapter looks at the Samoan governments' and contemporary Samoan churches' role in social change.

Chapter Five, the second chapter in this section then deals with the ways in which these various agencies have sought to define and manage a particular part of their role: the regulation of the manufacture, supply and sale of liquor. These two chapters form the backdrop to contemporary Samoan attitudes to alcohol.

## Chapter Four

### MISSIONS AND COLONIAL ADMINISTRATORS

#### Argument: Missions and Colonial Administrators Influential in Shaping Samoans' Attitudes and Behaviours towards Alcohol

*To understand current problems we must know something of the past. History is the greatest teacher of all (Ramsden, 1944: 9).*

#### **Introduction**

To comprehend the current attitudes and behaviours of Samoan people towards alcohol, it is necessary to understand the role and positions which the Christian missions and colonial administrations adopted to the alcoholic liquor and its consumption in the period since 1830. The material in this chapter provides a summary of these historical influences which shaped Samoans' current attitudes and behaviours to alcohol and its use. The discussion briefly highlights the roles of the early European settlers in Samoa, specifically the beachcombers, traders and consul administrators, and more importantly, the missionaries in the missionization of, and commercial development in Samoa during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. It examines how European settlers' values and moralities, embedded in the Western concepts of individualism and commercialism, have shaped, to a considerable extent, Samoans' value systems and practices of *fa'asamoa*. More particularly, the chapter examines the various groups' disparate views on alcohol and how the different groups' attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and its use may have contributed to Samoans' contemporary ones.

#### **Historical Context**

As the above quotation aptly avers, in order to understand contemporary problems, we need to know something of the past. Gaye Tuchmann has also noted that, 'to understand one's question one needs some background in the relevant historical period' (1998: 239). Similarly, Macpherson has noted that

Samoans' current attitudes and behaviours always have their roots in history and the missions and administrations have shaped that history in central ways'.<sup>33</sup> Hence the need for this chapter to set the scene to the analysis that follows with a historical contextualization of the role of some key players, especially the early Europeans at the time of contact with Samoans and their social world.

This chapter will also show that Europeans did not constitute a single homogeneous group which was united around a single social, economic and political agenda for Samoa as is often assumed. In fact, as I will show, the European population comprised a number of separate groups with rather different, and frequently competing, social, political and economic agendas. Each group sought to advance its own interests and, in the process, to thwart those of others who sought to usurp their influence. This was especially evident in respect of their attitudes to alcohol and its use and to the trade in alcohol and to the potential effects of alcohol on Samoan society.

### ***The Beachcombers***

Alcoholic beverages were introduced to the islands of Oceania by European explorers including 'crews of whaleships and beachcombers' (Marshall, 1979b). Ralston (1977) argued that the beachcombers were the 'first Europeans to make any significant impact on the islanders in terms of inter-racial understanding and the advance of European interests and technology' (1977: 20). From about 1820 until the 1830s, when European missionaries, permanent traders and consuls arrived, beachcombers had frequented Samoa which for many years after the massacre in Tutuila of the members of the crew of the French explorer La Pérouse (Ralston, 1977: 23),<sup>34</sup> had been avoided by traders and whalers. Ralston noted that 'beachcombing did not end once other foreigners had settled permanently in the island groups, but

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<sup>33</sup> Cluny Macpherson, Personal comment. (January 2004).

<sup>34</sup> The accounts given of the affair in "Voyages of La Perouse" had the effect of branding the Samoans for close to a century as bloodthirsty and treacherous savages; but had the native version been known a different complexion would have been given the story. The quarrel did not originate with the party who went ashore in the boats; instead, it was due to the punishment of a native who had visited the ship and had committed some petty theft. According to Rev. Dr. Turner, author of "Nineteen Years in Polynesia" ... the poor fellow was shot at and mortally wounded, and when taken on shore, bleeding and dying, his enraged companions roused all who were on the spot to seek instant revenge'. *The Cyclopaedia of Samoa*, (1907:2).

rather its participants either changed their occupation or moved away from the centres where the newly arrived Europeans congregated' (1977: 23-24). Moreover, Ralston noted that 'the beachcombers as a group joined in wars armed with muskets' and taught the islanders how to distil alcohol from a variety of native products (1977: 24). Likewise, Marshall (1979b) stated that: 'Resident beachcombers not only provided the islanders with examples of raucous and belligerent drunken comportment but in many cases taught them how to manufacture their own fermented and distilled alcoholic beverages' (1979b: 35).

On the characteristics of the early beachcombers, Historian, K. R. Howe (2000), noted that 'most beachcombers in the Pacific islands were escaped convicts from New South Wales or runaways from the harsh realities of shipboard life' (2000: 16). Similarly, Gilson (1970) explained that:

... the foreign settlers whom Samoa attracted were mainly of the refugee classes – the escaped convicts and deserted seamen who, for one reason or another, were desperate enough to try their luck among a reputedly hostile people. It was thus from the poor illiterate, and often the dissolute and violent, that the Samoans began to acquire a more intimate, if incomplete, knowledge of Western civilization (Gilson, 1970: 68).

Gilson also noted that several of the fugitives and castaways who had landed at Samoa before the missionaries, did not establish themselves in very secure positions.

Seldom able to stand each other's company for long, and preferring in any case the maximum of Samoan hospitality, they scattered widely, so that, considering their lack of overseas connections or support and their participation in Samoan village life, which limited both the degree and extent of their influence, they did not pose, either individually or collectively, any serious challenge to Samoan political supremacy in any quarter (Gilson, 1970: 142).

Similarly, historian, Peter Hempenstall (1984) argued that at first, and at least during the 1830s, Samoan villages exercised control over the community of beachcombers and itinerant traders, with 'village assemblies dispensing punishment unilaterally on those who infringed traditional codes of social behaviour' (1984: 21). Later, as Richards (1988) has pointed out, some of the



beachcombers acted as interpreters, pilots and trading agents for other early European arrivals, such as the American whalers who began frequenting the Samoan islands from 1834 onwards (1988: 12). Moreover, Gunson (1978) stated that: 'In Samoa a beachcomber known as Salima Norval attached to the high chief Mauga of Pago Pago was instrumental in persuading that chief to abandon old gods and is said to have translated part of the Church of England Prayer Book into Samoan' (1978: 169).

Gunson also noted that the influence of Norval, and the arrival in Samoa of 'drift-voyagers from Eastern Polynesia including a Christian convert named Hura, and the arrival of Tongan Christians induced a demand for religious teachers in the Samoa group' (1978: 169). Gunson added that several of the beachcombers 'were quick to realize the profits to be derived from teaching a spurious Christianity which resulted in a 'sailor religion'. As well, Gunson stated that some of the leaders of the sailor religion 'taught that they themselves were sacred and that all food prohibitions (sa) were wrong' (ibid, p. 169).<sup>35</sup>

Koskinen (1953) observed that the beachcombers realized that 'the advance of missionary work could only mean the end of their influence' on island social life and that they 'generally tried to prevent missionary influence from establishing itself and spreading' (1953: 40). Koskinen also noted that at the outset, when white men reached the South Sea Islands and generally tended to seek out one another's company, 'there was sharp antagonism between these adventurers and the missionaries'.

Even when the resident white population were not of the beachcomber category, they found the hypocritical morals of the missionaries less than pleasing. ... Although at the beginning they were pleased to see, thanks to missionary work, civilization advancing rapidly, the missionaries estranged even these favourably disposed whites with their uncompromising attitude (Koskinen, 1953: 128).

I discuss the role of the missions and the missionaries in Samoa later. But other Europeans such as traders and colonial administrators also impacted

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<sup>35</sup> Gunson noted that the Siovili cult, introduced by a Samoan sailor Joe Vili or Joe Gimlet at about the same time, was a similar version to the 'sailor religion' (Gunson, 1978: 169).

significantly on Samoans' attitudes to commercial, political and economic organization, which I discuss next.

### ***Traders and Colonial Administrations***

Traders' interests in alcohol can be clearly distinguished from those of beachcombers. For the former, alcohol was a trade commodity which could contribute to the profitability of trading enterprises. Where a taste for alcohol developed, and where alternative sources of alcohol were unavailable, its value was artificially inflated and profit margins from its sale were potentially high. They had an interest in suppressing beachcombers' right to supply the product in order to gain a monopoly of supply and the advantages that this conferred. This could be done in a number of ways.

Colonial administrators' interests in alcohol again differed from those of both beachcombers and traders. They had generally to regulate the supply of alcohol in the interests of stable government and the maintenance of order in colonial possessions. They were also under pressure to demonstrate to their employers in metropolitan centres that they were successful in both managing the colonies, and to 'aboriginal welfare' movements for protecting the interests of indigenous occupants in those territories. Thus, European interests in alcohol and its regulation varied and depended on a range of social and economic factors.

John Williams wrote in 1873 that '[w]here the missionary goes, new channels are cut for the stream of commerce' (1873: 583). This was also the case in the islands of Samoa where the British traders 'were the first to persuade the natives to produce cocoanut oil for export' (Ellison, 1938: 29).

In the [1850s] British traders established their headquarters in Samoa and Tahiti, where goods brought from other islands were assembled to be transshipped to Europe. This trade proved extremely lucrative, for the goods bartered to the natives were of little value (Ellison, 1938: 29-30).

Later arrivals to Samoa, after the British traders, were the Germans in the 1850s and some American land speculators in the 1860s. Ellison (1938) noted that the German traders 'pushed their interests ... so energetically and

at times so unscrupulously that by 1875 they controlled the trade of the Samoan Islands' (1938: 31). Some observers have noted that Germany's colonial policy in the Pacific during the nineteenth century was centered largely around the interests and trading activities of the leading Hamburg trading and shipping firm John and Ceasar Godeffroy (Ellison, 1938: 32-36). Ellison posited that along with the missionaries, 'traders paved the way not only for commerce but for consuls and men-of-war' (1938: 30). Consulates were established and existed to advance and protect the commercial interests of nationals of various countries.

While nominally, representatives of metropolitan powers, engaged to protect and advance their interests impartially, this was not always the case. From time to time, the interests of commerce and consulate were inseparable. For example, Theodore Weber, who for twenty-five years controlled the interests of the German firm J. C. Godeffroy, the most powerful commercial company in the South Pacific at the time, was also German consul at Apia.

The British and American consuls also played significant roles in the early years of Samoa's intercourse with Europeans. Reverend George Pritchard, who became British consul in Samoa in 1844, for example, 'urged his government to send warships to Samoa to impress the natives with the power of the British government even if it were necessary to burn a village or two' (Masterman, 1934: 46-47). Recall that it was the same George Pritchard, the British ex-consul who was expelled and deported from Tahiti in 1844, who was later transferred to Samoa as Britain's official representative in July 1845. Pritchard was also expelled from the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1852 when he brought in a second shipment of liquor under his consular protection, having earlier defied the law when he imported the first cargo of spirits for the Apia port trade in 1850 (Gilson, 1970: 176-177). Gunson (1978) stated that for engaging in the liquor trade, Pritchard and his sons 'were bitterly criticized by the Samoan missionaries' (1978: 170).

But not all consular representatives took the same approach to alcohol. The first visit to Samoa of Colonel Albert Steinberger as the United States' 'special and confidential agent to investigate the resources of the islands' in

the early 1870s, was significant for a number of reasons (Ellison, 1938: 47). Ellison noted that Steinberger 'was largely responsible for the establishment of the Samoan constitution and code of laws, the first of their kinds in the islands. His apparent sincere interest in the welfare of the country, his hard work, and his ability and tact endeared him and his country to the natives and whites, particularly the missionaries' (1938: 53).

One of the more significant achievements of Steinberger's first visit, in the context of this discussion, was the manner in which he gained support from missionaries across the spectrum of religious denominations in Samoa. Ellison noted that before Steinberger left Samoa, several LMS missionaries, the long-serving Wesleyan missionary Reverend George Brown, as well as the Roman Catholic bishop in Samoa, Father L. Elloy, all wrote letters of support, and were in concert in their praise and appreciation of Steinberger's mission. Furthermore, the missionaries expressed their desire which they noted, was also that of the Samoans, for United States protection and intervention (1938: 51-55).

At any rate, whilst Steinberger may have been successful in inaugurating a new government in Samoa with a written constitution, his emphasis on protecting 'the rights of the natives' caused enmity amongst the 'whites' who saw their privileges and rights been curtailed. One of the issues which a number of the foreigners objected to was the 'strict regulation of affairs, especially with regard to the sale and tax on liquor' (Ellison, 1938: 62).

Ellison observed of Samoa's relations with the Great Powers towards the end of the nineteenth century thus:

With the entrance of Samoa into treaty relations with the United States, Germany, and England, the first period of its history definitely came to a close. During this period western explorers, missionaries, traders, adventurers, consuls, and naval officers made the islands known to the world and introduced them to western civilization – Christianity, industry, trade, political and social institutions.

Whether the coming of the white man has resulted in good or ill for the natives; whether the introduction of western civilization was a blessing or a curse for the Samoans, is a debatable question. In his protest against the partition of his kingdom among the foreign powers,

Malietao asserted that the civilization which the foreigners introduced into Polynesia was inferior to that which the natives had possessed (Ellison, 1938: 107-108).

Interestingly, a New York *Nation* editorial (April 30, 1899, p. 285) opined that considering what the three world powers of the United States, England, and Germany undertook to do in Samoa, and what they actually accomplished, it looked like a 'sarcastic comment by fate on human intention. During the years of trying to teach the natives how to live in peace, the three powers intrigued, squabbled, and carried on war in a savage way' (cited in Ellison, 1938: 108).

This brief discussion on the role of three colonial powers and their agents in bringing western civilization to Samoa illustrates their agendas and covert schemes for achieving their particular goals. It demonstrates how colonial administrators and some Christian missions have influenced the course of history, the economic, social and political organizations, as well as cultural values of Samoa and the Samoan people in many respects. It is the roles of the missions and missionaries in shaping Pacific history and Samoan social organizations which I focus on now.

### **Missions and Missionaries**

During the early nineteenth century, Christian missions and missionaries gained considerable influence in the Pacific, particularly in the islands of Polynesia. Koskinen argued that whilst the 'propagation of Christianity' was to be the main aim of all missionary work, the missions were mindful that 'political influence of missionaries were very closely connected with evangelical tendencies' (1953: 48).

If the establishment of authority was an absolute necessity for the success of missionary work, it was clearly important to obtain political influence, and to strengthen it once it was obtained. The help that originated from co-operation with native social leaders was of revolutionary importance to missionary work (Koskinen, 1953: 48).

Francis Hezel (1978), a Jesuit priest and educator in Micronesia, argued that:

Christian missions have long been a controversial force in the colonial history of Oceania. To some observers, the missionary is the very

personification of that spirit of cultural imperialism which has succeeded in wreaking its mindless changes on unsuspecting native people and in making their islands cultural wastelands. The very word "missionary" often conjures up the image of a religious frontiersman, usually ill-prepared to appreciate the beauty and logic of the culture within he works, who pursues single-mindedly his goal of converting the heathen. With cross raised over the pagan land, he busies himself in baptizing babies, uprooting degrading superstitions, and preaching a new and better way of life to a people who are in his eyes at best children, at worst savages (Hezel, 1978: 251).

But Hezel also argued that while the 'stereotype of the missionary as imperialist is not without a measure of truth ... it is surely not the whole truth'. He observed that even 'if most missionaries did carry with them a pronounced sense of cultural superiority over the natives, this did not necessarily vitiate their effectiveness' (1978: 262).

Anthropologist, Kenelm Burridge, argued that while missionaries 'bring about many changes in an indigenous culture ... they do not necessarily bring about those that may seem, with hindsight, to have been inevitable' (1978: 5).

Besides preaching the gospel, learning languages, and recording customs and traditions, they introduced literacy and learning, were physicians and surgeons, taught new skills and crafts, brought new goods – combined in themselves, in short, all those roles and activities which, organized into a variety of aid and development agencies, are now to be found cluttering the capitals of lesser-developed countries. ... the missionary has been differentiated into a variety of specializations which now require complex bureaucracies to organize and maintain (Burridge, 1978: 5-6).

Missionary and anthropologist, Daniel Hughes (1978), in his examination of some 'basic differences between the missionary and the anthropologist that might bias their views of one another', noted that 'in recent years there has been an increasing stress in missionary training on the need for the missionary to adapt to the local culture' (1978: 65). Hughes remarked that Christianity throughout the Pacific, as elsewhere,

... contains elements of the traditional religious system. But that does not change the fact that in most Pacific societies the people are Christian and their world view is largely centered on their Christian faith.

Because of the length of a missionary's stay in an area and the nature of his [sic] relationship with the people, he is often highly respected and very popular (Hughes, 1978: 80).

Furthermore, Hughes suggested that the Christian missionary activity in the Pacific, including Samoa was part of the expansion of Western culture and colonial power throughout the Pacific:

The Christian missionaries who first went to the various Pacific islands were part of a wave of Western culture that was sweeping across these islands at an ever-increasing tempo. Western ships were more impressive, Western tools more durable, and Western arms more destructive than those of the islanders (Hughes 1978: 201).

### **Influence of Missions and Missionaries in Samoa**

Of all the Europeans that visited Samoa before and during the nineteenth century, the missionaries influenced Samoan people's society most. The work of the missions especially of the early LMS missionaries in Samoa has been described thus: 'Christianity, instead of bursting the bonds of the old life, has been eaten up by it'.<sup>36</sup> Historian, Sylvia Masterman (1934) wrote that John Williams noted that Samoans drank in the words of the missionary 'with outstretched necks and gaping mouths' (Masterman, 1934: 38). Arguably, this is not an inaccurate interpretation of the manner in which Samoans accepted and embraced Christianity and embodied it into their cultural, political, spiritual, and social way of life.

Masterman also noted that as well as teaching crafts, the missionaries were

... zealously determined to clothe the natives in the respectable garments of the English middle classes, and among the prime articles of import (until about 1870) were cotton prints, shirts and trousers, shoes and stockings and – particularly popular – umbrellas. Bonnets, astonishing parodies of early nineteenth-century feminine headgear, were usually manufactured of island materials, and were, and are to this day, the churchgoers' substitute for the gay garlands of flowers that clothe the head on weekdays (Masterman, 1934: 42).

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<sup>36</sup> This reference to Keesing (1934) is cited in Tiffany, 1978, p. 424. The Keesing text, held in the Auckland University General Library, however, has a section missing from pages 395 to 414, so that this particular reference could not be verified.

However, as Masterman also noted, the 'harmless trade in hardware and prints was in course of time supplemented by less scrupulous people with spirits and gunpowder' (1934: 42).

Interestingly, Douglas Oliver (1989), has argued that Samoa in 1939, 'had for years been pronounced a colonial "failure", the causes of which go back many centuries' (1989: 145). As well, Oliver stated that 'Samoans adapted to Western commerce as easily (and as characteristically) as they did to Western religion, choosing those aspects and items that fitted comfortably into the *fa'a Samoa* and rejecting the rest'.

The missions were able to outlaw a few indigenous practices, such as the ceremonial defloration of brides – her virginity having been a source of pride both to her family and her groom – and to add a few new ones such as strict observance of the Sabbath, but they did not bring about radical changes in native morality or ideology (Oliver, 1989: 147).

At any rate, it is generally acknowledged that the decision by paramount chief Malietoa Vainu'upo, and a number of leading chiefs, to embrace the new religion following the arrival of John Williams and the London Missionary Society (LMS) mission in 1830, was exceedingly influential and a significant milestone in the acceptance of the missionaries and Christianity throughout the islands of Samoa. Reverend George Turner, an LMS missionary who resided in Samoa for over ten years, wrote about the reception of Christianity in Samoa as follows:

On the reception of Christianity, temples were destroyed, the sacred groves left to be overrun by the bush, the shells and stones and divining cups were thrown away, and the fish and fowls which they had previously regarded as incarnations of their gods were eaten without suspicion or alarm. In a remarkably short time, under God's blessing, hardly a vestige of the entire system was to be seen (Turner, 1861: 243).

Gilson (1970) also noted that despite the missionaries' reservations about the chieftaincy and the nature of its authority over the people 'they chose not to interfere with the organization or leadership of Samoan kin groups for reason of expediency' (cited in Macpherson, 1999: 76). Koskinen noted that missionary societies 'strongly opposed the political activities of the



missionaries working under them' (1953: 48). He said the founders of the London Mission Society (LMS) clearly stated in the plan for the establishment of the society that: 'Its sole object was defined as to spread the knowledge of Christ among heathen and other unenlightened nations' (1953: 48-49).

But Samoa did become an important foothold especially of the LMS mission in the first half of the nineteenth century. Anthropologist, Sharon Tiffany (1982), for example, wrote that: 'Even the most casual observer is impressed with the religiosity and devoutness of the Samoans, who have transformed Christianity into a unique indigenous complex of beliefs and practices ...' (1982: 424).

Within ten years of the new religion's introduction into Samoa, for instance, a significant number of Samoans were converted to Christianity. Commodore Charles Wilkes, commander of the American survey mission,<sup>37</sup> remarked that by 1839, about two thirds of the total Samoan population belonged to the Christian faith.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Tiffany stated that 'twenty years after the arrival of the *Messenger of Peace*, 'there were practically no self-confessed heathens left' in Samoa.<sup>39</sup>

Oliver (1961), explained that:

In Samoa, where religion was never so highly institutionalized as elsewhere in Polynesia, the mission teachers simply replaced native priests in the new system, and the matais [chiefs], formerly the families' intercessors with supernatural forces, simply became deacons in village churches. Ultimately the Protestant congregations developed into peculiarly Samoan native-church organizations, processing mainly local twists in doctrine and practice (Oliver: 1961: 213).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Known as the Wilkes Expedition, the mission arrived in the Samoan archipelago in October 1839, and spent five weeks surveying the entire Samoan group (Holmes & Holmes, 1992, p. 19).

<sup>38</sup> Wilkes estimated that the Samoan population of around 56,600 in 1835 was distributed thus: Savai'i, 20,000; Upolu, 25,000; Tutuila, 8000; Eastern Group, 2000; Manono, 1,100; Apolima, 500 (cited in Ellison, 1938: 22 footnote).

<sup>39</sup> Watters, R. F. (1959), 'The Transition to Christianity in Samoa', *Historical Studies*, 8: 392-399, cited in Tiffany, 1978: 430.

<sup>40</sup> Cited in Tiffany, 1978: 424.

Furthermore, Oliver noted that the Samoans were receptive to the missionaries to the extent that 'before many years Samoan converts were spreading the gospel to other islands' of the Pacific (1989: 147).

Historian, Ellison (1938) remarked that while the missionaries were introducing western civilization to Samoa, the French and the American governments sent expeditions to investigate the South Seas, including Samoa (1938: 22-23). Ellison suggested that the new civilization introduced to Samoa 'effected a mixture of good and evil'.

The explorers introduced firearms and spirituous liquor; run-away sailors, convict desperados, 'salt water vagrants', taught the natives evil practices. The influence of the missionaries was more wholesome: they combated evil customs, encouraged industry, and opened schools (Ellison, 1938: 28).

Anthropologist, Lowell Holmes (1958) observed that the ministry is the highest calling in all of Samoa, and the village pastors are the most respected and influential of men:

No religious leader under the ancient Samoan religion ever equalled the paramount position of the village *faifeau*. Many of the decisions of the village council may be clearly traced to his wishes. While clergy may not hold chiefly titles, the village pastor is paid greater honours than are accorded any titled chief, regardless of rank. When he attends a village council he sits in the end of the house, the seat of honour, and drinks first *kava*, also the position of honour. Village visitors are often quartered at the pastor's house rather than the guest house of the High Chief, which was formerly the place to entertain those of high rank (Holmes, 1958: 35).

It is fair to say that the missions and missionaries who introduced Christianity to Samoa in the nineteenth century, have influenced many Samoans' views of the world, and shaped to a considerable extent, their attitudes to life in general and their morals and principles in particular. To this day, Protestant Christianity which the LMS missionaries brought to the South Seas two hundred years ago continues to impact significantly on the attitudes of some Samoan people in New Zealand, Australia, and more recently, Hawaii towards religion.

## **Samoa Churches and Alcohol**

As stated earlier, any discussion on alcohol and Samoan people inexorably touches on the role and influence of the early European missionaries in shaping many Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol. During the nineteenth century, for example, the prohibitive attitudes of some Protestant missionaries towards alcohol and alcohol consumption was perceived, and justified by some, as an attempt by the missionaries to help safeguard the 'natives' from the influence of European settlers, some of whom were renowned for their passion for alcohol. The missionary historian, Niel Gunson (1966), for example, has observed that the early missionaries in the Pacific 'were aware from the beginning that the introduction of spirits would cause havoc in the islands and work against the mission' (1966: 51). The record suggests that, beyond this general proposition, there was a degree of variability in the ways in which European missionaries, and mission, used alcohol and sought to regulate the access of others to alcohol. Again, it suggests that to represent the missions as exemplars of abstinence and a unified force for abstention is to ignore the historical reality.

Gunson also noted that several missionaries who came out to the Pacific Islands in the early 1800s rapidly became alcoholic, and 'several sons of missionaries became notorious drunkards' (Ibid, p. 54). Furthermore, Gunson stated that:

The effect of the high incidence of alcoholism amongst early missionaries on the image of the European missionary in the Islands ... concerns us directly. Missionary lapses were seen as individual failures rather than as evidence of the falsehood of the new religion. However, there were inconsistencies which did tend to alienate the allegiance of the islanders, and which could have had serious consequences if temperance reform had not been introduced (Gunson, 1966: 54).

But some of the LMS missionaries who came out to the Pacific in the early nineteenth century succumbed to alcoholism. For example, Gunson (1966) has argued that 'the frontier in the mission field was peculiarly endowed for fostering alcoholism':

Not only were the usual features of the frontier life present but also there were the subtle pressures of an alien religion, elements of the mysterious

blended with elements of the barbaric. The air fetid with the decomposition of human sacrifice, the sight of things appearing obscene, unnatural or cruel – such things were commonplace in many of the islands of Polynesia. The more subtle temptations of a sexual nature in a physical environment little short of Paradise were but part of the tropical milieu which increased the potential for alcoholism (Gunson, 1966: 46).

Even the infamous LMS missionaries Revs John Williams and Charles Barff, weren't exempt from imbibing liquor and indeed their conduct surprised other missionaries. Gunson noted that some American missionaries who visited the Marquesas to discuss plans for the opening of a new mission, were surprised to be invited by the LMS missionaries to partake in drinking two bottles, 'one of brandy, the other of gin':

You may judge what were our feelings when we received such expressions of friendship & civility from those who had come out to the dark parts of the earth to hold forth the light of life. ... We mildly told the brethren our views on the subject, & how the friends of temperance reason in America. They were not, however, convinced, for the two bottles graced the table everyday while we remained (cited in Gunson, 1966: 56).

Another LMS missionary with a Samoan connection, Rev William Harbutt, defended himself against an assertion in *The Scottish Journal* for July 1843 – 'Such wine-bibbing missionaries are a disgrace to Christianity' – saying that the informant, Captain Smith, was not a total abstainer in 1839, that he drank wine, and that the missionaries 'occasionally joined him and took a single glass after dinner' (Gunson, 1966: 59).

But not all Christian missions in Samoa shared the same philosophical and doctrinal approach adopted by the LMS missionaries towards alcohol and its consumption. For example, the arrival of Fathers Roudaire and Violette in 1845, followed by the opening of a S.F.O.<sup>41</sup> cut rate store in Apia in 1846, brought Catholicism and its own doctrines to Samoa. Whilst the advent of the Marist missionaries in Samoa was perceived as a threat by the LMS and

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<sup>41</sup> Gilson notes that the Societe Francaise de l'Oceanie (S.F.O.), was an organization dedicated to the planting of mission stations and trade stores throughout the Pacific islands that was established between French mercantile interests and Catholic missionaries in 1845. According to Gilson, the S.F.O. 'was determined to offer better terms of trade than its competitors, one object being to attract bargain-hunters to the Church, which in turn would try to assure the stores a monopoly of Catholic business'. (1970: 172).

Methodist missions, which purveyed anti-Catholic propaganda against the newcomer, the Catholic mission did eventually gain adherents,<sup>42</sup> and over the years, has played a significant role in Samoa's development, especially in the area of education and sport. In terms of alcohol consumption, some participants in this study including the Catholic priest participant, noted that alcohol wasn't totally prohibited although drinking responsibly and in moderation was preferred. Furthermore, the Catholic mission has remained one of the three largest church denominations in Samoa. More recently, for instance, Catholicism has, since 2001, become the largest religious denomination among Samoans in New Zealand.

In contrast to the Catholic Mission's position on moderation regarding alcohol use, the arrival of the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and the Latter Day Saints (LDS) missions in the 1880s introduced a doctrine which explicitly prohibited alcohol and other beverages such as coffee and tea. Other religious denominations such as the Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, as well as other groups such as Baha'i, which are all represented in the sample for this study, have also introduced and promoted, their own doctrines in relation to alcohol and its consumption. Clearly, contemporary Samoan church denominations have different perspectives on alcohol and its consumption, even to the extent that individual viewpoints within, and among particular religious affiliations differ, and practices in terms of alcohol consumption may be likewise, dissimilar.

For example, at one end of the spectrum is the Roman Catholic mission that takes a more easy-going, 'all in moderation' approach to alcohol and its consumption. As Marshall (2003b), has observed: 'Although Catholics did not usually actively oppose consumption of alcoholic beverages by islanders, Protestant missionaries spoke out against the "Demon Rum" from early on reflecting the rise of temperance movements in their home countries' (2003b:

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<sup>42</sup> According to Gilson, while the Catholic mission did not gain much support among Samoans early, things changed for the better when Mata'afa Fagamanu, a contender for the Tui Atua title, was called upon by a Wallis Island chief, Lavelua, to return a long-standing obligation, and 'find a secure place for the Catholic missionaries in Samoa'. Gilson notes that ten years earlier, Mata'afa and a number of Samoans were traveling between Upolu and Tutuila when they were blown off course in a storm, and had drifted to Wallis Island where chief Lavelua, 'had received them, given them hospitality, and assisted towards their return to Samoa' (Gilson, 1970: 169).

473). At the other end are the LDS, and the SDA missions, as well as some of the more recent denominations of fundamentalist persuasion such as the Pentecostal, Baptists, Jehovah's Witness, and several others which take a firm prohibitive position against alcohol and its consumption. The Protestants, including the Methodists and Reformers<sup>43</sup> seem to lean toward alcohol prohibition as well, although there appears to be no strict doctrine for or against the practices of some church leaders, as well as some church members around alcohol consumption. Or if there were strict guidelines, as one pastor of the Reformed LMS Church insists, that the church is absolutely against alcohol consumption, some church members still indulge. In other words, such doctrines may not necessarily be complied with, especially by one or two church leaders who themselves, indulge in alcohol.

At any rate, as Ellison (1938) noted: 'Whatever may have been their motives, the Samoans eagerly accepted the new religion. ... British missionaries were the first and the most active in converting the natives, Great Britain gained special advantages among the Samoans' (1938: 22-29). And whilst the British LMS and Wesleyan missionaries and those of the French Catholics both contributed to the missionization of Samoa, another foreign power that was to play a major role in determining the course of history for the islands and people of Samoa was Germany, which Ellison argued, 'came to Samoa merely as traders (1938: 31).

But it wasn't just Christianity and spiritual sustenance that the missionaries introduced to Samoa. Robert Louis Stevenson, who lived out the last few years of his life in Samoa, and whose sense of romance was captured by the islands of Samoa and the Samoans, wrote about the missionaries in Samoa as follows:

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<sup>43</sup> I refer to these denominations in the context of the Samoan churches, including the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa or CCCS, Methodist Church of Samoa, the Pacific Island Presbyterians (PIC), and the Samoan Reformed LMS Church, of which some participants of this study are members. But there are also other branches of these same churches which have separated from the main churches and have adherents who also practice in New Zealand outside the main CCCS, Samoan Methodist Church, and the Samoan SDA mission. Religious denominations represented in this study sample, other than those mentioned above are the Pentecostal Church, Jehovah's Witness, Baha'i and Quakers.

Missionaries are perhaps apt to meddle overmuch outside their discipline; it is a fault which should be judged with mercy; the problem is sometimes so insidiously presented that even a moderate and able man is betrayed beyond his own intention; and the missionary in such land as Samoa is something else besides a minister of mere religion; he represents civilization, he is condemned to be an organ of reform, he could scarce evade (even if he desired) a certain influence in political affairs (Stevenson, 1996:133).

The missionaries, however, believed in their 'calling' and were determined to convert the heathen natives. In Samoa, the missionary endeavour lives on but in a form and version which Samoan people themselves have fashioned, but still shaped and influenced to a large extent, by the nineteenth century European missions and missionaries.

### ***Impact on Culture and Social Organizations***

The nature and extent of, the missions and missionaries influence on Samoans and their social organizations were not confined to spirituality as has been mentioned. Not only did the missionaries convert Samoan people from paganism to Christianity, they introduced the written word and translated the Holy Bible into the Samoan language. The European missionary, and later the Samoan *faifeau* or pastor, was subsequently accorded the highest honor within the village code of ethics and protocols as *ao o fa'alupega*, head of the village honorifics, surpassing the status of high chiefs and orators. The position of the *faifeau* within the village *fono*, to which he may be invited to attend now and then, or attending in the course of his role as spiritual guide, the representative of God, the giver of blessings, the symbolic 'father of the congregation', certainly commands respect at the highest level.

Furthermore, the position of the first three missions; the LMS, Methodist, and Roman Catholics have been incorporated into the Samoan *fa'alupega*, listing of honorifics, and titular hierarchies and important Samoan historical milestones. Three of the most important *taeao*, literally meaning a 'new dawn', or watersheds in Samoan history, are the occasions of the arrival of those three missions in Samoa. The *lauga*, the Samoan formal oral

presentation to greet guests and at other important occasions, would not be complete without special citation of *taeao*, including the three landmarks of Christianity, referring particularly to the names of the places where the three missions landed.<sup>44</sup> An orator's level of understanding of and knowledge about *fa'asamoa* and its protocols and hierarchies is often judged by his ability to recite the *taeao* in their entirety and correct sequence.

### ***Importance of Samoa Mission***

Although Samoa was not one of the first island groups in the Pacific to be 'missionized' by European missionaries, it became an important foothold for the Christian mission enterprise, especially that of the LMS following early and dramatic conversions, and the establishment of its Theological Training Centre at Malua in 1844. Tiffany noted that the success of the LMS enterprise in Samoa was, amongst other reasons, 'its decentralized organization and local congregational approach to non-Christian peoples.' Tiffany also pointed out that:

In Samoa, the missionaries were confronted with a vigorous sociopolitical system which necessitated their adaptation to an indigenous organization of cognatic descent groups and chiefly hierarchies. ... In effect, the missionization process was politicized. ... In short, the missionaries' concern with their flock's spiritual welfare inevitably meant intervention in internal political affairs, which in turn influenced the structure and organization of the mission enterprise (Tiffany: 1978: 424).

But other religious denominations also played their part in the missionization of Samoa, and they too have contributed in shaping Samoan people's attitudes to religion and world views over the years. The *Lotu Toga*, or Wesleyan Church and *Lotu Pope*, Roman Catholic Church, also played significant roles in the religious development of Samoans and *fa'asamoa*, and have remained, along with the *Lotu Ta'iti* the LMS, the three largest Christian denominations since they brought Christianity to the islands of Samoa in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Methodists had Tongan teachers who had married into Samoan families attempting to convert Samoans to Christianity as early as 1928, before Reverends John Williams

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<sup>44</sup> The places where the three missions landed, are referred to as the *tulaga maota*, the ceremonial house sites of the highest chief of those villages.



and Charles Barff of the LMS mission arrived in 1830. However, the Methodist teachers later returned to Tonga leaving the LMS as the only Protestant denomination in Samoa until their return in the late-1850s. Meanwhile, in 1845 Catholicism was introduced by French Marists in Samoa when Fathers Roudaire and La Violette, coming from Wallis, 'were able to make use of Wallisian chiefly connections to gain entrée to Samoan high chief Mata'afa' (Hamilton, 1998: 167). Hamilton argued that despite arriving in Samoa after the LMS and the Methodists, 'Catholicism offered impressive ritual and, according to Catholic missionaries, Samoans were certainly attracted by Catholic ceremonies, and their musical talents were well attuned to Catholic worship' (1998: 172). As well, Hamilton noted that Catholicism

... was lenient towards customs such as tattooing, although strongly proclaiming its stricter stance on marriage and divorce. It was prepared to honour the dead in ceremony and prayer, and perhaps, in Samoan as well as Protestant eyes, came close to paying cultic honours to sub-deities (Hamilton, 1998: 172).

One of the major differences in the missions' stances and approach towards Samoans' behaviours and practices was in the manner in which Samoan people treated alcoholic beverages, which I discuss in more detail later. But it is important to digress briefly, in order to show how the missionaries and Christian missions generally, have been perceived in the context of changes which they produced in indigenous cultures of Pacific island societies.

### ***Missionaries as Agents of Change***

Some writers and commentators have painted the missionaries and their missions as very useful and influential in bringing changes to the Samoans and their political, economic and social organizations. While some anthropologists and historians have argued that missionaries came to Oceania to change island cultures, assuming that 'without missionary influence these cultures would have remained largely intact', Pacific historian, Sione Latukefu (1978), contended that the missionary activity 'was not only inevitable but also highly significant and, therefore, ought to be studied as objectively as possible'. Latukefu argued that in spite of their failures and limitations, the missionaries had a tremendous influence on the way of life of the various peoples among whom they worked (1978: 107).

However, Latukefu conceded 'that missionaries set out deliberately to change a people's way of life and make no attempt to disguise their intentions' (Ibid, p. 458). He also noted that while islanders appreciated the usefulness of European goods, 'more efficient weapons and alcohol resulted in widespread confusion among the people ... in addition to rapid depopulation caused by European-introduced diseases' (Ibid, 458).

Other commentators, however, have not been so tolerant, or as generous towards the influence of the missionaries on Pacific Island cultures. Historical researcher, James Boutilier (1985), for instance, has argued that the activities of nineteenth-century missionaries threatened the spiritual and political status quo in the islands:

Missionaries were important agents of change. Their presence, their perceived associations with great natural and supernatural powers, their possession of and access to material goods, their esoteric knowledge, and their activities, threatened the spiritual and political status quo in the islands (Boutilier 1985: 14).

Boutilier also noted that the new religion offered a convenient vehicle for 'key actors whose patronage was seen to be vital to the success of the Christian endeavour; for working out old rivalries, for gaining material wealth, and for advancing political ambitions' (1985: 14).

Gilson (1970), in his authoritative study of Samoan history - from the arrival of the first European missionaries in Samoa in 1830, to 1900 - suggested that the early missionaries wanted political centralization in Samoa. But when the missionaries realized that meddling in Samoan political and social organizations would have been quite problematic, they gave up the idea of a centralized government at a very early stage. Gilson also noted that the church in Samoa symbolizes one of the most substantial contributions of European civilization to the Samoan way of life:

Samoan congregations have been building churches of Western design, expending vast amounts of money, material and labour in the process. ... the village church, however out of keeping with the island landscape, may be seen as a monument to the selectivity of the Samoan reaction to European contact (Gilson, 1970: 14-15).

That missionaries and the mission enterprise were successful in Samoa is unquestionable and has been widely publicised. First, the Europeans and later Samoan missionaries were trained to preach the gospel not only in Samoa but in other islands in Oceania. In some cases, Samoans have worked as missionaries at other overseas missionary postings outside of Oceania as well. But missionaries 'also sought, for various reasons, to reduce the level of hostility between villages and districts'. As Macpherson (1999a) has noted, John Williams 'sought to have the energy Samoans devoted to war diverted into religious activity' (1999a: 77). Macpherson also observed that in 'one important respect missionary activity was to have an impact on the rationale that underpinned traditional economic organization' (Ibid, p. 78).

Missionaries encouraged Samoans to raise contributions for the advancement of the mission by creating surpluses of crops that could be sold to finance missionary activity. These collections were organized by Samoan laity according to Samoans custom, and they pitted family against family and village against village in a competition to donate the most to the mission ... Families competed within the villages to out-give one another (Macpherson, 1999a: 78).

This competitiveness in giving to the church has continued, especially among the CCCS and Wesleyan missions in Samoa, and has been adopted by these church denominations in Samoan migrant enclaves in metropolitan centres.

### ***Christian Values and Samoan Values***

Some participants in this study have suggested that whilst missionaries were sincere in their endeavour to convert Samoans to Christianity, they also brought to the field their own European values which they eventually superimposed on Samoan culture. A *matai* participant in Samoa explained that elements of Christian values were already entrenched and practised within *fa'asamoa* before the arrival of European missionaries. He said evidence of this was the use of the concepts of *fa'aaloalo*, mutual respect, *ava fatafata* dignity, *feavata'i* and other terms which were already part and parcel of Samoan oral language before the missionaries arrived. He added that whilst people can, with the benefit of hindsight, be critical of some

Western values which the early missionaries introduced to Samoa, he would like to believe that they were doing it in good faith.

I prefer to think that the good and bad things that the missionaries did, I would like to believe they did in good faith, that they were doing us a favour, they were protecting us from the evils that they were already familiar with. For example, the documentation and photographs taken by *papalagi* when they first arrived ... they stole our innocence because when the missionaries came those were our norms, that we were naked was the norm it was one of the most natural things with us. So perhaps they were doing it in good faith trying to take us out of our primitive ways into a more enlightened and more civilized manner, but in actual fact they were repressing and trying to replace our values with their values **(SA01 – Samoan-born Matai, Samoa).**

The same point was raised by an older Samoan-born woman participant who suggested that up till when the missionaries came to Samoa, Samoans were running around naked.

Being naked in the islands was something quite pure, there weren't any other connotations, and when the missionaries came all of a sudden sexuality was attached to it ... to the ordinary person here at that particular time there wasn't anything sexual about you being naked **(SA05 – Older Samoan-born Woman, Samoa).**

The same participant also noted that there were a lot of prohibitions on Samoan customs by the missionaries which people, over recent years are 'turning around and returning to nature'. She explained the difficulty some church leaders had in accepting the proposed crematorium which was proposed in Samoa a few years ago. The participant said in those pre-missionary days people in Samoa were embalmed when they died, but the missionaries put a stop to it and instituted burial. She said most of the *faiifeaus*, pastors objected to the proposed crematorium saying it wasn't a Christian practice to cremate the dead.

Another traditional Samoan custom which was prohibited by the missionaries is the *poula*, traditional night dances which Roach (1984) has argued, was considered by the missionaries 'particularly obscene in its gestures and in the semi-nudity of the participants' (1984: 84). As well as the *poula*, other traditional customs such as the *tatau* or the tattoo, for example, was another material cultural value which missionaries wanted banned, which several

participants noted some missionaries were successful in this endeavour, to some extent. A *matai* participant, who lectures in the Samoan language and culture at the National University of Samoa (NUS), for instance, stated that the missionaries were swift in banning men in Manu'a from acquiring tattoos.

The missionaries saw the *tatau* as a heathen cultural practice and prohibited it, and Manu'a complied with the missionaries' instructions. Now, you don't see anyone from Manu'a with a *tatau*. But we [Western Samoa] resisted, arguing that the Samoan *tatau* wasn't just for the sole purpose of decoration as it has been used in tattoos of other cultures. The Samoan *tatau* has a traditional cultural role: it's a celebration of your transformation from childhood to adulthood; that you are prepared and worthy to fight in combat to defend your country and your *'aiga*.

Even the individual patterns of the *tatau* have historical significance to the *'aiga* Sa Su'a. Unfortunately, now you see people who have *tatau* but who don't know, nor appreciate the cultural significance and the culture of the *tatau* has been commercialized (**SA09 – Young Tattooed Matai, Samoa**).

While the same participant was critical of the missionaries' imposition of their Western values on Samoan customs and traditions, he noted that he was glad that *fa'asamoa*, despite suggestions that it is very conservative, has in fact been quite flexible, which is why, the participant argued, it has survived the onslaught of missionisation and modern development.

But the *tatau* did survive some missionaries' bans even though the above example of its absence in the islands of Manu'a in contemporary times is a stark illustration of how some European missionaries' own value systems and lack of appreciation of the significance of some indigenous cultural practices and motifs can have a lasting impact on a traditional culture. But like other Samoan traditional cultural practices that Christian missions in Samoa took different positions on, and exception to, such as alcohol use, for example, which I will discuss later, the Samoan *tatau* for men and *malu* for women did survive some early missionaries' detestations.

The reference to Gilson (1970) in Chapter 4 of this thesis, for example, showed that in 1875, the LMS missionaries were more tolerant towards some of their adherents' code of behaviour, such as tattooing, than towards alcohol

consumption. Gilson noted, that 'it became permissible for communicants to participate in war if ordered to do so ... [and] might be tattooed, smoke, and play cards, but he was forbidden to gamble or sell liquor or ... to consume liquor himself' (Gilson, 1970: 136).

The Catholic priest participant, when reminded that some of the younger Samoan Catholic priests have acquired their *tatau* since been ordained as priests, explained that while the *tatau* has its unique place within Samoan social life, he didn't see any specific function that the *tatau* serves in the practice of the priest's role in the church. He concluded that the decision of some younger priests to be tattooed when they have been ordained as priests is beyond his understanding, other than perhaps as a personal preference to 'show off' the *tatau* when they have had a few drinks. The participant, however, could understand if a person had the *tatau* as a young man serving the village chiefs, and then joining the missionary work later. That, he said was understandable, in light of the need to be tattooed for that particular purpose as a *taule'ale'a*, with a specific role to serve the *matai*.

### ***Missions and other Europeans***

The missions, and their missionaries, in Samoa were perceived by other Europeans in different lights. It would be remiss to deny that, of all the early Europeans who came into contact with Samoa and its people, the missionaries were the ones that had a genuine desire to protect the welfare and best interest of the Samoans. Masterman (1934), for example, noted that: 'Until the coming of the missionaries the contact of native with white was invariably unfortunate' (1934: 25). Koskinen (1953) noted that from the outset, there was sharp antagonism between the white adventurers and the missionaries.

Even when the white resident population were not of the beachcomber category, they found the hypocritical morals of the missionaries less than pleasing. ... Although at the beginning they were pleased to see, thanks to missionary work, civilization advancing rapidly, the missionaries estranged even these favourably disposed whites with their uncompromising attitude (Koskinen, 1953: 128).

Koskinen (1953) argued that the first cause of friction between the white residents and the missionaries was the narrow-minded morality of the latter. The missionaries, 'zealously determined to clothe the natives in the European garments' were irritated by the attitude of whites to native women who they sometimes secured in exchange for intoxicants and firearms' (1953: 130). But while there were tensions between the white residents and missionaries, Charles Forman (1978), argued that 'missionaries had a good relationship with their fellow Europeans in many instances' (1978: 49).

After all, the missionaries often depended on government for protection and on traders for their supplies while on the other hand traders and governors found that the missionaries introduced a degree of welcome stability into their environment. Also, despite the frequent differences over morality and religion, there were many shared cultural traits that smoothed the relationship and many common problems and circumstances of life which drew them together (Forman, 1978: 49-50).

The influence and importance of the early missionaries in Samoa has been expounded by several writers (Masterman, 1934; Keesing, 1934; Gilson, 1970; Gunson, 1978). Other than their efforts to convert Samoans to Christianity, some missionaries were also instrumental and played crucial roles in the development of commerce, health and education (Gilson, 1970; Keesing, 1934; Masterman, 1934). That the early missions including the LMS, Wesleyans, and Roman Catholics, and later others such as the LDS and SDA missions, all set up schools in different parts of Samoa is testimony to the missions' endeavours to educate the Samoan people in the ways of the Europeans and their Western knowledge and worldview. But the missions, for example, that of the LMS, whose 'missionaries came primarily as Christians, but they were also enthusiastic Britons ... [who] could do no better than build another England in the South Seas' (Masterman, 1934: 43), cannot be denied.

During the colonial administrations of Samoa, the missionaries continued to play crucial roles in education and other social aspects of Samoan society. The German administration, for example, 'made no attempt to dispute with the missions their thorough control over native education, though they paid a

small subsidy and endeavoured to influence the mission leaders to 'stress the practical and useful rather than the academic' (Keesing, 1934: 415). Except for taking over the administration of the private school for non-Samoans at Leififi in 1904, 'marking the start of secular education under official auspices'; the opening of a school for the local Samoan children around the Apia area; and the establishment of a government high school at Malifa toward the end of the German regime, mission schools provided the bulk of education in Samoa throughout the German colonial administration, and through the war period (Keesing, 1934: 415-416).

The New Zealand administration, however, with the start of civil government in 1920, initiated a new and vigorous policy of native education under official auspices. 'The idea of a free, secular, and universal system of education under government control had become fundamental in the democratic philosophy of New Zealand itself' (Keesing, 1934: 416). This new proposal by the New Zealand administration was 'met with anything but an enthusiastic response from either the mission bodies or the local citizens'.

The L.M.S., contemplating an extension of their system so as to establish 'an island university with a divinity school' at Malua, regarded their work as accomplishing all that was necessary for the education of their followers; the Methodists considered government control would make neither for efficiency nor for economy; the Catholics deprecated any interference with their existing freedom, while offering to conform as far as possible to official standards (Keesing, 1934: 416).

The mission leaders following various conferences with government, 'agreed to integrate their existing organisations with government institutions to form a national system of education' in Samoa (Keesing, 1934: 418). And whilst the New Zealand administration established Village Grade II schools, and later central schools such as Vaipouli in Savaii, and Avele in Apia where promising pupils were sent for further education, the missions continued to provide the backbone of the education system throughout the colonial administrations of Samoa. And whilst the Samoan government, since attaining its independence has, to a large extent, continued with the New Zealand colonial administration policies in terms of health, education, trade



and commerce, as well as other social and cultural areas of services and development, some changes have inevitably occurred and have been introduced in Samoa. Some of these changes include the introduction of legislations, including alcoholic liquor production and control.

### ***Samoa Government Policy towards Alcohol Availability***

In recent years, at least since Samoa gained its independence in the latter half of the twentieth century, subsequent Samoan governments have enacted and passed liquor legislations even though religious denominations hadn't been able to express their organizations' positions in regards to the liquor bill. During the 1971 Liquor Bill debate, for example, former Prime Minister Mata'afa Fiame, argued that while he was aware that the Bills Committee had sent out invitations to various denominations to submit their views and opinions regarding the bill, the Report did not stipulate which denominations fronted up to the Committee. Mata'afa then stated thus:

I would like to say this for the information of the members that the recommendation by the Congregational Christian Church was that this Bill be referred to the general public in order to obtain their views for or against the question of liquor (Liquor Bill Debate, Official Report of the Legislative Assembly Debates, 1971 Sessions: 544)<sup>45</sup>

The former Prime Minister then moved a motion for the bill to be referred to the general public for consideration in the form of a referendum. In response to questions asked why liquor legislations hadn't been addressed in Parliament previously, Mata'afa explained that in 1969, while he was Prime Minister, he had 'invited representatives of religious denominations to come and discuss this matter with Cabinet'. However, because there had been a change of government since then, his government's earlier plans regarding liquor hadn't proceeded (Former Prime Minister, Mata'afa Fiame, 1971 Liquor Bill Debate, 15/12/1971: 565). Needless to say, the motion was voted on, and defeated by 10 votes to 25. The 1971 Liquor Bill was eventually passed into law on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1971, the last day of Parliamentary proceedings for that year before it was adjourned sine die.

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<sup>45</sup> Former Prime Minister, Mata'afa Fiame, was Chairperson of the CCCS on some occasions.

In 1978, the Western Samoa Brewery was established to produce Vailima beer (and soft drinks) with the Samoan government as the majority shareholder. I have discussed recent changes to the ownership of the sole beer producer in Samoa in an earlier chapter.

### ***Contemporary Attitudes to Alcohol***

One might have supposed that as Samoans gained increasing control of the governance of the various denominations within which Samoans worship, that the nature of their various positions on culture and on more specific issues such as alcohol use might have changed to reflect Samoan cultural norms and practices. This transfer of governance has been occurring for a long period of time and has accelerated since Western Samoa's political independence and might have been expected to hasten a convergence around Samoan values and practices. This has apparently not been the case. The observations of abstainers and particularly the older adult pastor with regards to alcohol and alcohol use within some churches suggests that alcohol has secured a place within *fa'asamoa*, and has now found its way into some Samoan church environments. This, however, is not to say that all the main Samoan churches such as the Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Pentecostals, as well as the abstaining LDS and SDA religions share the same position around alcohol and alcohol use. Like other Pacific Island churches Samoan religious denominations 'take a variety of stances on alcohol from complete prohibition to allowing some moderate use' (ALAC-MoH, 1997).

The Roman Catholic priest participant in this study, for example, explained that the position of the Roman Catholic Church, to be henceforth referred to as Catholic, towards alcohol is an 'all in moderation' approach. He said alcohol taken in moderation has positive effects, but when people abuse and misuse alcohol that is when the problems arise. He noted that while he and some other priests consume alcohol openly, some of his Protestant counterparts are secretive about their drinking.

I don't like it when people are not upfront and truthful about alcohol and drinking and that's why prohibitive policies don't necessarily work because when you prohibit people from doing something, then you're

saying whatever it is, must be bad. People who want to abstain from alcohol should do so on their own volition, but not because of the church's prohibition. So saying alcohol is bad because of the church policies isn't going to solve the problems. Raising awareness among our people about using alcohol responsibly would be a better strategy **(AK09 – Older Catholic Priest, Auckland)**.

The above comments of the Auckland-based Catholic priest are not unique to the position of his church to the New Zealand context. In fact other Catholic participants in this study, as well as informal conversations with other Catholic adherents within my own networks of friends and relatives, indicate that the Samoan Catholic Church and Catholics generally, whether in Samoa, New Zealand, or other migrant enclaves adopt a similar liberal position in regards to alcohol and its use. But that does not mean that all Catholics drink, nor does it imply that all Catholics drink wine common among the French and other more traditional Catholic countries. But other Samoan religious denominations, such as the CCCS, for example, appear to face different situations in respect of model of alcohol use, and in terms of some Church leaders' attitudes to and practices of alcohol use.

The CCCS pastor key informant, who said he would accept a 'glass' when offered on occasions for 'toasting' at weddings and other celebrations, explained that the position of his church on alcohol is related specifically to pastors and office-holders' drunkenness. He said the CCCS stance concerning church members' alcohol use and other lifestyle behaviours has changed from strict prohibition to that of moderation over the years. The pastor explained that the prohibitive position of his church is specifically against drunkenness among the pastors and holders of other positions within the church hierarchy. He also noted that prohibition against *drunkenness* among pastors doesn't necessarily mean that all pastors abstain from alcohol. This prohibitive stance, he added, does not explicitly ban drinking but is targeted at drinking excessively to reach a state of drunkenness.

The church policy on alcohol specifically prohibits drunkenness and it includes deacons and communicant members of the church ... but each pastor has a different interpretation of the policy and they individually apply the policy to their own congregations as they see fit **(NZKI01 – Key Informant Abstainer Pastor, Auckland)**.

The pastor also explained that the church's prohibition on these lifestyle behaviours is no longer so explicit. He said the transformation of the church's position on alcohol use has been reviewed by a Commission of Inquiry commissioned by the Church to examine lifestyle behaviours among church members. At the General Conference of the CCCS in May 2003, the Commission submitted a Report in which it noted the prevalence of alcohol consumption amongst some of its pastors. The Commission's Report recommended that the prohibition among church adherents of alcohol consumption, games of chances, going to movies on Sunday, elopement, and gambling, as recommended by the 1952-1962 Commission of Inquiry, be set aside (Ripoti a le Komisi mo le Ola Fa'ale-Agaga o le Ekalesia, 2003: 9-20). Interestingly, this is a significant change in policy and attitude of a very conservative church hierarchy which some participants have suggested, were 'ancient' and continue to practice 'out-dated' rules and ideologies.

A *matai* participant, a lay-preacher of the CCCS, said the position of his church regarding alcohol use is sometimes confusing, especially when different church leaders imbibe, to varying degrees, to the extent that some church members may be unsure what exactly the church's policies are on alcohol and its use. He added hesitantly, that church leaders' stance and practice vary from total abstention, to drinking moderately and irregularly, to a few who consume alcohol regularly, but discreetly. He said it would be unfair to blame the European missionaries for the manner in which alcohol and its use have impacted negatively on the economic, cultural, social, health and wellbeing of Samoans over the years. The participant, who said he has been a 'heavy drinker' for the most part of his life, and admitted that 'the whole direction of my life was changed because of alcohol', also remarked that his church leaders needed to be flexible with the church's policies regarding alcohol use because some of the leaders whether in Samoa or here in New Zealand, were known to consume alcohol regularly.

Another male participant who drinks, who is a member of the CCCS, said he knew of several pastors who drink regularly. He said when he was closely involved with the church's school system several years ago, there was a joke among the pastors' networks and his own circle of friends that the 'biggest

enemy of all was being caught'. He was referring to some pastors, including trainees at the church's Theological College who drank but very discreetly, and kept their drinking secret to avoid being caught by the church authority.

### ***Religion, Mission Politics, and Alcohol***

Some participants in this study have argued that the missionaries were selective in their own strategies towards converting Samoans to Christianity. The initial negative reaction of the LMS and the Wesleyan missions towards the arrival of the Catholic missionaries alluded to earlier, for example, was more to protect their own turf, hence the anti-Catholic propaganda at the time. And whilst the position of the Catholic Church towards alcohol and alcohol use was more liberal and tolerable towards moderation, the LMS and the Wesleyan missions were more prohibitive, although even their own approaches have been tempered and for some, have been reviewed and re-evaluated over time.

In a paper presented at the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs Pacific Vision Conference in Auckland, in July 1997, Samoan Pastor, Mark Lau Young, Chief Executive of the Hosanna World Outreach Centre in Wellington, identified several commonly held criticisms of the Pacific churches:

Churches are boring and irrelevant – particularly to young people. The result is declining participation, especially of our young people. Young people are voting with their feet. They are finding 'newer' churches and other social institutions (e.g. pubs, nightclubs, sports, clubs, gangs, etc.) more attractive.

Similarly, churches are institutional dinosaurs holding fast to traditions and values that do not reflect contemporary society and which many Pacific people no longer hold.

What do people feel when they enter our churches? Do they feel like they've entered a time warp to the past? Or do they see the future?  
(Lau Young, 1999)

In a Discussion Paper entitled, *The Church and Alcohol Related Harm*, prepared for an ALAC-sponsored Pacific Alcohol Issues Workshop in Auckland in February 2000, Philip Siataga noted that:

A contemporary Pacific youth culture in a multicultural and pluralist society raises challenges to traditional Pacific church norms and practices. For many Pacific people, youth and families, some of the

churches practices have yet to develop ways adequately addressing the contemporary issues of alcohol and drug related harm, domestic violence, and discipline and abuse although they continue to provide other important social functions (Siataga, 2000: 4).

But even conservative members of a conservative church organization such as the CCCS and the Samoan Methodists, for example, who one could argue, have been staunch supporters of their religious denominations and their theologies and ideologies do change at certain points in their lives. The establishment of new factions of some Samoan church organizations in some Samoan migrant communities, such as the Reformed LMS which I discuss next, is but one example of the influences of early European missions on some Samoan people's attitudes and religious practices which have continued to surface in recent years.

### ***Impact of LMS Mission in Samoan Migrant Communities***

An example of the impact of the early LMS mission on some Samoan people's attitudes towards religion is the recent establishment of a Samoan church organization called the Reformed LMS Church of Samoa.<sup>46</sup> Based entirely on the original LMS mission ideologies, doctrines, and practices, the reformed organization is a 'break away' group of disgruntled and disenchanting pastors and lay people from the main, and more established religious denominations among Samoans. People of mainly the former LMS church now the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS), some from the Wesleyan mission, and from other minority religious denominations as well, form the bulk of this reformed church organization.

Originally, the founders of this break-away faction promoted certain practices such as doing away with the *faigataulaga*, the obligatory annual monetary

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<sup>46</sup> A church organization which operates under the banner of the Samoan Reformed LMS Church was established and spearheaded nearly ten years ago by a Samoan pastor and few supporters who were disillusioned with the direction and practice of the 'Mother Church' – the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. The Samoan Reformed LMS Church was formed with a handful of congregations in Auckland and Sydney. At first, the organization grew at a phenomenal pace in the late-1990s where the Auckland branch of the church grew from one founding congregation to seven within a matter of three years. In Australia, it expanded from a single congregation in Sydney to additional congregations in Brisbane and Melbourne, Victoria. The organization, however, has since split into two separate groups, operating under two different hierarchies, but both still calling themselves by the same name. But the fact that Samoans formed a church group under the LMS banner is an ineradicable example of the influence of a European mission on some Samoan people's spiritual aspirations, their way of thinking, as well as how they view their world.

contributions towards the church as is the practice of the CCCS and the Samoan Methodist Church. This was essentially a strategy and an attempt on the part of the founders of the organization to distinguish it from those two main Samoan denominations. They also discouraged the liberal practice of some traditional Samoan customs such as *fa'alavelave* within the church, in an effort to ease the monetary and material burden of obligations on its members.

But divisions and separations in Samoan church organizations are not new. During the 1980s, for example, there was a major division within the CCCS which saw the establishment of the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS). The CCCAS consisted mainly of American Samoa-based congregations of the CCCS, although others from Hawaii and the United States also joined the breakaway group, calling themselves by the same name but of American Samoa. Over the years, some congregations of the CCCS in Auckland have joined the CCCAS and others from Wellington and more recently, Christchurch have done likewise. Other CCCAS congregations have formed in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne in Australia, mainly consisting of former CCCS adherents although people from other Samoan denominations have also joined some of these new congregations.

Whilst these 'break away' factions from some of the larger Samoan religious denominations are not unique to Samoan church groups, what is of interest is the use of the names of original European Christian missions to identify some newly-formed church groups. Whilst these divisions and multiple factions based on introduced European Christian mission ideologies and theologies may be caused by a multitude of factors, some have argued that 'denominational multiplicity' in Samoa 'results from competition for a variety of political, economic, and personal goals' (Tiffany, 1978: 425). And whilst these factors may have their roots in traditional Samoan people's factional allegiances to chieftainships and other genealogical connections, it is interesting, nonetheless, that some of these new religious groups revert to forming their denominational organizations on the basis of early European missions.

### ***Samoan People are Social***

Anthropologist Felix Keesing has noted that the 'Samoans are social – more than any other Polynesians - and fond of travelling' (1934: 25). Keesing observed that:

The records describe Samoan dancing, songs and music, games, feasting, and the constant visiting from village to village; they speak of the excellent ordering of family life, of fondness for children, and of "decorous and even highly polished manners". Yet grim warfare is also described; the natives were seen to be quarrelsome, "very turbulent", "threatening", "treacherous", and "ferocious". The most prolific sources of war were the murder of a chief, disputed succession to chieftainship, and women.

Sickness to the Samoan mind was essentially a product of supernatural agencies. The Samoans believed in various forms of "gods", of good and bad spirits, many of which to them assumed natural forms; they had their district, village, family, and personal presences, and performed directly or through the medium of priests such observances as were demanded by tradition; yet Samoa had no great elaboration of religious institutions and of the powers of the priesthood such as dominated life in some other parts of Polynesia (Keesing, 1934: 26).

Roach (1984), has argued that spirit possession was an important aspect of traditional Samoan religion. Reverend George Turner noted that these spirit mediums might be male or female (1861: 311).

A man or woman became ill because he or she had failed to observe an important taboo, because they had been cursed by a kinsman (the curse of the father's sister being the most feared ... or because they had been possessed by an angry spirit; in this last category, the *aitu* of departed relatives were considered the most troublesome (Roach, 1984: 56).

Roach also explained that 'the sick were always well treated by Samoans, as were the aged'. She also noted that many nineteenth century observers of Samoan life 'were impressed with the high status accorded to women' (1984: 58). And while Roach rightly observed that in traditional times, *matai* were nearly always men, this trend has changed during more contemporary Samoan life. More and more women, especially those with Western education or who hold senior positions within the Government Public Service or other paid employment, have been bestowed *matai* titles, some of very paramount status, by their families. This is a trend which had started during



the second-half of the twentieth century, as women started to achieve in education and other spheres of Samoan social life. In the 1950s, for example, the first Samoan to obtain a Ph.D. degree, according to Roach, was a woman.<sup>47</sup> Other Samoan women also succeeded to senior Government positions in the ensuing decades, while others spearheaded community organizations, including the inaugural Samoan National Women's Organization in the 1960s. In the early 1970s, a woman was elected Deputy Speaker of Parliament, while another was appointed Director of Education; both positions traditionally held by men. The final decade of the twentieth century witnessed the appointment of a woman to the Cabinet ranks, while a growing number of women were being appointed to head several Government Departments.

### ***Samoa and Social Change***

Since the early post-independence years, a form of Western individualism, which promotes the freedom of the individual vis-à-vis the collectivity, has emerged in Samoa. New attitudes and lifestyles which reflect new forms of class and status differentiation have become more apparent. This is reflected in a new materialism in terms of European-style houses, motor vehicles, imported foodstuffs, and certain lifestyle changes which began to emerge in Samoa during the 1960s. During that phase of Samoan nation-building and development there was an acceleration of material wealth accumulation among the commercial and government elites and other forms of visual economic wealth. It was undoubtedly fuelled, in part, by the exposure of the general population to Western lifestyles depicted in movies, and other news media which have become increasingly available and accessible to Samoans since that time.

Another explanation to these new attitudes and behaviours could be attributed to the exposure of some Samoan people to overseas lifestyles in places such as neighbouring Pago Pago, American Samoa, which was more exposed to American influences and way of life, and to other countries such as New Zealand. Other factors such as the more frequent visits of cruise

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<sup>47</sup> In the course of the literature review for this study, it came to light that another Samoan, Su'apa'ia Kipeni (1962), had claimed to be the first Samoan to have obtained a Ph.D. degree.

ships, the arrival of more Europeans such as the American Peace Corps and New Zealand volunteers under the Volunteer Services Abroad (VSA) scheme, have arguably all contributed to the exposure of Samoan people to the *papalagi* way of life and world views. Just as the Peace Corps had an immediate influence on the way Samoans constructed and adapted their 'dug out' latrines to the *fale pisikoa* style of toilets, so must have other visitors impacted on Samoans' way of life in other respects.

### **Chapter Summary**

I have attempted in this chapter to provide a background to the material to follow in the subsequent chapters on Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol, by summarizing the positions adopted by early Europeans, the beachcombers and more particularly the Christian missions and colonial administrations towards alcoholic liquor and its consumption in Samoa. I have argued that the missions and the colonial administrations have been influential in shaping Samoan social organization and, indirectly, people's attitudes towards alcohol and its use. As well, the Christian missions have also impacted significantly in shaping Samoan people's worldviews, their attitudes and practices in church affiliations and preferences, and their behaviours and practices around alcohol over the last hundred years.

In the next chapter we look at the ways in which the attitudes of, and the competition between, these various forces and agencies have influenced the availability of alcohol and the ways in which the various groups have sought to influence these. The chapter will review the reasons behind the agencies' attempts to limit the availability of liquor, changes in liquor policies and legislation which have been introduced in the years since Samoa's contact with the West and its alcohol history commenced.

## Chapter Five

### **A SOCIAL HISTORY OF ALCOHOL IN SAMOA**

*... to fully understand contemporary beliefs and social patterns relating to an important facet of life in any given cultural setting, it is necessary to obtain as much historical insight as possible into the processes that have shaped and molded that part of culture (Marshall and Marshall, 1984: 448-465).*

*'... history is not only the framework of human life, man is a product of history. If one takes him out of history, if one tries to conceive him outside of time, fixed, immobile, one distorts him. This mobile man is not man' (Durkheim, 1920: 89; cited in Bellah, 1959: 452).*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is a social history of alcohol in Samoa. It is a chronological account of the status of alcohol in the islands of Samoa since the early nineteenth century. This history has been divided into four main phases which I believe, delineate certain trends in the attitudes and the actions of major players and which have to a large degree, shaped the social history of alcohol in Samoa. The first three of these were dominated by foreign powers and colonial administrators. The fourth phase of this history covers the period from Samoa's independence in the early-1960s to the end of the twentieth century, during which the availability and use of alcohol, was governed by Samoans. This fourth phase focuses on the most recent influences on attitudes and behaviours of Samoan people towards alcohol consumption in Samoa, and examines the ways in which these might influence attitudes, behaviour and experiences of Samoan people abroad towards alcohol.

I take the arrival of Christian missionaries in the 1830s, through to the end of the nineteenth century as the first phase of this social history. The second comprises the period from 1900 to 1914, during which a German colonial administration imposed effective prohibition on Samoan 'natives' from alcohol consumption. The third phase is from 1914 to 1961, when Western Samoa

was administered by New Zealand as a mandated territory of the League of Nations and later as a trusteeship under the United Nations. The fourth period starts in 1962 when Western Samoa became the first Pacific Island nation to gain independence, through to the end of the twentieth century during which time, controls on consumption were removed and the Western Samoa Breweries Company was established, and alcohol and its consumption became widespread throughout Samoa. This latter phase of the history is significant because it has impacted most recently and significantly on the lives of those interviewed for this study. This section will contain also some discussion of alcohol consumption among Samoans living in New Zealand.

Finally, I explore some of the more noticeable alcohol-related social problems impacting on Samoan society, and to a lesser extent, the drinking patterns and awareness of the effects of alcohol on the health of some Samoans living in New Zealand.

### **Social History of Alcohol in Samoa**

There is a dearth of literature on alcohol in Samoa during early contact with Europeans. This is not entirely surprising in the light of the concurrence in the literature reviewed for this study, that no alcoholic beverages were manufactured in the Pacific Islands, including Samoa, before intercourse with Europeans commenced. The sociological exploration of the role which an introduced commodity, alcohol, has played in the social relationships within *fa'asamoa*, is a necessary but arduous task requiring constant rummaging for the rare tidbits of information from which to construct a narrative. It is a constant search for information about the relationship between a pre-contact Samoan culture, and Western influences in the form of colonial administration, missionization, and bureaucratization to name but a few, over one hundred and seventy years. This search for historical records of events to inform contemporary contexts, however, has become an inevitable part of any historical project. Bellah (1959) noted that it was Durkheim who argued that 'to study the present from the point of view of the present is to be enslaved by all momentary needs and passions of the day' (1959: 452). For that reason, Bellah posited that 'it is necessary to go to the past to uncover

the deeper lying forces which, though often unconscious, are so largely determinative of the social process' (Bellah, 1959: 447).

This social history of alcohol in Samoa has been reconstructed from material recorded in the second half of the nineteenth century, and to a lesser degree, secondary data documented during the first half of the twentieth century. Additionally, this account includes reflections and recollections of the experiences of some older participants in this study, and their knowledge of alcohol and its consumption in Samoa. In fact, some of the participants' information has been used in cross-checking some of the secondary data reviewed, and re-analyzed for this study. Triangulating information gathered by reanalyzing second- and third-hand data collected by other researchers using other research methods, is a useful strategy when collating historical accounts of events. Reanalysis of secondary data, moreover, has challenges which Arber (2001) argues, requires the researcher 'to use sociological imagination to construct theoretically informed research questions that can be addressed by somebody else's data' (2001: 270).

One example will suffice to explain, and perhaps justify, this course of action: the seeming contradiction on the period when Samoan 'natives' first acquired a taste for alcoholic liquor.<sup>48</sup> N. A. Rowe, a New Zealand district officer in Samoa during the mid-1920s, suggests that Samoans did not acquire a taste for liquor until 1920. Rowe's account of prohibition in Samoa cites as his source the Second Report of the Samoan Administration to the League of Nations on the mandated territory of Western Samoa (April 1, 1921, to March 31, 1922) which states that at 'no time do the natives appear to have acquired a taste for liquor' (Rowe 1930: 107). This contention that Samoans started to acquire a taste for alcohol in 1920 gains support from Felix Keesing (1934), an anthropologist, who made the following observations regarding Samoan people's attitudes toward liquor at the time:

Until about 1920 they seem to have had no liking for such drinks; a fact explained by the influence of the missions, to a native prohibition law of long standing, and especially to firm control by the matais, who, having

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<sup>48</sup> I discuss this here to emphasize the need for researchers to not take secondary data on face value, and more importantly, to show that data do get interpreted and documented by different people for different purposes at different points in time.

a satisfactory substitute in the ceremonial kava ('ava) to themselves, and an important symbol of their authority, were doubtless unwilling to allow the untitled people to have a beverage that might become a rival to it (Keesing 1934: 253).

Interestingly, Keesing's suggestion regarding the period when Samoans became interested in liquor may have been the source of reference for the 1953 Liquor Commission Report, which also states that, 'up to 1920 the Samoan race took little interest in the subject of liquor'.<sup>49</sup>

But contrary to the above contention that Samoans had no liking for alcohol until 1920, other sources seem to suggest that as early as 1875 'drunkenness was prevalent' among Samoan people. Gilson (1970) for example, in the following footnote to *Foreign Settlement at Apia Bay*, suggests that the problem of drunkenness among Samoans was first noted by the missionaries in early 1870s.

The missionaries' first mention of a serious problem of drunkenness among Samoans was made early in the 1870s, and then mainly in respect of Apia. War which was then in progress, was given as the main reason, the idea being that the people lapsed into all manner of bad habits when they left their villages to fight. Whatever the circumstances, however, the problem was short-lived, except among half-castes, of whom there were by then a substantial number of adult age (Gilson, 1970: 181).

Gilson's statement gains support from the following item in the minutes of a London Missionary Society (LMS) meeting in October 1875,<sup>50</sup> suggesting that drunkenness was already becoming a problem among Samoans at that time.

Drunkenness of Samoans – this is prevalent now; LMS to fight it thru [sic] formation of Abstinence Societies, and to appeal to Government and Consuls re importance of "licensing laws and any other legitimate means they can devise for the suppression of drunkenness (Ralston, 1977: 150).

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<sup>49</sup> The report also notes that Samoans, unlike many indigenous peoples, 'have never had an intoxicating liquor of their own' and that the knowledge of intoxicants that the Samoans had at the time had been derived by contact with Europeans (1953 Samoa Liquor Commission).

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of L.M.S Meeting, 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1875. (Cited in Gilson R. P., in Microfiche, 96-361/373, New Zealand & Pacific Collection, University of Auckland General Library).

From the foregoing discussion, there appears to be an inconsistency as to when exactly, Samoans first 'acquired a taste' for alcohol. This inconsistency, which spans some forty or fifty years, is I believe, quite telling. On the one hand, the account of the missionaries as cited in Gilson (1970) suggests that Samoans were already drinking in the 1870s. On the other hand, Keesing's (1934) account, and that of the Samoan Administration's Report to the League of Nations, which had been relied upon by the 1953 Liquor Commission Report, claimed Samoans did not acquire a taste for alcohol until the 1920s. Whilst the latter accounts is not necessarily incorrect, I believe it highly unlikely that all Samoan people would have totally abstained from alcohol throughout the latter half of the nineteenth-century, especially at a time when more and more Europeans were arriving and settling throughout Samoa, which would in turn, have increased the exposure of Samoan people to European lifestyles.

On the other hand, it is equally highly unlikely that all Samoans, or even all Samoans in Apia, would have been involved in alcohol consumption and drunkenness, given their commitment to the church and given the denominations' stances on alcohol. This apparent contradiction serves to remind us that all reports reflect, to varying extents, the concerns and interests of their authors and that the interpretation must consider the ways in which these may influence the emphasis in documents.

There are several possible explanations for the disparity. I would argue that Samoans would have been exposed to alcoholic drinks during the 1870s, based on the literature reviewed for this study, and to a lesser extent, on some older participants' recollections of their own experiences and secondhand information they were able to provide, and my own personal inferences.

Firstly, in 1845, Rev. William Mills of the Samoa LMS Mission, assured Rev. Damon in Honolulu, Hawaii that 'drunkenness is a vice' almost unknown among the Samoan natives. He writes to Rev. Damon in May 1845 thus:

I am aware that many wicked foreigners have used numerous devices to betray them [Samoans] into this sin; but they have almost in every

case withstood the temptation. Though I have resided here, at the principal harbor, for nine years, I have never seen an intoxicated native (Rev. Mills, May 1845, cited in Richards 1992: 143).

With regards to the manufacture and distillation of alcoholic liquor in Samoa, Mills in 1845, reported that he had heard of some instances of spirits being distilled by foreigners, but they were rare. Mills also alluded to foreigners attempting to establish grog-shops 'for the purpose of selling to the poor seamen who might feel disposed to throw away their hard earned wages for such filthy poison' (Richards, 1992: 144).

Secondly, there was the war of confederation, which Gilson refers to as 'the war of the *Faitasiga*' (1970: 269) in Samoa between the late-1860s and late-1870s, and the following observations would indicate that Samoans were already exposed to liquor. For example, Gilson noted that one of the conditions the European community and the two Samoan political factions agreed upon, when the *faitasiga* war seemed inevitable, was the subject of neutral rights and immunities. The agreement entailed the need for a 'neutral zone' which covered 'the beachfront between Matautu and Sogi, or in the area behind it inhabited by foreigners' where combatants were, among other things, 'to refrain from the use of liquor' (1970: 266). Clearly, this latter condition of the agreement implies that Samoans were indeed, already exposed to the use of liquor by that time.

Moreover, Gilson notes that in 1875, even the LMS missionaries' tended to be more tolerant towards some 'vices' than others in their adherents' code of behaviour, where communicants and candidates for the mission were permitted to participate in war, be tattooed, smoke, and play cards, yet they were forbidden to sell or consume liquor. Whether or not the missionaries' tolerance of some Samoans' waywardness and inattention to the missionaries' expectations, was due to rivalry between the Protestants and Catholic missions in Samoa for adherents at the time, is not within the scope of this study. What is more relevant is whether the Samoans' actual consumption of alcohol, or the concern about the possibility, during the 1870s, led to the decision of some missionaries to attempt to ban Samoans from selling and consuming liquor.



One could also make a case that a 'native' people, witnessing the place of alcohol at the centre of some non-mission European settlers' socialising at the time, might reasonably have been curious as to why such drinkers' moods and behaviours changed when they drank. Moreover, the effect of alcohol on Europeans' conduct, and their attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and its use at the time, would have aroused the curiosity of most Samoans, and might have led to a desire to experiment with the novel 'Devil drink'. Evidence for the contention that many Samoans would have already been exposed to alcohol by the 1870s, or at least during the latter half of the nineteenth century, is found in discussions of the political, environmental, and economic situation in Samoa at that time. During 'the minor cotton boom' of the late-1860s, for example, land was seriously affected by drought and Samoans were ready to exchange 'land for trade goods'<sup>51</sup> with foreigners and new settlers (Ralston 1977: 163). It seems reasonable to assume that some of the goods exchanged between settlers and some Samoan 'natives' would have been alcoholic beverages. Moreover, by the late 1860s, village trading was a firmly established feature of the economy in every part of the Samoan group (Richards 1992: 166). This expansion of trading and economic activities to parts of Samoa, beyond Apia, would have contributed in spreading the availability of liquor throughout the islands of Samoa.

By the 1860s, more Samoans outside of the Apia town area would have come into contact with small traders and artisans, settlers who had taken up cotton and copra production outside of Apia, as well as other new settlers, some of whom had established small trading houses in Samoa (Ralston 1977). In an environment where more and more Samoans would have been coming into contact with foreigners, it is highly probable that Samoan people would have been exposed to, and influenced by, the lifestyles of some of the new settlers.

And whilst the rivalry between the three foreign powers of Germany, Great Britain, and the United States during the late-1870s resulted in the

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<sup>51</sup> In New Zealand during the 1960s, for example, 'to force Maori to sell their land it became common practice to encourage them to build up considerable debt for alcohol and other goods, and to subsequently force sale of the land to satisfy the debt' were taken' (Cullen 1994) cited in Saggars and Gray, 1998, p. 44.

diminishing influence of the Samoan government within the port town of Apia, it seems unlikely that it weakened the influence of the missionaries and *matai* outside of the capital. In some accounts, the agreement was a trade-off in which there was agreement on the form of government of the town, which acknowledged the difficulty of Europeans exerting any real influence beyond the town area. The government of those areas was left to the missions and the *matai*. But the agreement gave the foreign residents complete control of Apia harbour area. In fact, foreign residents were exempted from paying any import or export taxes during that time (Ralston 1977: 174). These events resulted in some hostile reactions from the Samoan people, and it is not unreasonable to surmise that laws which had been imposed by foreigners on Samoans, such as the prohibition of alcohol, for instance, would have been difficult to enforce, especially if Samoan people believed they had been treated unjustly.

Finally, Gunson (1978) noted that very few mission stations were unaffected by the spirit trade, carried on by visiting ships and 'resident' grog sellers. Although the missionaries attempted to protect their members from 'the drinking Devil', and were worried about the problems arising from the settlers' heavy drinking, they did not take action 'until they received temperance literature from their pastors at home and from some American missionaries' (Gunson, 1978: 7). Gunson's suggestion that 'very few mission stations' were unaffected by the 'spirit trade' suggests that alcoholic beverages weren't confined to the Apia township because, at the time, most missions had stations scattered throughout the Samoan archipelago.

### ***European Settlers and Alcohol***

Not all Europeans who settled in Samoa during the first half of the nineteenth century used alcoholic beverages. Most of the early Protestant and Wesleyan missionaries did not consume alcohol. But to understand the prevalence, and effect of alcohol and its consumption in Samoa when alcoholic beverages were introduced, it is useful to examine briefly, who consumed alcohol, and how widespread alcohol consumption was among foreign settlers at the time. The following discussion provides a backdrop, and an appreciation of how

alcohol was consumed in Samoa, and the types of foreigners who were settled in Apia during the nineteenth century.

European male settlers, who resided around the Apia township were the main consumers of alcohol in the early years of settlement. In 1905, for example, the total white population for Samoa was 381 (340 on Upolu and 41 on Savai'i). The half-caste population numbered between 600 and 700, and the total population was 33,000 (*Cyclopedia of Samoa*, 1907: 237).<sup>52</sup> Some European residents' lifestyles were, to say the least, unpalatable to other Europeans who visited Samoa in the earlier years of foreign settlement. The death rate among settlers in Samoa, and throughout the Pacific beach communities, was high and alcohol, rather than contagious diseases such as dysentery or typhoid, was the killer:

In the Navigator Islands, as in Fiji, disease of any kind ... is to be attributed, not to the effects of climate, but to those of intoxicating drink. When one considers the astonishing quantity of alcoholic drink, chiefly 'square gin', consumed during any one month in either Apia or Levuka by so disproportionate a number of settlers, one need not be surprised at hearing an outcry about disease (Ralston, 1977: 158).

The literature indicates that there were few European women amongst the early settlers in Apia and other 'beach settlements' in the Pacific. Ralston (1977) observes that whilst a number of missionaries and consuls brought their wives 'the scarcity of white women was compensated for by the incorporation of indigenous and part-indigenous women' (1977: 136). At any rate, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, 'newly arrived Europeans increasingly brought their European wives and children with them' (Meleisea 1987: 160). Later still, during New Zealand's colonial administration, European women, such as teachers and nurses, some of whom were permitted to buy and consume liquor, became part of the European settlers' community in Apia. (Gilson, 1970; Marsack, 1961).

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<sup>52</sup> According to the January 1903 census, of the total white population in Samoa, 192 were German, 89 English and 39 Americans (*Cyclopedia of Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and the Cook Island*, 1907: 237).

### ***Imposition of Western Laws***

As early as 1837, Western laws were imposed on Samoa and the foreigners who had settled there. The first set of regulations emanated from sentiments expressed by the British Parliamentary Committee on Aborigines deploring 'the villainy imputed to foreign renegades in Samoa', and declaring that their hearts bled for 'the poor Samoa people, ... a very mild, inoffensive race, very easy of access' (Gilson 1970: 145). Thereafter, according to Gilson, British governments came to espouse as policy objectives, the establishment of order and, generally, the promotion of Christian civilization among the Samoans (Gilson, 1970: 145). To this end, Captain Bethune, commanding officer of the *HMS Conway*, which was out 'to recapture escapees from the Australian penal colonies, had met with 'principal chiefs of Tutuila' at Pago Pago, in December 1837. Captain Bethune requested the chiefs 'to join in relations of amity with Great Britain'. During the meeting, the issue of 'enacting port regulations was brought up,<sup>53</sup> for which Bethune 'lost no time in presenting draft regulations for them to adopt' (Gilson, 1970: 147).

Shortly after, in January 1838, Captain Bethune invited chiefs from Upolu to a meeting in Apia where another code was produced 'which incorporated not only the regulations previously adopted in Tutuila, but also some clauses on the subject of their enforcement' (Gilson, 1970: 148). According to Gilson, the *Conway* code was seen as a 'write-off in some respects', although its enforcement was used in the missionaries' preaching as 'a Samoan duty to God'. Moreover, Gilson notes that some of the regulations, notably those concerning liquor and prostitution, were amply enforced 'to inconvenience the beachcombers and mariners against whom they were directed' (Ibid, p. 149).

Beside the British, the Americans, and particularly those in the growing whaling industry, were also showing interest in the Pacific. By 1839, for instance, the Wilkes Exploring Expedition, commanded by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, arrived in Samoa. Wilkes proposed 'that the Samoan government and the foreigners should enact regulations that would protect

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<sup>53</sup> Gilson reports that the issue of port regulations were, according to Bethune, raised by the chiefs; though according to the interpreter Murray, it was raised by Bethune; but according to sailors and beachcombers, it was raised by Murray, or at least at his instigation. (Gilson, p. 147).

both natives and foreigners in Samoa' (Ellison 1938: 27). The regulations 'provided for protection by the Samoan government of all duly appointed and recognized foreign consuls and of all foreigners residing in Samoa and conforming to the laws of the country.' In terms of alcohol, all trade in spirituous liquors was to be forbidden under the regulations, 'signed by Malietoa and his leading chiefs on behalf of Samoa and by Wilkes, J. C. Williams,<sup>54</sup> and W. C. Cunningham, the British consul, on behalf of the foreigners' (Ellison, 1938: 28).

### ***'Grog Shops' in Apia in 1850s***

By the middle of the nineteenth century, there were already signs of open traffic in spirits in Apia, despite the combined efforts of Samoan chiefs and missionaries to maintain strict prohibition. Ralston (1977) notes that 'in the early 1850s, 'a plethora of grog shops' had appeared around the Apia township, reminiscent of the development of other beach settlements in the Pacific in the 1820s. In 1852, Rev Mills 'complained that there were more than twelve grog shops within less than a half-mile either side of his house. This was at a time when the foreign population in Apia did not exceed sixty' (Ralston, 1977: 79). The growth in the number of 'grog shops' in Apia at that time, however, could be explained as part of the general expansion of trade activities, including a number of small mercantile companies and services established to cater for the growing number of whaling ships which called into Apia for water, firewood and other provisions.<sup>55</sup> However, as the following discussion reveals, other improbable sources, such as consuls and ex-missionaries, played significant roles in opening up Samoa to open traffic in 'spirits', and in subsequent years, to the manufacture of alcoholic beverages.

### ***Consuls, Ex-Missionaries and Traders***

Whilst the liquor laws were unpopular among European settlers in Samoa, Gilson notes that 'there should have been a fair chance of preventing at least

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<sup>54</sup> John C Williams, who Wilkes had appointed as the American consul, was the son of the 'revered' missionary John Williams, who had recently arrived in Samoa at the time from England to be a 'Christian trader' (Gilson, pp. 157-8).

<sup>55</sup> According to Richards, it was the presence of the several hundred American whaling ships in Samoan waters in the early nineteenth century which 'justified the appointment of United States consular agents at Apia in November 1839, at Pago Pago in 1847, and in Savai'i in 1854'. (1992, p: vii).

open traffic in spirits in Apia', had the British and American consuls, who were also officials and church-members, been more committed to uphold the laws. However, Gilson contends that in an environment where 'the consuls were also merchants', the efforts of missionaries and some Samoan chiefs to keep Apia free from liquor trade would have been a tricky and onerous task. In 1850, George Pritchard, the ex-missionary appointed British consul, defied the British and American imposed liquor laws by openly importing liquor into Samoa. By importing several large cargoes of spirits, and turning the British consulate in Apia into a 'grog shop', Pritchard secured for himself a place in the history of alcohol in Samoa as the person responsible for breaking the prohibition (Ralston, 1977: 79; Gilson, 1970: 177). Gilson explains the historical deed thus:

In so defying the law he entirely destroyed its force, for in effect, he put the liquor business under his consular protection. When, in 1852, he brought in a second shipment, he was forthwith expelled from the London Missionary Society church, but such disciplinary action, however drastic as far as he was concerned, could not make Apia a 'dry' port again (Gilson, 1970: 177).

Incidentally, in 1852, Pritchard, the ex-LMS missionary, sold his Mulivai land to the Marists 'giving them a strategic site for the cathedral they planned to build'. Pritchard, indeed, 'claimed that it was really on account of the Mulivai land case, and not of his traffic in liquor, that he was excommunicated' (Gilson 1970: 177).

In any case, following the introduction of alcoholic liquor, Apia township was never the same again. Captain Home, who returned to Apia in 1852, found the place 'much less civilized' than when he had been there in 1844, when the prohibition had still been in effect (Ralston, 1977: 79). Home described Apia township and the British Consulate thus:

The place called the Consulate is of a description quite unfit for a respectable Englishman to live in or for the English flag to fly in front of. Although the sale of spirits is contrary to the law of Samoa established by the Chiefs, yet of the few houses which compose the town of Apia, I have reason to believe that nearly everyone of them deals in that article; no vigilance could keep the people sober who were engaged in watering (Ralston, 1977: 179-180).

At any rate, as the European population in Apia grew<sup>56</sup> so did grog shops, boarding houses, billiard parlours and bowling alleys – amenities supported largely by transient trade. By the mid-1850s, Apia the ‘town’, not the Samoan village of the same name, had turned into a place of ‘a most mixed character’. And if the appearance of Europeans’ dwellings and business premises in the Apia town were crude and of low standard, the state of European society at the Apia township was lower still (Richards, 1982: 166). Some missionaries and visiting naval officers were offended by the ‘ill-disciplined conduct’ of the foreign residents of the Apia township. In fact, at that time Apia became known far and wide as a ‘little Cairo’, a ‘hell of the Pacific’, and a ‘St. Giles’. As Gilson explains:

Many of the European dwellings and shops were described as ‘vile sinks of corruption’, whose occupants and patrons were scoffers living in open licentiousness, and setting examples of immorality by gambling, drinking, and double-dealing in all shapes (Gilson 1970: 179).

The foregoing account of the characteristics of non-Samoans residing in Samoa during the 1850s and their businesses, lifestyles, and more specifically, their attitudes to and use of alcohol suggests when alcohol started to become more widely available. In particular, the corrupt and unethical behaviour of consuls who degraded themselves and their respective consulates by trading in spirits and arms were shameful. Likewise, the case of the British consul referred to above, who ‘turned the British consulate into a ‘pot-house’ and openly defied the liquor prohibition (Gilson 1970: 179), was a blatant abuse of power and privilege. The same conduct may have led Samoans who saw the widespread use of and commerce in alcohol across the entire non-missionary social spectrum to start to form views on the place of alcohol in European society.

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<sup>56</sup> According to Gilson, there were about seventy-five foreigners in more or less permanent residence at Apia Bay in 1856, with a large proportion of unskilled labourers among the immigrants. By 1860, there were ‘more than one hundred; and these were often outnumbered by visitors and castaways’ (Gilson, 1970). In 1937, there were 2,300 part-Samoans of Alien or European legal status. Samoan historian, Malama Meleisea, cites the case of the Stowers family, one such part-European family which numbered 164 members, descendants of John Stowers the ‘Savai’i squire’. Meleisea alludes to ‘the right to apply for permits to drink liquor’ as one of the marks of the Stowers’ European identity in the 1930s (Meleisea, 1987: 176).

In 1856, when Captain Fremantle<sup>57</sup> attempted to re-impose prohibition on the Apia harbour area, the newly appointed American agent in Apia refused to comply, arguing that it was ridiculous ‘to restrict the commerce of a country so long as it did not conflict with the laws of nations in an island where there is no king, no government, and in many cases no God’ (Ralston 1971: 113). The agent argued that he ‘was not going to restrict imports of American liquor for Samoan benefit’ until the Samoans ‘were capable of creating their own unified government’ and of imposing national laws (Ralston, 1977: 113).

Then in 1857, with the help of Captain Fremantle, the consuls and paramount chiefs Pogai and Toetagata, embarked on another important undertaking; the establishment of a mixed Court to decide cases between Samoans and Europeans. According to Gilson, the principal aim of the mixed court was ‘to clamp down on the sale and consumption of liquor – not to attempt prohibition’, as Fremantle had suggested. In fact, the strategy was aimed at eliminating ‘the excessive and disorderly drinking that most offended their sense of propriety, and gave rise to much of the trouble between Samoans and Europeans’ (Gilson, 1970: 245).<sup>58</sup> The above examples of consuls’ shady practices highlight the conflict of interest with regards to the involvement of consuls and ex-missionaries in trade activities in Samoa during the nineteenth century. But as Gilson observes, ‘trading activities in general and the liquor business in particular, were the main cause of trouble among Europeans and between them and Samoans’, at least in the Apia township during the second half of the nineteenth century (1970: 207).

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<sup>57</sup> Captain Fremantle was commanding officer of the British warship H.M.S *Juno*, which Gilson notes, had earlier undertaken to settle the case of the *Crescent*, a British-owned and Apia-based schooner that was engaged in the local arms trade. The case involved the detention of the *Crescent* by the people of Manono, when Pritchard’s firm failed to supply two cannons to the Manono war party, which they had paid for in advance in full, but were never supplied (Gilson 1970: 205). The same Captain Fremantle had earlier, brought about a compromise between the European traders and Samoans when the chiefs of Apia, including those from Faleata and Mulinu’u, banned Samoan patronage of trade stores in the locality because of imports price-fixing at the time, Gilson, p. 239-40.

<sup>58</sup> A visitor to Samoa in 1862 noted that ‘... an American negro having attempted to smuggle spirits on board the “Fawn”, his boat was seized and destroyed alongside, and he himself was sentenced by chief Manutafa today to six months’ banishment from Apia’. Hood, H. T. (1867), *Notes on a Cruise in H.M.S. Fawn in the Western Pacific in the year 1862*. Edinburgh: Edmonton and Douglas, p. 137. Hood also states that ‘... negro cooks and stewards of American ships form a considerable portion of the American and British subjects in these islands’. (Ibid, p. 137).



But not all Europeans who visited Apia during those earlier times shared in the settlers and foreign consuls' disregard for island authority and welfare. For example, Gilson notes that one British naval commander investigating some disputes among the merchants of Apia considered the foreigners in general 'unruly', and 'disreputable' (1970: 179). But perhaps the most scorching criticism of European settlers in Samoa at the time was the following observations by Colonel William Mervine, of the *U.S.S. Independence*, who opined:

[In] Apia ... I found a state of society existing that beggars all description; composed of a heterogeneous mass of the most immoral and dissolute Foreigners that ever disgraced humanity, principally composed of Americans and Englishmen, several of whom had been Sidney [sic] convicts. Responsible to no law for their conduct – certainly none that the natives have the power of disposition to enforce against them – there exist anarchy, riot, debauchery which render life and property insecure ... Among the evils ... are grog-shops kept by Englishmen and Americans, where are sold the most poisonous liquors; connected with these are obscene dance houses, very demoralizing in their character (Gilson 1970: 179-80).

Clearly, judging from the above criticisms and negative descriptions of the environment in the Apia 'township', and the lifestyles of some foreign residents in Samoa during the second half of the nineteenth century, one could argue that it was inevitable, in fact only a matter of time, before liquor and the concomitant social problems would pervade the once grog-free Samoan society. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated in the following discussion, the prohibition laws and the attendant discrimination became some of the most contentious issues that confronted the colonial administrations in Samoa for over a hundred years.

### ***Liquor a Discriminatory Denominator***

Undoubtedly, laws controlling the sale of liquor and its consumption throughout Samoa's colonial history discriminated against Samoans. Marsack (1961) observed that during the German colonial administration, and throughout the New Zealand administration of Western Samoa, there was sharp discrimination between Europeans and Samoans in the matter of intoxicating liquor. Marsack notes that:

The former were subject to few restrictions in that respect and had available to them a wonderful variety of beer, wines and spirits which could be freely purchased. ... The Samoans however were totally prohibited from buying or consuming liquor, or even having them in their possession (Marsack 1961: 163).

For the Samoans, however, prohibition had been a matter of blatant manipulation by some Europeans as early as 1839, under the Wilkes Agreement. Later, in June 1889, under the Berlin Act, 'it was declared that the islands of Samoa were neutral territory in which the subjects of the three Signatory Powers' - Germany, Great Britain and the United States – 'had equal rights of residence, trade, and personal protection' (Rowe 1930: 80).

Interestingly, whilst prohibition was primarily intended to deny Samoan 'natives' access to liquor, it was just as contentious an issue, if not more so, among European settlers who during certain periods were also denied alcohol, and played a not insignificant role in the political intrigue and scheming which went on between the European settlers and colonial administrators in Samoa for many decades later. Moreover, prohibition created a great deal of hostility and bitterness among foreign residents, and later, with some 600-700 'afakasi or 'half-castes' in Samoa during 'German times', and throughout the New Zealand colonial administrations, as will be shown in the following discussion.

### ***Partial Prohibition under German Administration***

From 1900 to 1914, a period many Samoans refer to as 'German times', there was a sharp discrimination between Europeans and Samoans in the matter of intoxicating liquor (Marsack 1961: 163). For example, members of the 'Samoan race' were prohibited from obtaining intoxicating liquor, while Europeans were permitted to buy and consume liquor freely. Several licensed hotels existed in Apia and control of excessive consumption was exercised by means of prohibition orders. Furthermore, under German law, supplying liquor to natives had been punishable by heavy penalties, and Samoans found with liquor in their possession were also punished. What is surprising about the German law was the way in which it was apparently enforced: 'With only two white police officers, the Germans were able to control the liquor traffic so that drinking among the natives were practically

unknown' (Rowe 1930: 99). To claim that drinking among Samoans was enforced by two police officers is difficult to comprehend because the difficulty of such an exercise would have been enormous. It is more probable that the councils of chiefs in different villages and the missionaries, both of whom wanted the 'natives' to be protected from alcohol consumption, may have provided mechanisms by which Samoan people were discouraged from alcohol consumption.

### ***'Afakasi – 'half-caste problem'***

One of the more contentious issues in Samoa's colonial history was the question of the mixed-race or 'half caste' – *'afakasi* in Samoan. This became relevant in the context of alcohol permits and the discriminatory elements of the prohibition laws. As Meleisea (1987) states, the 'half-caste problem' originated in the model for economic policy which was laid down by Wilhelm Solf, Germany's first governor of Western Samoa in 1900 (1987: 155-6).

Throughout Samoa's colonial history, most *'afakasi* were classified legally as Europeans and as aliens in Samoa. As such they were discouraged from holding matai titles and legally forbidden to do so after 1934, or having legal access to land under customary Samoan tenure. This was a result of colonial regulations (both German and New Zealand) which were enacted with the intention of protecting Samoan land (Meleisea 1970: 156).

The *'afakasi* were usually the offspring of marriages between European males and Samoan women. Meleisea also notes that when John Williams arrived in 1830, there were already European settlers in Samoa, most of them beachcombers, escaped convicts or ships deserters. And whilst some of 'these men had little to recommend them by European standards, they were useful to their Samoan hosts if they had knowledge of carpentry, metal working, boat building and the use and repair of firearms' (1987: 157). Moreover, they were given 'chiefly protection, wives and access to land'. But as Meleisea also contends, the status of the *'afakasi* 'gradually declined as missionaries and increasing numbers of other Europeans arrived in Samoa and the status-conscious Samoans' were able to discern differences in wealth, knowledge and social position between them' (1987: 158).

Meleisea provides an extensive discussion on the historical development of the status of the part-Samoans, and the racist colonial policy 'towards those of Samoan-European parentage, and paternalistic attitudes towards Samoans which created social, economic and legal divisions between the two groups' (1987: 155). As Meleisea points out, a social class of people of 'mixed-race' arises when two populations with emphatic differences in culture and physical appearance meet on an unequal footing. The inequalities therefore, of the colonial period in Samoa arose from the prevailing ideology of social Darwinism, which led Europeans to believe themselves 'superior genetically or at least more advanced than any other cultural group in terms of their social, religious, political and economic institutions' (Ibid, p. 156). In the case of Samoa, once colonial rule was established, Europeans had the legal power to enforce their beliefs and to construct a racial hierarchy.

The Samoans, however, did not consider themselves or their culture inferior to Europeans, although 'they did regard certain technological and material introductions by Europeans as useful additions to their own culture' (Ibid, p. 156). Under Germany's colonial administration, '*afakasi* of a legitimate marriage of a foreigner and a person of native descent succeeded to the estate of their fathers (Keesing 1934: 452). However, this principle in theory 'would have meant that if a Samoan married a white woman the children would be classed as native', which Keesing argues, would be an equivalent situation whereby if a 'Samoan married a part-Samoan girl classed as European, her children would have been disqualified for status in the non-native community' (Ibid, p. 452). But as Meleisea (1987) and Keesing (1934) argue, the legislation of German days set the pattern of mixed-blood political and legal classification to the present. As Keesing added: 'A clear line demarcated European half-castes, who were associated with the foreign community, from the Samoan half-castes, associated with the full Samoans and natives from other islands ...' (Keesing, 1934: 453).

Such was the confusion and uncertainty over the status of the '*afakasi* in Samoa at the time, that even Governor Solf, a man of culture and education, 'was opposed to intermarriage between '*afakasi* and Samoans', an attitude which persisted among most colonial officials until the 1950s (Meleisea 1987:

162). However, one could argue that one of the most racist aspects of Samoa's colonial history was the 'special legislation to prevent Chinese labourers from mixing with the Samoan women' which was enacted under the German regime (Keesing, 1934: 453). German companies which were set up to start cocoa plantations in Samoa, one of which was Deutsche Samoa-Gesellschaft (DSG), imported Chinese 'coolies' to work the cocoa plantations when Samoans were found to be not interested in working in the labour-intensive cocoa plantations. Whilst Solf was initially 'cool to the idea', he nevertheless started recruiting Chinese labourers, with the first shipment of 289 workers from Shantou arriving in Samoa in March 1903 (Field, 1984: 27). But the poor treatment of Chinese labourers in Samoa did not improve under the New Zealand administration either. Field argued that the 'system of racial separation from the Germans which placed whites above half-castes, Samoans and Chinese' continued when the New Zealand administration took over from the Germans. He added that Logan became almost obsessive about the Chinese, a number of whom had been 'in Samoa for as long as ten years, and some had settled into fa'a Samoa or common law marriages' (Field, 1984: 30). As Field noted:

Repatriation of the Chinese dominated Logan's correspondence, and considering the major shipping problems in the Pacific at the time, he was remarkably successful in getting Chinese out of Samoa. Between 1914 and 1918 Chinese numbers went from 2,184 to 832 (Field, 1984: 30-31).

In terms of alcohol production, Chinese labourers were reported to have used cocoa beans to ferment a spirit, which didn't aid the administration's attempts at banning the manufacture of alcoholic liquor in Samoa and may, in fact, have strengthened its resolve to keep the two communities apart. The following observations of Llewella Churchill, wife of an American consul in Samoa at the turn of the nineteenth century, for example, may well have echoed the attitudes of many Europeans towards *'afakasi* in Samoa at the time:

From the beachcombers and other white men who have established domestic relations with the Samoans has sprung a class of half-castes, as yet not considerable element in the population either in numbers or in influence. Many are indistinguishable from the native populations of full bloods, whose customs they follow. Others are

carefully trained in the habits and manners of their white fathers. What any half-caste shall be depends entirely on the father; the child may most easily become like the mother's race, that needs no training, it results in debasement of the native blood with no elevation from the foreign strain. The result is a poor sort of Samoan (Churchill, 1901: 215).

But the *'afakasi* element of the Samoan population did gain considerable influence, as domestic relations between Europeans and 'native' Samoans increased, and later, when Chinese and Melanesian labourers were able to marry and entered into permanent relationships with Samoan women over the years.<sup>59</sup> Even the New Zealand Government policy in Samoa recognized *'afakasi* status under special provisions made in the Samoa Act 1921, to protect the Samoans. According to Boyd (1969), two types of domestic status were defined: 'Samoan status for those of pure or mixed Polynesian blood; and European status for Europeans and their legitimate part-Samoan descendants, as well as for a few Chinese' (1969: 128).<sup>60</sup>

Anyway, as well as prohibiting marriages between Chinese and Samoans, the 1921 Samoa Act prohibited any marriage officer or other person to solemnize any such marriage; and that any person who commits a breach of the provisions of the Act, 'shall be guilty of an offence punishable by a fine of twenty pounds or by imprisonment for six months'. As the New Zealand Minister of Justice, Ernest Lee, told his Parliamentary colleagues in Wellington 'it is certainly our duty to see that no marriage between them is legalized' (cited in Field, 1984: 57).

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<sup>59</sup> The term *'afakasi* here has been used quite generally to refer to people with 'mixed blood', although in Samoan, it specifically refers to a person of mixed-European descent. Samoans of Chinese descent are normally referred to as *'afaSaina* or 'half-Chinese' even though over the years, most Samoan descendants from those earlier alliances between Chinese labourers and Samoan women may have any combinations of Chinese blood, depending on who may be in a relationship. Over recent times, especially the last two or three decades, the colonial demarcation lines on Samoa's 'racial mix' have blurred significantly with inter-marriages between *'afakasi*, *'afasaina*, *'afa-Solomona*, Europeans, and people of other ethnicities. This includes those who refer to themselves as Samoa *a'ia'i*, 'pure Samoan', a term which is as problematic now as when the *'afakasi* concept was then because even now, a few half-Chinese people still think of, and refer to themselves as *'afa-Saina* who are Samoans.

<sup>60</sup> The 1921 Samoa Act, which replaced the Constitution Order, was a comprehensive Act which Field (1984) noted, 'covered almost everything a state like Samoa could need - except democratic representation for Samoans'. Field further argued that Clause 300 must be regarded as one of the most shameful pieces of legislation ever to be passed into New Zealand law' (Field, 1984: 57).

With regards to the prohibition laws, some *'afakasi* elements of the population started to gain recognition and were permitted to buy liquor from 1927. In the departmental heads' submission to Richardson, the New Zealand Administrator at the time, on the issue and control of alcoholic and fermented liquor in the Territory, 'every person registered and living as a European with one-half European blood or more, twenty-five years of age or over shall be eligible for consideration' by the proposed Liquor Permit Board.<sup>61</sup> This was a significant recognition of the status of *'afakasi* being categorized alongside Europeans under the proposed liquor laws, although there were also qualifications of certain types of *'afakasi* at the time. While this turn of events made some difference to the *'afakasi* element of the Samoan population, the prohibition law still prohibited the 'native' Samoan from consuming, or in possession of liquor.

### ***Total Prohibition under New Zealand Administration***

At the outbreak of the First World War, a New Zealand Expeditionary Force of 1,365 men formed, 'not from a regular Army but by recruiting civilian volunteers', with limited military training, was dispatched via New Caledonia and Suva to occupy the former German Protectorate of Samoa. On 29 August, 1914 the New Zealand troops arrived in Apia and put Western Samoa under a military administration using the structures introduced by the Germans (Meleisea 1987: 102). That feat by the New Zealand troops under Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Logan had international significance because when the New Zealand troops took over the administration of the former German protectorate, Western Samoa became the first of Germany's possessions to be taken by the Allied Forces during the First World War.

Some observers have noted that New Zealand's foray into the international arena, by acquisition of a League of Nations mandate following the First World War, had been perceived in some quarters of New Zealand society as a fulfilment of its 'nineteenth century aspirations to administer Western

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<sup>61</sup> As well as proposing the establishment of a Liquor Permit Board, the medical permits issued by the Medical Department at their discretion, were to continue. In terms of penalties for offences, 'any person found supplying liquor to Natives upon conviction by the High Court, be imprisoned without the option of a fine for a minimum of twelve months, (Rowe, 1930: 298-9).

Samoa on behalf of the British Empire'.<sup>62</sup> But as Boyd (1969) notes, by 1920 New Zealand 'had little wish to be saddled with the mandate'. Boyd observes that 'the resentment New Zealand had felt over Britain's 'betrayal' of her interests in 1899 when Samoa was partitioned between the United States and Germany had long since been drowned in an upsurge of wartime patriotism' (Boyd, 1969: 115).

### ***Restrictive Liquor Policy during the New Zealand Administration***

Whether or not the New Zealand Government policy on alcohol during the first decade of its administration of Western Samoa had been influenced by the 'rising tide of prohibition and restriction' liquor legislation in New Zealand at the turn of the nineteenth century is debatable. What is clear, however, is that a campaign by prohibition and temperance groups against drunkenness in the 1880s attracted a very wide spectrum of opinion within New Zealand society – 'Protestants who emphasized the sin of drunkenness, agnostics and humanitarians who saw the harm liquor could do and was doing to the Maori people', among other groups - 'took on the fervour of a moral crusade' and developed into the greatest populist movement in New Zealand in the space of a few years (New Zealand Royal Commission of Inquiry Report, 1974: 21). The Report of the Royal Commission cites the Licensing Act 1881, as a milestone in the temperance campaign then, and during subsequent decades:

A milestone in the temperance campaign was the Licensing Act 1881. This introduced many restrictive provisions perpetuated in successive Licensing Acts up to 1962. ... In 1910 the issue of reduction was dropped from the local option poll and a national poll on the issues of continuance and prohibition was provided for. In 1911 more than 55% favoured national prohibition (New Zealand Royal Commission of Inquiry Report, 1974: 24).

Given the background of restriction and prohibition of liquor in New Zealand, during the 1890s through to the First World War, perhaps it was not totally

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<sup>62</sup> One could argue that New Zealand's aspirations to annex the islands of Samoa for the British Empire had been spawned in the mid-nineteenth century when imperialistic individuals in New Zealand such as Sir George Grey (Governor of New Zealand, 1845-1853); Sir Julius Vogel, a former New Zealand premier, 'one of the keenest protagonists of a British Samoa in the 1880s, among others who 'had plans for colonizing and developing the islands' as viable commercial prospects.



surprising that the New Zealand Government adopted a 'total prohibition' approach when it agreed to administer Western Samoa as a mandate under the League of Nations.

Meleisea (1987) points out that with 'little preparation for the role of Colonial Administrator, Logan attempted to maintain the situation in Samoa as it had been laid down under the German administration and tried few innovations' (1987: 106). Subsequent administrations adopted the early liquor policy which created hostility and 'bad blood' against the New Zealand Government, among most elements of the Samoan population for several decades. Whether or not the New Zealand government policy on alcohol in Samoa was influenced by the prohibitive and temperance conditions in New Zealand at the time, the reaction to the 'total prohibition' policy in Samoa was very unpopular, to say the least.

### ***Total Prohibition Policy for Samoa***

The New Zealand Government policy on alcoholic beverages and alcohol consumption in Samoa was to a large degree, based on the earlier German prohibition policy. However, whereas the German policy prohibited only Samoan 'natives' from possessing or consuming alcohol while European settlers were exempted, the New Zealand policy imposed 'total prohibition' covering everyone in Samoa (Boyd, 1969: 128). Boyd argued that the total prohibition in Samoa by the New Zealand Government was to avoid in Samoa the kind of racial discrimination that existed in New Zealand's own licensing laws (1969: 128).

Under Article 3 of the League of Nations mandate, the supply of intoxicating spirits and beverages to Samoan natives was prohibited. Although the mandate was silent on the question of the supply of intoxicating liquor to Europeans, the New Zealand Government, by Section 340 of the Samoa Act, 1921, deemed it wise to prohibit the sale of liquor to all persons except for medicinal, sacramental, or industrial purposes (Liquor Commission, 1953). But as Marsack (1961) stated, it became clear very early in the New Zealand occupation of Samoa that 'the non-Samoan residents were at least going to

become very fractious if they were deprived of the alcohol to which they had become accustomed over the years'.<sup>63</sup>

The New Zealand Administration's First Annual Report to the League of Nations on the mandated territory of Western Samoa, explicitly demonstrated that total prohibition of further importation of intoxicating liquor was imposed, and shortly afterwards 'became a fundamental portion of the constitution'. The report further states that: 'Prohibition was imposed in what was considered to be the best interests of the community, but it was received with great dissatisfaction by a considerable portion of the community other than Native' (cited in Rowe 1930: 103).

When the Report came up for examination at the Second Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations,<sup>64</sup> the Chairman asked whether there was Prohibition under the German occupation of Samoa, and if not, why the New Zealand Government felt obliged to introduce it. Sir James Allen, representing the New Zealand Government replied that his government 'felt bound by the terms of the Mandate to abolish the liquor trade among the native population, and had for this reason made the prohibition absolute without any exception'<sup>65</sup>

Not surprisingly, the 'total prohibition' imposed on the entire population of Samoa by the New Zealand administration became a highly contentious issue among certain quarters of the Apia population, especially the Europeans who had been exempted under German colonial administration liquor prohibition. There was a 'feeling of grave mistrust' among the European population in Apia, who had been denied of their privileged access to alcohol by the administration without consultation. As Rowe observed, 'they could scarcely bring themselves to believe that such a thing could

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<sup>63</sup> Marsack, notes that whilst 'the local authority could not alter the New Zealand statute, they could at least, in the interests of peace and quiet, get round it. 'So the Chief Medical Officer issued medical permits as a matter of course to all the European population, authorizing them to purchase from the Government, which took over the business from the Administrator' (1961, p. 164).

<sup>64</sup> Hereinafter referred to as the Permanent Mandates Commission.

<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the Second Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission, (Cited in Rowe, 1930: 104).

happen to people living under the traditional liberty of the British flag' (Rowe, 1930: 100-1).

In 1921, there was a petition from the *Fono a Faipule* of the Samoa Native Advisory Council, to King George, asking for the Mandate to be taken away from New Zealand, and for the territory to be administered directly from the Colonial Office in London. The petition was denied, but it was widely understood that the petition had been influenced by the European settlers who were dissatisfied with the imposition of 'total prohibition' by the New Zealand administration.

The mood of the European settlers in Samoa at the time is perhaps best summed up in the following observations of a visitor to Samoa at the time. Professor Macmillan Brown, from New Zealand was visiting Apia and described the settlers' dissatisfaction thus:

The oceans of beer and champagne and whisky that flowed under German rule kept the Beach only half conscious of its grievances and half capable of expressing them. Now these oceans are dried up except surreptitious channels, and there is no liquid oblivion to lubricate the parched throat of the Beach or make it forget its grievances. ...Since that nip was denied, the Beach has become vocal with mighty oaths and intolerable wrongs: the Administration has done nothing but commit blunders (Brown, 1927: 203).

Reports referred to earlier, suggest there was illicit manufacturing of liquor amongst the settlers during the nineteenth century. By mid-1922, 'home-brewing could scarcely be called common', although 'there had been convictions of white planters for illicit distillation'. Rowe noted that 'by the end of that year "How's your brew?" became - in semi-seriousness - the usual salutation, and recipes were exchanged' (Rowe, 1930: 108). Rowe also stated that at the time, there was unofficial edict from the Administrator's office, that home brewing of liquors with in excess of the 3 per cent alcoholic content allowed by law, was to be tolerated in the case of Europeans, including *'afakasi*, manufacturing for their own consumption (Ibid, p. 108).

Then in 1923, the New Zealand government appointed a new Administrator to Western Samoa, in Brigadier General Richardson. At the time, the Citizens

Committee (representing the leading local Europeans and part-Samoans of European status) and the *Fono a Faipule*, had petitioned for more power in the way the administration was governing Samoa. One of the issues included in that, and later petitions, was for the removal of liquor restrictions (Meleisea 1987: 126).

In 1925, when the Samoa Mandate Report for March 1925, came up for consideration at the Seventh Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission, the Chairman stated that 1,036 gallons of whisky had apparently been consumed in the hospitals in Samoa which seemed to be a 'very large portion per patient'. In response, Gray, the New Zealand representative, replied that liquor was under very strict control in Samoa, and that it was only issued on a medical prescription. He also advised that 'the Administration did not interfere with the issue of medical prescription by medical officers' (Rowe, 1930: 200).

At any rate, growing discontent among the European elements of the Samoan population over the 'total prohibition' did not subside. In fact, later in 1925, it gained momentum to the extent that European members of the Legislative Council requested a review of the prohibition of liquor. In October of that year, for example, O. F. Nelson, one of the three European resident members of the Legislative Council, moved a motion for the Administration to recommend to the New Zealand Government to permit the sale of light wines and beers to approved Europeans without restriction. The motion was defeated. Again, in 1927, a similar motion, moved by Westbrook, another European resident member of Council, for the Samoan Administration to recommend to the New Zealand Government the Council's 'strong protest against the continuance of the prohibition of intoxicating liquor'. But, like the 1925 motion by Nelson, Westbrook's motion was defeated by 5 votes to 3. Not surprisingly, the division in Council was 3 votes for the motion from the European residents, including Nelson, Westbrook and Williams, whilst 5 votes against the motion were those of the members of Council appointed by the Administration. Official Members, according to Rowe were required to vote with the Administrator on all matters of policy: 'They outnumbered Elected Members by two to one. Everything submitted to the Council was a matter of policy. In this way notoriously heavy

drinkers were sometimes to be found speaking in favour of Prohibition, in contradiction of well-known opinions' (Rowe, 1930: 205).

In May 1927, a report by the Departmental Heads of the Samoan Administration to Richardson, proposed a continuation of total prohibition of the brewing of any fermented or alcoholic liquors throughout the whole Territory of Western Samoa, except by special licence. In particular, the Departmental Heads reported grave concern over the widespread availability, and increasing manufacture of *fa'amafu* from a concoction called "All-In-One" which was first imported into Western Samoa in 1922. Interestingly, the "All-In-One" concoction, a mixture of malt and hops made in prohibitionist San Francisco, packed in two pounds tins, and looking like molasses, which when added sugar and water, could make an intoxicating liquor resembling beer, was not prohibited because the *fa'amafu* brew made from it did not rise above the legal 3 percent of proof spirit. However, it was generally known that unless the amount of sugar added to the mixture was carefully regulated, the brew with the addition of extra sugar 'ensures an excess of alcohol and gives the drink a "kick", which is its only recommendation among its devotees' (Rowe, 1930: 108).

At the time, home-brewing was facetiously termed "The Third Industry of Samoa" behind coconut and cocoa planting. The pervasiveness of home-brewing in and around the Apia township at the time was so popular that the importation of "All-In-One" had increased from 57 cases in 1922 to 482 cases of the ever popular stuff by 1926 (Rowe, 1930: 296).

It could be argued that the law at the time 'was ineffective to prevent either Natives or Europeans from obtaining and consuming intoxicating liquor.' (Rowe, 1930: 299). Other forms of spirit were being manufactured from papaya and cocoa. As well as proposing total prohibition of the brewing of any fermented or alcoholic beverages throughout the territory, the departmental heads wanted the importation of 'preparations primarily intended for the manufacture of alcoholic beverages', such as "All-In-One" to be absolutely prohibited. Furthermore, they recommended the establishment of a permit Board of Control to control spirituous and fermented liquors within

the Territory, 'with the exception of liquor required for medicinal purposes' (Rowe 1930: 298).

In September 1927, the New Zealand Parliament agreed to set up a Royal Commission of enquiry to investigate grievances expressed by the Samoans against George Richardson's Administration.<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, Rowe (1930) noted that the 'important question of Prohibition was found to be beyond the scope of the inquiry'. Moreover, the Commissioners stated 'that not a single witness was called in support of Prohibition', while Government officials gave evidence against it. The Commission went on to express the opinion that 'the legislation has proved effective to prevent, so far as could reasonably be expected, the consumption of intoxicating liquor by Samoans' (Rowe, 1930: 232).

According to some commentators, the appointment of the Commission was more 'a way out' for the New Zealand government from the mounting unpopularity of the Richardson administration among the Samoan population at the time. In particular, the New Zealand government would have 'found it hard to defend itself' when a petition against Richardson's administration was presented in the New Zealand Parliament through a Labour MP, H. G. Mason, for which the New Zealand government didn't know anything about (Boyd, 1969: 152). Boyd argued that 'the Royal Commission is remarkable, not so much for the amount of evidence it amassed, as for the narrow, legalistic way in which it interpreted its terms of reference and made its findings'. Total prohibition was one of many other issues which the commission refused to recommend on technical grounds 'because they were matters of policy' (Boyd, 1969: 153).

In June 1928, the Report of the Royal Commission concerning the Administration of Western Samoa was adopted and examined by the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva. Alongside the Royal

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<sup>66</sup> The Royal Commission, consisting of Sir Charles Skerret (Chief Justice of New Zealand), and Judge MacCormack (a judge of the Native Court of New Zealand), heard testimonies from 155 witnesses, 90 of whom were called for the Mau and sixty five for the administration. The Royal Commission report completely vindicated Richardson and his contention that the Mau was inspired by local European agitators.

Commission Report were 'various petitions related thereto'.<sup>67</sup> The first item from the Royal Commission Report to be discussed was 'prohibition', which the New Zealand Government's representatives at the Commission, Sir James Parr, who was also New Zealand's High Commissioner in London at the time, and former Administrator of Western Samoa, George Richardson, pointed out, 'is a very old complaint'. Parr noted that

The whites cannot get liquor except as medicine, and a fair amount of medicine ... is drunk. But prohibition is general; it applies to both races, and the New Zealand Government is firmly resolved, notwithstanding the dissatisfaction of certain whites in a population of 40,000, to keep the prohibition of liquor still universal (Permanent Mandates Commission, 1928: 5).

Parr also argued that as well as 400 Europeans of pure blood living in Samoa at the time, there were also 2,000 half-castes, a large number of whom lived with the Samoans in native fashion, not as Europeans. Parr argued that this 'creates a very serious difficulty sometimes, since many half-castes are not living as Europeans and therefore, for all practical purposes, are Samoans' (Permanent Mandates Commission, 1928: 5).

So, if legislation were passed to the effect that Europeans should have liquor and the Samoans should not, the following extraordinary position would arise: the half-castes living with Samoans would be entitled to whisky and wine and beer, but their uncles, their cousins or their aunts living with them could not get it, and there would be such confusion as to make control absolutely impossible (Permanent Mandates Commission, 1928: 5).

Parr concluded by citing the following excerpts from the Royal Commission report, tabled at the Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission:

It appears clear that the legislation has proved effective to prevent, so far as could reasonably be expected, the consumption of intoxicating liquor by Samoans. ... It has been reasonably effective. ... The Samoan does not, as a rule, get liquor. His end would be soon in sight if he did so (Permanent Mandates Commission, 1928: 5).

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<sup>67</sup> One of the Petitions tabled at the Permanent Mandates Commission session from 12<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1928 was that by Mr Roberts, regarding the petitions of Mr Nelson of Western Samoa. At the start of the session, the Chairman proposed to the Commission that the report of the Royal Commission also dealt with a considerable number of points raised in the petitions. But after some discussion, the Permanent Mandates Commission declined to consider the petitions, nor agreed to hear the petitioners in session.

### ***'Medicinal' Alcohol Use***

As mentioned in the preceding discussion, a 'medicinal' system, by which liquor was made available to Europeans by the chief medical officer, had grown up to circumvent the policy of total prohibition in the 1920s (Boyd 1969: 178). For example, the sale of liquor for medicinal purposes was permitted solely on a certificate by a medical officer, indicating that 'the alcohol was required by the purchaser or his family for medical reasons' (Marsack 1961:164). Although the Director of Health, who was responsible for issuing medical permits 'announced publicly that alcohol was a poison, and was totally unnecessary as an aid to good health, medical permits continued to be issued 'to all those whose status in the community justified it' (Ibid, 164). Marsack added that the 'medicinal' system was later extended to include the issue of medical certificates for the purpose of obtaining liquor to non-Europeans, especially members of high standing in the community, even visitors (1961: 164). Moreover, Marsack stated that:

As time went on medical permits began to be issued to Samoans: not to those in a precarious state of health, but to those of high standing in the community such as the Fautua, the advisers to the High Commissioner, and the members of the Legislative Assembly. Even visitors who intended staying a week or two could obtain the magic piece of paper which entitled them to purchase a little beer or spirits (Marsack 1961: 164).

As well as coping its fair share of condemnation for the discriminatory nature, the 'medicinal' permit system was also criticized for the 'routine which had to be followed in the purchase of one's medical requirements'.<sup>68</sup> Marsack observed that one of the most unpopular features of the system was that the monthly points must be used month by month; 'their currency is for the month of issue only', so that one could not carry forward one month's ration to the next. According to Marsack, it was quite common on the first day of the month to see long queues at the Customs Office 'for the purpose of paying over money and receiving a chit which can later be handed in at the Liquor Store in exchange for the specified quantity of beer or spirits' (1961:

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<sup>68</sup> Marsack observed that because permits could be used only for the month of issue, 'the opening day of the month finds the great majority of permit-holders eager to purchase another supply. Judges of the High Court, merchants, bankers, highly placed officers of the Government, wharf labourers and taxi-drivers, all must take their places in the queue (1961: 165-6).



166). Furthermore, Marsack noted that except for the High Commissioner, who was subject to no restrictions in the matter of liquor, everybody else must make personal application at the Customs Office in Apia. Marsack's observations regarding 'the system' operating in Samoa is perhaps a fair indication of some of the Europeans' attitudes to liquor in Samoa at the time: 'It has nothing whatever to commend it except the fact that it produces a limited amount of beer and spirits; and this alone is something to be thankful for in a country where none of these things can be lawfully supplied except for medical purposes' (Marsack, 1961: 166).

In April 1936, when newly-elected New Zealand Prime Minister, Michael Savage, announced his government's objective to obtain the goodwill of the whole Samoan people, a 'goodwill mission' comprising Hon. F. Langstone, New Zealand Minister of Lands, and J. O'Brien, a Member of Parliament, was dispatched to Samoa to hold discussions with all sections of the community. The 'goodwill mission' recommended the replacement of the 'medicinal system' by a 'permit system' using points. However, the recommendation was not carried out until after the Second World War (Boyd, 1969: 178).

### ***Second World War and Alcohol in Samoa***

The advent of the Second World War impacted on the availability of alcohol and Samoan people's exposure to alcohol in a large scale. Boyd (1969) argued that the occupation of Upolu by 10,000 American forces from March 1942 to December 1943 saw Samoa riding on the crest of a tidal wave of artificial dollar prosperity. It placed some 2,600 Samoans on the Americans payroll, and the 'copra and cocoa trade was neglected for the more lucrative local trade in provisions and curios' (Ibid, 184).

Boyd stated that the presence of American forces also created a demand for alcohol. As well as alcohol, gambling, promiscuity and prostitution also flourished:

Wine, beer and spirits were manufactured from cocoa washings and sold at great profit. Gambling, drinking, promiscuity and prostitution

flourished. Samoan relations with the Americans were notably more friendly, hospitable and generous than with New Zealanders, and there was even a rush to the schools to learn English. Nevertheless, Samoa was not catapulted into the modern world overnight. Even during the occupation, many *ali'i* and *faipule* endeavoured to get their young people who were working regularly for the Americans to return home and to render customary services or monetary contributions to their *matai* (Boyd, 1969: 185).

### ***Advisory Liquor Board***

By 1948, 'the strictly medical basis for permits was no longer being observed, and an Advisory Liquor Board was constituted to advise and assist the Medical Officer in the allocation of liquor permits' (Liquor Commission Report, 1953: 6). The members of the Advisory Liquor Board were appointed by the High Commissioner. Whilst there was no legal authority for the existence of the Advisory Liquor Board, any authority it may have had 'springs from the fact that the Chief Medical Officer or Director of Health is a member of it' (Liquor Commission Report, 1953: 6-7). From that point on, the Advisory Liquor Board, and not the Chief Medical Officer of Health, was the issuing authority for liquor permits in Western Samoa.

Details of the new scheme, however, show extreme bias against Samoans in terms of the number of permits allocated for the purchase of liquor at the time. By August 1952, for example, the total number of permits issued was 1,073 of which 773 were held by Europeans (which included 'afakasi of European status); 136 were held by Chinese and part-Chinese; and 164 by Samoans (which included part-Samoans of Samoan status). According to the 1952 census, the total population at that time comprised 4,756 persons of European status (including Chinese) and 77,832 Samoans. Thus 909 liquor permits were held among 4,756 Europeans and Chinese while only 164 permits were held among 77,832 Samoans (Liquor Commission, 1953: 7).

In 1943, the issue of alcohol prohibition in Western Samoa was again raised in the Western Samoa Legislative Council debates. A motion by M. A. Stowers for the Legislative Council to recommend to the New Zealand Government 'that prohibition of alcoholic liquors in Western Samoa to Europeans be abolished', was seconded by G. Fa'alava'au. Before the

motion could be voted on, however, the Crown Solicitor moved an amendment to the motion: 'That this Council recommends to the New Zealand Government that the present system of restriction of alcoholic liquors in Western Samoa be amended.' The Treasurer seconded the motion (Parliamentary Hansard, 6 December 1943). Interestingly, the Stowers' motion made specific reference for an abolishment of the prohibition of alcoholic liquors to Europeans in Western Samoa. However, the Crown Solicitor's amendment to the motion, which was subsequently passed by the Legislative Council, recommended that 'the present system of restriction of alcoholic liquors' at the time be amended. It could be interpreted from this particular motion and amendment that the position of the Administration on alcohol and prohibition, was shifting from absolute prohibition to a permit system.<sup>69</sup> At any rate, the increasing availability of alcohol during the war years intensified attempts to eliminate the permit system.

### ***Permit System***

The Alcohol Liquor Board referred to earlier, had inaugurated a points system under which each permit holder was allotted so many points a month, which entitled the permit holder to buy liquor from the Government Liquor Store on the following basis of conversion of points: one point for each bottle of beer; 4 points for each bottle of wine; and 12 points for each bottle of spirits. Apart from a limitation as to quantity imposed in respect of Scotch whisky, a permit holder, subject to availability, can buy whatever kind of liquor he likes. Permits were granted upon consideration of the race, status, age, financial position, and character of applicants. The Liquor Board adopted a working practice under which the number of points allocated to an applicant varied from 24 in the case of an unmarried person under 25 years of age, to 108 points in the case of high officials and heads of business firms (Liquor Commission, 1953: 36-39).

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<sup>69</sup> Ironically, during the Legislative Council proceedings on the same day that the alcohol prohibition abolishment amendment was passed, a motion by Hon. Stowers to abolish the £50 deposit paid by Samoan people who desired to emigrate to New Zealand was also passed. Interestingly, there was a sense of familiarity, and of irony, in this course of events in the Council proceedings at that particular point in time, to the manner in which an earlier motion for the abolition of the liquor prohibition motion was proposed, and defeated in Council in 1928. At that time, a motion for the Hon. Administrator to exercise his prerogative to remit the £5 fine for drunkenness was proposed, but was subsequently declined by the Administrator.

In 1946, the League of Nations mandate was superseded by a United Nations Trusteeship Agreement. Under the Trusteeship Agreement, the New Zealand government, as the administering authority committed itself to promote the development of the Territory towards ultimate self-government. Under Clause 4 of Article VI of the Trusteeship Agreement, the New Zealand Government was required to control in the interests of the inhabitants the manufacture, importation and distribution of intoxicating spirits and beverages. (Liquor Commission, 1953: 1)

Although after 1946 the New Zealand Government was no longer required to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquor to natives, no substantial change had been made in the laws relating to intoxicating liquor since the passing of the Samoan Act 1921. And up to that time the supply of liquor had been made only for medicinal, sacramental and industrial purposes. Up to 1948 the consumption of liquor was limited almost entirely to Europeans and certain *'afakasi* under permits issued by the Medical Officer of Health, who alone dictated who might legally drink and the quantity of liquor that could be purchased. It is plain that even in those days the entitlement to liquor did not depend entirely upon the state of health.

### ***Liquor Commission of Inquiry***

In 1952, six years after the League of Nations mandate was revoked in favour of a Trusteeship Agreement from the United Nations, the Western Samoa Legislative Council recommended the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, which from hereinafter to be referred to as the Liquor Commission 1953, to inquire into and report upon certain questions regarding the supply, sale and consumption of intoxicating liquor in Western Samoa. Leonard Sinclair, a senior magistrate from Auckland, was appointed as the special Liquor Commissioner to investigate the subject of liquor control in Western Samoa. The commission was in Samoa for a month and heard evidence from fifty-seven witnesses:

The sittings of the Commission commenced at Apia on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1952 and continued intermittently there and in other parts of the Territory until 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1952. Sittings for the purpose of taking evidence were held on fifteen days and a total of 57 witnesses were heard. The Commission also made a visit to American Samoa to

enquire into and observe the system of liquor supply operating there. The sittings of the Commission were advertised before and during the sittings and I am satisfied that all sections of the community had adequate opportunity to be heard (Liquor Commission Report, 1953: 5).

After decades of prohibition and blatant racial discrimination, Marsack aptly noted that some commonsense policy on alcohol and its consumption in Samoa was finally being proposed. According to Marsack, the Liquor Commission recommended 'putting the importation and distribution of intoxicating liquor on a common-sense basis through a Liquor Board without any nonsense about medicinal purposes' (1961: 167).

One of the Liquor Commission's recommendations was that monthly points could be carried forward to the following month, after which time if the points were still not expended, they were to be then forfeited. This was recommended by the Liquor Commission as the preferred method of using points, rather than the assignment of liquor points between permit holders which had developed as a means of circumventing legislation and which, according to the Commission, 'destroys the effectiveness of control, and nullifies the work of the Liquor Board' (Liquor Commission, 1953: 6). The Liquor Commission recommended that 'the assignment of points between permit holders should not be permitted' (1953: 6-7).

### ***Home Brewing***

There is no doubt that the prohibition, which the German and later the New Zealand administrations, imposed on Samoan society directly contributed and were responsible for the growth of home-brewing in Samoa. It would have been only a matter of time before people would turn to the illicit manufacture of alcohol to serve a need for some of the population who had a craving for alcoholic liquor. In fact, when the New Zealand administration imposed 'total prohibition' it was inevitable that home-brewing would become widespread as a means through which people were able to acquire alcoholic liquor. Because of the unavailability of liquor under prohibition laws, people tended to turn to home-brewing as the only alternative means of catering for such a need. At first, the home-brewers in Samoa were primarily European settlers who may have been experienced, or at least had some knowledge, in

the home-brewing trade. Later, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, however, Samoan *'afakasi*, and a few Samoan 'natives' joined the fray, because the prohibition law included a ban on the manufacture of alcoholic liquor.<sup>70</sup>

However, it was not until the First World War, with the arrival at Apia of New Zealand troops which took over the administration of Samoa from the Germans, and later, in the early-1940s when some 10,000 American forces arrived in Tutuila and Western Samoa, that home-brewing in Samoa became popular. The New Zealand troops and American forces, as well as foreign settlers of the Apia Beach community, had a seemingly insatiable appetite for alcoholic liquor. This demand resulted in the expansion of the illicit manufacture of alcoholic liquor in Samoa. According to some participants in this study, the home-brewing of *fa'amafu*, the distillation of 'bush gin' from the *esi* (*Mangifera indica*) and other fruits, and the manufacture of a lethal concoction from the fermentation of ripe cocoa juice, grew from this demand for liquor.

This was borne out by the report of the Liquor Commission, which stated that Samoans' knowledge of home-brewing began when Europeans, as a result of the prohibition imposed under the Samoa Act 1921, started home-brewing. The knowledge of the 'art of home-brewing' soon spread to the extent that some Samoans picked it up. Moreover, as the Liquor Commission report indicates, although Europeans under the more liberal interpretation later placed upon the words 'medicinal purposes', no longer had the need to make home-made liquor, the Samoans had continued to do so. In fact, the Commission recognized that one of the major problems in Samoa at that time was the extensive home-brewing of *fa'amafu*, a fermented intoxicant resembling beer, which is made from malt and hops or native fruits (Liquor Commission, 1953: 23).

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<sup>70</sup> Some participants of this study recalled how home-brewing had been popular around some parts of the Apia town area, in places such as Lalovaea and Taufusi, although others remembered having been told of home-brews being present at Tanugamanono and Matautu during the earlier years of New Zealand's administration.

### ***Alcohol Manufacture and the Law***

The report of the Liquor Commission noted that illegal manufacture and sale of *fa'amafu* in Samoa was a major problem at the time. The Commission recommended that because the police force, 'apart from a few Europeans and part-European officers, consists of Samoans, most of whom have had little experience in police work' that vesting the powers of entry, search, and seizure on the police force should be restricted (Liquor Commission, 1953: 17). Exhibit 8 of the Liquor Commission Inquiry proceedings showed that the manufacture of *fa'amafu* as a breach of the Liquor Laws increased from 7 in 1947 to 30 in 1949. By 1950, however, illegal manufacture of *fa'amafu* had tapered off to 24 in 1950 to 12 in 1951 (Liquor Commission, 1953: 39). But as Marsack (1961) noted, by the 1950s cases of illegal manufacture of intoxicating liquor were frequent in the High Court in Samoa. For instance, in *Samoan Medley* (1961), Marsack relates how cases of home-brewing which found their way into the court system usually arose out of personal feuds in the villages. Marsack noted that 'it was almost always the wife who brews the beer, not the husband'. He also noted that when the wife would appear before the Court she would invariably plead guilty.<sup>71</sup> Marsack cites an example of a fairly frequent explanation in Court which runs like this:

With great respect before the Court, I make this beer to keep my husband at home in the evening. If I make this beer, he stays home and gives me some of his money to buy food and clothes for the children. If I do not make this beer he goes out in the evening and spends all his money to buy *fa'amafu* and then he comes home drunk and beats me and my children. That is why I have to make this beer, if it please [sic] the Court (Marsack 1961:169).

Another interesting aspect of home-brewing in Samoa at the time, as Marsack observed, was the manner in which payment of Court fines for the illegal activity which was regarded by Samoans as more an inconvenience, rather than home-brewing 'entailing any moral degradation'. Marsack states that: 'The fine is looked upon in much the same way as the penalty imposed on

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<sup>71</sup> According to Marsack, when the wife is asked 'if she wishes to say anything in connection with the offence, she as a rule assures the Judge or Commissioner that she made the beer merely for the use of her husband - or the carpenters repairing the *fale*, or the boys working in their plantation - but certainly not for sale' (Marsack 1961: 169).

bookmakers in New Zealand, that is to say as a licence fee which is necessary to entitle them to carry on with their illegal profession' (1961: 169).

From a sociological view point, the above example may be interpreted as a 'latent function' of prosecution, whereby the prosecution becomes a license fee rather than a deterrent. Marsack, also stated that Samoans charged for illegal home-brewing, attempted 'no evasions or prevarications' when they appeared before the Court. Marsack relates the case of 'a young woman with two club-feet, three children and no husband', who frankly acknowledged her offence in Court. Upon the imposition of 'a fine which was lighter than would have been the case but for her physical infirmities and her unfortunate domestic situation' (1961: 169), the woman requested time within which to pay her fine. Asked how much time she was asking for, she replied, two months. When further asked why she was requesting such a long time to pay her fine, the woman replied: 'If the Court pleases, I have no husband to earn money for me, and I cannot work because of my feet. So it will take me at least two months to sell enough *fa'amafu* to pay my fine' (Marsack, 1961: 169-170).

### ***Samoans and Alcohol - Liquor Commission Report***

In 1953, the Liquor Commission reported that the 'Samoans as a race were not yet wise in the uses nor informed in the abuses of intoxicating liquor' (1953: 19). The Commission also noted that Samoans 'may be called upon within a few years to exercise their franchise upon a social question which has troubled more advanced countries throughout the years' (Ibid, 19). The Commission noted that its choice will lie between total prohibition on the one hand and an unrestricted right to consume liquor on the other. The report stated that 'the evidence tendered on behalf of some of the Missions is truly indicative of present day Samoan public opinion, total prohibition is not beyond the bounds of possibility' (Ibid: 19).

Another issue addressed in the Commission's report was the limitation to the kind of liquor procurable under a permit in cases where that form of control may be deemed necessary. The commission cited the example of restriction to the quantity and kind of liquor found in Fiji, where Indians and Fijians were required to acquire permits to obtain liquor:



There, the novice drinker is educated to the use of alcohol by a process of graduation from beer to spirits over a period of time, with the quantity also increasing as the permit holder demonstrates his ability to consume liquor without getting into trouble (Liquor Commission, 1953: 9).

Another example of the different types of liquor that different groups could buy was the system operating in neighbouring American Samoa at the time. Although Europeans there were allowed restricted quantities of spirits, American Samoans were permitted to buy only light beer of alcoholic content not exceeding 3.2 percent by weight without restriction (Liquor Commission, 1953: 9).

Control of alcohol use and availability was another major concern raised in the Liquor Commission's Report. At the time, the Commission noted that peace and order in Samoa was dependent upon the measure of control exercised by the chiefs:

Any system of control adopted should be of such kind as to be adaptable to changes in the social life of the community. This refers to the fact that with the passage of time there may be a breaking down of the Samoan social system so that the control now exercised by the chiefs may be greatly lessened if not ultimately lost. At the present time much of the good order and peace in the community is dependent upon the measure of control exercised by the chiefs (Liquor Commission, 1953: 9-10).

Furthermore, the Commission pointed out that there was already evidence that control by family groups in Samoa was breaking down: 'This is noticeable in Apia where there are living a number of families who have broken away from their family groups and are now living independently and beyond the control of their *matai*' (Liquor Commission, 1953: 10). The Commission also stated that 'with improved education and travel facilities the breaking down of the social system was likely to continue to the point where chiefly control in the matter of liquor may be negligible, as was the case in New Zealand among the Maoris' (Ibid: 10).

The Commission, moreover, advised against relying primarily on the authority of the *fono a matai*, council of village chiefs, in the matter of liquor control. It noted that the system that existed in Samoa at the time, had no adequate controls to define 'entitlement to intoxicating liquor, whether by races, or classes, or otherwise, that did not involve discrimination and gave offence to one or other section of the community'. To this end, the Commission recommended a 'properly constituted and politically independent authority such as a board or committee' (Liquor Commission, 1953: 10).

One of the issues the Commission was asked to advise upon was the desirability of the continued monopoly of the importation and sale of liquor by the Government. As the Commission noted, 'an overwhelming majority of witnesses favoured the retention of the government monopoly, the main reasons given being, firstly, the more effective control of liquor, and secondly the advantage to the public revenues'. Quite apart from the great weight which should be given to public opinion in this matter, it seemed plain to the Commission that more effective control of sale and supply of liquor could be maintained under Government monopoly. As well, the Commission stated that one of the main difficulties in Samoa in the past was the lack of supply of beers suitable for the tropics:

Beer of light alcoholic content, but of good keeping and thirst-quenching quality is desirable, but no permanent reliable source of supply of beer of this kind has been established. Beer is being imported at present from New Zealand, Scotland and Germany, and was formerly imported from Australia. The light American beer of maximum 3.2 per cent alcoholic content by weight would be quite suitable, but no dollars are at present available for its purchase (Liquor Commission, 1953: 12).

It is possible that this recommendation by the Commission for the manufacture of a light beer to supply the liquor requirements of those living in Samoa at the time, may have influenced the later decision by Samoan political leaders to establish the Western Samoa Breweries, which was to become a major contributor to the Samoan economy in latter years. At any rate, the Commission felt that the enforcement of a law prohibiting the supply of liquor by way of 'gift' to persons not disqualified from receiving it would be

likely to be brought into disrepute by non-observance. On this latter point of gifting of liquor, the Commission was alerted to the need of visitors to the Territory to be able to reciprocate their hosts' hospitality by way of giving back at least, in the form of liquor what their hosts had been able to supply to them during their stay in Samoa (Liquor Commission, 1953: 14-16). It could be argued that despite a wide range of issues raised in the Commission's report, it opted to continue to administer a policy which met their requirements under the United Nations trusteeship and leave it to the Samoans to make decisions about more radical reform after independence. In 1956, the Samoa Amendment Act (1956) was hastily passed by the New Zealand parliament to enable the swearing in of a new Executive Council in Samoa.

### **'Samoanisation' – 1960s to 1990s**

So far, this social history of alcohol in Samoa has focused to a large extent, on prohibition, colonial administrations, and the attitudes and behaviours of some key stakeholders, Samoans included, towards alcohol and its consumption. This final section of the discussion focuses on Samoans and alcohol from 1960 through to the late-1990s, a period which I refer to here as that of 'Samoanisation'.<sup>72</sup> Essentially, the termination of the New Zealand administration marked the end to the discriminatory prohibition law which had drawn imaginary, though indelible, ethnic boundary lines between whites, *'afakasi* or half-caste Samoan Europeans, *'afasaina*, those of mixed Samoan and Chinese blood, *'afasolomona* children of Samoan women and Solomon Island men, and 'native' Samoans around alcohol and people's socializing for many decades.

In the post-World War II milieu of modernization and political development, the global decolonization tide was flowing ever-closer towards Western Samoa. Throughout the decade before independence, rapid social, political and environmental changes took place, and diverted some attention away from prohibition, as people were caught up in a fervour of expectation and

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<sup>72</sup> 'Samoanisation', refers here to the period when Samoans started to take on hands-on roles in the political, social, and economic affairs of the country, when New Zealand and the United Nations, agreed that the time had come for Western Samoa to be granted self-government.

excitement in anticipation of the looming self-government and what could be termed the 'Samoanisation' of governance.<sup>73</sup> Work on political, social, and economic development kept Samoans of all persuasions, as well as the administrators pre-occupied. United Nations missions and foreign experts arrived on Samoan shores to give advice, and to ensure Samoans understood what their political leaders were advocating.

By the mid-1950s, for example, the Constitutional Conventions sponsored by the United Nations showed an overwhelming preference among Samoan people for self-government. For example, the United Nations mission which visited Samoa in 1956, was of the view that the New Zealand government and the Samoans both desired a 'full member system' of government for Samoa. In September 1956, an amendment of the Samoa Act 1921 was passed in the New Zealand Parliament, to enable the swearing in of a new Executive Council in Western Samoa (Boyd, 1969: 238).

Immediately after attainment of its independence, the new government would have had more pressing needs to attend to, and it was some time before attention was directed to the regulation of alcohol consumption. It was not until 1971, nine years after independence, that a Liquor Bill was tabled, and heatedly debated in Parliament.

### ***Samoan Parliament Debate - 1971 Liquor Bill***

When the 1971 Liquor Bill was debated in Parliament, the Bills Committee through its Deputy Chairman, Tofilau Eti, reminded Members of Parliament (MPs) that the Samoan liquor laws that existed at the time dated back some fifty years, when the New Zealand Parliament had passed the Samoa Act 1921. He argued that the Bills Committee had sought advice from members of the public, including church leaders, and the Committee was of the opinion that the 'time was ripe' for Parliament to legislate and make adequate provisions for the control of the consumption of liquor. The Bills Committee Deputy Chairman stated that evidence submitted to the Committee included a claim from one section of the religious denominations that liquor was evil

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<sup>73</sup> The new Executive Council consisted of the High Commissioner, the two Fautua, the Secretary to the Government, the Financial Secretary, the Attorney General, and six elected members (four Samoans and two Europeans). Cited in Boyd, 1969, pp.: 238-9.

and was dangerous and disastrous to human beings. But he said there was also a counter claim from another religious point of view that there was no evil thing in this world. 'It was claimed that it is not the substance that is evil but the person that uses the substance in question' (Deputy Chairman, Bills Committee, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1971 Session, 14/12/71). Furthermore, the Deputy Chairman assured members of parliament that such issues as the negative effects of alcohol and all its detrimental consequences had been considered by the Committee in its deliberations. The Deputy Chairman further noted that the Committee believed that the time was ripe for Samoa's leaders to make decisions for Samoans and their liquor consumption by way of the proposed legislation.

Some of the main themes raised in the MPs' speeches during the Liquor Bill debate included: (1) the need for legislation to ensure alcohol does not encroach on, or threaten the authority of the village council of chiefs; (2) that if alcohol were to be sold publicly in the villages that there should be mechanisms put in place to ensure the consequences of drinking liquor would not impact negatively on traditional *fa'asamoa*, and; (3) the perception that the discriminatory Liquor Act which existed at that time, should be reviewed so that no sector of the Samoan population would be discriminated against. As well, and just as important, there was a sense of *déjà vu* among most members of the Samoan Parliament that finally, Samoan leaders could enact legislation, including liquor legislation which was relevant and appropriate for Samoan people .

### ***Right of Individual versus Collective Good***

During the 1971 Liquor Bill debate, former Prime Minister, Mata'afa Fiame,<sup>74</sup> contended that while he recognized the importance of the freedom of the individual to choose whether to drink or abstain, he was also mindful of the experiences of other countries where the freedom of individuals had led to 'bad habits'. He argued that because of this freedom 'many bad things have eventuated' in Samoa. Mata'afa further stated that 'it is this freedom that has

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<sup>74</sup> Mata'afa Fiame, who was Samoa's first appointed Prime Minister following Independence, was in opposition at the time when the Liquor Bill was debated, following his defeat as Prime Minister to Tupua Tamasese Lealofi IV.

given rise to wars and dissensions among nations'.<sup>75</sup> He contended that it was up to the MPs to prevent 'these bad habits' from spreading to the Samoan people: 'I strongly feel that it is the duty of this House to do what should be done for the benefit of our people. ... if liquor is totally prohibited it could result [in] people manufacturing unhygienic and illegal liquor' (Legislative Assembly Debates, December 1971, p. 545).

This determination to protect the collective from the negative consequences of the introduction of alcohol which had occurred elsewhere was set off against the determination to establish new rights for individuals which had long been denied them under prohibition.

The right of the individual to consume liquor also gained support from other MPs during the debate. Long-term MP, Leota Pita of Palauli-le-Falefa, Savai'i, noted that members who were calling for the Liquor Bill to be rejected needed to be reminded that the consumption of liquor is a right of the individual and therefore, MPs should not attempt to continue to deprive the individual of this right (Parliamentary Debates, December 1971, p. 551). Elderly MP, Mano Togamau of Si'umu, noted that in Samoan traditional customs, 'the chiefs and orators are vested with the authority to protect the rights of individuals of that village'. Mano, however, warned that while he 'firmly believed in the right of the individual ... we must not overstress and accuse our rights ... because the effect of liquor will contribute to the many and numerous unsatisfactory conditions that might arise' (Ibid, p. 552). Mano conceded that despite the proposed legislation, liquor consumption was well-protected under the permit system which was still in place in Samoa at the time.

Hon. Fatialofa Momo'e, MP for Lepa, who was known to have been an avid consumer of alcoholic beverages while he was a parliamentarian, was particularly concerned to hear recommendations that liquor be totally prohibited in the country. Fatialofa argued that 'after all the efforts that the public have put into the general development of the country they would be

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<sup>75</sup> Mata'afa correctly argued that whilst drinking liquor at the time was mainly confined to 'people in the town area ... the practice of consuming liquor will continue to spread out and would affect the people in the outside villages' (Parliamentary Debates, 14/12/1971).

deprived of this right of enjoying drinking beer if they so decided' (Parliamentary Debates, 15/12/71, p. 554).

Another long-serving MP and former Cabinet Minister, Fuimaono Mimio, of Falealili, argued that prohibition legislation should have been enacted and introduced immediately when Samoa gained its independent status. He noted that there were already many liquor stores and beer clubs around Apia and the town area which were, 'open to anyone of various ages that is from 15-year olds right up to adults' (Legislative Assembly Debate, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1971).

Mata'afa Fiame, expounded misgivings about possible ructions and internal disharmony within the village relationships which could emerge from some of the issues contained in the Liquor Bill. For example, Mata'afa noted that the proposed legislation could have adverse effects on 'the social relationships among the chiefs and orators of the villages' which he argued, could lead to divisions among members of village councils. He contended that if liquor were to be sold in the villages it could lead to other serious complications. Mata'afa then proposed that the Liquor Bill be rejected. The former Prime Minister's concerns may have been well-founded as will become evident in the next chapter and despite the passage of the Act some MPs continued to hold a number of misgivings, including the possibility detrimental effects of the availability of liquor on Samoan society, which will be discussed in chapters to follow.

### ***Western Samoa Liquor Act, 1971***

Ten years after Western Samoa gained its Independence, alcoholic liquor was becoming a major problem which Samoan leaders were grappling to deal with, at least through the introduction of legislation, which I have alluded to earlier in this chapter. The 1971 Samoa Liquor Act paved the way for the establishment of a Liquor Control Board to control the manufacture and sale of liquor in Western Samoa. The Liquor Bill was debated in Parliament for two days before it was passed into law on 17 December during the final session of Parliament for that financial year.

### ***Authority of Ali'i and Faipule***

One of the issues championed by the Bills Committee in support of the 1971 Liquor Bill, and referred to above, was the need to provide legislation to better control the use of liquor. The Committee was of the view that there should be provision in the legislation to consolidate the authority of *ali'i* and *faipule* the village chiefs, to assist in the enforcement of the law so that 'people are not harmed in any way whatever with regard to the consumption of liquor'.<sup>76</sup>

During the two-day debate of the Liquor Bill, some MPs raised grave concerns about whether mechanisms within the Bill to control the sale of liquor in the villages would encroach on, and diminish the *mamalu* or prestige of traditional Samoan customs and traditions. Other MPs advocated for stronger provisions in the legislation to protect the 'good qualities and good aspects of Samoan customs and traditions' from the effect of liquor. A long-time MP and former Cabinet Minister, Laufili Time, for example, echoed what other MPs thought about the Liquor Bill during the debates:

... the introduction of liquor to the villages will create very acute problems when it comes to implementing the law in its present form because there are inadequate provisions to adequately prevent the interests of village councils in matters relating to liquor.

... nowhere in the legislation is contained a provision for any penalties for any person who as a result of consuming liquor has caused inconvenience and become a nuisance in a village. ... many of the good qualities and good aspects of our customs and traditions will be literally killed by some of the provisions of this Bill.

... if the Board on the concurrence of the *ali'i* and *faipule* of a certain village would allow the erection of liquor premises in a village we will find a mixture of people, young and old, and of course the habits and the practices of these people will be quite contrary to the usual respect and the customary ways which have been observed in the village (Parliamentary Debate, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1971).

### ***A Discriminatory Liquor Act***

Another theme in MPs' speeches during the debate on the Liquor Bill was the discriminatory nature of the extant Liquor Act. Some MPs stated that the prohibition laws imposed on Samoans under the colonial administrations

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<sup>76</sup> Bills Committee, *Western Samoa Legislative Assembly Debates*, 1971 Session, 14/12/71.



were blatantly discriminatory. A long-serving MP and former Cabinet Minister, Asiata Lagolago, MP from Satupaitea, Savai'i observed thus:

If I may refer to the existing legislation ... in respect to liquor it is merely stipulated therein that no Samoan is entitled to obtain liquor except for medical purposes. As the present Act stands ... a Samoan would only be entitled to obtain liquor if it has been recommended by the medical authorities for medical reasons.

As a Samoan myself, I feel concerned over this matter. We are fortunate enough in our capacity as members of Parliament to be able to be holders of liquor permits whereas for the general public it would be very difficult for some of the matais to obtain permits because it is clearly indicated in the present law that no Samoan is entitled to obtain liquor. But as soon as a part-European reaches the age of 21 he is entitled to a liquor permit. It is a very unwelcome situation because it would seem that there is discrimination in the present legislation. ... I myself do not take liquor, however, because the provisions of the existing legislation do not benefit all the people, I therefore support the Bill.

... it is needless of me to say that we are now independent whereas in the past we were under the New Zealand administration and I feel therefore that with the achievement of our independence it is quite proper for us to take measures with regard to liquor in order to protect to the full interests of our own people. The consumption of liquor, I feel is entirely the choice of an individual, if one feels that he is not capable of consuming liquor then it is entirely the judgment or the decision of that particular person (Ibid, p. 559).

It is obvious from the observations of Samoan parliamentarians at the time of the Liquor Bill 1971 debates, that some Members, who strongly opposed the availability of liquor in the villages, supported the bill anyway. One could argue that their political affiliation to the ruling party at the time may have influenced their position and subsequent vote on the bill, rather than their rational choice for the government's course of action on liquor legislation then, and in the future.

### ***Quirky, Philosophical, and Farcical***

As well as the serious and philosophical observations, the 1971 Liquor Bill debate also threw up a range of light-hearted, quirky, farcical, ones. The following are indicative of the range of points raised in the debate and the range of sources on which members drew for their information for the debate, and which influenced the final decision.

*Hon Laumea Matolu:* Research has disclosed that liquor would benefit the blood system of a European but it does not benefit the blood system of a Polynesian. No doubt, this is why Samoan kava was grown and developed in Samoa because Samoan kava would benefit the blood system of a Samoan because he is a Polynesian.

*Hon Fuimaono Mimito:* For argument's sake, there have been young men of our country who had not touched liquor while [living] here in our country but when they proceeded to New Zealand, they started to drink and those are the very people that are considered to be the bad examples in that country. I contend, Sir, that these difficult examples that I have cited if they had started to drink liquor here and learn drinking habits here, they would not become trouble makers in New Zealand.

*Hon Tupuola Efi:* ... in almost every corner of Apia is a beer club. A great number of boys under the age of 21 are consuming liquor within these premises. Between 1958 and 1970, only small sums of money were spent annually to purchase liquor. Now, a substantial sum of money (\$460,000) has been appropriated for the sale of liquor.

*Hon Tofa Siasia:* ... the present legislation in respect of liquor is the New Zealand Act, and that is the Samoa Act 1921 which provides that Samoans are not allowed to consume liquor. In this Act the permit system was instituted and of course on the attainment of independence in 1962 the law was not rigidly adhered to, and liquor was allowed to be consumed by the people of our own country.

The Liquor Bill was subsequently passed into law as the Western Samoa Liquor Act 1971. One of the major focuses of this principal Act was the provision for control of the manufacture and sale of liquor in Samoa, which had also been recommended by the 1953 Liquor Commission.

### ***Subsequent Amendments to the Liquor Act***

Since its passage into law, the Western Samoa Liquor Act 1971 has been amended by Act of Parliament as follows:

- Liquor Amendment Act 1978 - this amendment to the main Liquor Act 1971, provided legislation to enable the Government's newly-established Western Samoa Breweries to sell its manufactured beer products.

- Liquor Amendment Act 1986 - enabled the Liquor Control Board to grant liquor importer's licences which authorized importers to import liquor into Western Samoa. This legislation in effect, ended the Government's monopoly on the importation of liquor into Western Samoa.
- Liquor Amendment Act 1991 - recognized the authority of *Alii* and *Faipule*, the village council of chiefs, in the issuance and cancellation of licenses to resell liquor at 'licensed premises' in the villages. This Liquor Amendment Act 1986 also increased from one to three, the number of Members of the general public to be appointed by the Minister to the Liquor Control Board.
- A Liquor Amendment Bill 1992/1993 – which was progressed without amendment in February 1993, was enacted to include the Financial Secretary or his nominee on the Liquor Control Board.

### ***From Regulation to Production: Establishment of Breweries in Samoa***

Over a century-and-half following the introduction of alcohol to Samoa by Europeans, leaders of the Independent Government of Western Samoa voted to set up a brewery to manufacture beer and soft drinks. The Western Samoa Breweries Company was set up as a joint venture between the Western Samoa Government and the West German company Hasse Brauei. The Samoan Government was the main shareholder in this venture. Shareholding, through the use of aid money, reflected the development orthodoxy of the day which promoted import substitution policies to manage the Samoan economy. Other shareholders included the Government of Nauru, Hasse Brauei, private shareholders, Erste Kulmbacher Actienbrauerei AC (Eku), ITM Pacific Ltd, and a Mr Hortelmann. The arrangement gave the German Brewery the contract to manage the brewery, providing both technical and management expertise.

At the opening of the new brewery, long-time Samoan resident Catholic priest, Father Louis Beauchemin, solemnized the colourful and elaborate ceremony with what many Samoans have since considered to be a visionary prayer. The prayer was published widely in the Samoan media and is cited here in its entirety:

Let us pray:

*God, our loving Father, we are gathered in your name, not just two or three but many, and we know that you are present in this gathering. And as we reflect, in your presence, on the condition of our human existence, which you took upon yourself in your Son Jesus Christ, we realize that life is not tidy, that life is often ambiguous – a mixture of good and bad.*

*Father we have come together for the opening of this industrial plant, geared principally to the brewing of beer, a product which is good – and also bad.*

*We are aware of its goodness – when used in moderation – to enhance the taste of food; to relax after heavy work; to meet with friends and relatives; to reduce tension; and to foster fellowship with other people.*

*But again, we remember how bad it can be, when wrongly used. We think of many people in our hospitals, injured and maimed in drunken brawls and motor accidents brought on by drunken drivers. We think of people in our jails for crimes induced by drink. We recall the many women, enslaved to alcoholic husbands. We remember husbands and wives broken apart through drink; the children scattered; and household furnishings broken to pieces, when the father of the family is a drunkard, and, worse still, when both father and mother are in the habit of getting drunk.*

*Father, such thoughts frighten us, and we pray that this elaborate plant, brought here from far away, may not become a scourge to our tiny island home.*

*We pray for all those responsible for the functioning of this plant – that they be inspired to take all precautions and safety measures to protect our workers from injury and health hazards. May they honestly avoid polluting our life-given lagoon.*

*Also we pray that no advertisements be put over the air, or in newspapers, urging people to drink the beer, especially the youth of our communities, lest, come a day, governments and companies from overseas will take advantage of our little country, when all our own people may have become alcoholics.*

*Finally, Father, we ask you to inspire all who drink beer, to do so in strict moderation. May others, too, be inspired to abstain altogether, as a witness and a help to those who have a weakness.*

*Father to receive this dedication prayer for the sake of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen!*

*(English Savali, 13 November 1978)*

In 1980, the Western Samoa Breweries began exporting its beer and soft drink products to neighbouring American Samoa. That market continues to be the main export market with export levels at 9,000 – 10,000 hectolitres annually. The brewery later established other export markets in the Cook

Islands and the Tokelau Islands. Trial shipments of *Vailima* beer were also sent to Australia, Fiji, and Kiribati.<sup>77</sup>

From 1982 to 1990, Western Samoa Breweries also brewed San Miguel beer on license from the Philippines. An article in the *Pacific Islands Monthly* (June, 1988), reported that the San Miguel beer was 'naturally, brewed to a Filipino recipe aimed at getting as close as possible to the taste of the highly successful original' (Strachan, 1988).<sup>78</sup> Another brand of beer brewed by the Samoan Breweries was EKV Bavarian beer under license to Erste Kulmbacher Actienbrauerei AG (Marshall, 2004: 208).

The Western Samoan Breweries did become and has continued to be an employer of a large number of workers processing *Vailima* beer and, more recently, Coca-Cola soft drinks. It also generated business opportunities for other local Samoan companies by way of product distribution throughout Samoa and to a lesser extent, in neighbouring American Samoa. At one stage, the brewery became the largest earner of foreign exchange to the Samoan economy. In 1988, for example, the Western Samoa Breweries was 'the single largest revenue earner in the country, with a turnover of 12 million tala (A\$8.5 million) and a workforce of 130' (Strachan, 1988: 38).

Later, in the early 1990s, *Vailima* beer was brewed by Dominion Breweries under license in New Zealand. In 1996, Western Samoa Breweries earned \$77,757 as royalty payments from DB Breweries for *Vailima* beer production of 3,110,000 litres. In 1997, 2,097,000 litres of *Vailima* were produced by DB Breweries, tapering off to 393,000 litres in 1988, before the agreement with DB Breweries was terminated in July of that year.<sup>79</sup> At the time, Hugh Ragg, manager/director of Carlton Breweries (Fiji) Ltd,<sup>80</sup> and Chairman of the

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<sup>77</sup> *Vailima Special Advertising Feature*, a glossy Ad supplement to promote *Vailima* in New Zealand, shows that *Vailima* Lager beer was produced by DB Breweries Ltd., Auckland in 1993. That arrangement however ceased in 1999 and the Apia-brewed *Vailima* beer is now exported directly to the company's appointed person in Auckland through which the beer is presold.

<sup>78</sup> Laurie Strachan, 'Here's to a New Islands Brew. Western Samoa's *Vailima* Beer Is a Foaming Success'. *Pacific Islands Monthly*, June 1988. Vol. 59 (6), 38.

<sup>79</sup> Shortly thereafter, Western Samoa Breweries was privatized, and was subsequently bought by Fosters Brewing Group of Australia (via its Carlton Breweries [Fiji] in 1999).

<sup>80</sup> Marshall (2004, 219) notes that Carlton Brewery of Fiji, part of the Foster's Brewing Group of Australia, 'only acquired a majority share in Samoa Breweries in 1999. By August of that

Samoa Breweries Board of Directors, said the New Zealand experiment flopped 'because of the water and... they couldn't completely copy the product here and the product was pretty well rejected by the Samoan community in New Zealand' (Ah Mu, 1999: 17-18).

While the ownership of the formerly government-owned brewery has been acquired by overseas transnational corporations (Ah Mu, 1999; Marshall, 2004), the Samoan Brewery continues to be managed by Brauhasse, with local staff now promoted to senior management. In an interview with Ah Mu of the *Pacific Islands Monthly* in November 1999, Ragg explained that:

As far as we are concerned as the investor in the company here, Samoa Breweries is a Samoan company, and it is our intention that it be run by Samoans. We don't expect to have any expatriates within the company, we will support the company from Fiji in terms of technical advice and backup, engineering backup and product backup. ... it's going to be run by Samoan people, without interference. Which is a big change from how it was operated in the past (Ah Mu, 1999: 17).

At the time, Ragg stated that conditions in Samoa encourage investment.

Carlton was attracted to Samoa by the company tax cut from 35 to 29 per cent and the abolition of the 15 per cent tax on repatriated dividends, both of which become effective January [2000] ... I have to tell you the equipment you have here now is much better than the equipment we've got in Fiji (Ah Mu, 1999, 17).

On the quality of *Vailima* beer, Ragg said 'they will not commit suicide with such a universally accepted product and tamper with *Vailima* beer or change its name'. Not surprisingly, Ragg wasn't ruling out expanding the *Vailima* beer production operation by way of exporting *Vailima* as a niche product to other overseas markets including Australia and the west coast of the United States where there are large expatriate Samoan communities (Ah Mu, 1999: 17-18).

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year it had a 51 percent share purchased from the Samoan government under a privatization policy ... and in October 1999 Carlton bought another 12.8 percent of shares from Brauhasse International Management of Germany and 4.5 percent from Grove International (Ah Mu 1999). When Samoa Breweries originally was established, 75 percent of the shares were held by the national government, 17 percent by German interests (the German Development Bank, a trading firm, Breckwoldt & Co., and a German Brewery, Hasse Brauerei, which managed the venture.

### ***Manuia - Second Brewery in Samoa***

But *Vailima* did get a taste of local competition in 1991. The establishment of a second brewery in a small economy such as Samoa was perceived with scepticism in some quarters of Samoan society. The mini-brewery was owned and operated by a long-time Apia resident American businessman, Dick Carpenter, of Apia Bottling Company. The brewery brewed *Manuia* beer,<sup>81</sup> which was bottled and sold in two-litre plastic Coca-Cola bottles. When it first came on the market, *Manuia* was seen as a ‘David’ against the ‘Goliath’ might of *Vailima*. Nevertheless, it created a price fight in bars as Samoan drinkers experimented with the new ‘brew’ and made direct comparisons with the more established *Vailima* beer.

In an *Island Business Pacific* article entitled: ‘Beer fight in bars of Apia’, Martin Robinson wrote:

The beer drinkers of Western Samoa are celebrating in some of the bars in Apia. First there was a special offer by a new *Manuia* beer – just \$W1.50 (\$US63c) for a big 750ml bottle on certain days at Le Tijuana Club. Beer prices hadn’t been that low for years. Then the Western Samoa Breweries responded by offering its new Eku beer at a very special low price of – you’ve guessed it – just \$WS1.50. This was available certain nights at Le Tijuana Club, the RSA Club, and the Tusitala Kitano Hotel.

These are the latest moves in Samoa’s beer battle as *Manuia* challenges the long-established monopoly of Western Samoa Breweries (Robinson, 1992: 51-52).

But as a recent visitor from Samoa noted, the new beer couldn’t foot it with the very popular *Vailima* beer’ and didn’t stay around for very long.

### ***Talofa Wine***

Another interesting player that entered the Samoan alcoholic liquor scene before *Manuia* brewery arrived was the local wine producer which made *Talofa* wine from passionfruit, banana, and orange juice. The *Talofa* wine venture is owned and operated by an expatriate New Zealander, Bob Rankin, of Island Style Fashions, who is married to a Samoan, and had lived

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<sup>81</sup> *Manuia* in Samoan means healthy or good health and is the term used to toast, or when drinkers wish ‘good cheer’, and when ‘ava drinkers offer good wishes and ‘good health’.

in Samoa for over twenty-five years at the time. Talofa Wine has over the years, produced other alcoholic liquor products as well. Its gold medal winning Coconut Cream Liqueur, for example, named after, and promoted under the name of famous writer Robert Louis Stevenson, has the epitaph of the infamous writer on its *tapa* print cloth label. The liqueur is 'made from pure Samoan coconut cream and coffee with a touch of vanilla from Tonga and gold medal Fijian rum, this is a superb liqueur of a smoothness and lingering flavour unmatched by any other and exquisite uniquely natural taste of the tropics'.<sup>82</sup>

### ***Controlling Liquor 'Samoan-style'***

At present, the Liquor Control Board has overall control of the sale and control of liquor in Samoa. The Board consists of heads of Customs, Health, Police, and Treasury Departments as permanent members. Other members of the Board are selected on three-year terms by the government. The Board has a permanent Secretary, and is currently administered within the Samoan Government's newly-established Ministry of Revenue. Under the current system, the Liquor Control Board controls the issuing of licences to resell liquor to the public. The Board Secretary says the issuing of licences is often a contentious issue for the Board because it depends entirely on the Police Department to police and enforce the liquor laws.

The Liquor Control Board could be perceived as an inefficient organ of government, ill-equipped resource-wise to police and enforce Samoa's liquor legislations. This was confirmed by the Samoan Police Commissioner, himself a permanent member of the Board, who noted that although some members of his staff are able to police and enforce liquor laws, this puts a lot of strain on the department's own resources. However, the Police Commissioner also recognized the need for his department to work together with the Liquor Board to police and reinforce the laws because of the escalating alcohol related problems in Samoan society.

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<sup>82</sup> The *tapa* printed cloth label also states: 'This gold medal winning coconut cream liqueur is brewed on the slopes of Vailima near the hundred year old home of Robert Louis Stevenson'. The liqueur comes in a 750 litre plastic bottle and has a 17% alcohol/vol. content.



### ***Alcohol and Village Authority***

A major concern raised in the 1953 Liquor Commission Report was the perceived 'break down' of traditional authority of the village *matai* in relation to control of alcohol consumption. These days, to be able to sell alcohol to the public, a village store requires the approval of a certain number of the village *matai* before the Liquor Control Board could issue a licence. Unfortunately, according to the Commissioner, some village councils have been supporting too many licence applications to sell liquor. But the Liquor Control Board can not refuse a licence if enough village *matai* support an application. The Commissioner expressed concerns that the *fono a matai* in some villages have been criticized for their indecision when supporting the granting of licenses for small village stores to sell liquor. He said some liquor licence applications were causing division in some village councils of chiefs where some *matai* support different applicants keen to sell liquor, mainly beer, at their village shops. This has created a problem in some villages which may have several small stores selling liquor and where police officers sometimes have to confront village *matai* when there is trouble in the villages and law-breakers ignore the authority of the *matai* of the village.

### ***Liquor Board and Liquor Laws***

The Secretary of the Samoan Liquor Control Board, stated that the granting of licences to sell liquor are based on the following criteria: (1) the appropriateness of the location of the premises; (2) letter of support signed by the *pulenu'u* and twenty other *matai* of the village where the premises are located; and (3) sanitary provision and acceptability of safety, and general condition of the premises. For the first and third requirements, the Board would normally refer the application to the Police department for an inspection of the premises in relation to other amenities. For example, are the premises in the vicinity of a school, a pastor's house and church, and other buildings and residences in the general neighbourhood, and whether the building is clean and safe.

For the second requirement of the law the *pulenu'u*, the village mayor, which in more recent years has been the government appointed representative in the village, and twenty *matai* are required to be signatories to support the

application. The list of *matai* signatories when received by the Board would then be referred to the Registrar of the Lands and Titles Court. This process, according to the Board Secretary, is necessary for confirmation that those signatories were indeed, registered *matai* from the village concerned. Additional checks involve a character check of the applicant, whether the named applicant is a bona fide resident at the premises, and is 21 years of age or over.

Where all the above requirements are met, the Board would then issue a licence to sell liquor. Before issuing a licence the Board normally reminds the licensee that the licence is strictly for selling liquor, and that there would be no liquor consumption whatsoever in or around the premises. In addition, the licensee would be reminded that there was strict prohibition of the sale of liquor on Sundays.<sup>83</sup> These conditions, however, according to most participants in this study, have not been adhered to, except in areas where village regulations prohibited public drinking and sale of liquor on Sundays.

### ***Areas Outside of 'Customary' Village Control***

In cases where people request licences to sell liquor in residential areas which are outside the control of traditional village *matai*,<sup>84</sup> the requirement for the *pulenu'u* and *matai* signatories in support of a licence application is waived. In the absence of *matai* to support a licence application for these areas, non-*matai* neighbours and near-by residents living in close proximity to the premises may substitute as signatories to support a licence application. The other two requirements are considered in the same manner as those for traditional village applications. The Secretary explained that the Board relies primarily on the Police Department for policing and enforcement of the liquor laws. He said occasionally, the Board puts out reminder notices through the mass media to ensure licencees were complying with opening

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<sup>83</sup> Prohibition of the sale of liquor on Sundays is not always strictly adhered to by retailers. During the time of my fieldwork in Samoa in 2001, I was able to buy liquor on Sunday from two different locations in two separate occasions. Some participants in this study also confirmed that the sale of liquor on Sundays is not uncommon and in certain locations, alcoholic beverages have been seen to be consumed on premises where liquor, especially beer, are sold.

<sup>84</sup> These areas are usually free-hold or lease-hold land which are located around the fringes of the Apia town area, which do not come under the authority of any traditional Samoan village council of chiefs. Usually, small retail stores within these residential areas have licences to sell Vailima beer.

hours and other requirements. As well, the police also patrol night clubs and public bars from time to time for under-age patrons or for infringement of opening hours for sale of liquor. Furthermore, public places such as beaches, parks, and other public spaces where the consumption of alcohol is prohibited, were also being patrolled by police.

Whilst the Secretary of the Samoan Liquor Board was adamant that the board has the power and was determined to enforce the liquor laws, the Secretary conceded that there has been only one case in the past where a night club licence has been revoked by the Board for non-compliance. He said that following several reports of non-compliance the Board decided to revoke that particular night club's licence for six months. However, the family that operated the night club petitioned the Board for clemency saying that the night club was its only source of revenue. The Board in its deliberations reversed its decision allowing the night club to continue operation, but with stern warning for non-compliance from the Board. The Secretary said the Board was mindful of the economic consequence to the family and workers should the night club licence be revoked. Just as important in the Liquor Board's decision to reverse its decision to revoke the night club's licence was the propriety of custom and etiquette of *fa'asamoa*, according to the Board Secretary. He said whilst the Board was well aware of its responsibility to enforce and uphold the liquor laws, there was also the *aganu'u* and *agaifanua* or Samoan culture and customs, the relationship between the Board and the family who operated the night club which needed to be taken into consideration. The Secretary noted that the Board also has to support businesses which employ workers who themselves, support their own families.

### ***Growing Concerns***

But some participants in this study were critical of the liquor laws, arguing that the accessibility of liquor to children who were able to buy beer from many licensed premises, mainly small retail stores throughout Samoa has become problematic. Some have suggested that children as young as nine or ten years old were able to buy bottles of Vailima from small village stores for parents or other adults. This is a problem which the Secretary of the

Liquor Board is well aware of. So too is the Commissioner of Police, who agrees that the laws have not been strictly enforced because some unscrupulous store-owners may be 'too greedy', preferring to make a sale rather than ensuring young children were not exposed to alcohol. Both Board officials were mindful of the loopholes in the laws whereby children may be able to buy liquor on behalf of adults. As well, they suspected that some licencees may be selling liquor on Sundays, and that some patrons were drinking alcohol on premises not licensed for public consumption. But both also concede that there is not a lot the Board can do because it relies entirely on the police for enforcement of the liquor regulations.

### ***What of Samoan People's Alcohol Use?***

In 1953, the Liquor Commission noted that intoxicating liquor was still unknown to the great majority of Samoans, and with some exceptions, those who were able to obtain liquor were in no way educated to its use. The report also noted that Samoans were 'immoderate in their drinking, and liquor appears to have an exaggerated effect on them'. Moreover, the Commission observed that when Samoans drink, 'old grievances are remembered, quarrels arise, and disturbances of the peace are a likely result' (Liquor Commission, 1953: 8).

Marsack (1961) agreed with the Liquor Commission's observations that Samoans at the time, were not yet educated in the use of liquor. Arguably, the former CJ would have been well situated, presiding as he did, over court cases of those charged for alcohol-related offences, to recognise Samoans' susceptibility and vulnerability to the demise of those who had misused or abused alcohol. He echoed the findings of the 1953 Liquor Commission, which suggested that Samoans were not educated in the use of alcohol: 'It is a regrettable fact that many Samoans who have acquired a taste for liquor regard a state of complete intoxication as the goal to be attained by their drinking' (1961:169).

Marsack concluded that perhaps, in time, 'and after some possibly distressing experiences', Samoans would acquire a safe and sound technique around

alcohol 'and then everyone in Western Samoa may have access to all forms of intoxicating liquor' (1961: 169).

At any rate, since the days of the New Zealand administration and the subsequent achievement of Samoan Independence in 1962, home-brewing did continue to be a popular source of relatively cheaper liquor for many Samoan drinkers. Over the last twenty-five years, however, the brewing and drinking of *fa'amafu* has continued, albeit at a much lower level. Some participants pointed to the relatively low price and widespread availability of the locally-brewed Vailima beer - compared to the high prices for imported beer - as an explanation for the diminishing popularity of home-brewing in Samoa. Or perhaps, Samoan drinkers who acquired a taste for home-brewed beer may have developed a safe and sound technique around *fa'amafu*, and alcoholic liquor generally, as Marsack had hoped they might do, in time.

In terms of access to alcohol for everyone in Samoa, which was a thorny issue during Samoa's colonial times, Marsack need not have worried. Clearly, as the discussion in other chapters will reveal, the widespread accessibility and availability of alcohol throughout the islands of Samoa, has become just as much of a 'social problem' now, if not more so, than when it was totally prohibited to Samoans many decades ago.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter has provided a chronological account of alcohol and its consumption in Samoa, which has been divided into four main phases. The first three phases were periods during which alcohol was introduced and liquor laws were imposed on Samoa by Western powers including Great Britain, Germany, United States of America, as well as New Zealand. Phase one includes the period from first contact with Europeans to the end of the nineteenth century. This phase was most significant for: (a) the imposition of Western laws including prohibition of liquor in Samoa; (b) the breaking of the prohibition when Pritchard, the British consul, imported large cargoes of liquor in 1850; (c) the growth of 'grog shops' around the Apia township thereafter; and the declaration of Western Samoa as neutral territory by the Three Great Powers at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Phase two was what the Samoans refer to as 'German times' (1900 - 1914), when Western Samoa was a German colony following the division of the islands of Samoa by the three Great Powers.<sup>85</sup> Whilst there was prohibition of liquor against the Samoan 'natives' European settlers were able to consume alcohol freely. The negative status of part-Samoans or '*afakasi*' as aliens was exacerbated by the German colonial administration's racial policy against half-castes, and their paternalistic attitudes towards Samoans which created social, economic, and legal divisions between Samoans and '*afakasi*'.

Phase three of this history (1914 – 1960), was the time when Western Samoa became a League of Nations Mandate, and later a United Nations Trusteeship under the administration of New Zealand. Of primary significance during this phase was the 'total prohibition' of liquor in Western Samoa. European settlers who had enjoyed access to alcohol under the German administration found themselves unable to buy alcohol when New Zealand officially became Samoa's administrator. A 'Medicinal System' and a 'Points Permit System' were subsequently put in place following European settlers' outcry for access to liquor. During this period, there was a dramatic growth in the home-brewing of alcoholic beverages to cater for the high demand for alcohol from New Zealand troops during the 1920s, and later the United States marines during World War II.

Finally, phase four was the period of 'Samoanisation', from the early-1960s to the late-1990s, when Western Samoa gained its independence in 1962 and Samoans gained control of their own affairs. A decade and half after independence, the Samoan government established the Western Samoa Breweries in partnership with a German Brewery Company, producing Vailima beer and soft drinks. A Liquor Control Board was charged with issuing licences to sell liquor, but relies entirely on the Police department to police and reinforce the 1971 Samoan Liquor Act which replaced the Samoa Act 1921, enacted by the New Zealand Parliament during its administration of Western

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<sup>85</sup> The Eastern islands of the Samoan Archipelago, including Tutuila, Manu'a, and Olosega were favoured by the United States for the Pago Pago port, and became American Samoa. The Western islands of Upolu, Savai'i, Manono and Apolima became a German colony and became Western Samoa. More recently, Western Samoa has become known as Samoa.

Samoa as a League of Nations mandate. Since the passage of the 1971 Liquor Amendment Act, alcohol has become widely available throughout Samoa to the extent that an increasing number of liquor outlets and the drinking of alcohol at public places throughout Samoa has become the norm, according to several participants. This major increase in availability of alcohol throughout Samoa can be attributed to the establishment of the Samoan Brewery which has been a major earner of foreign exchange for the Samoan economy during the past twenty or so years. The Samoan Brewery however, which was also a strategic asset for the Samoan government has since been acquired by Foster's (via Carlton Breweries [Fiji]), an overseas transnational corporation.

It is against this backdrop that current Samoan attitudes to and patterns of use of alcohol, which are to be discussed in the following chapters, have formed. It might be argued that the last phase of this history is the most significant influence on current patterns, but the changing availability and role of alcohol during that period was, in turn, a reaction to the earlier history of alcohol regulation in Samoa.

# **PART THREE**

## **THE DATA CHAPTERS**

*The harm from drinking, which includes not only adverse consequences for health but also major social problems, makes alcohol a very special commodity, not just another item of trade or commerce (Room et al. 2004: 228).*

*Alcohol – especially in the form of beer – is clearly in the Pacific to stay and has become woven into the people’s lives in many ways’ (Marshall, 2004: 218).*

### **Introduction**

This section is an analysis and discussion of fieldwork data from the three research sites organised around four major themes. Each of the chapters that follow explores and focuses on an individual theme. Other issues raised in the interviews have been categorized as minor themes and are discussed collectively in chapter 9. This strategy enables individual chapter discussions to focus on particular thematic areas, while providing opportunities to point to linkages between themes where appropriate.

### **Major Themes**

Some major themes, and a number of minor themes, emerged from the data at the three research sites. The major theme areas are:

- Alcohol, values and norms of *fa’asamoa*
- Attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol
- Availability and alcohol-related problems
- Drinking as an ‘elite lifestyle’ marker

These themes, in turn, serve to structure discussion on the data outlined in this and the subsequent chapters.

- ⇒ The nature of missions’ and colonial administrators’ influences on Samoans’ attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol,
- ⇒ The nature of alcohol’s impact on values and norms of *fa’asamoa*,



- ⇒ The influences of economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors on Samoans' attitudes and behaviours toward alcohol,,
- ⇒ The influence of the increasing availability of alcohol in Samoa on the prevalence of alcohol-related problems,
- ⇒ The consequences of the inclusion of alcohol consumption as part of a 'trendy lifestyle'.

### **Minor Themes**

Other issues identified in the data are listed as minor themes and are discussed in Chapter Nine in no particular order, alongside 'alcohol consumption as elitist and a trendy lifestyle' topic area. These minor themes include:

- 1) Alcohol as social boundary marker,
- 2) Drinking as a hazardous activity,
- 3) Alcohol as reward for services,
- 4) Alcohol as gift,
- 5) Alcohol and 'Host Responsibility'.

### **Discussion and Analysis of Data**

The insights and opinions of key informants have been presented and considered alongside the points of view of the participants and secondary material throughout the analysis. The analysis and discussion of the main theme areas in separate chapters is a means of grouping and managing data on particular topics. The separation does not necessarily imply that the data analysed in each of the individual chapters is unrelated to other topic areas. Nor does it imply that issues identified as the main themes are separate or unrelated to those categorised as minor themes. In fact, some of the topics which may have been identified as minor themes in this thesis discussion might have major implications in some other contexts. Take minor theme (4) as an example; that alcohol has been accepted in the practice of gift-giving among some Samoan people. Whilst not many participants mentioned this use of alcohol within Samoan practices of gift-giving and reciprocity, at least two of the key informants and a number of participants suggested that alcohol has gained a degree of popularity and acceptance as a 'gift' among

some people over the years. In a society where reciprocal gifting is an important element of social organisation, this practice may be one of the main vectors by which alcohol has made its way into the centre of Samoan social organisation

Thematic discussions and analyses in the remaining chapters will be interlinking, and there will be overlapping threads of alcohol and alcohol consumption; culture as a social construct as embodied and presented in *fa'asamoa* as a social, political, cultural, spiritual, and economic framework; as well as health and wellbeing. In other words, the focus of the following chapters on a particular topic or theme does not restrict individual chapter discussions exclusively to any one particular theme. For example, the discussion of issues such as alcohol and its impact on *fa'asamoa* and Samoan social life, its consequences for social relationships, and health and wellbeing have also been addressed within individual chapters, and across all of the chapters. This approach inevitably results in overlaps and the interlinking of issues throughout the remaining chapters of this thesis.

## Chapter Six

### ALCOHOL, SAMOAN VALUES, NORMS & SOCIAL ORGANISATION

#### Theme: The Impact of Alcohol on Values and Norms of Fa'asamoa

*Alcohol - especially in the form of beer – is clearly in the Pacific to stay and has become woven into people's lives in many ways (Marshall, 2004: 218).*

*Ua mai vai ae suamalie 'ava i le alofa o le Atua ... Water is bitter but Kava is sweeter in the love of God.*

*(Samoan Proverb)*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter first defines *fa'asamoa* and outlines the values and norms of *fa'asamoa*. The chapter then explores some transformations of *fa'asamoa* and how Samoans' worldviews and cultural and social organization have changed by examining internal migration within Samoa, and international migration and the formation of migrant communities in industrialized countries such as the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Third, the chapter discusses the centrality of the role of 'ava within Samoan social organisation. Fourth, it examines the use and place of alcohol in *fa'samoa* and how this phenomenon has impacted on other aspects of Samoans' social lives and organisation. This latter section has been organized into sub-themes which will be grouped under New Zealand and island-born categories which in turn, distinguish similarities and differences in attitudes and behaviours towards, as well as perceptions and practices around alcohol and drinking.

#### **Alcohol in Samoa – A Historical Context**

In earlier chapters, I have alluded to Lemert's study of drinking pathology in three Polynesian societies (1979) in which he posited that Samoan society placed values on 'conformity, acceptance of group decisions, ceremonial

compliance, and politeness in interpersonal interaction', values which he postulated, are guaranteed by a 'prompt and rough system of social control' administered by *matai* within the Samoan social organization of *fa'amatai* (1979: 203). Furthermore, he argued that in order for the *fa'amatai* to remain significant, it was crucial that the *matai* who make and carry out decisions are respected by other members of society. As well, Lemert observed that, 'inasmuch as it makes no place for direct contradiction and openly symbolized hostility' the *fa'amatai* 'will develop a deep substratum of aggression in its members which readily comes to the surface with intoxication' (1979: 203). Lemert further stated that drinking in Western Samoa was unpatterned and culturally unintegrated (1979: 198). Since Lemert's study in Samoa, however, the situation appears to have changed significantly. The data gathered for this study indicate that alcohol and the drinking of alcoholic beverages have found their place and have been integrated into Samoan social life in several respects.

Some commentators (Keesing, 1934; Gilson, 1970; Macpherson, 1978, 1997; Shore, 1982; Meleisea, 1987), have pointed out that the political and social stability which have characterized Samoan society, have been in large measure due to the role which *matai* and traditional polities have played in the maintenance of law and order, which in turn has been possible because of *fa'aaloalo* or respect for the institutions. Any phenomenon, such as alcohol use and abuse, which undermines the foundations of political and social stability, has wider ramifications for Samoan society. Clearly too, improved control of alcohol manufacture and use at the national level through new liquor legislation to address rapid changes in alcohol and drug use and abuse, reviewing current alcohol accessibility through better policing and enforcement of sale and of liquor laws, and at the level of the *fono a matai*, council of chiefs, plays a significant role in managing the growing alcohol-related problems in Samoa.

Since Lemert's (1979a) study, alcohol has become widely available throughout Samoa, and alcohol consumption pervades Samoan life. Data show that estimated beer consumption in Samoa grew from 1,452,538 litres in 1971 to 2,505,505 litres in 1977. Following the establishment of the

Western Samoa Brewery in 1978, estimated beer consumption increased from 3,640,122 litres in 1979 to 4,124,935 in 1980 (Casswell, & Smythe, 1982).<sup>1</sup> Estimated beer consumption for the same periods also increased from 9.91 litres per capita in 1971 to 16.37 litres in 1977 and from 23.52 litres to 26.47 litres for 1979 and 1980, respectively. More recently, local beer production by the Samoa Brewery have fluctuated from 5,406,000 litres in 1994 to 4,653,000 in 1998, and reaching 7,027,000 litres in 2002.

Another index of beer's availability and consumption in Samoa is the number of licensed outlets through which liquor is sold. Although figures on the number of permits to resell liquor issued by the Liquor Board during earlier years of beer production are not available, most recent data on the number of licences approved by the Liquor Control Board for 2002 and 2003 show a 20 percent increase in this two-year period, from 472 licences issued in 2002 to 566 in 2003. This twenty percent increase in the number of licensed outlets to sell liquor, mainly Vailima beer in a matter of two years, supports concerns expressed by some participants and key informants in this study who argued that this increasing availability and accessibility of alcohol will continue to exacerbate economic, cultural, social and health problems in Samoa.

Several participants and key informants, including the Samoan Commissioner of Police, suggested that alcohol has been implicated in most traffic accidents, domestic violence, as well as in serious crimes such as murder, in Samoa over recent years.<sup>2</sup> These trends are of major concern because of the adverse effects of, and negative consequences on individuals and Samoan society in general. The Commissioner of Police expressed grave concern that alcohol, and more recently, drugs such as marijuana which are also available, will become an enormous burden in terms of social and health problems in Samoa. These matters will be dealt with in more detail in a later chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Casswell, S and Smythe, M, (1982). *Alcohol Trade in the South Pacific: A Pilot Study in Five Sites*. Paper presented to a World Health Organization Working Meeting for the Study of International Production, Marketing, and Distribution of Alcoholic Beverages, October 25-27, Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>2</sup> The Samoan Commissioner of Police suggests that alcohol is a major contributing factor to most offences and serious crimes reported to, and dealt with by the Samoan police. (Key informant interview, Apia, December 2001).

The Commissioner believed alcohol is a major contributing factor to crime and offending in Samoa and that even the authority of *ali'i ma faipule*, the chiefs and orators, of some villages may have been threatened and compromised by the pervasiveness of alcohol and drunkenness. According to the Commissioner, the use of these substances in some cases is already threatening the authority of the village council of *matai* and could undermine *fa'asamoa* which depends on acceptance of the authority of the *fono a matai* the council of chiefs. However, the impact of alcohol on *fa'asamoa* and the threat which it represents to the authority of the *fono a matai* and the *fa'amatai* may vary throughout Samoa. Drinkers who have deliberately disobeyed village rules and regulations have been punished in a variety of ways by the *fono a matai*. The severity of punishments for offenders seems to be determined by individual village council's formulation and enforcement village rules and regulations of alcohol. But the loss of authority of traditional leadership has potentially serious consequences for law and order and law enforcement because the Commissioner acknowledged the importance of the contribution from village councils of chiefs in assisting police when working on serious cases involving villages. Furthermore, given the inadequate police resources to enforce and police liquor legislation this situation can not be easily turned around.

This is not simply a case of untitled people consuming alcohol and then finding the 'courage' to challenge those in authority and the values which they represent, as Lemert had posited forty years ago (1979a: 206). Several participants and key informants in this study have expressed concerns about the pervasive use of alcohol by some of those in authority, including the *matai* themselves, in various contexts in Samoa. Widespread use of alcohol by those in authority and those over whom the authority is exercised, has the potential to undermine the social structures which have produced the political stability which Samoa has thus far enjoyed. Some participants are worried that alcohol has been incorporated into Samoan people's lives to the extent that not only the drinkers, but those around the person, for instance, the spouses, children, extended family members, and even innocent parties such as pedestrians and passengers in motor vehicles have been affected in one way or another by alcohol and alcohol use.

Furthermore, if the situation is to be reversed, the leadership of these traditional sources of authority will be crucial. But, the pervasive abuse of alcohol by those in authority means that their credibility as role models in general, and in respect of lifestyle and health related issues may already have been weakened. Some New Zealand-born participants in this study, for example, have expressed concerns about the way Samoan people of their parents' generation, some of whom are leaders in their church groups and among Samoan communities, have been poor role models when it comes to lifestyle behaviours and attitudes towards alcohol use. These and other cultural and social issues will be expanded on in this and the remaining chapters.

The empirical data gathered confirms that alcohol has indeed, secured a place in the lives of many Samoan people both in New Zealand and in the islands. This is not totally surprising, however, in the light of recent studies alluded to in Chapter 2, which shows that alcohol and alcohol consumption pervades many Pacific peoples' lives in New Zealand (ALAC-MoH, 1997; Lima 2000; Siataga 2000). Participant observation at bars and nightclubs in Apia and at a Working Men's Club in Christchurch, and the author's own experience of growing up, socializing, and participation in the Samoan social setting, particularly between 1970 and 1990, confirms that alcohol is ubiquitous in the psychological, cultural, economic, political, and social life of Samoa.

It does not necessarily follow that the increase in consumption *causes* changes in either the culture or the social structure of the society. This has to be demonstrated empirically by identifying and elaborating the linkages between alcohol, and culture and social structure. This chapter examines some connections between changes in patterns of alcohol use, and those in Samoan culture and society both in Samoa and in New Zealand.

The following discussion summarises values of *fa'asamoa* and the dynamics of complex relationships which provides some context within which alcohol may be located and understood within Samoan social, cultural, and political life. It focuses on how *fa'asamoa* defines and views alcohol, and how this

may have changed over time. It asks whether these changing perceptions have influenced the extent to which alcohol has become entrenched within and impacted upon the central values and norms of *fa'asamoa*.

### **Values and Norms of Fa'asamoa**

Values, as consistent components of a social system, were defined by Parsons as commonly held conceptions of the 'desirable type of social system' - in the most important case, society as held by its own members. Such social values are to be differentiated from values concerning desirable types of object other than social systems, e.g., personalities, organisms, or physical objects (Parsons, 1968: 350).

### **The Fa'asamoa**

*Fa'asamoa* has been defined as a framework for social action. It is based upon the social structure of the *aiga*, the *nu'u*, and the *pule*, or authority, of the *fono a matai*, as well as all the other traditional customs, practices, and spiritual and cultural values encompassed therein. *Fa'asamoa* is founded firstly on the *fa'amatai* the *matai* system, and its *pule* over the *nu'u*, the village, and secondly, on the *ta'ita'iga*, the leadership of the *matai* over the *'aiga* and the *'aiga potopoto* or extended family. These institutions are crucial to the maintenance of values such as the *mamalu*, or dignity, of *fa'asamoa*, and are central to the conservation of *vafealoaloa'i* or reciprocal relationships. Other aspects such as *fetausia'i* or reciprocity, *loto alofa* or kindness, *'a'ao mafola* or generosity, *talimalo lelei* or hospitality, *osi 'aiga* and *tautua lelei*, responsiveness and good service to the *'aiga* as well as *tausil le mamalu* or be dignified, are all elements which were once considered crucial within *fa'asamoa*. They are some of the values and norms which may be implicit and unexplained, but are nonetheless, ever present and infused within the meaning and essence of *fa'asamoa*.

### **Fa'amatai**

Central to the operation of *fa'asamoa* is the *fa'amatai* (Shore, 1982). The *matai* system, has endured, despite early Europeans' attempts to 'manipulate and control the decision making process' (Meleisea 1987). Samoan historian, Meleisea observed that:



By the end of the nineteenth century the new colonial goal of reforming native institutions, creating others and injecting them with 'progress' was in place. Both German and New Zealand Governments believed that they could achieve this by using what they understood to be the traditional political system, weeding out the customs of which they disapproved (Meleisea, 1988: 13).

The decentralized system of political authority in which the basic political unit was the *nu'u*, better translated and understood as 'local polity', was a territory which was collectively 'owned' and controlled by a number of bilateral, corporate descent groups, or cognatic descent groups, called '*aiga*'. Shore (1982) argued that to translate the term *nu'u* as a segment of some inherent size or population such as are suggested by the terms 'village' or 'district' is to 'misconstrue the significance of the term and the logic that underlies its usage' (1982: 51). Shore also noted that chiefs had the authority to fine village offenders, although fines were rarely levied. Shore stated that whilst Samoans 'did not institute a distinct and independent set of judicial institutions ... they did build into their political institutions a fairly sophisticated set of processes to deal with conflict of many sorts' (Ibid, p. 111).

In terms of alcohol and its consumption, Shore noted drunkenness among other minor misbehaviour:

Drunkenness, cursing or causing disturbance in the village centre, and incest are '*inosia* (disgusting) to the sensibilities of others, suggesting disorder and pollution. There is some suggestion that the most offensive aspect of these acts is getting caught, so that private drunkenness undetected or illicit sexual behavior is not the object of serious disapproval, in the same way that murder is. A characteristic of these proscriptions is that they are generally recognized by villagers as part of traditional Samoan custom rather than a body of formal legislation (Shore, 1982: 112).

Shore argued that 'conformity with laws and regulation is, like so many aspects of Samoan behavior, a function of particular contexts, as are verbal demonstrations of respect for those regulations' (Shore, 1982: 119). And whilst non-conformity to village laws and regulations would be perceived as *le usita'i*, disobedience or defiance, it could also be interpreted as a serious breach of etiquette, an affront to the authority of the village council of chiefs.

*Usita'i* or obedience as Shore points out, is a central and explicit value within *fa'asamoa*, and some village councils of chiefs have in recent years been particularly severe in their response to disobedience, as in the case of Nu'utai Mafulu of Lona, Fagaloa, a former Auckland resident Samoan chief who was murdered by *taulele'a* or untitled men acting under instructions of some village *matai*, which I will discuss in further details later in this chapter, will demonstrate. Disobedience has been interpreted in some Samoan contexts as the concept of *fou*, to challenge,<sup>3</sup> or *fouvale*, a revolt or rebellion against, the authority of the *fono a matai*, and is a more serious offence than someone in a drunken state who screams out abuse knowing full well the consequences of this action. But as Shore argued, no boundary is intended to provide an absolute limit to behavior.

All boundaries are assumed to include opportunities for testing and occasional trespassing. 'Getting away' from time to time with officially proscribed behavior is a matter of personal pride for many Samoans, and they admit this in intimate conversation. Such pride in overstepping official and social limits on personal behavior provides social life with a vitality that Samoans cherish, and is in no significant sense inconsistent with a professed reverence for the very laws and regulations that are being tested. Only a respected law is one worth making a great effort to test (Shore, 1982: 119).

This particular observation of 'getting away' with proscribed behaviour was used by a *matai* participant, who drinks, when discussing his church's position on alcohol and drunkenness. The participant, an adherent of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS), said he knew of several pastors and pastor trainees at the church's Theological College who drink and 'get away with it'. He joked that the worst enemy in those circumstances is 'getting caught' by those in authority. He said while the drinkers were well aware of the prohibitionist stance of the church towards alcohol, it was taken for granted that they could drink alcohol, so long as they didn't get caught. But he also acknowledged that within his own village *fono a matai*, of which he is a member, drinking was officially prohibited but that policing and enforcing village regulations were quite lax. He added that in some circumstances, where the *fono a matai* had been offered or gifted beer, the *matai* would make special dispensation so they could accept such a

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<sup>3</sup> *Fou* as a verb meaning challenge, or *fouvale* as a noun meaning revolt or rebellion.

*fa'aaloalo* or a token of generosity, and drink it together as a group. These individual challenges to the positions of both the church and of the village on alcohol are part of a wider pattern of challenges to the central pillars of Samoan social organization.

### ***Challenges to the Matai System***

Since independence in 1962, challenges to Samoan chieftainship have intensified. The challenges have originated from within Samoan social, political, even legal institutions. For example, the proliferation of *matai* titles by wholesale splitting and creating 'to manufacture rather than to win votes' in the 1970s, resulted in the huge increase in title-holders from 4,394 in 1961 to 9,948 in 1976, and 11, 013 in 1979 (by 126% 1961-1976; and by 150% 1961-1979).<sup>4</sup> This scramble to create new *matai* titles for election purposes or *matai palota*, in reality, effectively devalued the *mamalu* of the *matai* system (Powles, 1986). Macpherson (1997), noted that the election to titles 'of minors and others who would not normally have held power ... shocked many Samoans and led to the 1969 amendment to electoral legislation aimed at limiting the number of recognized titles to those which existed before independence' (1997: 40).

Another major challenge which posed the biggest threat to the *faamatai* was the growing impact of the Western notion of cash and commerce. As Powles (1986) has pointed out, money is replacing food, labour and the other personal services that go to make up the *tautua* or service as the lifeblood of the *matai* system. Over the past two decades or so commerce and trade have been espoused and embedded within *faasamoa* generally, to the extent that even the national political campaigns have resulted in charges of bribery and treating by way of money payments by candidates to potential voters. In some instances, these have resulted in overturned parliamentary election results over recent years.

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<sup>4</sup> Powles, G. (1986), "Legal Systems and Political Cultures: Competition for Dominance in Western Samoa" in Sack, P and Minchin, E. (eds.), *Legal Pluralism: Proceedings of the Canberra Law Workshop VII*. Canberra: Research School of Social Sciences, ANU.

Paradoxically, the power of the *matai* and *fono a matai* have been confirmed by the passage of *The Electoral Amendment Act of 1990* within which 'retained the provision of *matai* representation in Parliament but enfranchised all adult Western Samoan citizens' (Macpherson, 1997: 41). Another act, passed into law in 1990, *The Village Fono Act of 1990*, allowed every village *fono* to exercise any power or authority in accordance with the customs and usage of that village. In effect, the Act validated and empowered the village *fono* to exercise its authority in accordance with custom and usage (Section 3.2). Macpherson also noted that 'in addition to powers and authority conferred in this act, every village *fono* was to enjoy such other powers, authorities, and functions as may be conferred by any other act' (1997: 42).

### ***People and Relationships***

These values, however, only take form in relationships. Enactments of these values in the conduct of personal relationships are the occasions in which abstract ideas are translated into actions, against which people judge their own and others' conduct. The connection between Samoan values and way of life is perhaps, best summed up in the following words about Polynesia, penned by McKay, a New Zealander who was a long-term resident of Samoa who spent the major part of his working life as a New Zealand colonial government employee in Samoa.<sup>5</sup>

"... a Polynesian view of life is not one of places, nor does it yearn for possessions; it is filled with people. ... Today, as in the past, in Samoa and among the thousands of Samoan migrants in New Zealand, the underlying motivation is pride – pride of self – of family, and of race. It is an easy sitting pride, which looks unselfconsciously at other people. Inherently, a proud people see value in dignity, and they expect recognition, from strangers and among themselves (McKay, 1968: 6-7).

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<sup>5</sup> C.G.A. McKay, was known as "Mac" or "Makai" among his Samoan friends. According to Sir Guy Powles, former New Zealand High Commissioner to Western Samoa, McKay 'perhaps contributed more than any other European to Samoa's smooth transition from colonial status to independence'. "Makai" arrived in Apia in 1919 before he was twenty years old to take up a clerical position with the New Zealand administration. There he remained until 1943 when he reluctantly left to take up the position of Secretary of Island Territories in Wellington. He retired from Government service in 1947 but the following year, was appointed New Zealand Commissioner on the South Pacific Commission (G. Powles, 'Preface' in McKay, 1968 *Samoa: A Personal Story of the Samoa Islands*).

The above observation is a fairly astute appraisal of Samoan people and their characteristics embedded in *fa'asamoa*, at least during the later half of the twentieth century. In particular, McKay's observations captured the spirit and essence of Samoan values; that its view of the world is not one of places or material possessions but one filled with people.

Similarly, Marsack (1961) has observed that, 'the Samoan shows two notable characteristics which set him apart from men of other races: his dignity and his response to discipline' (1961: 22). Marsack noted that the Samoan 'has a sense of humour [and] appreciative of the funny side of a situation; but on the subject of his personal dignity no joke is tolerated' (Ibid, p. 22). This reference to the Samoan person's dignity and his response to discipline is interesting and worthy of further, albeit brief discussion.

Recall Lemert's (1979) observations about values espoused in Samoan social organisation:

Its conservative emphasis is revealed by the values placed on conformity, acceptance of group decisions, ceremonial compliance, and politeness in interpersonal interaction. The dominance of these values is guaranteed by a prompt and rough system of social control, administered by the *matai* ...

It can be expected that this kind of system, particularly inasmuch as it makes no place for direct contradiction and openly symbolized hostility, will develop a deep substratum of aggression in its members which readily comes to the surface with intoxication (Lemert, 1979: 203).

Lemert's observations of forty years ago still have merit, and can provide a baseline against which contemporary *fa'asamoa* can be compared. Over the years, these values of conformity to village laws and regulations, acceptance of and compliance with the decisions made by the *fono a matai*, and politeness and respect in interpersonal relationships, have persisted. But there is growing concern among some participants in this study that some of these values may no longer be as widely held or enjoy the same commitment as they did when Lemert made his observations. For example, while the *fono a matai* still has the authority for discipline and social control over the *nu'u* and its members, there have been occasions during the last decade or so

where people have defied, and openly challenged that authority of the *fono a matai*.

Even the most conservative, hierarchical social institutions, have changed during the last three or four decades. For instance, although the *fono a matai* and other social institutions within the village have persisted Samoan village dynamics have changed. Beside the visible material changes in terms of houses, cars, roads, electricity, etc., there is also a noticeable decline in the number of people seen in some villages.<sup>6</sup> The diminishing number of Samoan people living in traditional villages can be explained by internal migration from villages to the Apia town area. It could also be attributed to the larger out-migration, including the migration of people from Western Samoa to Pago Pago in American Samoa for employment and educational opportunities since the early 1960s. There has also been simultaneous growth of Samoan populations beyond Samoa which saw enclaves grow in 'cities in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States where opportunities for skilled and unskilled work were available' (Macpherson, 2004: 169).

But Macpherson (1984, 1991), has argued that this issue is further complicated by the fact that there is no longer a single form of *fa'asamoa*, but rather a number which vary significantly. A study of the impact of changes on social organization in three communities in Samoa by Fitzgerald and Howard (1990), for example, found that modernization and migration have resulted in the fragmentation of the Samoan *'aiga*, with some members living in the home village, others living in the local urban centres, and others scattered about in New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii and the United States mainland (1990: 31). The authors have argued that the conservatism of *fa'asamoa* has created conditions for the successful adaptation of modernizing and migrant Samoans by providing economic, social, and psychological support (Ibid, 31). But that migration has also transformed the *fa'asamoa* because the unique combination of factors which underpinned the village variant, the so-called 'traditional' form of *fa'asamoa*, is no longer present in these communities. People, for instance, no longer depend on the *matai* for access

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<sup>6</sup> Conversations with some villagers I spoke with during my fieldwork trip in Samoa in 2001 indicated that it is not unusual for some families in some villages to have fewer people living at home than members living in either Apia or overseas including Pago Pago,.

to land and the power relationships between *matai* and untitled people are fundamentally changed by this fact.

Variations have developed within migrant enclaves. As the Samoan anthropologist, Le'ulu Felise Va'a (2001), in his study of Samoan migrants living in Australia has pointed out, 'the *matai* system seem to have lost power while *taulele'a* have gained more influence' (2001: 229). Va'a (2001) noted that:

... the way of life of Samoans in Canterbury-Bankstown contains many striking differences from that of Samoans in Samoa. Most obviously, migrant life is not based on the existence of villages where a hierarchy of chiefs rule, horticultural production and fishing are the distinguishing features of the kinship-based, subsistence economy, and practically 100 percent of the population are Samoans interacting with each other, in familiar settings, in the Samoan language.

The Sydney community does not have the patterns of co-residence, land ownership and economic controls that help underwrite the ranking system in Samoa. As a result chiefly authority is undermined, giving new significance to the role of the Samoan Christian church and pastor (Va'a, 2001: 16).

Va'a also argued that *fa'asamoa*, like other cultural systems, 'is always the product of construction and reconstruction in that individual consciousness mediates and interprets it'. Furthermore, he noted, that although *fa'asamoa* 'is a mercurial product subject to varying interpretations, we should still be able to refer to its structural aspects when we are considering the more enduring principles of social organization' (2001: 226).

These changes result from the dynamics of the new political and economic milieu in which the *fa'asamoa* has been re-established. In terms of alcohol and its consumption, many of these changes would have occurred in any case and it is important to avoid the assumption that all change is the consequence of the availability of alcohol. This suggests that any discussion of alcohol and the *fa'asamoa* has to be contextualised, and has to establish the mechanisms by which alcohol has changed, and continues to change, the variant forms of *fa'asamoa*.

## **Migration, Transformation, and Expanding Worldviews**

To frame this discussion, an account of the processes which have led to the redistribution of Samoan population has occurred and has generated a number of communities beyond the 'village' each of which exhibits slightly different forms, of *fa'asamoa*. It is useful to distinguish between two types of mobility: internal or domestic migration, and external or international migration, each of which has somewhat different consequences for culture. These movements result in people seeing and experiencing new values and new forms of social organisation, against which they may judge their own 'traditional' one. Macpherson (1978, 1994, 1999, 2004), for example, has noted that migration, in its various forms, extends people's views of the world and offers new bases for judging the village social world. It transforms power relations and is a place in which the pace of social change may accelerate because of this.

### ***Internal Migration***

During the past three decades more people from villages close to town have started to commute to Apia daily. As roads and public transportation have improved, people travel from further and further out to work and attend school in Apia. The amount of time which they spend in villages declines, and the nature of their connection with the village changes in fundamental ways as a consequence. Others, who have purchased free-hold land around the Apia town area, have opted to reside permanently in town only visiting village homes periodically. Yet others hardly ever visit the villages now, especially those whose primordial ties to the villages may not, for a myriad of reasons, be as strong now as they once were when options to living in the village were not readily available.

Internal migration and the gravitation of people from the rural villages to urban industrial centres have created pressures on social services such as health and education services which struggle to accommodate the new arrivals. But this phenomenon is not new, nor is it a unique phenomenon to Samoa. Internal migration has impacted on most societies including the more affluent Western economies such as the United States, Australia, and New



Zealand, countries which a significant number of Samoan migrants have, over the years, called home.

### ***International Migration and Transnationalization***

The other explanation of this not-so-recent phenomenon of population movements which has contributed to changes in Samoan people's attachments and affiliation to their traditional villages has been what Macpherson (2004) has referred to as the international migration of Samoans, who sought employment opportunities in 'larger states around the Pacific Rim' such as New Zealand, Hawaii, United States, and Australia (2004: 167). Other countries such as the United States (Ahlburg & Levin, 1990), and later Australia (Va'a, 1995), also became destinations for Samoan migrants. Within these countries, permanent enclaves of Samoan population have developed and have taken root. Macpherson has described it as the 'process of transnationalization of kin groups and of Samoan culture'.

Kin corporations, formerly concentrated in a single village, were now transnationalized, with 'centres' in the village of the origin and 'nodes' in one or more overseas enclaves. ... Much of the subsequent migration involved people moving down the migration chains, which linked more and more Samoan villages (centres) to enclaves (nodes) that were forming in these metropolitan sites (Macpherson, 2004: 167).

But these newly-formed transnational kin corporations vary in the level of their members' affinity to their new communities and environments. Fitzgerald and Howard (1990), for example, in their study of changes in social organization in Western Samoa, American Samoa, and Hawaii, found that

When compared to Western Samoa, American Samoa appears to have undergone some rather profound changes in response to the commercialization of its economy, to urbanization ... and to Americanization.

Data from Hawaii, as expected, show an even stronger shift away from traditional Samoan social organization. ... Ties to matai, while still in evidence, are functionally weaker, and traditional men's and women's organizations are not present (Fitzgerald & Howard, 1990: 47-48).

The study also found somewhat different patterns of monetary flow in the three locations: 'Whereas in Western Samoa helping with *fa'alavelave* (ceremonial events) primarily involves producing goods and providing services, in American Samoa and Hawaii giving cash is an alternative way of meeting obligations' (Fitzgerald & Howard, 1990: 44). In migrant communities in New Zealand and Australia, church communities have become the venues within which Samoan people practice the values and norms of *fa'asamoa*.

### ***Metropolitan Auckland***

Metropolitan Auckland, generally regarded as the largest Polynesian city in the world has immediate relevance to this study. It is home to 66 percent of the 115,000 Samoans living in New Zealand, reflects the ways in which *fa'asamoa* has been transformed as it has been re-established abroad in new political and economic milieux. In this study Auckland, and to a lesser extent Christchurch, serve as a proxy for the *fa'asamoa* in diasporic communities. According to some participants in this study, Auckland is a very significant node of the Samoan transnationalization migration system for a number of reasons, as Macpherson (2004) has contended. In the light of the relative centrality of Auckland's geographical location to Samoa, and the projected growth of the Pacific Island population in New Zealand, which is likely be concentrated around the Auckland region, this metropolis will continue to play a central role in Samoan villages' and families' transnationalization.

### ***Auckland's Samoan Connections***

Central to, and long recognized as the basic unit of the Samoan social structure is the *'aiga* the family, which some writers (Gilson, 1963; Fitzgerald & Howard, 1990) have noted, is 'one of Samoan society's most stable features' (Fitzgerald & Howard, 1990: 31). These authors have argued that the *'aiga* 'has been credited with creating conditions for the successful adaptation of modernizing and migrant Samoans by providing economic, social, and psychological support' (Pitt & Macpherson, 1974; Macpherson, 1978). Macpherson also argued that the Samoan *'aiga* or extended kinship group is 'the most important day-to-day form in which the *fa'asamoa* is

enacted and replicated'.<sup>7</sup> Another important institution within *fa'asamoa*, is the *feagaiga*, the sacred covenant or special relationship of the brother and sister which Shore (1982) discusses in some detail. Shore (1982) has argued that the primary affective and behavioural associations of the brother and sister *feagaiga*, are *alofa* or love and kindness, *fa'aaloalo* or respect, and *ma* or shame in certain situations, along with avoidance (1982: 228). These institutions, some participants have argued, have been debased and boundaries blurred, when family members from different generations and brothers and sisters find themselves consuming alcohol together. The social distance and proprieties embodied in relationships are eroded when alcohol provides opportunity and excuse for collapsing these.

The other form which Samoans in migrant enclaves have used to maintain their social institutions have been village associations. These adaptations can be interpreted as deliberate attempts on the part of some Samoan people and community leaders to provide the social, political and cultural institutions within which to practice *fa'asamoa* and to maintain their links to Samoa. Within the Auckland metropolis several traditional Samoan village associations with a large number of village *matai*, and other non-*matai* villagers, organize village-based activities. Samoan traditional village associations have served as the framework for organising village teams to compete in local Council-organised Sport Competitions such as *killikiti* the Samoan version of cricket, rugby, league, touch and netball; fund-raising for village projects, ranging from church and school buildings; supporting visiting village team participation in sports competitions; and organising group visitations to Samoa and hosting visits from Samoa. Within these village associations are other traditional Samoan institutions such as the *'aumaga* or untitled men, and village women's organizations such as the *aualuma*, the young women's organization, each of which performs its traditional roles within these activities.

### **Other Samoan Associations**

Samoan associations with direct links to their Samoan roots have also been established within the Samoan diaspora. Samoan schools have formed old

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<sup>7</sup> Cluny Macpherson, Personal Comment, March 2004).

pupils' association branches in Auckland and other metropolitan centres. Samoa College Old Pupils Association (SCOPA), and Samoa Marist Brothers and St Joseph's Old Boys Association, to name two, have strong links and connections with their home-based schools and local associations. Branches of other Samoan professional and church-based groups such as the organization of former students of the CCCS School for Girls at Papauta, *Teine Papauta Tuai* (TPT), Samoan Police Association, Samoan Nurses Association, for example, have also formed in migrant communities such as Auckland. Through these organizations, many Samoan people, who may not necessarily be active members of any village associations, have been able to retain their links to things 'Samoan' and *fa'asamoa*. For some people though, as one health professional in Auckland remarked, 'some Samoan people are members of several of those organizations including village associations, which can be quite demanding especially for those of us who work fulltime' (Samoan Health Professional, Auckland).

At another level of Samoan social organisation new associations have been in existence in some of the metropolitan centres. In New Zealand, for example, the Ministry of Pacific island Affairs has an Advisory Group and a series of Community Reference Groups consisting of members of different ethnic groups, including Samoans, to advise the Ministry on community needs, and to disseminate information to Pacific communities. In Auckland, the *Fono Faufautua a Samoa*, the Auckland Samoan Advisory Council, a voluntary organization of mainly Samoan *matai* but which membership is open to other Samoan people as well, has played a leading role in organising Samoan community activities in Auckland for over twenty years. One of its main functions is organizing the annual celebrations of Samoan Independence in June, in which traditional village organizations compete in organized sports, and in other cultural and choir performances.

Organizations such as the *Fono Faufautua a Samoa* in Auckland and other centres throughout New Zealand have no formal relationships with national or local governments or with the Samoan Consulate in this country. However, these associations perform roles which are crucial in retaining what some participants have referred to as norms and values of *fa'asamoa* in

diaspora communities. Besides the *Fono Faufautua a Samoa* in Auckland, similar associations have also been established at other main Centres such as Wellington, Hamilton, Christchurch, and in Invercargill. These associations are currently in the process of forming what Fa'atili Fui'ava, Chairman of the Auckland *Fono Faufautua a Samoa*, calls the National Samoan Advisory Organisation, an umbrella organization under which all the Samoan regional associations in New Zealand will be linked.

The Samoan *fa'amatai* has been practiced in Auckland at another level<sup>8</sup> in place of, or alongside the Samoan *nu'u*. Aspects of *fa'asamoa*, such as the *'ava o le feiloa'iga* the kava ceremony to officially welcome Samoan visiting parties and dignitaries, for example, has continued in most Samoan diaspora communities. Similar organizations have also been formed in other established Samoan diaspora communities, in other metropolitan cities around the world. Chairman Fa'atili, for example, explained that the *Fono Faufautua a Samoa* has performed functions which were once the traditional role of the village *fono a matai* in Samoa. He said his organization has welcomed to Auckland dignitaries from Samoa including the Head of State, Prime Ministers, Opposition Parties and several other VIPs for many years now. This, Fa'atili said, despite the fact that his organization has no formal links to the Samoan government, nor an obligation to do so. Fa'atili explained that what has happened in the past is that the Samoan Consul General's Office in Auckland has allocated certain duties for his organization to perform on behalf of the Samoan people and the Samoan Government. Furthermore, his organization has been used as an ad hoc sounding board in the Consul-General's relationship with the Samoan communities in Auckland.

Samoan Consul-General in Auckland, Va'ai Simon Potoi, confirmed that there is no official protocol that links the Consul-General's function to the *Fono Faufautua a Samoa*. However, he explained that he has indicated to the Council his hope that the *Fono Faufautua a Samoa* would be able to

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<sup>8</sup> The *Fono Faufautua a Samoa* is a voluntary collectivity of *matai* and some non-*matai* Samoans who may feel inclined to join the association by paying a modest annual membership fee.

continue working together with the Consulate to serve the Samoan people in Auckland.

Our door is open all the time to ongoing consultation ... my sincere wish and that is the wish of the Samoan government as well, is that we may be able to work together with organizations such as the *Fono Faufautua a Samoa* to serve our people in this country. We don't need a bylaw to establish these relationships ... official or not official my function [as Consul General] is to work closely together with groups such as the *Fono Faufautua a Samoa* for our people and the Samoan community (*Personal Comment, Va'ai Simon Potoi, Samoan Consul General in Auckland, January, 2004*).

The above discussion demonstrates that *fa'asmoa* is a dynamic system which has a number of elements which are also continuously changing. The form of the system varied within Samoa, and this variation has increased in the diasporic communities which have formed abroad under novel political economic and social conditions. These transformations have not occurred solely as a consequence of the availability and use of alcohol, but liquor has played a part in the changes in the *fa'asmoa*. This raises the question of why alcohol has had a more significant effect than another form of intoxicant, 'ava, that has been integrated into Samoan society.

#### **'Ava: A Prototype to Alcohol?**

Any discussion on alcohol and its consumption by Samoan people whether in Samoa or in diaspora communities in metropolitan cities around the world invariably seems to link these practices to kava or 'ava use. This is not totally surprising as some people have referred to the drinking of 'ava as the prototype for alcohol consumption in Polynesia, (Lemert, 1979: 194).

I explore the supposition that the kava circle is the prototype for patterns of alcohol consumption in all areas of Polynesia except New Zealand, by explaining the royal kava ceremony, and its social, political, and spiritual significance in Samoan culture and social organisation. The royal kava ceremony stands at the very heart of *fa'asamo*a that manifests, in a special way, some of the central elements and values and norms of *fa'asamo*a, more commonly known as the 'ava o le feiloa'iga one of the symbols of Samoan

customs and values which has persisted both in the islands and within Samoan diasporic communities in metropolitan cities.

Former head of the Catholic Mission in Samoa and Tokelau, Cardinal Pio Taofinu'u, has noted that one of the more sacred occasions in Samoan life is the 'royal' 'ava ceremony, the royal welcoming of guests in Samoa (Taofinu'u, 1995). Taofinu'u articulated this aspect of *fa'samoa* as follows:

In our ancient Samoan life, there is no moment more sacred, no moment more full of meanings than the Kava Ceremony, which is the reception, rightly called 'royal', offered to our visitors and friends. It is not too much to say that the ceremony stands at the very heart of our culture and manifests, in a special way, some of the loveliest elements of our Samoan character (Taofinu'u, 1995: 1).

Taofinu'u argued that the 'ava ceremony is an expression of friendship which strengthens social bonds and unity, and that the symbolism of the Samoan royal 'ava ceremony has parallels in Christian symbolism.

Taofinu'u noted that the 'ava ceremony is a prophecy: 'It came to our ancestors from God, to preserve our Samoan people in love, peace and unity. We can safely say, then, that our Samoan Culture was a prophecy, a foretelling, a foretaste, of the Christian way of life' (1995: ii). Taofinu'u's interpretation of the 'ava ceremony, and the meanings and values evoked by its practice, establishes parallels between the symbolism and values of *fa'asamoa* and those of Christianity. For example, the symbolic representation of Christ by the *tugase* or 'ava stem, and the blood of Christ by the 'ava drink prepared from the powder of the crushed 'ava root, have been articulated in the Samoan proverb, *Ua mai vai ae suamalie 'ava i le alofa o le Atua*, which Taofinu'u translates 'water is bitter but kava is sweeter in the love of God'. This is so, according to Taofinu'u, because it embodies the bond of friendship and love (1995: 6). The symbolic representation of Mary, Mother of Jesus, through the *taupou* who mixes the 'ava in the kava bowl, and the role of the 'aumaga, the 'ava guards of honour charged with the distribution of the cup of 'ava, symbolising those of 'the apostles distributing the words of Faith and Holy Communion to the faithful newly come to Christ' (Ibid, p.7). Furthermore, the tipping out of a drop or two of

‘ava as a sacrificial libation before the drinker drinks the ‘ava is an offering of thanks and a prayer to God for his blessings on all present at the ‘ava ceremony.

Another aspect of the symbolic interpretation of the ‘ava as an exclusive drink which only *matai* or important guests and visitors could partake, evinces the status and authority of *matai* within a hierarchical society, as is the case of Samoa. Traditionally, the ‘ava and the drinking of ‘ava was a privilege reserved for *matai* and important visitors and guests in attendance at the ‘ava ceremony. Untitled people weren’t expected to drink, and even young *matai* and some minor titleholders may not necessarily be offered ‘the cup’ to drink, even when they may be present in the ‘ava ceremony. Proof indeed, of the exclusivity of the practice of this aspect of *fa’asamoa*.

For example, a younger *matai* participant who had recently joined the ranks of the *fono a matai* at his village noted that in some contexts, even during village *fono*, some younger *matai* would be quite appreciative if their names were called out ‘to drink’ during the ‘ava ceremony. Because the order in which those present would rely on whoever of the ‘aumaga is calling out names of *matai* to receive the cup, often those newly-appointed members of the *fono* would not be called out during their early years as members of the *fono*.

The traditional ‘ava ceremony is still practiced out in traditional village settings, to welcome visitors, to open village *fono* sessions, and sometimes even in contexts within the Church environment such as the main churches’ annual conferences and other occasions like that. In the village setting, not every *matai*’s name would be called out to ‘drink’ a cup of ‘ava. The protocols and etiquettes generally single out the paramount chiefs and senior titleholders, often leaving out younger *matai* and/or minor titleholders. The protocols is normally closely adhered to, because missing out someone that should ‘drink’ a cup could be a serious affront not only to the village protocols but to a particular person or titleholder involved **(SA02 - Younger Matai Businessman Abstainer, Samoa)**.

The elderly wife of a *matai* who grew up in a deeply traditional village in Savai’i testifies to the significance of the ‘ava ceremony in the practice and protocols of traditional *fa’asamoa*.



It's part of our custom and usage, and it is not only within my own village but is the practice throughout Samoa. Whenever a visiting party calls at a village, *matai* would be notified and the first thing they do is to grab their *tugase*, especially the orators and converge on where the guests may be housed. No occasion would be complete without the 'ava ceremony, it is an offering to God who had safely guided the visitors to this gathering ... we can never replace the importance, nor should younger generations of Samoans overlook or forget the significance of the 'ava ceremony in the practice of *fa'asamoa* (**NZ01 – Older Abstainer Wife of Matai, Auckland**).

### **'Ava Palagi or 'Ava Samoa?**

Some participants commented that 'ava palagi or alcoholic beverages have been consumed in a similar fashion to the way 'ava was, and has continued to be, consumed within the traditional *fa'asamoa*. They also noted that the practice of drinking the two beverages also have parallels. The drinking of the *fa'amafu* with group members sitting in a circle and the brew is dished out in turns, to members of the group using one cup or a glass has some similarities in the traditional practice of the traditional 'ava.

Others, however, have argued that other than these superficial differences, the consumption of alcohol and 'ava have quite distinct differences. Whereas alcohol makes the drinker aggressive, the 'ava drinker is surly, subdued, and become quite passive. However, some participants also noted that the use of alcohol as a substitute for 'ava in some contexts, have become fashionable for some people because of those permissive elements of alcohol. Their respective roles and functions are, the following comments show, quite distinct even if there are parallels in the practice of drinking of the 'ava palagi and 'ava Samoa.

A former Samoan High School principal *matai*, who has recently become a pastor in Auckland, related incidences in Samoa where he had shared alcoholic drinks with family members when they came together to discuss important family matters, or when he had invited family members who were scattered throughout Samoa and overseas, to family re-unions or *fa'alavelave*. The purpose of providing alcoholic drinks on those occasions was not to get family members drunk but to make people feel at ease, to generate good will, to talk and share experiences, and to enhance

conviviality among members of his family, some of whom may have not seen one another for many years.

But another former school teacher who drinks suggests that 'ava and alcohol have not intermingled in their respective functions within *fa'asamoa*. He argued that there is no way that a village *fono* would greet visitors with cartons of beers instead of the 'ava ceremony.

If my village *matai* were to arrive here on a *malaga*, or if my church group was to arrive at our village as visitors, the *matai* of my village wouldn't greet us with cartons of beers. Even though we have travelled from New Zealand where beer is a popular drink, the village *matai* wouldn't bring beer to greet us they would bring the traditional *tugase* and perform the 'ava o le *feiloa'iga*. It's part of our Samoan culture and beer or alcohol or whatever would never ever take the place of the 'ava, and my fervent hope is that this will never change. There may be a time at a later stage of our visit or in a different context where alcohol may be drunk, but that wouldn't be as part of the traditional Samoan welcome, especially out in the Samoan villages **(NZ03 – Older Matai Drinker, Auckland)**.

A *matai*, and the head of a Samoan Government Ministry was also adamant that alcohol and 'ava have distinctive roles and functions and can never overlap. He explained the distinctions and the newly popularised *tanoa* 'ava in Samoa thus:

Whereas alcohol is used as a social drink, 'ava is used primarily as a ceremonial drink. These two can not be used interchangeably nor can they be seen or interpreted as having the same function. Over the years, 'ava may have been drunk by people when building a Samoan *fale* or building a *fautasi* or other group projects of significance within Samoan social life. In those contexts, 'ava was used as a soothing drink to counter the heat of the sun. Admittedly, 'ava now has been drunk publicly at the *tanoa* 'ava or the kava bowl in the market place and at other private settings but it can not be drunk as a social drink the way alcohol is consumed **(SA01 – Older Matai Drinker, Samoa)**

The same participant said 'ava *palagi* or alcohol was introduced to Samoa 'as a social drink right from the start, not as a sort of ceremonial drink'.

... it [alcohol] had no counterpart importance such as that of 'ava in our culture, it was purely a social drink in the *fa'apalagi* and it came with connotations as a social drink. I guess it is through that role of alcohol as a social drink that 'ava now has been used in that context as a

social drink partly I suppose as a substitute, a poor substitute for 'ava *palagi* when people can't afford it. ... But 'ava now is not really just a substitute drink but it now has another substitute function in terms of bringing people together in that social context, people come to drink 'ava but also to talk and make conversation just like they do when they go to the beer clubs **(SA01 – Older Matai Drinker, Samoa)**.

On the subject of abusing the use of 'ava by mixing it with liquor, the above *matai* was aware that *tanoa* 'ava were occasionally filled with 'ava mixed with liquor to give it a potency and that the 'ava drink which people were consuming was in fact alcoholic. The *matai* however, was reluctant to discuss this because although he had been told about incidents where 'ava had been mixed with alcohol he had not personally witnessed this practice. However, he remarked that people who had related those isolated incidences to him were mindful of the negative connotations of such a practice. He said one could sense that people who related such experiences were actually reluctant to relate them publicly because they knew such a practice could be interpreted as debasing the 'ava, one of Samoa's treasured and valued customs. 'Those who joked about it realised that it was a disgrace to Samoan values, a serious violation of etiquette, which is good because it means people see such action as an abuse of a valuable practice within our Samoan culture' **(SA01 – Older Matai Drinker, Samoa)**.

The abstaining wife of a *matai* who was a heavy drinker, but who has since abstained, has no sympathy for those *matai* who consume alcohol publicly.

Anybody that consumes alcohol while discussing and deliberating on village matters wouldn't be in a frame of mind to make any sensible decisions ... whatever village issues that need to be enhanced wouldn't benefit from any *matai* who consumes alcohol during council meetings, drinking would have detrimental effects on the drinker's thinking and decision-making and the meeting would be a waste of time **(NZ01 – Older Abstainer Wife of a Matai, Auckland)**.

### **'Ava Consumption on the Rise in Samoa**

Some participants and key informants in this study reported that 'ava consumption has gained a degree of popularity, among some Samoan people in Apia over recent years. An increasing number of people were drinking 'ava at various *tanoa* 'ava around the Apia town area. During trips to Samoa in October to December 2001 and in September 2003, I saw several

*tanoa* 'ava around Apia. Two of the most popular and regularly attended of these were at the Fish Market in Savalalo and at the agricultural market place in Fugalei. This raises the question of why it has become popular and whether alcohol consumption may have been replaced by the drinking of 'ava in Samoa. Several explanations were offered for this growth in 'ava consumption.

Several participants stated that despite the growth of the *tanoa* 'ava and the number of untitled people partaking in most of these, no formal ceremonial function is served by the *tanoa* 'ava. As some observed, the conversation at the *tanoa* 'ava is mainly gossip, informal joking and banter, and conversations about such things as political scandals reported in newspapers and media. Some participants said there have been times when the *tanoa* 'ava has become a place where yarns and 'half-truths' may be invented and circulated and those 'stories' sometimes find their way into the news media and public discourse. But despite all the jesting and the non-ceremonial nature of the *tanoa* 'ava, there is still informal observance of mutual respect, of *feavata'i* and *vafealoaloa'i* or relational pleasantries and respect among those who participate, both *matai* and non-*matai*.

A *matai* participant who accompanied me to one of the *tanoa* 'ava on a Sunday morning explained what goes on at the 'ava:

At any *tanoa* 'ava there are 'regulars' just like they do at pubs, so there are people who go to particular *tanoa* 'ava and other kava bowls have their own regulars. So if you come in and you are not a regular you come in as an outsider and Samoan etiquettes are observed such as welcoming you by citing your title and in turn, you acknowledge the welcome by returning the compliment acknowledging those who you know by their *matai* titles or by their other status whether be senior public servants etc., ... and then you will be presented with your 'ava. Those are like the unwritten rules of such social gatherings and the giving of your 'ava is acknowledgement of your acceptance as part of that particular *tanoa* 'ava. So what I'm saying is that in this setting there are no formal procedures, it does not observe the formal 'ava ceremony procedures although the initial *fa'atu'ulima* or welcoming words to you on arrival, and your response to acknowledge those present is a part of the process (**SA01 – Older Adult Matai Drinker, Samoa**).

A couple of participants stated that an interesting aspect of 'regulars' at any of the *tanoa 'ava* in Samoa is the absence of women. Drinking 'ava has been traditionally, a men's activity, and only one woman in this study, had ever tasted 'ava. She was an older woman who holds an *igoa taupou*, a ceremonial virgin title, interviewed in Christchurch, said she acquired a taste for 'ava as she was growing up because her father and brothers were always drinking 'ava. The increasing number of Samoan women acquiring *matai* titles during the past four decades which entitles those title holders to participate in 'ava ceremonies, may mean that more women may have tasted 'ava in recent years.

### ***Tanoa 'Ava as the Focus of Men's Clubs***

For several years, the *tanoa 'ava* had become the focus of men's clubs formed in Apia. An older adult *matai* now living in Auckland, explained that he and several friends, some of whom were businessmen and senior employees of government or companies, had a *kegi*, a 'gang' or club, in Apia several years ago. Mostly, it was men who played tennis together, and a few non-players, and the *tanoa 'ava* was the central focus, the meeting place where they regularly met for informal discussions while drinking 'ava.

We had a gang it was like a Savings Club which was operated around the *tanoa 'ava* and at one stage we had twenty-four club members. Every Friday the members paid in so much money towards their individual savings accounts and this goes on during the year culminating in the payment of savings to individuals just before Christmas. I didn't save a lot of money but the total club funds got to \$156,000 on a particular year and that was a lot of money in those days and convenient for the members' wives for Christmas shopping for the families (***NZ07 – Older Adult Matai Drinker, Auckland***).

The same participant said there were other clubs operating at the same time and senior public servants and business people in the private sector were also known to have operated similar clubs, with the *tanoa 'ava* as the focal point of informal meetings and socializing.

A Samoan-born woman participant, whose father was a Samoan judge and a huge drinker of 'ava, said she acquired a taste for 'ava because she used to

have some whenever her brothers were drinking 'ava. The participant said her father had a *tanoa* 'ava at his work place.

He was a huge drinker of 'ava ... he had a bowl in his office, well it wasn't in his office but it was next door, and there used to be a joke around the circles that most of the Court decisions was done around the kava bowl because it wasn't just him it was all of the *fa'amasino* [judges] and it was like a social thing in the office everyday **(CH06 – Older Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Christchurch).**

This participant remarked that when she started drinking 'ava, some women in her family were surprised and suggested she should not be drinking 'ava. She said 'ava was refreshing and was very much an acquired taste although she was mindful that there isn't enough research done on its long-term effect.

#### **'Ava as a Business Venture**

An Auckland-based *matai* who commutes to Samoa regularly observed that over the years the *tanoa* 'ava has also become a major business venture for some individuals and their families. He said the individual who has provided the *tanoa* 'ava at the Apia Fish Market for many years seems to be doing very well financially from it. He recalled when the fish market was first set up in Apia at another location, that the same person had provided the *tanoa* 'ava. When the fish market was relocated the individual shifted to the new location and has continued to provide this central service.

Whenever I go back to Samoa, you'll find me there at six o'clock every morning and the *tanoa* 'ava has got it's regulars who go there everyday to chat, to joke, to gossip ... that's the place where you'll hear all the world and regional and local news first. The 'ava is not for sale but you're expected to give a koha but if you haven't got money then you just leave when you've drunk enough 'ava and that's fine because the person who runs it knows everybody there. And when you come the next time, you may give more than you would normally give as koha, I usually give \$5 or even \$10 but sometimes when I don't have a lot of money I may only give \$2, it's quite flexible, really ... **(NZ07 – Older Matai Drinker, Auckland).**

The head of a Samoan government ministry agreed that a number of *tanoa* 'ava which have sprung up in public places around the Apia town area have been turned into business ventures.

There is a new use of 'ava in Samoa now where some people run the *tanoa* 'ava as a small business venture. When you go there you actually pay money and then you are able to drink and to participate in and be part of the group. Of course in this context it is still social drinking, it is a social gathering where people congregate for the purpose of drinking 'ava ... but there is still some element of our traditional *fa'asamoa* observed there. For instance, when you arrive at the setting, some of the older 'hands' usually *matai* who may be 'regulars' at that particular kava bowl may say a formal welcome, in recognition of your *matai* title, or if you are a person who is untitled but is someone with status within the Government bureaucracy or other employment or positions, then you will be welcomed as so and so with status of whatever sort ... **(SA01 – Older Adult Matai Drinker, Samoa).**

### ***Tanoa 'Ava as Focal Point of Socialization***

The same participant noted that this usage of 'ava in Samoa is a recent phenomenon which has been popularised by Samoans who had been educated or employed in places such as Fiji where 'ava is more popular as a social drink. He also explained these *tanoa* 'ava have taken on another function, as a meeting place for people who come to talk and socialize rather than go to the beer bar:

And that's an important function, not so much the economic elements but more importantly, the *tanoa* 'ava is now an important focal point for socialization and it is substituting as a beer bar because when you go to the *tanoa* 'ava you don't get as drunk as you do from the effect of alcohol, but you are also getting satisfaction from that need for socialization, just as much as going to a bar ... that is now another incentive for some people to go to the *tanoa* 'ava. There are no formal etiquettes like when you go to a beer bar you have to buy a drink and there is a certain price for it. So either you have the money for that drink or you don't drink, and it's as simple as that.

The beer bar is not going to offer you a drink whereas at the *tanoa* 'ava as soon as you sit down you are given a cup of 'ava ... and in turn, it's like there is an expectation, an understanding that you will make a contribution, how much that contribution is entirely up to the participants themselves ... and there's no guarantee that you will make that contribution. When you have finished drinking and then you go without making a contribution ... it's undesirable but if it happens it happens. And the contribution you make is entirely up to you, and that's another appeal of the *tanoa* 'ava, there is flexibility of etiquettes which makes it easier for people to participate in terms of socializing because there aren't any set rules **(SA01 – Older Adult Matai Drinker, Samoa).**

### ***'Ava for Matai and Non-Matai***

One change which has accompanied the availability and drinking of 'ava in public places in Samoa is the fact that 'ava could now be consumed by all those who are present at the *tanoa* 'ava. Whilst the above participant noted that customary mutual respect is observed among those present, it raises the issue of status vis-à-vis the traditional 'ava ceremony. In the traditional 'ava ceremony for instance, only *matai* and in some cases, only certain *matai* may drink 'ava. Within the more public *tanoa* 'ava context, however, where participants are expected to make a monetary contribution for the 'ava that is drunk and for the privilege of being part of the *tanoa* 'ava on a particular occasion, anyone can partake and drink 'ava. The practice of *matai* and non-*matai* sharing 'ava at the *tanoa* 'ava is a departure from tradition and a transformation of this aspect of *fa'asamoa*.

The practice, however, of anyone drinking 'ava is not new in other societies in Oceania where 'kava bars' are opened alongside beer bars. Marshall, for example, notes how kava bars have outstripped alcohol bars in popularity in Port Vila, with kava bars also existing in the urban centres in Fiji, Guam, Hawai'i, New Caledonia, and Pohnpei (Marshall, 2004: 202). And although kava bars have not yet emerged in Samoa and among Samoan diaspora, the concept of the *tanoa* 'ava at public places has caught on in places such as the Otara Shopping Centre in Auckland. A few other *tanoa* 'ava have surfaced periodically at a couple of other locations in Auckland, where a significant number of Samoan men congregate.

### ***Distinct Role and Place of 'Ava***

Most informants in this study insisted that the role of 'ava in *fa'asamoa* will never be replaced by alcohol. Nor will alcohol supersede 'ava, or the drinking of alcohol and the 'ava ceremony within Samoan social life. A few disagreed, suggesting that because the drinking of alcohol was now so prevalent within Samoan social life, that it could over time, replace that of the traditional Samoan 'ava as a drink.

In an ALAC (2000) pilot study in which the respective roles of alcohol and 'ava were discussed in Samoan focus groups (Lima, 2000), some New



Zealand-born young people were adamant that 'ava no longer had the status and value within some contexts of *fa'asamoa*. One New Zealand-born participant in that study, for example, lamented the presence of alcohol at important Samoan traditional occasions or *fa'alavelave*. He argued that some Samoan people 'accept drinking as the norm' and drinking alcohol 'was a *palagi* form of replacing the 'ava ceremony'.

Before, 'ava Samoa was sacred to our people. Now they do it in the market sort of thing, it's been taken out of the house, never done inside the house it's always outside the house into public places just like social drinking. ... my concern is the fact that we are actually adopting these European ideals or symbols of a better society into our culture. I mean it just seems strange how every time you go to a *tusigaigoa* or anything that's important within Samoan culture, right alongside the *pua'a* [pig] is the *tasene*<sup>9</sup> ... it's like it's there ... (*Young New Zealand-born Male Abstainer, Auckland*).

But an older adult participant wife of a *matai* in Auckland, raised in a 'very traditional' village, believes the 'ava ceremony, one of the most important elements of Samoan culture or *fa'asamoa*, can never be replaced by alcohol or any other 'drink'. She recalls how village *matai*, especially orators, understand the importance of taking along a *tugase*, an 'ava stem for the 'ava ceremony when a visiting party arrives, and the symbolic significance of this ritual within *fa'asamoa*.

The pinnacle of any important Samoan occasion is the 'ava ceremony which is the celebration of the connection of Samoan people's souls and the Spirit of God on such occasions. It is the means of offering thanks to God for his guidance and love that has enabled the villagers and the visitors to come together in good health (***NZ01 - Samoan-born Older Woman Abstainer, Auckland***).

The Catholic priest recalled how, during the early years of his pastoral work, he had been impressed by the traditional practice of the *usu* in which village *matai* come to greet the priest when he arrived at villages during his parish

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<sup>9</sup> *Pua'a* is pig, while *tasene* or a 'dozen' is a reference to a 'dozen of beer'. *Tusigaigoa* is an informal census or 'registering of names' of members who belong or have connections to a particular traditional Samoan village. This strategy has been popularised over recent decades especially in diasporic communities as a form of raising funds for particular village development projects. The strategy invokes elements and values of *fa'asamoa* such as *loto alofa* or 'kindheartedness', *tausi 'aiga lelei* or 'dedication to service to ones family', *lotonu'u* or 'devotion to ones village', *loto atunu'u* or 'patriotism'. The concept also evokes among many Samoan people elements of reciprocity and generosity as well as competitive giving among individuals and village families, even church groups.

visits. He fondly remembered those times where the *toeaiina* or elderly men had arrived with the *tugase*, and of sharing the 'ava o le *feiloaiga* before he started his work. Those times, the priest said, were very precious because they provided the opportunity for him to chat with the elderly *matai* of different villages, exchanged stories and learned from them the importance of making the effort to appreciate the values and norms of Samoan organisation and social life.

At the beginning of this discussion on 'ava, I asked whether the use of 'ava was a prototype to the use of alcohol. The presence in Samoa of another intoxicant drink at the time of contact with Europeans, for example, shaped some Samoans' alcohol use and attitudes towards alcohol. The practice of drinking *fa'amafu*, by drinkers sitting in a circle, is based on the traditional 'ava ceremony setting, with the one cup passed around to each drinker in turns. A similar observation was made by Lamont Lindstrom (1982) in regards to the drinking of alcohol in Tanna, in Vanuatu. According to Lindstrom, the existence in Tannese traditional culture of another intoxicant taken in liquid form such as kava, shaped Tannese use of alcohol (1982: 421). But while 'ava and socializing are connected in the new Samoan context, people still distinguish between *tanoa* 'ava and other forms of alcohol consumption.

### **The Impact of Alcohol on Fa'asamoa**

So how has alcohol impacted on *fa'asamoa*? One example, alluded to earlier in this chapter, was the pervasive abuse of alcohol by some in authority such as village *matai* who have been drinking beer openly during their village meetings. Some participants have argued that the credibility of *matai* as role models and community leaders has been undermined by their use of alcohol. Participants pointed also to the *feagaiga*, the sacred relationship between the brother and sister, once held in high regard because of the expectation that the sister would uphold the family honour through chaste behaviour, and that the brother would serve and protect his sister with both parties showing mutual respect to one another. They argued that this relationship has been undermined and eroded by alcohol use. These and other adverse effects of alcohol on the *fa'asamoa* will be discussed in the remaining section of this

and following chapters. These will be derived from the experiences, perceptions and practices of participants which are grouped by gender and to a lesser extent, New Zealand-born and raised, and island-born and socialized Samoans' attitudes to and practices around alcohol.

### ***Rationale for this Approach***

The literature on alcohol and culture show that it is predominantly men who consume alcohol, and that men are more likely than women to display drunkenness. Samoan men's and women's attitudes to alcohol also differ, as the data to follow will show. This dichotomy between Samoan men's and women's experiences and attitudes to alcohol is a useful way to structure Samoan people's views of the risks associated with alcohol. Distinguishing and comparing men's and women's attitudes towards a phenomenon such as alcohol and its concomitant problems would, I believe, reflect a duality of 'two opposite yet complementary descent groups' in the social organization of Samoan society (Va'a, 2001: 151).

This duality of purpose reflects the 'dual functions' of alcohol implied in the title of this thesis. Recall that *Tafesilafa'i*, one of Nafanua's four war clubs, has been interpreted by Reverend Sione Eli, as 'strike with courtesy', a weapon that could inflict serious harm, yet at the same time, can be a symbol of and proxy for the traditional use of 'ava when Samoan people meet. On the one hand, alcohol is used for socializing and conviviality and other positive functions; yet on the other hand, alcohol has been abused to the extent that it has caused serious economic, cultural, social and health problems for many individuals and Samoan families, some of which will be referred to in the following analysis.

Furthermore, an exploration of the relationships between alcohol, culture, and health, should discern how alcohol impacts on different sectors of the population, especially in light of overwhelming agreement in the literature that alcohol use affects women in most societies in more ways than men. Separating the empirical data into two groups based on gender, I believe, helps to discern differences and similarities in the experiences and impacts of alcohol on men and women, and in turn, focus attention on how those

findings could be useful in policy formulation, and in designing programmes that can raise awareness of the effects of alcohol on men and women's economic, health, and social wellbeing.

### **Sub-Themes:**

A number of sub-themes, which surfaced in discussions, have been used to frame the discussion. These are:

1. Home experience and parents' alcohol use
2. Introduction to alcohol
3. Peers' use of alcohol
4. Personal and professional experiences of consequences of alcohol
5. Attitudes to spouses' and children's use of alcohol
6. Strategies to regulate and manage use of alcohol

### **Samoan Women's Experiences with Alcohol**

The women participants born and raised in New Zealand, and the sole woman key informant for this study, indicated that drunken behaviours and 'drunkenness' have indeed impacted negatively on *fa'asamoa*. Their experiences, attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol and drinking varied, although there are also some similarities in terms of their use of and exposure to alcohol in different environments.

#### ***Home Experiences and Parents' Use of Alcohol***

One of the most common complaints expressed by women participants against alcohol use is the domestic violence against women and children. Alcohol seemed to be synonymous with domestic violence, especially where the father or husband is, or had been a heavy drinker.

The older women participants, the majority of whom were born and socialized in Samoa, identified the negative effects of alcohol on specific relationships including those between older and younger people, husbands and wives, parents and children, and between sisters and brothers. They also pointed to economic, social and health problems associated with alcohol use as major concerns.

For example, the sacredness of the covenant between the brother and sister, the *feagaiga*, has according to some participants been besmirched, and even renounced. The older abstainer *matai*'s wife from Savai'i who was interviewed in Auckland, for example, lamented the way in which alcohol has played a hand in its degradation.

In the olden days, the Samoan woman would stay in the house and wash clothes and clean the house while her brothers do all the other manual and physically demanding chores. Brothers were like servants and ensured all the sister's needs were met and catered for. The concept *E mu mata o tugane i le tuafafine*, meaning that brothers would face the fire in the service of the sisters doesn't apply anymore these days. You see brothers now expecting to be served by the sisters especially when it comes to *fa'alavelave*. The importance of the *feagaiga* and even its practice in real life just doesn't seem to be relevant anymore **(NZ01 - Older Wife of Matai Abstainer, Auckland)**.

Interestingly, the suggestions by most of the older women participants that the values and dignity of the *feagaiga* have diminished were also observed by Elizabeth Roach (1984), some twenty years ago. At the time, Roach noted that in American Samoa in the early 1970s, Eleanor Gerber (1975), in a PhD dissertation entitled: *The Cultural Patterning of Emotions in Samoa*, had argued that there appeared 'to be very little left of the complex set of Polynesian taboos which prescribe avoidance between brothers and sisters' (1984: 132). However, Roach also noted that:

In Western Samoa the *feagaiga* continues to be expressed by brothers looking after their sisters, seeing to it that they uphold the family honor through chaste behavior, ensuring that they and their children are taken care of, and showing respect and honor to their sisters. A sister, for her part, is also expected to show honor to her brother, to respect and obey him.

Never are brothers and sisters permitted to show physical intimacy toward each other, nor is either permitted to make any reference to his or her love affairs or any sexual matters at all in the presence of the other, even jokingly (Roach, 1984: 132).

Some twenty years since Roach's study, however, these proscriptions have been eroded, and several participants lamented the erosion of these values.

One of the most serious consequences of alcohol and drunkenness among Samoans is its adverse effects on the family. It has, in the view of women participants', over recent years affected Samoan values such as kindness, generosity, and respect for the elders which have been degraded somewhat. The respect which one typically associates with relationships between age groups in a gerontocracy has declined. Several participants and all the key informants observed that the problems may be more pervasive than people really appreciate, especially in Samoa. One young New Zealand-born woman explained how when she went to Samoa some of her own immediate family members, whom she expected to shelter her from any unwanted sexual advances from strangers, were, as it turned out, the source of those behaviours. She recalled how when she had gone to nightclubs with an aunt and her husband, her aunt insisted that she drink alcoholic beverages like they did. When the participant didn't drink she was often pressured to drink, and she found out later that her aunt wanted to get her drunk so her husband could sleep with her.

... the only one time I was out where drinking was a problem was when my father's youngest sister took me out, you know how in families the ideal is love each other and get along ... well in reality there was a lot of jealousy and envy and infighting and stuff. She [aunty] was determined that I would drink and she wouldn't let me order anything other than Kahlua-milk, and I just refused to drink. Looking back on it now and this is the reality of life in Samoa with these things, her husband wanted to sleep with me and if I had been under the influence that would have helped him and it would have been my fault, and I only found out about this later (**CH01 – NZ-born Young Woman Abstainer, Christchurch**).

Ironically, this unpleasant experience was not, she discovered, unique, at least within her family. It transpired that this particular aunty had herself been raped when she was twelve years old by the husband of the participant's father's eldest sister.

It's hard and it makes me sad, the whole family thing makes me sad I mean I am a product of what I grew up in ... but I can't be angry at her [aunt] or any of the individuals that have hurt me because they had also been hurt. This particular aunt was raped by my father's eldest sister's husband when she was 12 so all this internal abuse and stuff like that for me is not abnormal. Even my school friends in their families, their stories weren't any different ... I think though that it isn't unique and it has happened before ... but it is usually not the actual

sister [of dad] ... it could be a close relative but this [my experience] is kind of extreme I guess (**CH01 – NZ-Born Young Woman Abstainer, Christchurch**).

Similar insights around the abuse of alcohol were provided by other Samoan-born women participants. The 'heavy drinking' woman participant, for example, argued that some Samoan church leaders were aware of these issues but were not doing enough to protect young people from being exposed to alcohol.

The older of the two Samoan-born women who migrated to New Zealand with their families as two-year-olds said alcohol wasn't present in her home environment, a small town a few-hours-drive from Auckland. Her parents didn't drink and so alcohol was neither around the house, nor at the church environment as she was growing up.

I think one of the blessings of my growing up was that there was never any alcohol in my house ... it was really a taboo thing to do in our home. As a child growing up I never saw alcohol in my home, my parents didn't drink so there wasn't alcohol around ... (**NZ15 – Older Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland**).

The participant also explained that two of her brothers, one of whom was a drinker had a problem with alcohol and was abusive when he was drunk, has since abstained.

... my other brother he has 2 children he is the heaviest drinker in our family and married a lovely Maori girl from up north ... funny how you have these things ... but that the other experience of my parents that their son married a Maori and she is fluent in Maori so that there all the [parents] stereotypes about young Maori people ... and this brother who drinks a lot married her and now he is no longer drinking (**NZ15 – Older Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland**).

The younger Samoan-born and New Zealand-raised woman, who drinks, said alcohol was only available occasionally in her home environment because, although her father drank, his drinking was episodic. She recalled that her father was often in and out of the church as she was growing up, and only on occasions when her father had a friend from Samoa visiting, or when they were 'out from the church', that her father would drink at home.

My father he used to get quite wild when he drank ... well he was quite wild even if he didn't drink ... I think he hardly ever drink in front of us, he never did that I think it was only ... unless of course one of his friends had come over from Samoa and he [father] wasn't in the church at that time (**NZ09 – Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland**).

The New Zealand-born older woman participant, who drinks, said she and her brothers and sisters were aware of alcohol because her father was a heavy drinker and used to get quite violent when he was drunk:

... in terms of my own family my dad was a very heavy drinker and he worked hard, worked six days a week, we never saw him ... he would go early coz he had to start at 5 or 6 in the morning and come home late at night ... there was the 6 o'clock ritual to the Star Pub, that was very well-known to us kids, but along with that came the drink at home after the pub ... I remember sitting in the kitchen terrified because when dad used to come home he used to be quite 'aggro' alcohol used to make him very aggressive and even demanded mum to make the food and sometimes I can remember us crying because he got quite violent if his needs weren't met that well (**NZ17 – Older New Zealand-born Woman, Auckland**).

### ***Introduction to Alcohol***

Most women participants who drink were introduced to drinking as teenagers, and when they started tertiary education. The New Zealand-born older woman participant, who drinks, also started drinking as a teenager:

For me it was about 18 when I attended university ... yeah start to experiment and start to be exposed to all these new ideas and people and things trying to have a life I guess ... but as I got older we started to partake in it going to parties and dances as I was growing up. ... I started off drinking beer and then ... it got so bad I could drink a whole bottle of liquor especially Bacardi and I would be so sick ... that got me turned off Bacardi (**NZ16 – Older New Zealand-born Woman Drinker**).

An older Samoan-born but New Zealand-raised woman who drinks, started to drink after she left home and went to Auckland to train as a nurse.

I left [home] when I started nursing when I was 17 and I came and lived in Auckland ... it was very hard for my parents because they expected me to be living at home and do my training there ... but I had grown up and being under my parents so much so I guess I was looking for freedom, do my own thing. So I came to Auckland and so I was partying and things ... I guess it was like waking up when you



have lived with your family all your life and restrictions and things ...  
**(NZ15 – New Zealand-raised Older Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

The younger Samoan-born and New Zealand-raised woman who drinks said she also started drinking when she went to university. A New Zealand-born young woman, who drinks, said she started drinking alcohol when she was at 4<sup>th</sup> Form, aged 14 or 15 years. She said she and her other teenage friends were always trying to 'catch up' to their older peers, and often pretended they were older than they really were. This was not a common pattern among other participants' introductions to alcohol, although the Samoa-born woman 'heavy drinker' stated she was in a 'group of kids' who were always pushing the boundaries and 'trying anything'. Whilst the 'heavy drinker' wasn't specific about what age she was when she started drinking homebrew, she stated that she was one of a group of young people who started drinking when they were at High School.

### ***Peers' Use of Alcohol***

Pressure from peers to drink has been perceived as one way some young people start to drink. In New Zealand, for example, where consumption of alcohol per head of population has fallen in the last decade, heavy drinking by women has increased (Ministry of Health, 2001; Casswell & Bhatta, 2001; Field & Casswell, 1999). In this study, two of the New Zealand-born participants who drink, noted that they were introduced to drinking because others in their peer groups were doing it.

The older New Zealand-born woman, who drinks, said she wasn't pressured into drinking, although part of the crowd she socialized with did drink: 'Mine wasn't the pressure. Mine was just the social life. It was just something you did, and the group you were with ... and others, so I started to drink because that's what others did and because I didn't touch that other stuff ...' **(NZ16 – Older New Zealand-born Drinker, Auckland).**

But the same participant said whilst her friends drank and did drugs, she never liked, nor did she do drugs. She said she enjoyed socializing with her 'crowd' which included other Polynesian young people and also enjoyed drinking alcohol.

I liked drinking most types of alcoholic beverages, but I didn't like drugs because mum and dad were heavy smokers really heavy smokers ... and because I was the youngest girl I had to wash the clothes and physically the clothes were smelling of the smoke ... and ever since then I just hated smoking and that's why I didn't do drugs because the smoke I can't even stand the touch ... so it was only drinking alcohol ... **(NZ16 – Older New Zealand-born Drinker, Auckland).**

A young New Zealand-born woman abstainer, who said she knew of young women who sneaked out from their homes at night to go out to parties, also said there were never any pressures which she couldn't deal with when she was doing tertiary studies.

Some women participants started drinking, not because of peer pressure, but because of pressure from parents to conform to Samoan norms for young women. Two New Zealand-born young men, for example, noted that pressure from parents and expectations that 'Samoan girls' don't drink, and should not hang around in places where people drink, resulted in their own sisters' rebellious responses which involved sneaking away from home at night to have a drink with their friends.

### ***Attitudes to Spouses' and Children's Use of Alcohol***

The data on spouses' and children's alcohol use provides some convincing arguments that women rather than men experienced more adverse effects of their spouses' drinking. The older of the two Samoan-born but New Zealand-raised women, for example, who said her parents were abstainers but two of her brothers drank, noted that her experience growing up in a 'dry' family environment, has been valuable when confronted with domestic violence and alcohol abuse.

I did enjoy a good social life and I was drinking and smoking and I guess I changed from a heavy drinking student when I had my son ... you don't realize until you are older that the kinds of things taught by your parents were really true ... and you start to value those and pass them on to your own children and others close to you **(NZ15 – New Zealand-raised Older Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

An older Samoan-born woman, living in American Samoa, whose husband was formerly a heavy drinker, suggested that *matai* of individual families have a role to play in controlling the form of celebrations in contemporary Samoa. She said *matai* who consume alcohol, often influenced family decisions on the style of celebration and swayed family decisions to include alcoholic beverages because of their own inclinations to imbibe rather than out of cultural necessity. The participant argued that alcohol at Samoan family celebrations have become the norm, that it is now generally accepted and in many cases, even anticipated that alcohol would be available on these occasions. She observed that:

Brothers and sisters, parents and children, and even older and younger generations of Samoans are now drinking together, and the excuse is often because it's a happy celebration for so and so ... whether or not it is appropriate within the context of *fa'asamoa* ... yet these things [alcoholic beverages and the drinking] are commodities and practices which have been introduced to Samoa from outside **(SA07 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa).**

The inclusion of alcohol, and the resultant drunkenness, in ceremonies where large numbers of relatives were gathered has negative effects on other areas of culture. The participant observed that one of the institutions of *fa'asamoa* in which alcohol and its abuse has had a negative impact is the *feagaiga* the sacred covenant between the brother and sister, once held in high esteem within *fa'asamoa*. She said this has been tarnished and dishonoured by people, especially men, who often, under the influence of alcohol, do and say things which have led to its degradation.

You would think that a *matai* who has been accorded power, status and dignity would consider that brother/sister relationship when planning these celebrations. I have often witnessed situations where Samoan people have behaved disgracefully in public because of the effect of alcohol. Most of these people are normally quite deferential to, and respectful of their sisters and family members, but give them a few *Vailima* and they make idiots of themselves ... women also have been compromised and 'shamed' because of their behaviours in public places when they have been under the influence of alcohol. You even see a brother and sister dancing together at parties these days which before would have been unthinkable. And because of the freedom of individuals to express their rights over recent times, some Samoan women now find they can speak their minds in certain contexts without thinking about their positions within the traditional Samoan *aiga* ... in some public places, sisters now have their own money to buy their

own drinks and there seems to be no more boundaries within the brother and sister relationship, and even if there were, they are mostly blurred or ignored ... **(SA07 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa).**

Some younger participants, for example, have argued that alcohol is a *palagi* 'ideal' that has been adopted and accepted into Samoan people's practice of hosting, and among their daily activities. Some participants even suggested that *fa'asamoa* has adapted to accommodate the drinking of alcoholic beverages, and that alcohol has been perceived by some people as encroaching on, and even taking the place of the 'ava within some contexts of Samoan life. Other participants, however, including most of the key informants were adamant that alcohol and 'ava remain distinct and their respective roles within Samoan social life are preserved.

### ***Personal & Professional Experiences of Consequences of Alcohol***

A young New Zealand-born woman abstainer, who is Baha'i, said she abstains because her religious faith does not subscribe to alcohol use, 'and it seems like the sensible thing in the life that I live'. But she has another reason for not drinking alcohol. Her father was an alcoholic for a period when they went to Samoa. She blamed her father's bout of 'alcoholism' on the pressures of church obligations and to family dynamics.

The obligations to the church and to the family can be overpowering ... when you feel powerless you just go out and drink, and that's what I'm talking about, the oppressiveness of culture where you have no outlet and then you drink. Dad would go out drinking and we won't see him again for the rest of the weekend and that meant no food for the weekend nothing for the weekend while he's gone and sometimes he wouldn't come home unless someone went and got him or someone else brought him, it was very destructive.

... it was hard because my family moved back to Samoa from New Zealand, and with all these romantic ideals ... and we get there and the ideal comes crashing down and when your money runs out all those wonderful family and friends that were around you disappear, and they don't just disappear they bring you down and then they kick you while you're down ... and that's why dad started drinking because he had friends when he drank **(CH01 – NZ-born Young Woman Abstainer, Christchurch).**

The same woman abstainer suggested that some Samoan values such as *mamalu* or dignity have been degraded by alcohol use and abuse. She related her own personal experience in observing her uncles and aunties lose their dignity because of alcohol and drunkenness.

... my thing against consumption of alcohol is that of the loss of dignity, most people when they have had more than just a few social drinks they lose their dignity ... and that is very important in *fa'asamoa* to be able to be dignified ... when I look at my uncles and aunties they were extremely disrespectful and used foul language at each other when they got angry with one another.

... alcohol seems to be a major part of one's life in Samoa growing up, the socializing, going out for drinks is a lunch time, after work time, and weekend type of thing ... now alcohol is contributing to the breakdown of values, I would say yes it has, and may be more publicly now that it's harder to have to pretend (**CH01 – New Zealand-born Single Woman Abstainer, Christchurch**).

An older participant, whose husband was formerly a 'heavy drinker', explained that alcohol has been used in various celebratory contexts in Samoa. In a sense, alcohol has become synonymous with success because it has been used by some Samoan people to celebrate significant milestones and achievements. Alcohol is increasingly the focus of celebrations of success such as graduations from tertiary studies, successful admission to higher educational levels, or job promotions.

When there is success or other important occasions within Samoan families to be celebrated alcohol would be at the heart of those celebrations. Whether it's at the home or at venues such as restaurants and church halls, alcohol is forever present ... it's like it has a significant role in these events. Very rarely would you go to Samoan functions and celebrations now where alcohol is not present ... these days even at funerals, alcohol is consumed at the after-functions yet these were solemn occasions in our traditional *fa'asamoa* where behaviours such as alcohol consumption would have been seen as disrespectful and inappropriate ... (**SA07 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa**).

Other women participants noted that the perception that alcohol is a commodity which is 'not for women' is not uncommon among Samoan people. A Samoan-born woman drinker, who is a University student and former school teacher, wondered whether the fear of change or cultural expectation that women 'should not drink' was the reason why women in her

church do not drink. She said the fact that she must be the only woman in her church that would openly have an alcoholic drink in social occasions such as weddings didn't really bother her.

Sometimes I'm conscious of that, but you sort of sense it in the atmosphere. When we have a church wedding I openly drink because I hate going to weddings where alcohol is not available, you know how long our functions go for and so to go through all that not having a drink.

We went to a wedding and when we got there I went and got gin and tonics for me and our *faletua* [wife of pastor] and the women probably thought the *faletua* was having a cordial drink but they didn't know she was having a gin and tonic (**NZ10 – Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland**).

While the experiences of women participants are varied, the fact that most women were concerned about the effect of alcohol on Samoan people's health is clear. The increasing level of excessive drinking amongst young women in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2001), for example, poses a great threat to young Samoan women, which is projected to grow at a higher rate relative to the general New Zealand population. Many more women than men participants expressed concerns about the need for programmes that would raise awareness among Samoan women and the population generally, about the adverse effects of alcohol on health and wellbeing.

### ***Strategies to Regulate and Manage Use of Alcohol***

Some women participants and the New Zealand-born key informant suggested that alcohol use needed to be regulated, and strategies devised to raise awareness of their adverse effects. A young Samoan-born woman, who drinks moderately, for example, suggested there is a need for alcohol and its effects to be demystified. She said her church takes a prohibitive stance against alcohol and 'it is kind of expected' that parents wouldn't drink because of the church doctrines. But she argued that there has to be a demystification process around the notion that 'you can't have a good time without alcohol'.

I think just as the preventative rules are useful, I think that demystification process that should be worked around the doctrines so that it's not just 'don't do it' but explain about the effects ... give young

people the information about the danger and let them be aware of the effects. ... I think there's another culture in those churches where drinking parties have become almost something that is expected ... where the kids have become exposed, they have tended to see it [drinking] as having a good time that you can't have a good time without alcohol (**NZ09 – Samoan-born Young Woman Drinker, Auckland**).

Another strategy which might usefully be explored when addressing alcohol and its attendant problems is to provide information about the detrimental effects of alcohol and drugs for young people through churches. Some women said providing seminars and other educational programmes for young people within the church environment would mean involving the pastors and church leaders, in raising general awareness of the consequences before they were confronted with them.

I think it's a worthwhile strategy, to implement programmes or other educational strategies within the church environment and church groups, we need to impress on the parents how important the programmes are for them, especially for their children in the future (**NZ06 – Samoan-born Young Woman Drinker, Auckland**).

But the participant was also quick to point out that she would be very cautious when approaching churches especially church leaders because 'some of them don't want to be told that you're trying to educate them'. She added that

'... educational programmes that raise awareness, anything about food, about stress, about the environment, about health and education would be the best strategy for our communities, but don't say you want to 're-educate' our people because they are already educated' (**NZ06 – Samoan-born Young Woman Drinker, Auckland**).

The observations of the above participant were similar to those of another Samoan-born woman drinker, a University student and former school teacher. The mother of two children, and a drinker, noted that her experience with her own church is that Samoan people of the older generations were reluctant to change their ways and the churches have also been slow to change. She suggested that *fa'asamoa* has to adapt and accommodate changes, and churches too, have to change with the times, even the doctrines need to be reviewed in light of global changes, she argued. In terms of alcohol and the consequences of drinking, she said not many people

in her church drink, but she suspected that some young people were into alcohol.

I think part of the difficulty in trying to change our older people's ways of thinking about recent problems including alcohol-related problems could be attributed to the attitudes or the 'old ways' ... some of the older women they want to impose their old beliefs ... like in my church I am the only woman that doesn't wear a *pulou* [bonnet], and I would suspect only a very small number of people drink though they do not drink openly like I do. And some of them would comment now and then and say, 'Samoan girls do not drink alcohol' ... but that's probably why most of our Samoan women don't drink, because of the cultural expectations **(NZ10 – Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

A mature woman abstainer, and wife of a parliamentarian, observed that the *mamalu* or dignity of the authority of her own village's council of chiefs has been eroded, and that its decision-making lacks coherence and good judgement. She noted that the *vafealoaloa'i*, the mutual respect which underpins the dignity and decorum in the maintenance of relationships within the council and throughout the village social structure have been undermined by 'alcoholic' *matai*.

There's no dignity and coherence in the decisions the council makes, because the trio of 'alcoholic' *matai* have captured the power within the governance and authority of the council. Now they openly drink beer during *fono* sessions and people are afraid to question their decisions. And the *fono*'s decision-making has become so unreasonable.

Sadly, these are the leading *matai* of my village, they make the decisions and yet they are setting very poor examples and these are the people that young people look up to as role models for the *taulele'a* and all members of the village **(SA10 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa)**.

The two eldest women abstainer participants, who suggested that alcohol use has become pervasive in certain contexts of Samoan social life, expressed similar misgivings. The older abstainer wife of a *matai* in Auckland noted that as she was growing up in Samoa, the dignity of her village *fono* was something that was very special. The *pule* or authority of the *fono a matai* during those days was *tutasi*, unopposed and would not be questioned by anyone. She added that the decisions were not taken lightly, that lots of consultation and deliberation were involved in all the activities of the *fono*.



Ultimately, she said the *vafealoaloa'i* mutual respect and *feavata'i*, the dignified recognition of the appropriate relationships among members of the village council was paramount. Sadly, she has heard of villages in Samoa where *matai* were consuming alcohol during the village council *fono*, which she said would have been unheard of in earlier times in Samoa.

### **Samoa Men's Experiences with Alcohol**

Samoa men's experiences and attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol reveal some differences to those of Samoa women. But just as women's attitudes and experiences of alcohol vary, so too do those of Samoa men. Some of this variability, and its causes, are explored below using the same sub-themes as those used above for women.

#### ***Home Experiences and Parents' Use of Alcohol***

Samoa men's home experiences of parents' use of alcohol were similar to those of their women counterparts. There are also similarities in the experiences of some, though not all, Samoa-born and New Zealand-born participants. An older *matai*, head of a government Ministry in Samoa, noted that alcohol had been present in his home all his life.

Alcohol played a huge role in our home as I was growing up he [dad] was always drunk. He was always abusing our mother and us for no apparent reason. He was a terribly nice man when he was not drunk but when he drinks he is a completely different person. I told myself when I was young that when I grew up I would never drink, that I wasn't going to go down that track when I was older, but as it turned out I didn't keep that promise because of the influence though I didn't drink until after I got married (**SA01 – Older Matai Drinker, Samoa**).

One key informant, the Samoa Commissioner of Police, said domestic disputes in Samoa occur mainly when the father or husband became drunk.

Most of the times the husband may have been drinking and when he comes home and things aren't to his liking, that's when the wife gets beaten up, and the children get beaten as well. Sometimes, it's not the wife and kids but it could be someone else in the family ... in some instances, a person just wants to cause problems and fight with anybody else for no particular reason (**SAKI02 – Samoa Commissioner of Police**).

The Samoan-born former heavy drinker, who came to New Zealand as a teenager, said alcohol has found a place in Samoan social life, and has permeated Samoan cultural and social practices in many respects. The participant admitted he was a heavy drinker who had 'abused alcohol to the limit' and considered himself fortunate to be still alive after the abuse of alcohol and drugs, and recalled the pain and heart-ache he put himself and his family through for many years. He said his family name, which literally translates to 'Great Drinkers', became a curse because there was an expectation that members of his family would be 'big drinkers'. That was a 'cultural stigma' which he said he had to carry around with him for many years. However, he also said that since those 'difficult times' when he was a violent, wife-basher, he has turned his life around,

... everything has a place and has got to fit somewhere ... we're not going to hide things that are not good for us and say there's no place for them, I mean that's not the real world, it's not real. If there is a problem then we have to address that ... perhaps the cultural stigma which we carry like title names have the stigma ... like my own family name literally translates to 'Great Drinkers' ... it's a curse and we carry that curse for generations because we have to make sure we are great drinkers without knowing the implications of what we're doing **(NZ14 – Samoan-born Male Former Drinker, Auckland)**.

The participant's former life of drugs and alcohol abuse, gambling and the associated violence and criminality, has since been transformed to an abstaining Christian life. He has also changed his last name, and is now working with community groups and with Pacific people within the Pacific Island Baptist Church environment.

But some participants' attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and drinking revealed contrasting styles. Several older Samoan-born men's styles of drinking were both heavy and hazardous when they were younger. *Fa'amafu* was commonly cited as the alcoholic beverage most often consumed, and through which most were introduced to alcohol, and is discussed below.

Interestingly, some of the New Zealand-born participants including the two youngest men, remarked that there is a perception among people of their generation that older Samoans, including some of their own relatives, are

using alcohol irresponsibly, especially drinking and driving. These two participants, in a joint interview in Christchurch, said they have witnessed older men of their church get behind the wheel of their vehicles and drive off after drinking at church fund-raising gatherings. One of them said the drink-driving message just isn't getting through to some older Samoans.

I think for the older generation it's not getting through to them and I don't know whether it's the language barrier or whatever ... you go to *sivas* and the amount of old men that jump in their cars and drive when they have been drinking is quite frightening. My uncle was also caught by the police and stuff ... he was drinking with friends and he went out and his car was in a chase with the police ... my own dad did [drink drive] because he was hurt from two serious accidents; one I can remember because he nearly lost his arm. Now dad really pushes for us younger guys to make sure we've got a driver when we're out drinking ... **(CH03 - NZ-born Young Single Male Drinker, Christchurch).**

The same participant noted a big gap in terms of the level of awareness of the detrimental effects of alcohol between his generation and island-born migrant generations.

I think people of our generation are more aware of what's expected and what to do when you're drinking, but I feel sorry about people my dad's age because there's quite a lot of stress on them and they want to release when there's a function ... they're going out drinking and they don't know about getting a specific driver and they need to because they're under lots of pressure **(CH03 – New Zealand-born Young Male Drinker, Christchurch).**

### ***Introduction to Alcohol***

Most older Samoan men, who drink, including two former heavy drinkers, were introduced to alcohol through *fa'amafu*. Two Samoan-born men who were introduced to drinking in New Zealand didn't mention drinking *fa'amafu* and the three New Zealand-born men, who drink, have never drunk *fa'amafu*. The rest of the older men who were introduced to drinking in Samoa, including the two key informant former 'heavy drinkers' said they drank *fa'amafu*. It was the only alcoholic beverage they could afford, or was available to them. Apart from the pastor, all of the men who drink consumed alcohol with others. The pastor's solitary drinking, he conceded, was to ensure he does not drink in the view of the public, because of his church's

position on alcohol.<sup>10</sup> The pastor, whose father was also a pastor, said his introduction to alcoholic liquor was through drinking *fa'amafu* when he was 13-years old.

One of the older men, a former school principal, who was introduced to drinking via *fa'amafu* said his friend, who was working at the time, was able to buy the *fa'amafu* for both of them. He said he and his friend were looked up to by other young men of the village who couldn't afford to drink, or weren't interested in drinking. The participant also noted that drinking alcohol, especially on pay days, during his early years as a school teacher was something he and several other colleagues looked forward to. He said that occasionally, he and his colleagues drank imported beer as a special treat but because their 'salaries were so low even *faa'mafu* wasn't affordable' most of the time.

Another former school teacher recalled how he started drinking *fa'amafu* at Teachers' Training College in Samoa. He remembered he was one of the youngest of a group of men from his institution who were renowned for drinking *fa'amafu*. He said as trainee students they were paid an allowance, but it was 'a pittance' and it was never enough to pay for their need for alcoholic beverages. He said they used to look forward to Friday because that was when they would go drinking *fa'amafu*.

Drinking *fa'amafu* was kind of special, you felt different and strange feelings, feelings of the need for a woman, and not just one woman but any woman, feelings of pride and happiness, feelings of sadness, feeling you want to fight when your body is 'brushed' by someone else, and you don't hold back when your body is touched accidentally. Sometimes, me and my mates, we would drink inside the school buildings, and other times we would stay overnight to 'sleep off' the drunkenness at wherever we were drinking at. That's my introduction to alcoholic beverages (**NZ03 – Former School Teacher Drinker, Auckland**).

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<sup>10</sup> The abstinent position of the CCCS regarding alcohol has been reviewed, and at its recent Annual General Assembly conference, certain prohibitive positions including that on alcohol use have been revised, particular in regards to the general membership. Its position on pastors and others within the church leadership hierarchy hasn't been explicitly spelled out. The CCCS pastor key informant to this study, however, has noted that the church's regulations are open to interpretation, and that the positions of the individual pastors often determine their stance on church regulations.

One of the main reasons he and his mates drank regularly when they were students was *mimita*, to show off, but there were also good points in the course of that fellowship over *fa'amafu*. As he explained:

We used to debate, to share our knowledge and understanding of certain things, about culture and about the world generally. We'd discuss our progress at Teachers College, and gave advice to each other, and those were good points about what we were doing and why we were doing it. But mainly, it was to show other people especially women that we were a 'gang of drinkers' (**NZ03 – Former School Teacher Drinker, Auckland**).

But the participant also conceded that now that he is an older *matai*, he only occasionally, has a quiet drink with his wife at home after work on Fridays.

The two young New Zealand-born men from Christchurch, who drink, said they were introduced to alcohol through drinking with their friends. One started drinking when he was at High School, the other young man started much later, but didn't mix drinking with sports much. The third New Zealand-born man interviewed in Christchurch, said his father was the son of a Samoan minister, and that he was introduced to alcohol and drugs as a teenager through a 'townie crowd' which included mainly Samoans including him and his twin brother, Maori and a couple of *palagis*. He also recalled that when he was really young, his mum's father, a *palagi*, had given him a glass of beer at Christmas. Other than that, he doesn't recall having seen alcohol in the house in those early years.

### ***Peers' Use of Alcohol***

The former school teacher said he and his friends' drinking was primarily to 'show off' and also to attract women. He said he was still married when he got married again because he had fathered a child to another woman whom he later married. He said entering into relationships with other partners that resulted in unplanned and illegitimate children were a consequence of drunkenness in which he said many of his friends also got caught.

It was a weakness in character which unfortunately, many Samoan men weren't able to resist because once you're drunk and you see a nice woman, you're determined to 'score' and have sex, I just couldn't resist the temptation. But times have changed, and now I am in a very

close and secure relationship with my current partner, sometimes I am not quite sure whether she is a wife, or a partner or a girlfriend ... but we have a very good relationship and I think those days of unwanted liaisons are well and truly over **(NZ03 – Former School Teacher Drinker, Auckland)**.

The two young New Zealand-born men from Christchurch said there was some peer pressure on some people to join in the drinking, but that normally, their friends were usually quite understanding towards people's decisions and respect the wishes of those who did not want to drink. One of them, the married man who played a lot of sports when he was younger said there was some peer pressure to drink but he didn't succumb early: 'It was more kind of social peer pressure but I didn't succumb early ... it was when I was a little older. Sport was just a way to relax and I didn't really mix drinking with sports' **(CH02 – Young New Zealand-born Man Drinker, Christchurch)**.

The participant's other colleague started to drink when he was still at High School, but that it wasn't because of peer pressure but because alcohol was at parties and places where he and his friends socialized.

I was never really pressured into drinking, I had just done it, just started drinking because it was there and we used to see groups walk in with a dozen of beers so we thought, next time we'd go and start and look cool ... and we'd just sit there and drink and tried to be cool **(CH03 – Young New Zealand-born Man Abstainer, Christchurch)**.

This same participant also noted that while people weren't pressured by friends to drink when they did not want to, there were times when the pressure was 'from people who don't really know you'. He added:

It was quite interesting because if some people knew that you are Samoan they would just assume you go to church, so you don't drink and that's how they come up to you and try and treat you differently, not knowing that you drink. And then your other friends that know you come up and say come on ... have a drink, that puts pressure on you, and sometimes you can feel pressured and say ok, I'll drink. ... If anything it was pretty positive 'cause the guys knew that some people are quite serious about their church and I think that's why they never pressured you to have a drink **(CH03 – Young New Zealand-born Man Abstainer, Christchurch)**.

### ***Attitudes to Spouses' and Children's Use of Alcohol***

Most of the Samoan-born men participants' spouses did not drink alcohol. Only two men, a former teacher and an unemployed labourer, both living in Auckland, would sometimes have a drink with their spouses.

Some older men participants, including the four 'former heavy drinkers' said drinking was a waste of time and money, and a cause of certain ailments. An older *matai*, who was introduced to drinking by imbibing methylated spirits and later *fa'amafu*, said he suffers from gout as a result of his former heavy-drinking days. He was saddened by recent signs that his son, a postgraduate student at university, may be drinking although he and his wife have not yet confirmed it.

I've spoken with him, and his mother has talked to him about the adverse effects of alcohol. I have emphasized the terrible things which happened to me over the years when I was a young man, the domestic violence, the constant fights with other people, and the lack of monetary support for my parents, all those things I regret now, but it is too late. And now I want to impress on him how terrible drinking can be, and has been to me during my lifetime. I have reminded him of the scars in my face which were the result of constant drunken brawls and violence. I want him to stay away from alcohol, it is evil and I can vouch for that because it is shown on my face, the scars of alcohol abuse **(NZ01 – Older Matai Former Heavy Drinker, Auckland)**.

Another older *matai*, a lay preacher in the CCCS, who still drinks though he doesn't abuse alcohol anymore, said he was glad that none of his sons followed in his 'alcohol-abuse-footsteps'. He noted that he was glad none of them has ever abused alcohol or taken after him: 'One doesn't drink and doesn't smoke, one takes alcohol occasionally, and one sadly, doesn't drink nor smoke cigarettes, but I hear he smokes marijuana though he denies it. So I suppose when you come down to it, it isn't too bad because I have beer at home and no one drinks it **(NZ07 – Older Matai Drinker, Auckland)**.'

An older former school principal who used to drink, but has abstained since he became a pastor, distinguished between younger and older couples' experiences around alcohol. He suggested that an older couple who may have a better understanding of each other, are more likely than younger people to talk things out before the onset of domestic violence.

Yes, there are times when domestic violence occurs, especially among young couples who do not understand each other very well. For some couples, there isn't any violence because the wife understands the husband's needs and requirements when he's under the influence of alcohol, and vice versa. In those cases, even if the husband arrives home very late the wife would always get up and look after her man's wishes and those kinds of things ... she also would normally have strategies in place to ensure the man doesn't get violent when he's drunk (**NZ04 – Older Former Drinker Pastor, Auckland**).

### ***Personal and Professional Experiences of Consequences of Alcohol***

An older Samoan-born *matai* drinker, now a professional alcohol and drugs counselor, who admitted abusing alcohol when he first came to New Zealand over thirty years ago, surmised that:

Alcohol is ok and it's here to stay for the rest of our lives, but the problem with our people is that we abuse alcohol. We can't just say ban all alcohol in New Zealand because you can't do that because that is stupid and unrealistic. But what we have to do is educate our people in a safe way to live with alcohol because you can use alcohol and still be safe because abusing alcohol doesn't happen overnight ... (**CH04 – Older Matai Drinker, Christchurch**).

The same participant said young Pacific people have their own way of abusing alcohol.

They want to belong to some form of group, they want to impress their girl friends they want to be a 'man' early, so they will be seen as big men. But it's a wrong perception you can't be a man by drinking but some young people think if they drink they will be like their fathers and so feel grown up (**CH04 – Older Matai Drinker, Christchurch**).

A young New Zealand-born man who works with 'problem young people' in Christchurch, said kids as young as 13 were turning up at school 'stoned and stuff like that' from drugs.

I see it a lot at work where some Samoan boys, island kids they do dope quite regularly, it's normal. ... marijuana is just a normal drug. Marijuana is just too easy, it's drug of choice because it's easily accessible, they get into LSD and all sort of tablets, there's cocaine and speed (**CH03 – Young New Zealand-born Man, Christchurch**).



The other young New Zealand-born man said he remembered when he and his brother were kids, he was scaling beer because he didn't know what it was.

I never wanted to touch it [beer] but mostly my contact with alcohol was at *sivas* and we always fancied liquor because all I can remember was fights. But at least as kids we used to always be around and always as kids try to follow the action and that sort of thing, not understanding what's happening yeah, but that's where I had contact with my alcoholism **(CH02 – Young New Zealand-born man, Christchurch)**.

The same participant stated he does not drink and drive although his younger brother has done it a couple of times. He said that when he is around he would normally take his brother's keys and take control. He said in recent times, he and his friends have insisted on nominating one person to drive, and that person wouldn't drink during the night.

I think there's a stigma around when you drink and drive, like when I go to a party and a person says he's drink and driving I would think 'what a dick' ... I don't respect them as much and personally I don't respect anyone that's drinking and driving, it's like a bloody idiot thing ... and some of our people are not responsible because they lose their licenses and those kinds of things ... **(CH02 – New Zealand-born Married Male Drinker, Christchurch)**.

The older abstainer, a pastor, said he has seen the adverse economic effect of alcohol on some Samoan families where fathers spent money intended for food and other household expenses on beer and smokes. He knows some of the families in his congregation suffer financially because of fathers' and husbands' mismanagement of the family budget. He said he regularly reminds members of his congregation about the abstinent position of the church around alcohol and that he was quite intolerant towards drunkenness. He advises families in his congregation to ensure the family needs are looked after first before they start giving to the church. The pastor added that his children abstain because he encouraged them when they were growing up to refrain from drinking and follow his abstinent stance from alcohol.

A former 'heavy drinking' man, who is now a lay-pastor of the SDA mission, expressed similar misgivings about wasting his time and a lot of money on

alcohol at the prime of his life. He recalled how his life as a heavy-drinking school teacher had turned around when he embraced his church's doctrines which prohibit alcohol and smoking.

When I first joined the SDA church, alcohol and tobacco, even coffee and tea were prohibited because they affected people's health and people from other main Samoan churches 'laughed at it' ... now others apart from people from our church are preaching the same message that smoking kills, coffee has caffeine, that drinking is hazardous to health, and the message has been disseminated widely throughout the country.

But now new diseases are affecting people's health, the environment has been affected ... Alcohol now is prevalent and so are other substances ... all these things are impacting on young people's lives, their relationships with their parents and the *fono a matai*, they no longer have respect because they are under the influence of alcohol and other drug substances ... **(SA11 - Older Adult Former Drinker, Samoa).**

### ***Strategies to Regulate and Manage Use of Alcohol***

Among older participants, especially those raised in Samoa, one of the main concerns was the lackadaisical monitoring and enforcement of liquor regulations, and the widespread accessibility of alcohol to village people of all ages. Many participants and all key informants in Samoa said availability, and lack of regulation was problematic and needed addressing.

A *matai* drinker suggested that alcohol consumption has been allowed in some villages throughout Samoa. In his village, for instance, alcohol consumption is allowed, but would be banned periodically when people abuse alcohol and display irresponsible drunkenness.

Our village council imposes prohibitions whenever people abuse alcohol or openly display drunken behaviour which threatens peace and harmony or when the dignity of the village is threatened by drunken behaviours. Sometimes, the *fono a matai* needs to consider the wellbeing of small village store owners who sell beer. And because we are next-door to the golf course which sells liquor, our store owners would be unduly penalised if we ban 'drinking and selling' of beer. If we did that the drinkers would go to buy and drink beer at the golf course depriving our village store owners of the 'business' ... so the village council has to have some consistency and consideration for our village's small businesses. Sometimes people could drink in their own homes but can not buy alcohol from the village stores **(SA01 - Older Matai Drinker, Samoa).**

The same participant opined that the village councils needed to plan, develop, and implement strategies which would be beneficial to all villagers, including the village store owners, and which ensure that the dignity of the village and peace and harmony across all sectors of the village are upheld. He said whilst periodic prohibitions on liquor consumption are imposed, especially when the authority and the dignity of the council of chiefs may be threatened, it is also important to ensure that everyone's interests are looked after.

Another male participant who drinks confirmed that 'drinking' is now permitted in most villages and that drunkenness is no longer a punishable activity in some villages.

I think you'll find that drinking is generally allowed and drunkenness is not punishable anymore in most villages. It is only when drinkers *fa'aumu*<sup>11</sup> and display 'unbecoming conduct' or do 'something silly', then they get fined. Compared to when I was a young person, when people used to get beaten up just for staggering along when they were drunk, now the rules are a lot more relaxed and people also seem to be educated in their attitudes towards alcohol and its consumption **(SA09 - Younger Matai Drinker, Apia).**

The same participant also noted that at his own village, alcohol is prohibited. Sometimes though, when someone offers a keg of beer the *matai* would make an exception and allow the keg to be drunk among themselves on the pretext that all members of the village council are present, and therefore accept and drink the keg. 'Drinking alone is not allowed but when we [*matai*] are all present, then everything is JR,<sup>12</sup> we are ok'.

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<sup>11</sup> *Fa'aumu* or *usususu*, is a particular loud call with a particular aim of challenging, or disturbing the peace which is decried by most Samoan people. Implicit in the 'call' is a challenge often aimed at someone in particular, or towards the village council or people generally. Samoans know that when someone does the 'call' that the person would be dealt with by the village authority the next day or in its next meeting, or at times, the person gets 'dealt to' by way of a beating or stoning by another village member who is offended by the 'call'.

<sup>12</sup> JR is acronym for 'just right' a common unofficial ellipsis used often in jesting manner. In some home-brew drinking circles, people use the acronym to indicate approval of a 'brew' which may have been 'suspect' whether it had fermented enough for consumption. The experienced home-brew consumers are able to tell whether the brew is 'too sweet', indicating insufficient brewing time, or 'venika', too sour indicating over-brewing. A participant who used to drink home-brew with his colleagues when they were at Teachers Training College said the language used among home-brew drinking circles can be quite vague to the untrained ear.

But an older adult former drinking *matai* insisted there is no place in the Samoan village social life for alcohol or the drinking of alcohol. He said he has seen the detrimental effect of alcohol and drug abuse in his village, and throughout Samoa. He recalled that when he was growing up in his village, alcohol and drunkenness was very rare; now drunkenness is common and other drugs such as marijuana are available. He said his village bans drunkenness and fines drunken offences according to the seriousness of the offences.

If you are caught drunk in the village you get fined 10 sows or 20 sows or even more. If you are drunk and then swear and use foul language the fines are even greater ... a sow is an equivalent of about \$10 so that if you're fined 20 sows that translates to \$200. Some parents have been forced to sell valuable fine mats in order to raise fines for the errant children and some parents even send those children to live with relatives in other locations before the village *fono* impose a worse fine on repeat offenders ... **(SA11 – Older Matai Former Drinker, Samoa).**

The police superintendent participant, noted that in his village, when people break village laws the village council immediately convenes to identify the law-breakers and determine appropriate punishment within the village regulations. He said the punishments are often a deterrent to ensure the council acts in accordance with the policies set by central Government and the Department of Police to ensure the safety of the village people. The assumption underlying this participant's comments is that the village rules and regulations are based on the government and Police Department's policies, on which he didn't elaborate. It does seem surprising since villages enjoy, and zealously guard, considerable autonomy in formulating by-laws. They use these to manage local realities which vary from one village to the next.

Another older *matai* drinker explained that each village in Samoa formulates its own rules and regulations and ensures that villagers comply with these. He added that drunkenness was one of the offences punishable under those village regulations. He said it is enforced to ensure people are safe and not harmed by drunken behaviour which sometimes result in fights and unruly behaviour. He explained that if the village *fono* doesn't have rules and

regulations, then troublemakers could cause disturbances of peace and harmony within the village. These disturbances may have a ripple effect which lasts long after the drunkenness itself. In his own village in Savai'i, the participant said drunkenness was prohibited although drinking outside of the village environment was often left unpunished by the council. He explained thus:

I don't know of any village in Samoa that allows drinking and drunkenness but you can drink in public places outside of the village and the *fono a matai* doesn't extend outside of the village ... so long as you don't break the village rules and regulations then you're ok. You may have been drinking and come home peacefully and you are fine, it is another matter and an offence when you commit such actions as screaming obscene language, or disturbing the peace or any other provocative actions which may be outside the norms of village expectations and regulations, that is when the *matai* come down hard on offenders.

Another reason why drunkenness is prohibited is to keep the young people away from stealing because when people want alcohol, young people especially, they would most likely steal from someone else in order to get money to buy alcohol. Over recent years many villages have made rules and regulations with the ultimate goal of deterring young people from committing offences in order to buy alcohol **(NZ05 – Samoan-born Older Matai Drinker, Auckland)**.

Some participants also mentioned that in Samoa, some of the worst impact of alcohol on *fa'asamoa* may be seen in social terms: domestic violence committed by the drunken husbands and fathers; wife- and child-beating, damage to homes and furniture, fighting and disturbing the village peace. Other participants referred to the economic effects of people spending money on alcohol when other more pressing family needs such as food, children's clothing, church donations, school fees, and *fa'alavelave* are not met. This expenditure issue is potentially more serious in Samoa where wages and salaries are low and liquor is relatively more expensive than in New Zealand.

But an older *matai* who said some people have offered liquor to family members when they congregate, suggested that whilst there are negative aspects of alcohol consumption, there are also positive aspects which should not be overlooked. He was certain those leaders who offer alcoholic beverages to family members when they assembled have done so with the

best of intentions. But he warned that where alcohol is consumed, there would always be a 'black sheep' of the family, or someone who may hold a grudge against the *sa'o o le 'aiga*, the senior titleholder of the family, who may, under the influence of alcohol seize the opportunity to raise these matters. Where this results in a loss of *mamalu* or dignity to the chief and to the 'aiga as a collectivity, the single incident may result in longer-term ill-feeling and tension between those involved and the factions to which they belong.

Samoans value the dignity of their *matai* and 'aiga, but note that when a man becomes too drunk, these relationships may be debased, and social boundaries blurred and crossed. In these circumstances some people commit the cardinal sin of using foul language or acting inappropriately, which can bring unpardonable shame and stigma to the family. Samoans take these things seriously because they say, *E pala le ma'a ae le pala le 'upu* meaning that stones will eventually turn to dust but shame on the family for foul language or uncouth and inappropriate behaviour will never fade or be forgotten.

Disagreement among members of families whether it be between the *matai* and his 'au 'aiga, members of the extended family, or 'au *tautua* those in the service of the *matai*, is not conducive to the *va lelei*, good relationships and *nonofo fealofani ma fegalegalea'i* or living in good terms, and in harmony among kin and group cohesion both of which are fundamentally connected with an *aiga's* power and influence. Where valued relationships within the Samoan family are affected by members of the clan through drunkenness, Samoans make sense of such acts by framing these thus: *O lou lima lava e toe pa'ia ai si ou mata*, literally meaning that a person's own finger could accidentally hurt one's eye; or, *O le manu'a mai fale e le o se manu'a mai fafo*, an injury or harm which has been inflicted from within the family not from outside. Injuries from inside, fuelled by alcohol use, may constrain a family's ability to unite later and weaken the *mana* of its leader long after the drunken episode.

An older *matai* participant reiterated the positive aspects of alcohol as a disinhibitor which sometimes, provides the opportunity for people with a wealth of knowledge about *fa'asamoa*, to share that knowledge and wisdom with others. However, what the participant finds most problematic with alcohol consumption is the commonly expressed concern of other participants about the detrimental effect on people's attitudes and behaviours in relation to the authority of the *fono a matai*. As one *matai* observed:

Some younger men sometimes go against the village rules and regulations when they are under the influence of alcohol and when that happens they break the laws and then they get fined. And that is the way it happens, because fines are a means to deter the would-be offenders from breaking the laws which are made by the *fono a matai* **(NZ04 – Older Samoan-born Matai Abstainer, Auckland)**.

Similarly, another *matai*, a police superintendent, noted that alcohol and its consumption is a big challenge to *fa'asamoa*, especially to the *pule* or the authority of the *fono a matai*. The participant noted the tendency to use the excuse that someone did not know what he or she was doing because of the effect of alcohol to explain inappropriate social behaviour.

Somebody may have held a grudge against a *matai* or someone else, and may be unable to say what he wants to say when sober, and then when alcohol is consumed some use that as an excuse to retaliate ... in some instances drinking has resulted in people committing suicide ... and traditional values may be degraded even leading to serious crimes **(SA04 – Older Matai Drinker, Samoa)**.

The same participant argued that another negative aspect of alcohol is the way some Samoan people, under the influence of alcohol start to discuss genealogy and the origins of *matai* titles to which they are not related.

The problem with some people including *matai* is that when they have had a few drinks they start to weave these stories about their titles and their family connections and how they may be related to some 'family lines' ... often, these people wouldn't even know what they're saying but for the effect of the alcohol ... which is why 'ava Samoa is so different. When you drink too much 'ava Samoa you don't talk a lot, you frown and you are sulky and then you may quietly leave and go home and sleep.

Alcohol leads to drunkenness and in turn, causes violence ... or someone goes off with someone else's spouse and then end up living with that woman and forgets about his wife and children ... those are

some of the negative effects of alcohol and alcohol consumption  
**(SA04 – Older Matai Drinker, Samoa).**

This behaviour, in turn, can cause damage to relations between the families of the errant spouse and the jilted one. The seriousness of the damage varies with the circumstances of the infidelity and the social status of the families involved.

Alcohol-related family abuse whether it be physical violence against the wife and children, or whether it be sexual violation of children or other relatives was also perceived by some participants as a growing problem. Whilst none of the participants admitted to have been victims of alcohol-related unlawful sexual abuse, some made generalizations about its existence in Samoa. A retired school teacher, who abused alcohol while he was younger, spoke passionately about alcohol-related abuse in terms of physical beating of family members and unlawful sexual violation when the husband is drunk:

... you can not deny that it's happening because you hear it and see it but in most cases it never gets past the home, it never gets reported ... a man gets drunk, gets angry for whatever reason with his drinking mates or in that drinking environment ... he comes home and vents his frustration on the wife and the children. That's when the inhibitions go because you are the *matai*, you are the head of the family and you start to do things which in your right mind you wouldn't do, you have sex with your wife's sister or your daughter ... so where's the morals and the Christian values and the *feagaiga* and all those things that are important to you? **(SA08 – Older Matai Drinker, Samoa).**

The same participant then explained that the problems he had outlined were not new, that Noah himself had gotten drunk and naked, and had sexually abused his daughters-in-law. The participant blamed Noah's adulterous relationships on the adverse effect of alcohol and drunkenness. Noah's reputation and special relationship with God was tarnished because of drunkenness and this was interpreted by the participant as a weakness which caused Noah to commit adultery. The point, however, the participant opined is that the scriptures contain warnings of the potentially serious consequences of drunkenness which some humans continue to ignore.



This participant's explanation of Noah's adulterous actions was paralleled in the experiences of some Samoan men interviewed by Anae, et al. (2000). In the study of Samoan men's roles and responsibilities in reproduction, some older men who had fathered children to women outside of their marriages, indicated that in most cases, they would have been under the influence of alcohol when those extra-marital relationships occurred. For most, alcohol and the inability to control their drinking resulted in the illegitimate children as a consequence, were attributed to a 'weakness' of character.

Adulterous relationships both with immediate family members and with people outside the family, however, seemed a not uncommon phenomenon, especially when people were under the influence of alcohol. An older woman abstainer participant, highly critical of a group of leading *matai* of her village who consumed beer openly at some of the village *fono* sessions, related how one of the group of three 'alcoholic' *matai* has had an adulterous affair with a married woman of her family whom she said,

... has a husband and children but has been in an adulterous relationship with one of this 'gang of three' ... and people have known about it for a long time including her husband but no one has said anything because people are afraid of him ... the *matai* is powerful because he is one of those leading village *matai* who oversees the decision-making process and determines the level of fines ... the woman, my relative has been fined and I have told my brother who is a *matai* to ban her from living in our family land because she has 'shamed' us and the whole family has been ridiculed by her adulterous behaviour **(SA10 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa).**

The same participant said she has heard that another of the three *matai* referred to above, was abusing young girls: 'people say he harasses young girls but this is all anecdotal because no one is prepared to come out and say in public that this was happening.' She added that the inappropriate behaviour of those *matai* have been brought about by overindulgence in alcohol. This, she argued is a sad indictment of the authority of those who are in powerful positions to influence village decisions which impact on individual people's lives.

The credibility of the authority of village *matai* was also commented on by the Commissioner of Police, who noted that the dignity and the cohesiveness of

the authority of village councils of chiefs in Samoa were dependent to a large extent, on the integrity of the title holders and the level of mutual respect within councils and individual *matai*. He said he had observed over many years as a commissioned police officer, that the villages that have *matai* with quality leadership and decorum, who govern with integrity, compassion, and fairness, never have serious problems that needed police intervention or consultation. Conversely, he noted, villages where offences and serious crimes were committed, whether by *matai* or *taulele'a*, were ones where the *pule mamalu a ali'i ma faipule*, the authority of the council of chiefs, is lacking. He said he could tell where village authority was functioning well and above reproach and other villages whose *pulega* or governance have been debased as a consequence of alcohol and drunkenness. The Commissioner of Police remarked that his own village near Apia was an example where the authority of the *fono a matai* was *maopoopo* or functional and organized, and where the authority is *mamalu* or dignified.<sup>13</sup> He also confirmed that it was sad to see the authority of *matai* in some villages been brought into disrepute in public because of the influence of alcohol and drunkenness. The Commissioner said one of the most recent social problems which he and the police force have had to deal with at the village level is the growing alcohol abuse and the cultivation and use of illicit drugs.

A Samoan-born *matai* who drinks, a mature student and lay preacher of the CCCS, said alcohol has affected Samoan individuals and communities in different ways. He argued that many Samoan pastors drink and he has no problem with individuals' choices irrespective of whether their religious doctrines allowed it or not. Interestingly, the CCCS pastor participant, who drinks himself, said there is usually a connection between religious practice and physical or psychological family violence. Those who do not go to church are more likely to experience violence and other social problems in the home environment.

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<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, less than twelve months following this interview, there was a massive split within the ranks of the *fono a matai* and in turn, the *pulega* or governance of this village over some unrelated matter. There has been a *faaleleiga* or reconciliation since then and as far as I know, things are back to normal within the ranks of the *fono a matai* in the former Police Commissioner's village.

I'm speaking about my own *aiga* and my congregation and alcohol. You never see those families in the church have parties, but in occasions where they may have a barbeque and drinks, everyone would be just mingling and talking and just enjoying themselves. At some of our 'church family' functions, I would normally advise people before I leave, to ensure they don't drink and drive, and to drink moderately. I remind them that I don't want to see dead people in our church. It comes as a joke but behind that is a strong message of moderation and responsibility (**NZ11 – Samoan-born Pastor Drinker, Auckland**).

### ***Alcohol and Drugs in the Villages***

Clearly, one of the more worrying problems related to alcohol consumption in Samoa is the effect of drunken comportment within the village context highlighted above. Several older adult participants, both in Samoa and in Auckland, for example, expressed concern about the impact of drunkenness among young men in the villages which sometimes result in accidents which cause serious injuries. A former 'heavy drinking' *matai*, whose religious theology espouses 'total abstinence', was adamant that alcohol and more recently, other drugs have been implicated in many of the social problems including serious crimes in Samoa, some of which have resulted in death.

What we are witnessing throughout Samoa these days in terms of alcohol and tobacco is the message that my church was preaching some thirty years ago, warning against caffeine and nicotine and alcohol and drugs ... Even I didn't appreciate nor fully understand what it was all about when I first joined the SDA church. Now I am convinced that these things [alcohol, drugs and tobacco] are the major cause of diseases and other social problems. Here in Samoa, kids as young as nine or ten years old are doing marijuana, and it's not just kids in Apia, it's [marijuana] available everywhere, even in Savai'i you can smell marijuana in the air in the evenings ... it's been smoked everywhere. No wonder some parents are now asking the *fono a matai* for help with children who have been addicted to the drug (**SA11 – Older Former Drinking Matai, Samoa**).

The same participant explained how his village council is struggling with the issue of alcohol and drugs. He noted that in some circumstances, where families have been fined several times by the *fono a matai* for their children's drug use, some parents have resorted to removing errant children from the village sending them off to live with relatives in other places. As a leading *matai* of his village, he has suggested to the *fono* that if parents can't help these children and if the *fono* can't do anything else but impose fines, then

perhaps the *fono* should consider fining the pastors in the village for neglecting the alcohol and drugs problem among the village youth.

I have suggested to our village *fono* to seriously consider, imposing fines on church leaders of the different denominations in our village. Counselling and working with young people who are confronted with alcohol and drug problems should be part of church leaders' responsibility, not just eating the leg of the beast ... or just driving around in their flash cars **(SA11 – Older Matai Former Drinker, Samoa).**

This, however, raises the question of whether the *fono* will continue to enjoy the authority to make and enforce these decisions, if alcohol and drug use by young people increases and undermines the credibility of *matai* and their moral high-ground. A village near Apia operates a system whereby villagers found drunk and behaving inappropriately in a manner which threatens village peace are fined for their actions. An elderly *matai* participant, a member of the village *fono* sub-committee which enforces village regulations regarding alcohol and drunkenness, said drunkenness was prohibited within the village boundaries and there were strict restrictions on inappropriate behaviour. This participant added that whenever someone breaks village regulations regarding alcohol comportment, the village sub-committee would meet and mete out appropriate fines to the culprits. However, he also knew of villages that were facing difficulties within the governance framework of the *fono a matai* because of the influence of alcohol abuse and drunkenness on some of the villagers' behaviour.

A Catholic *matai* abstainer, who said he has seen many changes in Samoa during the last twenty years, noted that there has been a big increase in the number of people drinking Vailima beer, and the problems which result from drinking and drunkenness. He stated that several village councils of chiefs in Savai'i and some villages outside of the town area in Upolu were revisiting and even revising their rules and regulations regarding the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

In some villages, the sale of liquor has been prohibited because of the increasing problems which are caused by drunkenness. The problems related to drinking and drunkenness has got out of hand in some villages, although there are still villages where the authority of the *fono*

*a matai* is quite firm and cohesive. I think it all depends on the cohesiveness of the council members and also the way they have implemented the village laws. I believe there are villages where the *pulega* or governance of village affairs by the *matai* have not been very cohesive, and those are the villages which may not faring too well now in terms of alcohol related problems (**SA15 – Older Matai Abstainer, Samoa**).

But the same participant, who has never been interested in drinking, although his grandfather, most of his uncles, cousins, and some of his own brothers were heavy drinkers, also stated that alcohol has been abused by many people causing hardship and family troubles. At the same time, heavy-drinkers who gave up drinking could have a profound effect on those around them and in particular on their attitudes to and use of alcohol.

He said while he was a teenager, his grandfather used to send him to pick up liquor from bars in town. He recalled that his grandfather had a permit which enabled him to acquire liquor in those days, when *fa'amafu* was plentiful around their neighbourhood at Vaivase, and that even his grandfather had his own homebrew. But he didn't recall having any major problems with his grandfather's drinking although he knew he was a 'big drinker' of all types of alcoholic liquor. He said his grandfather would drink with his friends and when he was drunk he went to sleep. The same participant also stated that one of the most precious things he remembered most about his grandfather was that he gave up drinking when he was in his 60s. That was quite special because he was a big drinker, but before he died he had abstained, and those are the types of role models that are quite admirable. A generation later, after his grandfather passed away, some of his uncles became even bigger drinkers and seemed rowdy and unbearable, especially for someone like himself who wasn't remotely interested in alcohol.

A younger participant who grew up in Apia, who said he had abused alcohol and drugs 'to the limit' recalled that he and some of the boys from his village, regarded themselves as the 'town boys' and wanted all the fashion and any new things which were introduced to Samoa to start with them. He said those were some of the pressures which young men of his village experienced as they were experimenting with alcohol and drugs:

We were the 'town boys'. We were from the village of Apia, and we didn't want anything new to be introduced by boys from other villages, it had to start with us the boys from 'town'. I was in Form 4 at Samoa College, and there was a lot of peer pressure from friends and guys you hung around with **(SA12 – Young Male Heavy Drinker, Samoa)**.

The participant also noted that when they started drinking, they drank beyond vicinity of the village. They went to the outskirts of town, 'because when we drank we made a lot of noise, so if we were inside the village we would be fined by the *matai*'. He said they drank anything and did drugs and everything:

... it was mainly beer including homebrew then ... and later we did everything, anything new that came up at the time including *taepovi* [cow dung] ... if we didn't have beer, we'd have mushroom, marijuana had just come on to the scene in Samoa then and we had to have that. I even tried raw mushroom, and it landed me in hospital, I was there for three days. They had to give me injections ... put it simply I was getting away with murder. It got so bad that I stole my family's furniture and sold them, even sold my grandmother's fine-mats. She was the one that was looking after my wife because I had a wife quite young and grandmother was looking after my wife and kid ... **(SA12 – Young Samoan-born Former Heavy Drinker, Samoa)**.

But the participant did change and, although it wasn't overnight, he said when his grandmother died he thought he was 'really becoming an alcoholic'.

But it wasn't just alcohol there were other 'stuff', and no one in my family was impressed with me and my attitude. My wife and my child had left and there was even thought of suicide, I was making excuses but I was really missing my grandmother I didn't know what to do ... and for three months I wasn't drinking or smoking, and not working ... **(SA12 – Young Man Heavy Drinker, Samoa)**.

### **Alcohol-Related Village Murder**

Alcohol has also been implicated in more serious incidents causing death. The case of a former Auckland resident Samoan chief, Nu'utai Mafulu, alluded to earlier, who was murdered by *taulele'a* or untitled men acting under instructions of some village *matai*. After spending some twenty years in New Zealand Nu'utai returned to Samoa and set up a small business at the village of Lona in the district of Fagaloa. Macpherson (1997) describes how the deceased 'was shot twice in the head in front of his home and in the view

of his wife and five children by *taulele'a* acting on instructions from the village *matai*.

The deceased's house had been stoned for an extended period earlier in the day; and the shooting was followed by the burning of the house, shop, bus, and a private vehicle.

The deceased ... had on various occasions refused to accept the directives of the *fono [a] matai* to end the sale of alcohol from his store in the village or to pay fines that the *fono* had imposed on him for these breaches. The *fono [a] matai* had then directed villagers to boycott his bus and store. The matter came to a head when Mr Mafulu physically challenged the right of a *matai* to ring the village bell that signalled evening curfew (Macpherson, 1997: 46).

The murder was seen as the ultimate price the businessman paid for defying the authority of *alii* and *faipule*, the chiefs and orators, of the village council. The deceased businessman apparently disobeyed orders not to sell alcohol at his store on certain days, and at particular times of the day. The subsequent Court case found those responsible for the man's death, including some of the *matai* who ordered the shooting of the victim in front of his wife and children, guilty of various degrees of murder.

But the above murder tragedy is not an isolated case where alcohol has been implicated in a murder crime in Samoa. Nor is it new. Some twenty years ago, in the *Samoa Mystery* at Salailua which Shore (1982) cast as an ethnographic murder mystery, for example, alcohol (along with gambling) was also implicated as a factor in the fatal shooting.

The Commissioner of Police key informant, for example, remarked that alcohol has been implicated in several serious crimes in Samoa, some of which had caused death.

### **Alcohol-Related Health Problems**

Others see the impact of alcohol manifested most glaringly in health problems such as sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), the 'after effects' of drunkenness, serious crimes causing death, and injuries caused from drink-driving and alcohol-related accidents.

### ***Drink-Driving a Serious Problem in Samoa***

One of the most noticeable detrimental effects of alcohol and drugs in Samoa is the increasing number of alcohol-related car accidents and the number of serious accidents where someone dies. One key informant, a health professional at the National Hospital in Apia, said serious injuries resulting from alcohol-related traffic accidents is a major problem in Samoa. He said drink-driving is pervasive and there are a significant number of alcohol-related injuries, some of which have resulted in fatalities: 'Recently, a priest was put behind bars for driving a car when he was very drunk ... they were coming from Safata into Apia ... one priest got killed and marijuana and alcohol were implicated'.

Other participants and key informants have also expressed apprehension at the amount of drink driving that goes on in Samoa. Samoa's Commissioner of Police, for example, conceded that drink driving especially among young people has become a major problem. The Commissioner also noted that alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents have become a major cause of serious injuries, sometimes even death. He said the police force does try its best to enforce the laws but this is not often possible because of other priorities. He said the police force has special units that patrol liquor outlets such as night clubs and public bars, usually in the weekends mainly to monitor under-aged drinkers and to enforce liquor regulations.

A businessman, who commutes regularly between Apia and Auckland, was adamant people in Samoa drink-and-drive at random without any consideration for their own safety and the welfare of other motorists and pedestrians. He attributes this to the lack of effective enforcement of liquor regulations and particularly those relating to driving under the influence of alcohol.

There isn't any great effort to enforce the laws whether because of the lack of police officers or some other reasons, it is frightening when you see people staggering out of drinking places and get in their cars and drive away. ... Conversely, it's quite noticeable when you see visitors from New Zealand usually, who once they have had two or three drinks they relinquish driving responsibility immediately. Yet people here just get in and drive away even when they have been drinking heavily ... **(SA02 - Younger Male Abstainer, Samoa).**



A former Auckland-resident *matai* participant from Savai'i observed that alcohol is implicated in a lot of serious problems some causing deaths in Samoa, and it's not just traffic-related accidents.

If it isn't the drinker that dies, it would be someone else who didn't drink but was injured in whatever way by the person who drank. It could be a car accident, a fight, even injuries from stone-throwing or other weapons such as guns or knives ... and why? Because .... those drinking together ended up drunk and start fighting amongst themselves ... **(SA11 - Older Matai Former Drinker, Samoa).**

### ***Need for Matai as Role Models***

A mature female participant, who lives in a traditional Samoan village, noted that 'drinking' among some *matai* of her village is disgusting, an affront to the *mamalu*, or dignity and propriety. The participant related how some of the main decision-making *matai* of her village council have been seen drinking beer during their council meetings.

It's disgusting, a disgrace to the *mamalu* of the authority of traditional Samoan customs and what *fa'asamoa* stands for. How could they [*matai*] blatantly disregard the dignity of their authority by displaying their 'drinking' publicly? You know for some of them it's 'showing off' that they can afford to buy beer and so when you drive past during their meetings, you can see the Vailima bottles standing right beside their posts ... **(SA10 - Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa).**

The same participant explained that what has happened in her village is that some *matai* who are drinking openly, have now committed other more serious offences. Another older woman participant said anybody that consumes alcohol while discussing and deliberating on village matters would not be in a frame of mind to make sensible decisions.

... whatever village issues that need to be enhanced wouldn't benefit from any *matai* who consumes alcohol during village council's deliberations. Drinking alcohol during council meetings would have detrimental effect on the drinkers' thinking and decision-making, the drinker wouldn't be at the same wavelength as non-drinkers so the meeting would be a waste of time **(NZ01 – Older Woman Abstainer, Auckland).**

The *matai* husband of the above participant explained that the relationship between the *matai* and the *taule'ale'a* would be affected when a *matai* drinks.

When the drinker has had too much to drink more often than not, the *taule'ale'a* wouldn't listen to the *matai* anymore ... In fact, if the *matai* or his wife tries to intervene the untitled drinker wouldn't hesitate in answering back and may commit an even more serious offence by using foul language, he wouldn't be able to make sense of, or understand his position in that kind of drunken situation ... **(NZ02 – Older Matai Former Drinker, Auckland)**.

This participant's observations echoed what former Prime Minister Mata'afa Fiame, had lamented during the Liquor Bill debates thirty years earlier. Mata'afa's misgivings about the introduction of the 1971 Liquor Bill were that if the bill was passed to law, that alcoholic beverages would be widely available to people in villages, who had no knowledge about the adverse effects of alcohol on their physical health and wellbeing.

A former school teacher who still drinks said alcohol can take control of a person's 'common sense' and that when that happens the person could behave disgracefully and some even lose their respect and understanding of courteous relationships. 'They tend to behave in quite the opposite manner when they are sober'. This participant, however, doesn't believe that alcohol has affected *fa'asamoa*.

Alcohol hasn't affected *fa'asamoa*, it's how people use alcohol that is the problem. Take for example those village *fonos* where bottles of beers are drunk during the *fono*, those are the attitudes and practices of people which have implicated alcohol and led to the degradation of and disrespect for *fa'asamoa*. No village in Samoa is founded on alcohol or have a place for alcohol especially during the village *fono*. Village authority, or the degradation of it, has been brought about by the politicizing of election campaigns, that's how beer bottles have arrived on the scene, and it's why some *matai* are now drinking beer during village council deliberations **(NZ03 – Older Matai Drinker, Auckland)**.

### ***Inconsistent Village Laws***

Of particular interest to the attitudes of Samoans towards drinking and drunkenness is a common perception that village councils are 'more relaxed' towards alcohol and alcohol consumption now than before. The Commissioner of Police, for example, stated that not all village councils and

Samoan villages approach alcohol in the same manner, or with the same intensity. He points to the differences in terms of villages' enforcement of rules and laws within village contexts.

The Commissioner noted that in villages where the traditional authority of chiefs and orators are resolute, the values of *fa'asamoa* are unfaltering and they have shown resilience and dignity. In those villages, *matai* would report to the Police anyone found cultivating marijuana or other illicit activities within the village environment and the village *matai* would even hand over offenders to the Police. In the case of serious offences such as murder, village *matai* themselves have brought the offender in to be dealt with by the Courts. The Commissioner also noted that where some of the values have persisted in some Samoan village contexts, the task of the police is made easier.

However, the Commissioner also pointed out that not all traditional village authorities have persisted. Nor are all village authorities forthcoming when police ask for their assistance from time to time. He referred to a recent instance where village *matai* had reported a storeowner who sold alcohol without a licence. But when the police, under advice from the Liquor Control Authority, charged the store owner for illegally selling liquor, some village *matai* came back and recommended that the storeowner concerned be issued a licence to sell liquor at his store: 'Now, more stores in that village have been issued liquor licences and the village now has several stores selling beer because village *matai* have reneged on earlier decisions and had later agreed for these licences to be issued' (**SAKI02 - Commissioner of Police Key Informant, Samoa**).

An older adult *matai*, a retired school teacher, threw some light on the source of this problem. He said alcohol has impacted on *fa'asamoa* in terms of the divisions within the *pule* authority of the *fono a matai* in some villages.

Alcohol, more particularly drunkenness have impacted on the *pulega* because of drunken *matai* making decisions while under the influence of alcohol. The Bible tells us we have to respect the authority. But if those in authority abuse that authority by making unfair decisions because of their own weaknesses which in many instances may be impaired by alcohol. *Sometimes what happens when two matai clash*

*in the fono when they are under influence of alcohol? Of course they would be up and fighting in front of the village fono. And why? Because the Devil has used alcohol to breakdown the values and norms of fa'aaloalo and vafealoaloa'i central to our fa'asamoa ... now it's happening in the 'aiga where the parents both drink. Sooner or later there will be chaos in the family environment and the children suffer (SA08 – Older Matai Drinker, Samoa).*

The Commissioner conceded that the police are still very much dependent on the support and cooperation of village councils of chiefs in policing and enforcing the law in villages. He said in some circumstances, the police may be unable to carry out their law enforcement involving unco-operative members of the public without the assistance of village leaders. He says the difficulties in achieving results would be compounded if the village *matai* weren't prepared to assist the police in their work. He said his advice to his officers is that the appropriate approach is to go and see the council of chiefs of the village concerned, or the *pulenu'u* the village mayor. But this strategy may ultimately be unsuccessful where the authority of the *matai* and *pulenu'u* are compromised by their use of alcohol and where this results in their failure to manage their villages' affairs. This has become apparent in some villages where questions have arisen over their management of liquor licensing.

### ***Liquor Authority and Village Liquor Licenses***

The dignity of village *fono* is an important consideration when the Liquor Control Authority deliberates on applications for village liquor licences. The Secretary of the Samoan Liquor Control Authority, for example, noted that the Board takes seriously the recommendations of village *matai* who support license applications to sell liquor in village stores. Recall that this problem of controlling and enforcement of the liquor regulations was raised by some parliamentarians when the 1971 Liquor Bill was tabled and debated in parliament. Some MPs at the time were concerned that the dignity and sanctity of the *pule* of the *fono a matai* at the villages may be degraded as a consequence of drunkenness due to easy accessibility and availability of alcohol in villages. Sadly, the data has shown that alcohol has inevitably impacted on Samoan social life, including the *pule* of the village *fono a matai*. However, it is also just as important to note that the *pule* or the authority of the *fono a matai* in other villages in Samoa as related by some participants,

including that of the pastor interviewed in American Samoa, have endured the pressures of social change and recently-introduced lifestyle behaviours including alcohol use.

### ***Fa'asamoa is Resolute in Some Places***

Whilst some participants in this study have expressed concern that cherished values of *fa'asamoa* may be diminishing, and that these have been abused in some quarters, other participants insisted that *fa'asamoa* and all the good qualities which it represents still exist, and will endure. This may be because Christian principles, norms and conventions have become embedded within *fa'asamoa* to the extent that they are now considered Samoan principles and this has contributed in anchoring *fa'asamoa*. However, those values and norms which are cherished by most Samoans may need to adapt to withstand the winds of change which have swept through the islands of Oceania during the last two decades or so.

A key informant, who lectures at the CCCAS Theological College in American Samoa, has argued that the practice of traditional *fa'asamoa* at his village was, as evidenced in the strict laws enforced by the village *fono*, very strong and would continue to be. But he conceded that not all villages in American Samoa were as strict in enforcing village laws regarding alcohol and the drinking of alcohol.

Our village traditions and customs have held firm and likewise, the *pule* of *ali'l ma faipule* is just as resolute. I think people simply don't want to come away from that traditional Samoan way of life. Another contributing factor to this unwavering power and dignity of the authority of the *matai* is our village's isolation from everybody else. We are remotely situated and in a sense it is just as well because it means that people still go out to work and do other businesses in town and elsewhere during the day, and then at the end of the day they still come back home to its serenity and isolation. That I think helps people to think alike and share similar values which aren't influenced by any encroaching neighbours (**ASKI01 – Lecturer Key Informant, Pago Pago**).

The same key informant explained how the *matai* system has served his village well, even if the odd *matai* has wanted to introduce change now and then. He said people who try to change the traditional *fa'asamoa* within his village don't last very long. And whilst he admits that he has seen some

*matai* consume alcoholic liquor before or after village *fono*, he said that doesn't alter the fact that the *fa'amatai* and the authority of the *fono a matai* has actually contributed to the absence of any major alcohol-related problems at his village. He hopes that those villages where the *matai* have set an example of openly consuming alcohol at public places will not be seen by young people as role models that they should emulate.

### ***Politics and Fa'asamoa***

But to attribute, or even imply, that the changes which are occurring in the *fa'asamoa* are the consequence of the growing availability and use of alcohol is to overstate the role of alcohol in Samoa's social transformation. While alcohol may be seen to be implicated in these, they are frequently a consequence of economic and political factors which underlie and drive the changes in modern Samoan society.

Some Samoan political leaders and sectors of the Samoan media have, for instance, become involved in the definition and regulation of the practice of *fa'asamoa*. Recent media reports referred to current Samoan Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Sailele's proposal to downsize traditional Samoan *fa'alavelave*. An 'Opinion' by Savea Sano Malifa in *The Samoa Observer* (19/08/2003), entitled "PM to Rid of 'Ugly' and 'Un-Samoan' Culture", for example, supports Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele's initiative to 'do away, or downsize the volumes of traditional obligations' of the 'money-gorging *fa'alavelave*'. Savea was referring to a report in the inaugural edition of the monthly magazine, *Tapu*, where the Prime Minister is reported as saying 'he intended to do away with large numbers of fine mats being exchanged at family and church obligations'. The story went on to say that:

This competition for volume unnecessarily places a financial burden on families. It refers to large numbers of fine mats, cartons of herrings and barrels of beef which families give at "*fa'alavelave*" causing "financial ruin" poignantly realised after the ceremonies.

But since the life of a Samoan evolves around "*fa'alavelave*", people simply pick themselves up and gather together the more bundles of gifts when the next "*fa'alavelave*" comes along. Yet this is not "true" kindness in the Samoan culture as the givers' aim now seems to be reciprocated with just as many expensive gifts if not more.

And it is the abandoned Samoan culture of "true *alofa*" when Samoans give from the heart instead of for profitable gain which Tuilaepa wants to see being respected again. Because if the present trend is allowed to continue, among other reasons, the "government gets blamed" by the public for causing the cost of living to climb even higher, Tuilaepa is reported to have said. And he's responsibility-bound to be concerned.

Savea opined that Samoa's customs and usages 'have somehow evolved into an expensive culture causing poverty and suffering to its many adherents'. He said 'complaints abound that exchanging large gifts of food, fine mats and money at funerals, weddings, church dedications, among other similar ceremonies, is directly responsible for today's high cost of living' in Samoa. He calls for Parliament to pass legislation banning *matai* from prostituting Samoan culture to better themselves. 'We're talking about *matai* who "beg" at traditional ceremonies saying this is culture. If it is, then Samoan culture is truly the cause of most ills in society today', (Malifa, 2003: 5).

### ***Political Interference or Rationalization?***

Interestingly, what has been mooted by the Samoan Prime Minister in the above paragraphs, has been tried before without any significant success. Keesing (1934), for example, noted that in Samoa during the German colonial administration, Samoans themselves had a difference in opinion 'as to whether fine mat customs should not be done away with altogether' (1934: 327). Keesing explained that,

... owing to the frequent "misunderstandings and squabbles" between chiefs and orators and among families involved in distributing them and the poverty caused through parties competing in generosity in order to enhance their prestige. The opposition to fine mat ceremonies seems to have come partly from those "without many mats" and partly from chiefs who found themselves in trouble with avaricious orators (Keesing, 1934: 327).

A more recent example of adaptation and reassessment of values and the practice of *fa'asamoa* was the ban on the use of fine mats for *fa'alavelave* in the district of Faleata, on the western outskirts of Apia by former Prime Minister, Mata'afa Fiame in the 1970s. Mata'afa, who was also holder of the paramount chiefly title Faumuina, from the village of Lepea at the time,

banned the use of fine mats in the traditional practise of *fa'asamoa*. And whilst the ban was seen by some traditionalists as an infringement on the rights of individual families and their *matai* to practice what they know as *fa'asamoa*, many hailed it as a brave and rational decision that helped lighten the burden on families when dealing with their *fa'alavelave*.

### ***The Fa'asamoa Beyond Samoa***

Some of the social changes outlined above have resulted in out-migration and the emergence of Samoan migrant enclaves in other metropolitan centres (Macpherson 1994, 1997, 1999, 2004). Again, to argue that the changes which occur in Samoan migrant communities are attributable to the increased availability and use of the alcohol is to overstate the effect of alcohol. Samoans have continued to practice variants of their *fa'asamoa* (Macpherson, 1997; Va'a, 1995; Meleisea, 1992; Shore, 1982). While Samoan migrant communities' variants of *fa'asamoa* have been adapted to the realities of their local environments, the norms, values, principles and elements which make *fa'asamoa* unique have remained anchored in the bedrock of their *fa'aaloalo* respect and politeness, *vafealoalo'i* mutual respect and deference and *feavata'i* courteousness, *loto alofa* kindheartedness and *tautua fa'amaoni* obedient and compliant service to the *'aiga* and *nu'u*. Some of these values may have been modified somewhat in different migrant Samoan communities, but many Samoans continue to meet their obligations and practice their *fa'alavelave* and *tautua* or service whether it be to the *'aiga* or church in Samoa, Auckland, Sydney, San Francisco, Honolulu, or Pago Pago.

It could be argued from the foregoing paragraphs that Samoan culture has to adapt to the changes in order for it to be practical and relevant both within the 'centre', and in the 'nodes'. Where changes have occurred in these nodes, these have been, as in Samoa, driven by economic and political realities. Alcohol may be involved in the changes, but it is unlikely that it is the driver of the transformation. The transformation of *fa'asamoa* abroad is likely to be related to the new political and economic realities which it confronts abroad. Where values and practices change it may be that the changes are driven by the need to accommodate the requirements of life in urban capitalist society.



Some of the change evident is driven by Samoans who may be inadvertently 'prostituting' it through lack of knowledge or deliberately bastardizing it for their own personal gain. Some participants in this study have remarked that *fa'asamoa*, despite its admirable values and mores has been abused by many people for their own benefits. An older woman participant said the practice of reciprocity and generosity within *fa'asamoa* needs to be reviewed if it is to survive in the current global monetized and materialistic milieu. The role which alcoholic beverages and their consumption have contributed to the changing values and norms of *fa'asamoa* has been debated by participants and key informants in this study. Where alcohol appears to be implicated in these it may be as a substance used in increasing quantities to deal with the social and personal consequences of this transformation, than from alcohol per se. What is clear is that alcohol has secured a firm foothold within the social life of some Samoan people both in Samoa and in migrant enclaves.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has examined the impact of alcohol and its consumption on the values and norms of *faa'samoa*. It posited that the *fa'amatai* is central to the continuation and endurance of *fa'asamoa*, and highlighted some of the challenges and changes which have emerged since Samoa attained its independence. The chapter also discussed the recent increase in the number of *tanoa 'ava* and a new trend in some Samoan men's 'ava consumption. An explanation of and the relationship between 'ava and alcohol was presented, and how Samoans perceive the role of alcohol in Samoan social life and *fa'asamoa*.

The chapter then discussed the consequences of alcohol consumption and the concomitant social problems. An explanation of the role of the *fono a matai* in controlling alcohol and drug abuse, and the lax village regulation to deal with alcohol-related problem. Some of the social problems which are the effect of alcohol use were highlighted, and the consequences on Samoan values were also noted. It provides a brief exploration of why *fa'asamoa* will endure, and the pressures which are brought to bear on Samoans in the islands and in migrant communities so they may hold on to their cultural

values and norms, in light of the adverse effects of alcohol on their economic, cultural, health, and social wellbeing.

Finally, the chapter explored recent developments in the debate on whether an initiative proposed by the Samoan Prime Minister to 'do away, or downsize the volumes of traditional obligations' of the 'money-gorging *fa'alavelave*' and a positive response from one of Samoa's most senior journalists and critic of government policies, in support of the proposal to streamline or revise the practice of traditional Samoan culture.

## Chapter Seven

### **THEME: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ALCOHOL**

#### **How Do Social, Cultural, Economic, and Environmental Factors Influence Samoan People's Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol?**

*Generally, those with the most cash are those working for wages in cities and towns or on a government station. This has led to an association of beverage alcohol with urbanism, sophistication and modern ways (Marshall, 1982a, 8)*

*'... alcohol was very much an elite thing and to be allowed to buy alcohol was the social endorsement and recognition of you being part of that social elite' (SA01, Matai Participant).*

#### **Introduction**

The chapter explores how social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors influence Samoan people's attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol. It argues that social and environmental factors that are part of individuals' socialization process influence, to a large degree, people's attitudes to alcohol and their drinking practices. Examining Samoan people's drinking at three research sites: Samoa, Auckland and Christchurch, was intended to include points of view of Samoans born and raised in Samoa, and those born and raised in the Samoan diaspora. Within New Zealand, Samoan communities differ in size and in social organisation. The choice of a second site, Christchurch, in which the traditional practice of Samoan customs may not be so common or intensive was deemed necessary to ensure that a cross-section of perspectives from within Samoan communities in New Zealand were captured for this study. As Macpherson (2004) has noted, new practices have been incorporated into the practice of *fa'asamoa* in various environments have necessitated accommodation and adaptation in the way they view their different worlds, and how they live their lives. This is evident in the various ways in which alcohol and alcohol use have become integrated into Samoan people's lives.

Two case studies illustrate how individuals with similar sociocultural and demographic characteristics can have contrasting attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol use.

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### **Two Island-born but New Zealand-raised Case Studies**

The experiences of two Samoan-born women participants who migrated with their families to New Zealand as two-year-olds; one during the 1950s and the other in the 1970s can serve to illustrate the ways in which environmental, social, and cultural factors influence Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol. Whilst their lifestyles, attitudes and behaviour towards *fa'asamoa* cannot be assumed to be typical of island-born and New Zealand-raised Samoan women, their respective experiences provide some interesting insights into women's, attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol, and patterns of alcohol consumption and those of their family members. Furthermore, their understandings and expectations of both *fa'asamoa* and its practice, and their respective identity journeys and perspectives about life as Samoan mothers, women, academics, and members of the Pacific and Samoan communities reveal the impact of alcohol on their individual experiences. The case studies remind us of the variability within Samoan populations to alcohol and its use. Alisa and Teuila, not their real names, live and work in Auckland, and they travel to Samoa from time to time.

#### **Case One - Alisa**

Alisa is a single-mother of one teenage son, in her early-50s. She was brought up in a small town a few hours drive from Auckland. She has tertiary qualifications and works in middle-management at a tertiary education institution. She was brought up in the Pacific Islands Congregational Church (PICC) under strict supervision of parents, who impressed on the children the importance of Samoan cultural values of sharing and contributing to the upkeep of the extended families in Samoa and in New Zealand. She remembers how her mum used to impress on her, as the eldest daughter, values that embrace kindness, respect and love. Her parents, and especially her mother, had instilled in her responsibility, as the eldest daughter, to serve

people whenever they visited their home, and for other extended family members. The parents contributed to family *fa'alavelave* but did not impose the concomitant burdensome obligations on their children.

Alisa recalls that her father, a deacon and lay preacher in the PICC, did not 'drink', and that alcohol was never present in the home as she was growing up. In fact, alcohol was not as big a problem in the small town she grew up in as it may have been in other New Zealand cities and communities at the time. But she has 'bad memories of drunkenness' through a brother who 'should have never drunk' because he became aggressive when he was drunk:

... he was aggressive with me, he was aggressive to his girlfriend ... I suppose he had a problem with women and that was what got me in trouble. I would question him and he didn't like to be questioned and never liked been made responsible, and he just didn't like to take advice from anybody, and he was basically the rebel in the family.

But he loved mum and dad to bits and they loved him to bits as well and they had to put up with a lot ... My dad used to be so embarrassed when my brother got in trouble ... but none of my other brothers had any problem, he was the only one that got in trouble. There were times when he would just be a pain and then at times [he] would be a wonderful human being, but would never admit he had an alcohol problem. I think the alcohol had a terrible effect on him, it brought out the beast in him, but certainly he was a very loving person, he is a quiet unassuming person.

Interestingly, the same brother, who Alisa said 'would be a pain' when he was drinking also could also be quite endearing:

One of the things he did and I didn't know about it for a while was that he goes and mows old people's lawns and he never told us about it but his wife told us. ... His wife said she brought a ham home one Christmas and she looked in the fridge and it wasn't there ... apparently he had given it to some older people.

Alisa recalls how she grew up under her parents' strict rules, such as having brothers trailing 'your every movement and those kinds of things'.

Alisa started drinking when she was 17, and came to Auckland to train as a nurse. In Auckland, she was able to drink, smoke and go to parties. She met and trained with other Samoan nurses who had come from the islands, but she didn't have a lot in common with them and remembered mixing more with Maori girls then.

I'm not sure whether it was because the Samoan nurses that I knew had come over from the islands for their training ... they probably looked down on my behaviour going out partying and things like that ... I suppose they didn't see me as a good Samoan girl who shouldn't drink and shouldn't be smoking ... but I became very good friends with a Maori girl from Taupo, and I met and mixed more with New Zealand-born Samoan girls than the ones that had just come over from Samoa.

Later, as a divorced solo-parent she trained as a school teacher. When Alisa went to University, she was introduced to and 'really mixed with Samoan' students there.

I had a cousin who was at University there and he introduced me to the Samoan students, and that was the time I really mixed with Samoans and I had the best two years of my single life there. ... I could debate issues with these students, and the things that interested me symbolizes and stimulated really good discussions, and it was I think an intellectual thing ... I did rebel and I was a bit of a nonconformist and I wasn't the Samoan girl they knew from Samoa sort of thing, that I was somebody having a good time. I suppose they saw me as somebody who was at their level of socialization ... and they accepted me without putting me in a box, nor saying that I should behave and respect guys and that kind of thing, and it was great.

The door opened for me into that group through my cousin and so they treated me with respect because of my association with him ... but also they respect me for what I am ... Yeah I look back on that time and I think that was the best learning experience in terms of opening my mind to being Samoan in a totally different direction.

Although she now drinks only moderately, she admits to being a 'heavy drinker' when she was a student at University.

We drank beer most of the times that's all we could afford really ... I can't drink whisky straight or any spirit straight, it has to be mixed and it's normally the taste of the lemonade or ginger ale that I like rather than the spirit ... beer and wine are the only things that I really drink, not that I indulge much these days ...

Of particular interest here, is Alisa's attitude to her teenage son's own behaviour towards alcohol and her attempts to control his exposure to alcohol. She said she was very particular about which schools her son attended, the friendships he made at school, especially when her son and his friends reached the age 'when boys want to go out'.

... he went to a party when he was at the 7<sup>th</sup> Form and there was a prefect 7<sup>th</sup> former who were celebrating their last year, it was only two weeks to the end of school and so after dinner some of them went off to a party and at the party the boys were set upon by a gang of other kids and he [son] was injured ... went to the hospital and he said the boys hadn't been drinking.

Alisa said when her son was sixteen, he was allowed to go out to a night club for her fiance's daughter's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, but with some young people she trusted, and when he came home that night he was fine.

I woke up in the morning and he had his pyjamas on ... so he was very responsible when it came to alcohol and he knew that if he had broken the rules then he wouldn't get the chance to do it again. After that I trusted him when he went out but there was a time when I remember him coming home drunk ... but that was only the third time he'd been out to a night club, so I never let him go to the night clubs again after that until I could trust him when he was 18 and he could drink officially.

Alisa is involved with and heads some national Pacific Women Organizations in this country. She is passionate about Pacific issues which promote fairness, equality, and opportunities for Pacific people in Aotearoa and in the countries of the Pacific.

### ***Case Two - Teuila***

Teuila is in her early-thirties, the mother of two daughters whose New Zealand-born Samoan husband does not drink. Like Alisa, Teuila migrated to New Zealand with her parents when she was two-years old. She has a postgraduate qualification, plays the piano in church, and has been brought up strictly in the church environment. Teuila recalls her sheltered childhood, her various responsibilities at home and at church, a few friends as she was growing having no time to go out and socialize. As early as Intermediate School, Teuila had decided she had, 'had enough of my parents', and was

determined to go to University as a way of leaving home, so she 'could be independent and financially secure' and would no longer have to rely on her parents.

Teuila is now a casual drinker who prefers wine to beer or spirits. She recalls having been told of stories about her father's heavy drinking when he was younger, and how her mother's father did not want her parents to marry. Members of her mother's family were really angry with her father because on their wedding day, he turned up 'pissed out of his brains'. Teuila, however, noted that her family wasn't the typical Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) family because sometimes they were within the church and other times, they were outside of the church:

... every time we went out of the church my father drank, and when we were in the church my father didn't drink. When we were out [of church] he was full on [drinking]. To me it created a situation where it was quite contradictory, so I got a bit cynical about all of the church doctrines and people's real lives and stuff like that. And my father, he used to get quite wild when he drank ... well he was quite wild even when he didn't drink. I think he hardly ever drink in front of us, he never did that ... unless of course one of his friends had come over from Samoa and he [father] wasn't in the church at that time, when he would be angry with our pastor or something like that, and he and my uncle used to drink.

... my uncle, I think he was Metotisi [Methodist] I can't remember now what church but he wasn't SDA, but when he drank I used to really like it when he drank because he would start singing, he was really happy and he doesn't get violent or anything he just was happy and he was really nice. I remember that when he gets drunk I go near him but when my father drank we stayed away.

I've seen what it [drinking] does ... and one of the main reasons that I knew [my husband] was the right person for me to marry ... was that he didn't drink because it takes a lot away in terms of money ... I had a good idea of what I wanted in a husband, stuff like that around drinking ... so it had to be someone who didn't drink or didn't drink excessively, in particular, someone who would let me drink ...

... I'm a little different because I'm quite open about my drinking even in church, like at our church situation you're not allowed to drink, you're not supposed to drink, and they say it's advisable that you don't drink but there's heaps of people who drink. I am quite open about my



drinking and if we go to a church wedding ... I would openly drink my wine because if you're drinking you drink ... and so long as I'm drinking in moderation you know when you eat ... drinking alcohol is like that parable when Jesus turned water into wine, and even though I'm not heavy into the Scripture it has always struck me as something that if you drink in moderation you're fine.

Teuila openly has a glass of wine at social functions, even within her church context, which is considered deviant behaviour in light of her church's abstinence policies and doctrines. In regards to her older daughter's attitude to drinking, Teuila admits she doesn't prohibit her daughter from drinking, and actually invites her daughter 'to have a sip' from her glass of wine when they have dinner at places where wine is consumed. She believes that if her daughter tastes wine early and finds she doesn't really like it, there's a good chance she wouldn't want to drink when she gets older.

Her husband shares her stance to their daughter's exposure to alcoholic liquor, saying that if she had a taste of alcoholic liquor now and 'finds it not to her liking', she may decide she does not want to drink later in life, then he considers this strategy a responsible attitude towards alcohol. Teuila appreciates the values and norms of *fa'asamoa*, and is closely involved in her immediate and extended *'aiga* and the practice of *fa'asamoa*. She admits to being frustrated by her relatives' reluctance to rally when they have their family *fa'alavelave*, and to the obligations of children to support parents and 'family things' in Samoa.

The case studies of two Samoan-born women who migrated at two and were raised, educated, married, and have brought up their children in New Zealand, reveal differences in their attitudes towards alcohol, patterns of drinking in different contexts, different dynamics within family relationships and among kin, different church environments, and varied life experiences. The cases were offered as evidence that there is no one pattern or style of drinking, nor any particular attitude and behaviour towards alcohol among Samoan people, and even those who on the surface have similar backgrounds and might be expected to have similar experiences.

One interesting feature of the experiences of these two women in terms of alcohol consumption is that neither started drinking until they left the family household to attend tertiary education institutions. The contrasting experiences of their father's use of alcohol: one a teetotaler, the other a sporadic 'heavy drinker'; and of male relatives like Teuila's uncle who was a 'happy drinker' and Alisa's 'aggressive when drunk' brother, provides some snapshots of different influences of Samoans' attitudes towards alcohol and drinking.

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### **Samoans' Patterns of Drinking**

The variability in attitudes and patterns are consequences of the circumstances in which they were formed. Personal circumstances may be significant as I have shown above, but so too may political ones. I have also suggested that the missions and colonial administrations shaped Samoans' contemporary attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol both in the islands, and within migrant communities. The effect of prohibition during the first half of the twentieth century on Samoans' attitudes to alcoholic beverages can not be underestimated. Lemert's study alluded to in earlier chapters, described drinking in Western Samoan society as secular, unpatterned, non-ritualized, and non-festive. Lemert's categorization of drinking patterns in Polynesia, however, was not an exhaustive account of all forms of drinking among the three societies studied at the time. In a *Review of Alcohol and Kava Studies in Oceania*, Marshall (1976) noted that they were 'the dominant patterns', the net effect of which was 'to pair a particular society with a particular pattern of drinking' (Marshall, 1976: 107). Furthermore, Marshall explains that:

While such crude categorizations may be helpful as a first approximation, it is obvious that they run roughshod over the almost certain intracultural variation that occurs. A more thorough investigation should examine systematically the effect of variables such as age, sex, religion, location (urban port town versus rural hinterland), education, and employment history on drinking behaviour and drunken comportment (Marshall, 1976: 107).

The focus of this thesis on variables such as age, sex, religion, place of birth and socialization, as well as drinkers and abstainers in examining Samoans' attitudes to alcohol and their alcohol consumption is, to some degree, a response to Marshall's (1976) call for systematic investigation of intracultural variations of drinking in Oceania. Marshall correctly noted the need for further investigations of the 'very useful array of data', from the solid groundwork on drinking in Oceania laid out by Lemert, pointing out some interesting matters which Lemert raises that should be investigated further including:

- the relation between patterns of kava drinking and patterns of alcohol consumption;
- the relation between colonially imposed prohibition and type of drinking;
- the effects of mission policies on drinking patterns and frequencies;
- the implications of alcohol consumption for relations between the sexes and between members of the same sex;
- the relation between status rivalry, political factionalism, and drinking;
- the relation between participation in a wage-work economy and drinking behaviour;
- the association between drunkenness and criminal acts;
- the association between cycles of work and play and drinking;
- the connection between diet and values on eating and obesity and absence of organic pathology deriving from excessive alcohol consumption (e.g. cirrhosis of the liver); and
- the role played by guilt in excessive alcohol consumption.

Some of the variability in attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol which I highlight momentarily are not unique to Samoans, or to Pacific people for that matter. Several reasons for drinking and patterns of drinking may be common within a society. For example, the need to be sociable and happy; to enjoy the company of others in a convivial environment; and to offer alcohol as a symbol of hospitality, are but a few examples given by some Samoan drinkers as reasons for drinking alcohol. All these, and many other functions and patterns of alcohol use have been outlined in the literatures reviewed and attributed to other societies as well (Heath, 1995; Marshall, 1976, 1979; Singer, 1979; Pittman & Snyder, 1962). Room (1998a), for example, noted

'that the position of drinking varies in different cultures, and that different drinking patterns have different characteristic mixes of alcohol-related problems' (1998a: 395).

Within New Zealand, alcohol consumption has been incorporated into Pacific people's social and cultural way of life. Alcohol is often now present in social functions and celebrations, to the extent that some Samoan people, who do not drink, have suggested that alcohol has become integrated into the social and cultural fabric of *fa'asamoa*, and Samoan people's lives. The following discussion reviews some of the patterns of alcohol use by Samoans, men and women in Samoa, and in Auckland and Christchurch. I begin with a description of some patterns of alcohol use, attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol among women participants in the study.

### **Samoans' Drinking and Social Occasions**

Heath's (2000) insightful, descriptive account of 'drinking occasions' as a way of understanding 'drinking patterns and the various roles that drinking has in cultural context', provides a useful set of questions about when, where, who, how, and what people drink? (2000: 46). The following analysis of alcohol use among Samoan people shows that alcohol has secured a place in and has a significant impact on the lives of many people. The data indicate that alcohol is consumed by participants in different contexts: weddings, birthdays, graduations, family reunions, and more recently, funerals, and unveilings all of which are celebrated with feasting and the consumption of alcohol. It also raises the questions of why, on these occasions, some people abstain while others drink to varying degrees, and who drinks what and why.

One of the most important reasons for including participants who were born and raised, and long-time residents in New Zealand in the sample was to provide a comparative analysis of their attitudes and behaviours to alcohol use, and of their understanding of traditional *fa'asamoa*. This approach can be problematic because of the variance in variables such as age, gender, religious denominational affiliation, and drinking or abstinence status. However, categorizing the data into the emerging sub-themes, which are then, analyzed using the dichotomy between New Zealand and Samoa offers

a structure which provides some interesting comparisons across the intervening variables and across the sample population.

### **Samoan Women's Drinking Patterns**

Whilst it is generally agreed that it is mainly Samoan men who drink alcoholic beverages (Neiche & Park, 1988; Ministry of Health & ALAC, 1997; Lemert, 1979), the data gathered for this study shows that Samoan women also consume alcohol. Consumption of alcohol by women has been identified as an increasing trend among women within the New Zealand general population. Recent studies, such as the *Aotearoa Women's Consultancy Group on Alcohol and Other Drugs* (1993), for example, suggest that 'there has been an increase in the prevalence of excessive drinking amongst women, especially young women' in New Zealand (cited in Ministry of Health, 2003: 16). Similarly, a comparison of the 1995 and 2000 *National Surveys of Drinking in New Zealand* by Habgood et al., (2001), indicates that one of the demographic groups to show marked increases in both frequency of drinking and the typical quantities consumed were women. Habgood et al., also found that 'women also showed increases in reports of experience of problems from their own drinking' (2001: 61). It would be surprising if women in the Pacific population, which is very young, were not affected by these trends in the general population since they are educated in the same institutions and are exposed to the same alcohol advertising campaigns. The *Annual Auckland Alcohol Survey* (Casswell, 1999), shows that in the 1990s, 59 percent of Pacific people consumed alcohol compared to 80 percent of Maori and 87 percent of the general population. This makes the proportion of Pacific abstainers high, according to Casswell (1999). The most recent data on Pacific peoples' alcohol and drugs consumption in New Zealand indicate that an increasing number of Pacific women reported drinking in the last 12 months (Ministry of Health, 2004).

In *Beyond Stereotypes: A Study of Some New Zealand Women Alcohol Drinkers*, which included Samoan women participants, for example, Julie Park (1991) noted that '... those women who tended to drink small amounts (even often) thought that drinking large amounts (even infrequently) was

pathological. Conversely, women who drank infrequently (even if in large amounts) tended to think daily drinkers were rather pathological' (1991: 203). Park also noted that 'women's drinking which is completely socially acceptable and certainly regarded as quite "ordinary", can also be at or well above risky levels' (1991: 202). Park also identified three frequently mentioned categories of negatively stereotyped drinkers. These were: the 'secret' drinker, the 'binge' drinker, and the 'can't leave it alone' drinker (Ibid, p. 203).

While some of the Samoan women drinkers in my study would fit into one or all of Park's categorizations, the categories I have created for this discussion are 'occasional' drinkers, 'casual' drinkers and 'heavy' drinkers. I have not been able to quantify the volume of alcoholic drinks consumed, or the frequency of drinking sessions. The frequency of drinking also varied from 'occasional drinkers', to some who drink socially, to those who claim to be 'casual drinkers' but would have several drinks on any occasion. Only one older participant admitted she is a 'heavy drinker'. Someone who said she would drink, but only on particular occasions, has been referred to as an 'occasional' drinker. A person drinking once a week or once a fortnight has been classified as a 'casual' drinker. The one Samoan-born older participant who said her drinking has caused her problems of 'black-outs' and would go out to drink with her friends even when she may have been suffering from a hangover from a previous drinking session, has been defined in this study as a 'heavy' drinker.

### ***Women Abstainers***

Of the 16 women participants in this study, 6 are currently abstainers. Some abstain for religious reasons, while others give cultural, and social reasons for their abstention. One of the two eldest women participants said she does not drink but admitted being drunk on two occasions. Snapshots of several participants' attitudes towards alcohol, show there is no one pattern of alcohol use, and nor is there a particular set of attitudes or behaviour of Samoan women towards alcohol.

The two eldest women participants in this study are abstainers. One lives in Samoa and the other in Auckland, but both grew up in Samoa in the CCCS. One, still a CCCS adherent, said she has never tried alcohol and has never had the urge to taste it, mainly because she grew up in a very 'traditional' village in Savai'i where women weren't expected to drink. The other, who says she is now a non-active church member, grew up in the Apia town area and did experiment with alcohol when she returned to Samoa after spending several years as a teacher-training scholarship student in New Zealand. This participant said that in Western Samoa in the 1950s and early-1960s, very few Samoan women went to the clubs for social drinks. She and her other New Zealand-trained teacher colleagues were among the first group of Samoan women who went to clubs or hotels for drinks in those days. For this participant, however, going out to the hotels and bars was more a social outing with her colleagues than for the sole purpose of drinking. She admits, however, that she had been drunk twice, once in Samoa after a wine-drinking session, and the other time when she and her family were living overseas. She insists, however, that she has never really had an interest nor had she acquired a taste for alcohol.

The older woman who grew up in Savai'i had never drunk alcohol 'in all my life' because she grew up in a 'very traditional' village environment where alcohol was perceived as something which was drunk by young men. Since she has been living in New Zealand, however, her husband who was a 'heavy drinker' in Samoa has abstained for health and religious reasons. She said over recent years, she has observed among her two children, in their 20s, that her daughter, a school teacher, has no interest in alcohol at all. However, she has noted that her son seemed to be going out with his friends more often these days, although she wasn't sure whether he was drinking alcohol or not. She said in an environment such as New Zealand, where young people were able to go out and get influenced by their friends it is harder to control their behaviour and practices in relation to alcohol.

The two youngest women participants interviewed in this study are New Zealand-born. One is Baha'i and the other is Pentecostal. Both abstain for

religious reasons. The Pentecostal participant said her parents, who had been 'drunk on rum' before when they were younger, have abstained since they became pastors in their Pentecostal church. She herself, has never wanted to drink alcohol even when she was going to socials with her friends from time to time when she was studying at University. The other New Zealand-born colleague said she loves going out to dances, but she has never acquired a taste for alcoholic beverages. When she went with her family to Samoa as a teenager, this participant said she was permitted to go out to night clubs, but never wanted to drink alcohol. She remarked that she was mindful of the trust that her father had accorded her, allowing her to go out while a teenager, which she said was quite rare in Samoa at the time. Since she had been a Baha'i, she has continued to abstain as part of the Baha'i faith doctrines, and because abstaining is more conducive to the style of life she wants to live.

The New Zealand-born woman key informant abstains although she admits to having a glass of wine now and then when she feels like it. She said when she was younger she tried drinking.

When I was younger I tried drinking and I never really got the taste for it. ... I have friends who liked to drink Southern Comfort and stuff like that, and my sister started drinking really early in life and I can remember when we'd all go out ... I never really touched drink although at that stage of my life I drank to be sociable' (**NZKI02 - New Zealand-born Key Informant, Auckland**).

The same key informant, who does not belong to a religious denomination, uses wine in her cooking and said she sometimes wondered about the logic of having wine in the food because when she drinks wine, it tastes like poison, yet when used as a food enhancer, it isn't such a bad taste. She reflected on her own experience as a researcher in the area, sharing experiences with her own participants, and also learning about people's perceptions and experiences with alcohol over the years.

One of the interesting things right now is that all the women I've spoken to, in fact, quite a number of men too develop a taste for



alcohol, it doesn't come automatically. It takes time to develop, and if you are into a culture where you grew up with alcohol you drink it like you drink wine ... and because I love food and I love cooking I will often cook with wine. But all the people that I have interviewed have all said they absolutely hated the taste, yet for me I would say it is the thing that got them going that they knew it was going to have some other effects on them (**NZKI02 – New Zealand-born Woman Abstainer, Auckland**).

A Samoan-born younger woman drinker suggested that the patterns of parents' alcohol use and abuse influenced to a considerable degree, children's own drinking habits and practices. She said she has noted a growing number of young people who go to night clubs and other drinking places in Samoa as a means of imitating their parents' practices around alcohol. She argued that the availability of night clubs and beer clubs to which young under-age people can gain admission, has grown significantly in recent years.

A lot of young people are exposed to alcoholic beverages at a younger age, either at the home or other environments including night clubs and bars. Sometimes when members of our staff go out for drinks and for a bit of entertainment and there they would be the young people that you are teaching during the day, dancing and drinking in these environments. It is quite sad as a parent of teenage kids to see these young men and women present in these places late at night (**SA14 – Young Woman Drinker, Apia**).

The older New Zealand-born woman participant who drinks, but abhors smoking, said 'I prefer two or three drinks, but a drink without smoking'.

I think alcohol brings out the aggression in people whereas the other one [drugs] makes you more mellow and easy-going. But I mean when I say 'cool smoking' I mean cool smoking but you don't have to have it when it's not there, and don't flaunt it and avoid kids using it, and that for me is the better option. I think the key is to educate them on what moderation is, and that would be difficult (**NZ16 – Older New Zealand-born Woman Drinker, Auckland**).

Another Samoan-born woman, who drinks, also noted that young people have been exposed to alcohol in several contexts that some may see alcohol

and drinking as just normal. She said her own children and her sisters' children who are now older and can drink legally, have been educated in alcohol use at her house, but are not allowed alcohol at her sister's home.

My sisters' kids are older now and when they come to our house I show them how to behave, like when we have visitors at home, they were to take their drinks and have it at another part of the house, and not to drink where the adults and the visitors may be drinking. It's important to tell the children to respect the parents and the older generations, but unfortunately many parents aren't able to educate the young ones about those values of respect and the importance of relationships within their families and church, and in all other contexts **(NZ08 – Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

The same participant observed that the Samoan and New Zealand environments are quite different in several respects and that parents need to be role models for the young ones. She related the changes in one of her own sister's personality when she starts drinking. She said her sister's personality changes and she acts differently when she drinks.

When I go out with her she does things you know like she talks like it's not her, for a lady ... she has a few too many drinks she can be a bit difficult. I mean I'm loud but she is loud and that's what I mean about different characteristics. You know when we have a drink you talk and you laugh and that's life, but she gets a little fragile ... and yet she's a really sociable person **(NZ08 – Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

### **A 'Heavy Drinker'**

The older Samoan-born woman participant who grew up in the CCCS but does not go to church anymore said she is a very 'heavy drinker'. She recalls having been introduced to alcohol by way of *fa'amafu* when she was still at high school in Samoa. She openly admits she was a bit of a 'rebel' when she was younger, 'part of a bunch of school kids who would try anything, always pushing the boundaries':

You know when you're at school there's always three or four kids that are always trying anything ... while all the other kids go about their business peacefully, that small group of kids would catch the bus and get off without paying ... I was one of those kids that used to try ... and it was the same thing with alcohol and smokes **(SA06 – Older Woman 'Heavy Drinker', Samoa)**.

The participant explained that during the 1960s, when she started drinking while still attending High School in Samoa, it was at first, more of an experiment and 'just to try things out'. She hardly ever went to the night clubs then because she was too young and didn't have any money.

... I never had any money in my pocket but when we would go out it was like in a sense you're going and sit down and have a table and people would just buy rounds of drinks and I suppose it was more or less an experiment that you got to like and got to carry it on. Now, the excuses to have a drink are quite different ... the young people think it's trendy to go out and drink, it's trendy to go out and stand at the bar with a glass of wine or any drink. It's like a social climbing like if you don't drink you're not part of the night crowd the night scene it's like a fad ... **(SA06 – Older Woman 'Heavy Drinker', Samoa).**

She also admitted to being a 'bigger drinker' than her older brother. 'When I compare my drinking to his, I hold a lot more than he does, and even now I can still drink him under the table, and I'm a happier drunk than he is'. She did, however, relate how her heavy drinking got very serious, to the extent that there were times when she would get up in the morning and wouldn't remember how she got home the night before.

... there were many a times when I would get up in the morning and wouldn't remember how I got home. I would first of all check where the car was parked, whether I had parked it outside in the open or in the carport. I wouldn't remember that span of time whether it's one or two hours or even three hours before I got home it would be a blur and I would think, God I have done it again, may be I should stop drinking ... so that little span of time when you're trying to recollect, and then probably a day later, I would come across someone who says let's go have a drink and you start all over again. So yeah, there were times when I thought about giving it up or cutting it down and then you think, cutting it down to what? **(SA06 – Older Woman 'Heavy Drinker', Samoa)**

The same participant observed that young people in Samoa now are able to go to night-clubs, 'whether they are allowed or not, they still go, and so because they're going to these places at a younger age there's a lot more problems for them to face' **(SA06 – Older Woman 'Heavy Drinker', Samoa).**

### ***Patterns are Variable and Changing***

One of the two eldest women participants in this study said she was 'sheltered' from alcohol and had quite the opposite experience with alcohol to that of the previous participant. And whilst the 'heavy drinking' participant's experience with alcohol is by way of heavy drinking and periodic 'blackouts', this participant noted that her experience with drinking earlier in her younger years was having one or two 'rum and cokes' but never getting drunk. She said her only experience with drunkenness was watching one of her uncles come home drunk and then telling funny stories, but 'it wasn't violent drunkenness'. She did, however, witness violent drunkenness while she and her family were living in Papua New Guinea for some thirty-odd years, which was in a way, a disincentive for her to drink.

In terms of drinking, what Papua New Guinea is like now, is what Samoa was like before independence, people really get drunk and become aggressive, abusive and powerless ... I mean if you go to a party here, you see people getting a little drunk but they walk to their cars and drive off. In PNG most parties always end up in big fights so before the party gets to that stage where people are getting a little loud, that's the time to leave. They are a few years behind us and there's a lot of wife-bashing, although I hear there is a bit of that here as well but I have never seen anyone beat up his wife since I've been back (**SA05 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa**).

Interestingly, the participant's observations about violent drunkenness in Papua New Guinea were also commented on by Dernbach and Marshall (2001), who argued that among other things, 'the increase in availability of alcohol has led to various sorts of alcohol-related violence' in Papua New Guinea (2001: 38). These comments from some participants come twenty years after accounts of alcohol-related violence among drinkers in Papua New Guinea were documented in *Through a Glass Darkly: Beer and Modernization in Papua New Guinea* by Marshall (1982).

At the time, alcohol-related violence in Papua New Guinea were reported by Grossman (chapter 5) who observed fighting at parties in Kainantu; violence between men and between men and spouses in an Eastern Highlands village reported by Sexton (chapter 8); Talyaga's (chapter 10) account of brawling and inter-ethnic conflicts in Enga. Accounts of violence in parts of the Papua New Guinea Western Highlands by Strathern (chapter 11) and Reay (chapter

13), and fighting in Anga in the Eastern Highlands by Pataki-Schweizer (chapter 16), are evidence of violence in that area of Oceania in the early 1980s.

In the case of alcohol consumption in Samoa, one abstainer remarked that whilst there seemed to be more drinking in Samoa these days because of the wide availability of beer throughout the country, she also noted that there are changes in Samoan people's drunken behaviour and the manner in which they went about drinking.

You know in those days, you see these people who have been drinking staggering unsteadily along the roads, and I think it could be something to do with the strength of *fa'amafu* which apparently was supposed to blow your mind ... still, I think there was also a bit of that showing off in those days that you have been drinking because not as many people drank anyway (**SA05 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa**).

The changes in some Samoan women's drunken comportment referred to above were also commented on by some older men participants, who noted that some Samoan women's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol, as well as their drinking patterns have changed. I trace some of those attitudinal and behavioural changes which some participants have argued are cultural, generational and environmental in nature in the following chapter. But there are also trends and patterns of alcohol consumption among Samoans which have not changed which I discuss next.

### ***Drinking a Group Activity***

Drinking for women participants was always with others, usually relatives or groups of friends, and was mainly a social activity whether going out for a meal, to dances, or in more formal social occasions. A younger Samoan-born woman, who said she drinks socially, also admits to having an occasional 'let go' drinking session with friends.

I go out once a month and I would have like a 'let go' but I don't really do it everyday. With my group of friends we often go out and we only do it socially. Every time we plan to go out there's always a place where we can sit around, play pools and drink alcohol. It's been that format for quite a while now ... but when you go to have dinner you always ended up having alcohol so it's like something to socialize and

it's coming to be a symbol of socializing, when you socialize you drink  
**(NZ06 - Samoan-born Young Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

The participant said sometimes they go out, 'just to sit down and have food and have a few drinks and then go somewhere else for a few more drinks'.

A few drinks is like if you had five or six people you may end up with two bottles of wine just to go with the meal and you end up with like two glasses of wine each. ... I haven't really been in a group of women that drink four bottles of whisky in a row, just sitting there drinking just for the sake of it. When we've had a few drinks we go out dancing or play pools or go somewhere and have a few drinks here and there ...  
**(NZ06 - Samoan-born Younger Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

The 'heavy drinker' in Samoa said she would always drink with friends, whether men or women. She said she had more male drinking friends than females. Although she drinks heavily on a regular basis she doesn't normally drink alone. She regularly has a drink with dinner with her husband and also admitted drinking when invited to do so by friends, even if she was still trying to recover from the hangover of a previous drinking session. She said her circle of friends, at the golf clubs, are usually her drinking mates and they would usually have a drinking session after playing a round of golf. However, she said she didn't really have any preferred drinking place because she has probably had drinks at most places in Samoa anyway.

Another Samoan-born woman participant said she would normally drink with friends, sometimes at home or she would go with her sisters to socials and things like that. She said she did not like drinking alone so alcohol consumption is a group activity usually with friends. The older Samoan-born woman who said she drinks more when she was with her brothers, than at home with her *palagi* husband and her daughters, also stated that since her three daughters have started drinking, she and her husband always make sure that the girls know the rules while out socializing.

We made sure that if they went somewhere they were always together all three and they were never to be separated, and also that they take a bottle of wine. It was better that we gave them a drink ... because we knew there would always be alcohol around so it was better that we gave them that stuff to go with and they learned to look after each other. If one got drunk the others look after her, and they actually got more responsible with alcohol than we were. ... the younger one is in

Dunedin and is a heavy drinker, she's been known to drink uncle S..... under the table and that is quite a feat because her uncle is quite a drinker (**CH06 – Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Christchurch**).

### ***Alcohol and the Home Environment***

Women participants had various experiences regarding the availability of alcohol within the home environment. Whilst some claimed there was no alcohol present in their home environment as they were growing up, others said alcohol was available and drunk in their homes, mainly by male family members. Two Catholic women drinkers, one older and the other younger, remarked that alcohol was present at their parents' homes while they were growing up. The older woman is Samoan-born, married to a *palagi*, whose father was a Samoan judge who drank alcohol and 'ava, explained that alcohol was present in her home in Samoa while she was growing up. She remarked that hers was a unique situation with alcohol, because she and her sisters and brothers grew up in a home that had a bar.

My situation with alcohol was probably quite unique ... for what my parents were at that time, they were very liberated because we had a bar at home and I grew up with my sisters having a bar at home with social occasions ... and my dad believed in protecting us girls by knowing how to handle our liquor. [Dad] made us drink at home, sometimes he would make us drink a lot to get drunk, and he would take us through the stages of the drinking ... he'd say how do you feel now? and this is where you know your limits you have to know where that one more drink will take you, so its either stop there or you decide ... He made us do all that, it was his way of making sure we were protected because he wasn't going to be looking after us for twenty-four hours ... (**CH07 - Samoan-born Older Woman Drinker, Christchurch**).

The younger single New Zealand-born Catholic woman, who drinks, recalled how her relatives always socialized at home and that alcohol was always present at her parents' house.

... we have always had alcohol at home you know they [parents, uncles, aunties, and other relatives] used to have a record player thing and they [parents] had a bar at home ... so they used to have some full-on parties in their times and they used to play cards, so I've grown up with that, older people staying up till the middle of the night ... and they had lots of laughing and screaming. The old women, I think they

used to drink whisky and my uncles always drink brown bottles of beer  
**(NZ15 – New Zealand-born Younger Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

An older PIC New Zealand-born woman, who drinks, noted that her father was a heavy drinker who used to bring his friends home for drinks during the 'six-oclock closing' days. She also recalled her father being quite aggressive when he was under the influence and at times, was quite violent when his 'needs weren't met properly'. She remembered being very frightened when her father came home drunk.

But a younger Samoan-born woman drinker, who remarked that there was 'no alcohol of any kind' consumed in her home environment while she was growing up in Samoa, later conceded that her father had in fact stopped.

... he was a drinker but he actually stopped before I was 15 or 16, kind of before we were all grown up and see those things but he had a major problem with consuming a lot. He was consuming that much which means alcohol was more accessible and available to him ... but I guess my brothers did not bring home alcohol then or didn't come home drunk ... because my father was a very quiet man but very impatient so I guess that's why there wasn't any alcohol within the vicinity of our home environment **(NZ06 – Samoan-born Young Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

A New Zealand-born young woman abstainer explained that an unfortunate experience with very close relatives and alcohol when she returned to Samoa with her immediate family had transformed her view of *faasamoa*. Recall the experience of this participant whose aunt's ulterior motive for wanting her to 'drink' when they went out to socialize at night clubs, was so that her husband could have sex with the participant. Those experiences had 'left a lot of unanswered questions' about the participant's ideals of Samoan values and although she still has respect for the traditional concepts of *fa'aaloalo*, *mamalu*, *alofa*, and the values of 'aiga these had for her, have been sorely 'tested' by her past experiences. The participant's experience and, in turn, respect for her father for allowing her to go out and socialise with friends, for example, is contrary to the experiences of the sisters of two New Zealand-born young men participants, who noted that their sisters weren't allowed to go out with their friends. The abstaining woman participant noted that: 'I never drink because my father had given me permission to go out which was



very unusual, and I couldn't break his trust so I never and I didn't ... I could have got into a lot of trouble as a young person if I didn't have my wits around' (**CH01 – New Zealand-born Young Woman Abstainer, Christchurch**).

### ***Introduction to Alcohol***

The introduction of Samoan women participants to alcohol varied from being educated within the home environment about drinking and getting drunk, to binge drinking as a young teenager, to imbibing because others in the social group were drinking. The two women who migrated to New Zealand as two year-olds, started drinking when they went to university, while an older Samoan-born woman abstainer, said she did have the odd drink while she was training as a school teacher in New Zealand. The Samoan-born older Catholic woman participant, who drinks, said her experience with and introduction to alcohol may have been unique in the sense that not many families in Samoa would have had bars in their homes in the 1960s and 1970s. What is more exceptional, moreover, was her father's strategy of making the daughters drink to get drunk, sometimes putting the daughters under the shower when they had drunk too much alcohol. Even more exceptional is her admission to drinking more and getting drunk more when she drank with her brothers. The participant also noted that her parents were very liberated on the issue of alcohol and that alcoholic liquor was always part of their lives.

I guess him [dad] being a judge, he knew because he sees it [the effect of drinking in court] and he knew that would be something us girls needed to do. ... I mean up to then we weren't allowed to go out because for them there were very strict rules about what age we start going out and who we went with, so when we started we were probably about 16 or 17 years. We started by going out to parties. But alcohol was always part of our lives in fact I got drunk more when I was with my brothers ... even now with my husband and the girls I don't really drink but it's only when I'm with my brothers that I kind of drink ... (**CH07 - Samoan-born Older Woman Drinker, Christchurch**).

The younger New Zealand-born Catholic woman, who said that alcohol was always drunk in her parent's house when she was growing up, recalled how

she started experimenting with alcohol when she was at Secondary School. She remembered when as a 14- or 15-year old, 'always wanting to catch up to the older ones ... so, including my first drink, we would pretend we [her and friends] were 16 or 17 and we would be going to parties'.

... there were a whole group of us and we were all in jobs, working in little cafeterias and at Farmers, and I can remember working when I was 13, I lied about my age I said I was 15, and from that in my holidays I got money to buy little things ... I can remember that alcohol was always around so I would have started to drink, not drinking full on but you know, experimenting when I was 4<sup>th</sup> form, and from then on we used to go to the odd night club and I can't even remember drinking alcohol. It was always just pretending and we used to think we were cool ... you know that kind of being silly but really cool? **(NZ15 – New Zealand-born Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

The older New Zealand-born woman who grew up in the PICC church started drinking as an 18 year-old University student. She explained that drinking alcohol was more just for the social life, 'and you drink because others in the group you were with drink'.

Yeah, it was a lifestyle thing ... but there was also the feeling of being lifted. It was like not being tied down ... it kind of made me more happy and the feeling that made me feel that I could say anything and there were no boundaries. It got rid of inhibitions and it was a kind of excuse to say anything I wanted to say and to hide behind being drunk and get away with that sort of thing ... **(NZ17 – NZ-born Older Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

The same participant also explained that in her third year at University, she had too much of a social life and she got pregnant.

I got pregnant and that was symbolic in my life because I had it happen to me. I left my family home because I didn't think I had the right to be there because of my state ... the baby was born and we got a flat with the father and made my own life ... I had a husband that took me away from our family because I felt guilty about the whole thing and I just took it as my lot that I had to suffer. You know every girl that get themselves pregnant have this fear about telling their parents and I just was horribly terrified ... and when I did it was just an anticlimax he [dad] just asked me if I was going to get married and he wasn't even angry. It made me more convinced that I had shamed the family **(NZ17 – New Zealand-born Older Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

When the participant was finally invited to 'come back home', she said her pride was restored in terms of being close to her *fanau*. She said she got into another relationship and had two other children. In terms of alcohol the participant noted that for a while after she returned home, she was very guarded around alcohol and didn't go to any parties. She added that if she went to a party she would just drink a bit, but never found a drink that she really liked. Interestingly, she said all those years she 'just sort of drink, but not sort of love it'. She said she only found out when she was older that she really liked 'whisky and ginger ale' because it didn't give her a hangover the next day.

An older adult woman participant who was born in Samoa, but moved to New Zealand with her parents as a two-year old, who also grew up in the PIC Church in a provincial town, recalled that alcohol was not present in her home environment because her father didn't drink. She started drinking at around 17 or 18 years of age when she left home and moved to Auckland, and has been drinking ever since. The other Samoan-born woman who also migrated to New Zealand as a two-year-old didn't start drinking until she went to University although she added that she has never really taken to drinking seriously except for having a glass of wine occasionally.

The Samoan-born older heavy drinker who experienced 'blackouts' from time to time, said alcohol was present in her home because her father was a drinker. She started drinking *fa'amafu* while still at Secondary School. Two younger Samoan-born women drinkers weren't sure when exactly they were introduced to drinking, although they recalled it would have been after they had left High School. Another young Samoan-born woman drinker said while she was introduced to alcohol by a cousin who 'was free to do her own thing', but it was only during Christmas that we had a drink'. It wasn't till she went to University in Fiji that she got the freedom to drink.

The parents weren't there, and most of the students' social activities revolved around alcohol, and so going to parties was part of that social life as students. But it was never solitary drinking, you don't just go on your own and buy alcohol, it had to be with friends and others around your social environment (**SA14 – Samoan-born Young Woman Drinker**).

The New Zealand-born abstainer, whose children are in their twenties, said she has observed young people being introduced to alcohol at a younger age through sports and church environments. She said her own daughter was introduced into a drinking environment as a teenager. She said there was an expectation among parents and sports organizers that young people would be present at after-match functions and at those places, she said that alcohol would always be present.

### ***More Younger Women Drinking***

Some women participants remarked that the younger generation of Samoan women seemed to be 'more into alcohol' than the older generations. This is not totally surprising, however, because data from other studies show that an increasing number of younger people, men and women, have reported drinking enough alcohol to get drunk. The comparison of the 1998 and 2001 National Surveys of Drug Use in New Zealand (Wilkins et al., 2002), for example, found an increase in the heavier level of alcohol consumption (of four drinks or more in one sitting) among young women aged 15-17 years old in 2001 compared to 1998. According to Wilkins and his colleagues the 'proportion of women of this age group who drank four drinks or more in one sitting at least once a week increased from 15% in 1998 to 28% in 2001' (2002: 17).

A New Zealand-born younger woman who drinks and whose work involves liaising with young Pacific people at a New Zealand tertiary institution, noted that a number of young Pacific people including Samoan women, drink to get drunk.

I get invited to student socials and things like that and sometimes it's 12 o'clock [midnight], I'm going home and they don't go until they are drunk ... they would have drunk beers and those pre-mixed drinks and it's naughty because they would all be driving ... Yeah, I don't know what it is, whether it's a Kiwi culture or what ... I think it's a kind of really modern thing. I can remember boys talking about 'going on the piss' but I can't remember it as a teenage-girls sort of thing ... I think it's kind of flicked over and women are tagging along or it's probably a teenage cultural thing ... ***(NZ15 – New Zealand-born Young Single Woman Drinker, Auckland).***

The same participant also remarked that her brother-in-law, who works with problem kids at an Auckland Secondary School, had noted that alcohol for young kids aged 12 to 14 years is common, and is part of peer pressure. 'The kids try to be something that they aren't at certain times, and their families wouldn't know about it and it's dangerous', her brother-in-law said. She also noted that some young women were putting themselves in dangerous situations when they go out drinking and getting drunk.

What I mean is like you don't mean to be sexually active as a young Pacific Island woman, but when you're hanging out with all your friends you don't know what could happen ... This particular young woman, she's telling me how often she would have left the night club and she couldn't remember and she woke up outside ... and the other girls went and found them outside at the car park with these guys. Anyway, she's saying if it wasn't for her friends finding her, she could have been in a situation, and just because she got drunk, she wasn't in control anymore, and that's what I mean by dangerous **(NZ15 – New Zealand-born Young Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

A younger New Zealand-born abstainer, born in Auckland but interviewed in Christchurch, related how she didn't associate a lot with people who drank alcohol and did drugs as she was growing up. But she said she knew of young women who sneaked away from home to go to parties.

You'll be amazed at how many 16 or 17 year-olds who manage to sneak out in the middle of the night ... there were some girls at church who were living double-lives and some of them got pregnant, and some of them were the smartest ones at Sunday Schools exams but they were the ones that ended up getting pregnant before marriage and without boy friends. Sadly, for some young people alcohol is the only scene for them and there's drugs and things which result in unwanted pregnancies, it just opens them up to diseases and things as well **(CH08 - Younger New Zealand-born Woman Abstainer, Christchurch)**.

But drinking among young women isn't confined to Samoans who are born and raised in New Zealand. Some participants who have been socialized in the social scene in Samoa, for example, remarked that young people, men and women in Samoa, are also increasingly exposed to alcohol and the night-club scene in Apia. A New Zealand-born young woman abstainer, who relocated to Samoa with her family as a teenager, found herself socializing with her friends and relatives in the social scene there, explained that 'alcohol

seems to be a major part of one's life in Samoa'. She said she started to go out when she was 15, and that was totally atypical.

... in Samoa to go out at that age you are a bad girl, but I went out at that age and I didn't drink because my father had given me permission to go out which was very unusual and I couldn't break his trust so I didn't drink ... the friends I was going out with didn't have permission so already they had a different relation with their families, they had snuggled out the back windows or something and they were out to rebel ... **(CH01 – New Zealand-born Young Single Woman Abstainer, Christchurch).**

A Samoan-born young woman drinker observed that younger people are drinking to get drunk at public places such as parks and even bus stops in New Zealand. She said she also knows of people who would drink alcohol to work up the courage to be able to do certain things. She mentioned one of her own cousins who wouldn't do the Samoan *siva* unless she had drunk two or three cans of beer. This type of drinking to get rid of inhibitions was also remarked on by other women participants.

Similarly, a New Zealand-born young woman abstainer noted that Samoan culture can be so restrictive that alcohol is used by some to get up the courage to do things you are not allowed to do:

... the culture can be very restrictive and oppressive, and alcohol is being drunk or the influence is seen as permissive; you are allowed to do things when you are under the influence ... you're getting up the courage to do things that you're not allowed to do **(CH01 - New Zealand-born Young Single Woman Abstainer, Christchurch).**

### ***Women Drinking to Rebel***

The above participant's perceptions regarding alcohol use among Samoans, that it is drunk 'to get up the courage to do things you're not allowed to do' gains support from other women participants as well as some men. But within the structure of traditional Samoan social organizations, certain roles and functions of women (Le Tagaloa, 1997) which are crucial to the maintenance of *fa'asamoa*, and the performance of those roles and functions could be

disadvantaged and impacted on negatively, by alcohol use and abuse.<sup>14</sup> The frequent presumption 'that a woman who drinks in the company of men is sexually promiscuous and otherwise immoral' (Heath, 1995: 337), for example, would bring shame, *fa'alumaina* or stigmatise the woman or her family. Within *fa'asamoa*, for a woman to be even suspected of such behaviour, whether true or grossly exaggerated, would still be *mataga* or indecent and shameful. Samoans frame such suspicions around the saying, *E 'asa le faiva ae le 'asa le masalo*, that a fishing expedition may have no success, but a suspicion usually has some ground for it (Schultz, 1965). There was a perception among several participants that some young Samoan women, whose freedom to express their rights as individuals was constrained by their parents' strict rules and expectations around alcohol, may be consuming alcohol as a means of rebelling against their parents.

Interestingly, this was first raised by two New Zealand-born young men. One said his older sister sneaked out to drink with her friends as a means to rebel. He noted that it was a Samoan cultural expectation that girls stayed home, while boys could go out and stay out late.

I guess that one of the things about *fa'asamoa* is that the girls always stayed at home and the boys had the freedom to go out late at night ... my sister she got busted a couple of times, just going out drinking with her friends and she had to sneak out jump through the window, go out and drink with her friends and then she used to come home drunk ... I think it was rebellion: she just did it just to risk and as an outlet. She was always mad because the young boys can go out anytime of the night and may be not even come home ... and she would never ever dare, wouldn't even go out with her own cousins and that was hard (**CH02 – New Zealand-born Young Married Man, Christchurch**).

Another New Zealand-born young man remarked that when his older sister sneaked out to have a drink he looked down on her.

It's funny because we [boys] had it easier and we can do it [go out and drink] ... but when your sister does it you look down on them sort of ... she's older than me and I thought, how could you have done it? It was

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<sup>14</sup> Le Tagaloa (1997), identifies roles of women within *fa'asamoa* as: *Fai'oa*, *Ositaulaga*, *Pae ma le Auli*, *O le Taulasea*, *O le faia'oga e iai upu o le aiga*, *O le Taupou*, *O le Tausala*, pp.14-20.

more my understanding of *fa'asamoa* that I was different to the girls ... that she stays at home and doesn't do that, doesn't drink and drive **(CH03 – New Zealand-born Young Single Man Drinker, Christchurch).**

The above observations of the two New Zealand-born young men regarding the roles of Samoan women within the family and around alcohol, are worthy of further examination. For example, the participants' expectations that the young Samoan women are not supposed to go out at night, that they are not supposed to drink alcohol as the young men do, are not dissimilar to the expectations and understanding of one of the two eldest women participants, who noted that young men and women have complementary roles within the family. The participant referred to the *feagaiga*, the brother-sister sacred covenant or relationship wherein the brother is expected 'to slave in the service and protection' of his sister where the expectation is that the sister stays home, irons clothes, cleans the house, and performs all the light chores. The brother, on the other hand is expected to do all the physical chores in the plantation and fishing as well as protecting the sister from untoward approaches and threats from outside influences.

Implicit in the two New Zealand-born young men's assertions that their respective sister's behaviours of sneaking out to go drinking with their friends breached the parents' trust, and were an indication of lack of respect for the parents. The two men's understanding of Samoan protocols and etiquettes, that Samoan women stay home while young Samoan men, can go out as they wish, for example, indicate they have been 'educated' by the parents in the course of their upbringing about certain Samoan parental expectations.

An older Samoan-born woman abstainer, interviewed in Auckland, observed that the roles and responsibilities of Samoan women within *fa'asamoa* should be maintained. She suggested that these might be articulated explicitly by the parents to their children or by older women to younger ones. This could occur through regular formal instruction either in the families or within Women's Committee settings, or learned through observations of everyday activities of *faletua ma tausima*, wives of chiefs and orators, and other village women's institutions. More importantly, the learning of these roles need to be



articulated within the family environment by the mother and / or older family women, so that younger generations of Samoan women would be informed about and value, their roles and responsibilities in *fa'asamoa*.

The participant opined that some huge gaps are emerging in the knowledge and understanding of many Samoan young people in migrant enclaves such as those in Auckland and Christchurch, because the mothers may be too busy working to pay bills, and could be neglecting their ultimate role of advising and educating their children about their roles and functions within *fa'asamoa*. Whilst she acknowledged that some churches were filling in for some parents by providing education about Samoan culture and the risk of alcohol abuse, she said that young people need the constant engagement of daughters and mothers, or sons and fathers to understand the *fa'asamoa*, and their respective roles and responsibilities within the Samoan social world. She said it's very well for children to learn English and adapt to the *fa'apalagi* or European ways of life, but she warned that Samoan children should also be as versed in their *gagana*, language and the 'Samoan way' or *fa'asamoa*.

### ***Women and Domestic Violence***

Some participants noted that a number of women were affected by their husbands' drinking, when it resulted in domestic violence. The participant above, whose alcohol and drug abuse resulted in beating up his wife and daughters, losing his business and family home, divorcing his wife, and domestic mayhem is a poignant, though not unique case. Recall Neiche and Park's study (1988) which examined Samoan women's attitudes towards alcohol consumption which showed that Samoan men's drinking impacted negatively on Samoan women's lives.

The Samoan-born woman participant, who works as a counsellor for a social service provider in Christchurch, stated that she deals with a lot of domestic violence in the course of her work. The participant said whilst it would be useful to confide in other community leaders such as church pastors about violence among some Samoan families, she was also mindful of the 'confidentiality stuff' which she says complicates things for her and other colleagues.

I think domestic violence clients who are women are very reluctant to come here [to our service] ... we're such a small community that people will know what you're up to, so often, I arrange a place to meet them because I can't go home either because they don't want their husbands to know and they don't want their families to know so I have to make arrangements to meet them somewhere else. And they [women] are very scared (**CH06 – Samoan-born Older Woman Drinker, Christchurch**).

The New Zealand-born woman key informant, whose family experienced economic and social problems because of the alcohol abuse by the father when the children were younger, remarked that sometimes, the health factors or the adverse effects on health within a household require an examination of the economic and social impact of alcohol abuse, before the health aspect of it even features in the family's situation.

... part of wellbeing is to look at all those things that go on in the home environment, the ramifications of the social and economic factors on the children. There are people who need support and it's almost like being battered but they want to hide it because they don't actually want to talk about it, you don't want other people to know because there's certain shame associated with it at the same time. You want to be seen to be coping as a family you keep battling on even though all these things are going on.

I can look at my own family as a good example of that because mum put up with it for years all her life. But at the same time it's something you don't want to go outside your door, you want to keep it inside and so you plot on, but often what those women don't understand is that they're plodding on and it is having an effect on your children (**NZKI02 - New Zealand-born Key Informant, Auckland**).

Furthermore, the same informant said, 'a lot of it is about denial and how a woman is socialized'. She added that 'there's a gender thing which in a sense it's really complicated'.

I think that there is this expectation that we're family that we'll stay together, they may have been seen within their own family that the woman takes responsibility and holds that role and so they're modelling themselves on their own mothers. And no matter what we say there is that thing that we allow men to go off and do their own thing and they can go off and be boys, but a woman must be responsible and it's part of their role to look after the children and to keep the house and the family going (**NZKI02 - New Zealand-born Key Informant, Auckland**).

Other participants, both men and women, in Auckland, Christchurch, and Samoa had also witnessed domestic violence among members of their families or friends, even parents or siblings and children. The Samoan-born man who abused alcohol and drugs, who said he physically beat up his wife and daughters, cried several times as he narrated his 'life of abuse and violence' against his wife and children. He lost his business and the family home, and his wife eventually divorced him after putting up with a 'life of domestic violence and abuse'. But he said he has since turned his life around, and is working closely with community groups especially within his Baptist Church environment. He is particularly proud of his daughters who have gone on and done well, going to University and getting good jobs, which he didn't expect especially when they joined gangs, which he said was their way of getting back at him and his abuse and cruelty.

### ***Alcohol and Safety Messages***

Another trend in Samoan women's attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol and alcohol use which deserves mention here is some Samoan parents' determination to ensure their children are aware of the potential danger of alcohol, and the need to 'make absolutely sure' that the safety message was drummed into the children. Recall the experience of the older woman participant whose father had deliberately made his daughters drink alcohol while he explained when 'drinking' reaches certain stages of drunkenness. The participant described the strategy which she and her *palagi* husband employed when their three daughters went out socializing as they were growing up. She said that since parents would not be around at all times to look after the children, it is vital to ensure their safety around alcohol use, devising strategies and setting rules within their alcohol environment would be very useful.

... mums and dads are never gonna be around all the time and these kids are always going to explore, it's the nature of kids, it's like growing up as a baby putting things in your mouth to experiment ... it's a reality and it's gonna happen. With our girls over the years what was very useful for us as the girls were growing up ... before they leave if they were going out socializing at a party, we would decide on a 'code word' which would indicate to us 'come and get me I don't like where I am, I'm in danger come and get me'. So when they are out all they have to do is pick up the phone and say the 'code word' and we would know they're in danger without them having to say so, to save face ...

that has worked for us it's kind of a strategy for the girls. The other two strict rules when they were socializing was to stay together all the time that they were never to lose sight of each other, and to always come home no matter how drunk ... (**CH06 – Samoan-born Older Woman Drinker, Christchurch**).

Safety concerns, especially around alcohol and young women, were raised by other, men and women participants, who argued that not only parents, but government and community leaders including Samoan church leaders should be more involved in implementing safety measures to safeguard young people from the detrimental effects of alcohol consumption. An older New Zealand-born woman participant suggested that programmes to raise awareness among young people about the negative effects of alcohol should be implemented at schools and church environments to help young people around alcohol.

In Samoa, the General Secretary of the National Samoan Red Cross Society explained that her organization had included 'alcohol as a hazard' within the Natural Disaster Preparedness strategy. She also noted that other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been established to assist and help provide support services for domestic violence victims, mainly women and children in recent years in Samoa.

One such NGO is *Mapusaga o Aiga*, or family haven, which works on domestic violence and child abuse in Samoa. A recent feature article in *Islands Business* (August, 2004), entitled: 'A Haven for Battered Women: NGO Concerned by Rising Trend', indicates there is a rise in domestic violence and child abuse in Samoa, estimating between 3 and 7 cases each week: 'Disturbing too is the increasing incidences of child abuse ranging from physical, emotional, verbal to sexual. ... Alcohol abuse is, of course, a contributing factor to the rise in cases' (*Islands Business*, 2004: 32). The article notes that *Mapusaga o Aiga* offers counselling information services and runs an awareness programme against violence and child abuse but gets no funding from government, and therefore has to raise funds on its own.

In Auckland and Christchurch, participants in this study noted that there are educational programmes on television and in the mass media which target ethnic groups as well as mainstream population, on alcohol use and abuse. In this respect, alcohol-related problems may be more readily acknowledged in New Zealand than in Samoa at present.

### ***Education on Alcohol Use***

One of the older New Zealand participants, who is in a position where she can influence young people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol, said education to use alcohol in moderation was the key, although she perceived it as a difficult task. She also suggested that church leaders have a crucial role to play in raising awareness of the detrimental effects of alcohol on young people.

I think because the church leaders have been accorded the status it would be a good role model program to start at church so those messages are promoted strongly to the kids, and for parents to move out of that cocoon into the real world of peers at university. But the real test, I think, is that it's fine for them to experiment out there once they have that base and have that understanding (***NZ17 – New Zealand-born Older Woman Drinker, Auckland***).

The above participant said she got pregnant whilst she was young and unmarried, but said some young women 'got pregnant on purpose'. She said at the time when she was socializing, it was understood that, 'as soon as you drink you're easy ... especially that gender thing around alcohol'. She also conceded that the perception that 'when you drink you're easy is still there', and she would encourage young people to talk about those social issues including that of abortion, which she said comes up whenever alcohol and gender intertwine. But she also noted that perhaps the young people 'need to be thrown into the deep end to learn from their mistakes'. She conceded that it may be a matter of empowering young people to make their own decisions. She said there is a huge change of attitude towards alcohol, such as having a designated driver when drinking for example, which she said she herself 'hadn't realized how serious people are about drinking and driving, and young people are thinking like that'. As this participant points out, these efforts are likely to be more successful in some cases than in others because

of parental behaviour. She said adults or parents 'are not good mirrors' for young people when it comes to those attitudinal changes.

Definitely, they are becoming more aware even about what they eat ... but that's the message for society and I just hope it gets picked up by our generation ... I think that would be much more effective than anything the churches and the professionals can put up ... **(NZ17 – New Zealand-born Older Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

But as a New Zealand-born key informant has argued, parents and not just mothers have to take responsibility for their children, and one of the most important aspects of parenthood is to ensure that the fathers and husbands play their roles in bringing up children. More importantly, she argued that not only *matai*, but all men should be good role models if they expect the children to behave responsibly especially around alcohol.

### ***Some Generational Differences***

But two older Samoan-born participants in Christchurch, the older Catholic woman counselor, and the *matai* alcohol and drugs counselor, noted that alcohol is pervasive and has become a big problem because other economic and social difficulties emanate from alcohol and its abuse. The older Catholic woman counselor, for example, noted that alcohol abuse exacerbates other social problems within the home environment.

I don't think most of them realize the problem and they are too involved in the situation they are not objective in looking at isolating and identifying there is a problem. I think they're too involved they are consciously or unconsciously trying to fix it within their own but not succeeding because they are not trained. Gambling too, it's worse in Auckland but it's on the rise here in Christchurch, and it's only a matter of time before it becomes a problem here in Christchurch as well **(CH06 – Samoan-born Older Catholic Woman, Christchurch).**

Another alcohol-related problem commonly experienced by participants both in Samoa and in New Zealand was the aggression and subsequent domestic violence, usually by the father or husband. The older New Zealand-born woman, commenting on her home environment as she was growing up said her father was a very heavy drinker who would go to work at 5 or 6 o'clock in

the morning and come home late at night. She recalled that her father, and the relatives from Samoa who boarded at their house, had 'a ritual' visit to the Star Pub during the 6 o'clock closing days.<sup>15</sup> She also remembered that after the pub closed they would come home for more drinks, and being terrified when her father came home drunk.

I remember as a young girl sitting in the kitchen terrified because dad used to be 'aggro'. Alcohol used to make him very aggressive and even demanded that mum make the food for him and his friends. I can remember us crying because he got quite violent if his needs weren't met that well **(NZ17 – NZ-born Older Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

Of her other siblings' alcohol use, the participant said 'the signal that someone could drink had to come from dad'. She believed her father's attitude and behaviour towards alcohol did impact on her and her siblings' attitudes towards alcohol. The participant explained that her older brother has been a teetotaler all his life, which she attributes to perhaps his memories of those difficult times when his father used to be aggressive when he was drunk. Yet, the domestic experience did not have the same effect on all of those who lived through it.

The participant also volunteered the experience of another brother who used to drink heavily, to the extent that she and her sister would be 'pissed off' with him because he would 'turn up at our doorsteps and he would be loud and it got real bad'. She said 'he was real bad without realizing he was doing it, and for twelve years he was just abusing alcohol'.

... that brother of mine is an alcoholic, and the unfortunate thing is that his son knows he is an alcoholic and had been treated ... he should have gone to prison, but thank God that he went into one of these homes for his alcohol problem and he was there for five months over Christmas. I think it changed him and I hope so, he has been out now for about three months and he hasn't touched alcohol **(NZ17 – NZ-born Older Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

Clearly, within this participant's own family environment were three Samoan men with three different types of attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol use and non-use. The father's violent behaviour towards the mother and

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<sup>15</sup> Up until the 1960s, pubs and taverns in New Zealand closed at 6 p.m. Due to the liberalization of hours of sale of liquor, however, closing time was extended to 10pm.

children when under the influence of alcohol is not dissimilar to some other participants' experiences and practices. Of particular interest and value to this study are the extreme attitudes and behaviours of her two brothers around alcohol. At one end of the spectrum is the eldest brother who is a teetotaler which she attributes to his exposure to her father's drunken comportment, whilst on the other extreme end is the brother who is an 'alcoholic'.

### **Men's Drinking Patterns**

Like their women counterparts, Samoan men's drinking styles vary across ages, religions, and also between Samoa- and New Zealand-born participants. But just as there are divergent patterns of Samoan men's drinking and alcohol consumption, there are also discernible similarities. One of the most significant patterns of alcohol use among Samoans is that alcoholic beverages are consumed predominantly by men. Not surprisingly, this dominance of drinking by Samoan men is consistent with the majority of cross-cultural research findings in most societies (Child, Barry & Bacon, 1965; Marshall, 1979a, 1982).

### ***Perceptions of Violence***

Domestic violence may appear differently from a Samoan-born man's perspective. A former 'heavy drinker' who used to associate with gangs during his heavy-drinking days recalled how he used to abuse drugs and alcohol. He said he regrets the hard times he used to give his wife and children and the property damage he caused. He regretted his violent behaviour against other people whenever he was under the influence of alcohol and drugs during his heavy drinking and drug-abusing younger days.

Alcohol took over my life and violence was part of that alcohol and drugs culture. I socialized with violent people including gang members and violent behaviours by way of beating up people and as a consequence, my own daughters joined street gangs and that lifestyle ... my wife and my daughters experienced a life of violence and fear to the extent that my own daughters turned to violence and my family suffered, I lost my business and lost our family home and my wife divorced me and I was absolutely drowning in alcohol ... I was totally overwhelmed by alcohol to the extent that I would take to my house



and furniture with an axe and no one could come near me when I was in that kind of violent mood and behaviour ... **(NZ14 - Samoan-born Former Heavy Drinker, Auckland).**

The participant noted that there are people in society who are 'walking around out there now with missing arms or legs because of the effect of alcohol'. In between bouts of weeping and deep regret over his life of violence, alcohol and drug abuse, the participant asked a pertinent question and said alcohol was the cause of a lot of the problems:

Are the young generations that are coming up going to be generations of one-legged and one-armed people as a consequence of alcohol? Most of our tragedies are caused by alcohol, people die on the roads, break-up of marriages and the list goes on ... they are all caused through alcohol **(NZ14 - Samoan-born Former Heavy Drinker, Auckland).**

### ***Alcohol in the Home Environment***

A young New Zealand-born former heavy-drinker who said he would still have a glass of wine or beer occasionally but would not get intoxicated, recalled that alcohol wasn't present in his home. But when he was quite young he remembered his father 'falling over' in the laundry, though he 'never saw him drinking in the house'.

I never saw him drinking ... but all I remember is my mother saying something and I always remember that thing about him falling over in the laundry but I never actually saw him drinking, I don't think he actually drank a lot so I don't really know what role it played in his life **(CH07 – New Zealand-born Former Heavy Drinker, Christchurch).**

The other two New Zealand-born young men, who drink, had contrasting experiences around alcohol at home. The young, married man said his parents gave up drinking when he was young, so he never really experienced nor witnessed alcohol being consumed at home. He also noted that he wasn't really interested in alcohol when he was younger because all his friends weren't into drinking anyway, and he played a lot of sports. He said his friends' parents were mostly social drinkers and they used to drink frequently.

I guess I was influenced by my dad but it was more because he didn't drink at all and so I just didn't do it and so didn't feel the need ... until I was a bit older, I think it was a little bit of peer pressure though I can't really remember when I started ... Dad hardly ever drink and he never ever drank at home, dad's concern was over my little brother because he had a family really young but he liked to still drink and party, dad was always warning him about the drink because he was always drinking in the weekend and stuff like that ... **(CH02 – New Zealand-born Male Drinker, Christchurch).**

The above participant's single colleague, on the other hand, said there was drinking at his home as he was growing up. He said his father was a security officer at the pubs in Christchurch so he was quite exposed to the alcohol and drinking environment, especially outside the home. He said he had lots of relatives staying at their house so the adults were always drinking, especially when there was a Sunday *to'ona'i*. He doesn't recall any serious violence or fights when the adults were drinking at home, although he knows of family friends who usually end up fighting when drunk.

There was tacit expectation from the two young men's accounts that their parents would expect them to go out at night, and drink even if there hadn't been any explicit rules and expectations of what they, as young men did in those instances where they may not come home. One of them noted that he wouldn't go home if he'd been 'going hard at the drinking' because he didn't want to let his parents down. He also explained that his understanding of *fa'asamoa* was that he was different to the girls, that there were certain things he could do that his sister could not do.

I guess when you're growing up ... it's just a normal part of life, you realize that growing up Samoan had a different way of living, of seeing and doing things. Like whenever we have to go to another family's home, dad would always sit us down and reminded us not to do anything that would reflect badly on our parents and family **(CH03 – New Zealand-born Young Man Drinker, Christchurch).**

### ***Introduction to Alcohol***

The two New Zealand-born young men said when they started drinking alcohol it was through socializing with their friends from church or from the neighbourhood. As teenagers the two were introduced to alcohol, one via

drinking beer with a group of friends around the neighbourhood, the other through drinking 'a little bit of beer but mainly drinking 'lemon-flavoured drinks with alcohol in them'. The first said when he was about 17 years-old, although he wouldn't drink a lot, it was just going to parties and then having a drink, but never really got drunk not till later, in the 20s. He said he enjoyed the company of his friends from the neighbourhood, which was a mix of *Palagi*, Maori, and other ethnic groups including Samoans. But once he linked up with young men from his Samoan church, he realized that there was something different about socializing and just 'hanging out' with the 'guys' and part of that social scene which involved drinking.

I started noticing when the mates from church were drinking and I felt more comfortable then, being around the guys, knowing what they went through, similar lifestyles, life patterns so drinking with them was more enjoyable and we had good times, we could laugh ... **(CH03 – Young New Zealand Man Drinker, Christchurch).**

The second New Zealand-born young male participant said he was influenced by his dad, but it was more because 'he didn't drink at all and so I just didn't do it, and so I didn't feel the need'.

It was more kind of social peer pressure but I didn't succumb very early ... it was those lemonade drinks but have alcohol in them, and coke and that kind of thing, that's when I really started drinking because it was so easy to drink and it was ok, because I didn't like the taste of beer or spirits but that tasted like normal fizzy drink **(CH02 – Young New Zealand-born Male Drinker, Christchurch).**

The older New Zealand-born man participant recalled how he started drinking when he was about 15 years old while hanging out with a 'townie crowd' in Dunedin. He said the crowd included Samoans, Maori, all brown and it was a 'brown crowd' with a couple of *palagis* ...

Basically, that whole crowd ended up in a lot of Courts, Community Corrections, and Probations that was the scene. ... Some of that crowd started up Black Power down there and some went to the Mob that was a sub-culture. We were in this middle phase where you're not old enough to be there but you're old enough to do your own thing and there was 'smoking' [doing dope] ... that was a big part of that. We were the first Samoans in the Court down there ... we became notorious and were recognized as trouble **(CH07 – New Zealand-born Former Heavy Drinker, Christchurch).**

Of the two older Samoan-born male participants interviewed in Christchurch, one didn't start drinking until he came to New Zealand and was exposed to alcohol and the drinking at sports clubs when he was playing rugby. Before he started drinking, he wrote to his mother and asked her whether it was ok for him to drink. He said it was a matter of respect for his parents that he needed to know they were agreeable for him to start drinking. His other Samoan-born colleague, however, was introduced to alcohol through his family's *fa'amafu* or home brew in Samoa. Several other Samoan-born men participants interviewed in Auckland and Samoa said their introduction to alcohol was through drinking *fa'amafu* before they came to New Zealand and some older participants recalled that methylated spirits, and *fa'amafu* were part of their introduction to alcohol.

For some male participants, *fa'amafu* was a popular drink not so much for the taste as for its affordability. At least a third of all male participants in this study said they had tasted *fa'amafu* at some stage of their drinking experiences. *Fa'amafu* was popularized in Samoa during the First World War when New Zealand armed forces occupied Western Samoa. Some three decades later, when more than 10,000 American marines landed in Samoa during the Second World War, demand for alcoholic beverages to cater for that large increase in the number of drinkers was so great that Samoans were soon brewing *fa'amafu* illegally to cater for an unprecedented demand for alcohol.

### ***From Fa'amafu to Vailima***

Some older participants recalled that in Samoa during the 1980s, a noticeable pattern of drinking especially in the rural villages was the increasing number of Samoan men drinking beer in and around village stores that sold *Vailima*. Before that time, the majority of beer drinking was done in Apia and areas close to the town area. Some illegal *fa'amafu* was brewed and drunk in some villages where people took the risk of brewing *fa'amafu* primarily for economic return. But when the government-owned brewery was established in 1978 and *Vailima* beer became widely available, some *fa'amafu* drinkers switched to *Vailima*, although many who couldn't afford it continued to drink *fa'amafu*. Others drank *Vailima* occasionally, especially

during payday week but switched back to *fa'amafu* when money ran out. *Vailima* drinkers were perceived as of a social status superior to those who consumed *fa'amafu*. There were drinkers, especially those with a high alcohol tolerance, who preferred *fa'amafu* because it was less expensive. But there were also other drinkers who never bothered to drink *Vailima* for their own reasons, and so *fa'amafu* continued to be manufactured and had its own followers.

A former school teacher who attended Teachers' Training College in Samoa during the early-1970s recalled how he and a group of colleagues used to drink *fa'amafu* because they couldn't afford *pia palagi* then. Later, as they graduated and became school teachers they continued the ritual of *fa'amafu* drinking, though there were times when they would go to drink *pia palagi* at beer clubs which were growing in numbers around Apia town area at the time. A retired school principal whose introduction to alcohol was through drinking *fa'amafu* recalled that home-brew was the main source of alcoholic drink for many people in Samoa when he started drinking in the 1950s. The retired school principal said before he became a teacher he had a friend who was working and the two of them were able to buy *fa'amafu* which was all they could afford at the time. When he later became a teacher his salary was so small that there was no way they could afford *pia palagi* and so continued to drink *fa'amafu*.

Other older participants observed that whilst there was a noticeable increase in the number of people drinking at 'beer places' in Apia following the establishment of the Samoa Brewery, there was also a marked increase in the number of outlets which were selling *Vailima* beer.

Interestingly, this pattern of drinking was reportedly on the increase in Papua New Guinea at about the same time (Marshall, 1982). During the early 1980s, for example, Room (1982) noted that Papua New Guinea was 'going through a veritable explosion in the availability of alcohol' (1982: 448).

Over recent years, *fa'amafu* hasn't been as common in Samoa as it would have been up to fifteen or twenty years ago. Some older men participants suggested that people of the older generations who enjoyed drinking *fa'amafu* may have been dying out or else, abstaining from drinking for whatever reason. It seemed likely that either members of the *fa'amafu*-drinking generations have abstained for health or religious reasons, or, if they are still drinking, may have switched to the Vailima beer or other alcoholic beverages.

### ***Men's Attitudes and Behaviours***

Samoaan males' attitude towards alcohol could be described as ambivalent, ranging from tolerant, disapproving, to prohibitive, and lot of in-between positions. It is ambivalent in that while some people perceive alcohol as responsible for a multitude of social, economic, and health problems, others don't necessarily see anything wrong with consuming alcohol if it is done responsibly. The much vaunted Samoan commitment to religion does not have a singular effect on perceptions of alcohol. Churches' alcohol policies and regulations range from drinking in moderation to absolute abstention. On one extreme is the Roman Catholics' permissive attitude towards drinking in moderation; and on the other is the abstemious positions the Latter Days Saints (LDS) and Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) missions; and between these are a variety of other positions regarding alcohol. For example, the Congregational Church in Samoa (CCCS), position has shifted recently from abstention to a more liberal 'moderation' stance on alcohol use. But there are Samoan people here in New Zealand and in the islands who may no longer be active in the church communities and who are not influenced in any significant way by the denominations' positions on alcohol. Within the three research sites for this study, participants and key informants expressed different attitudes across age groups, gender, as well as people's place of birth and socialization.

### ***Samoaan Men and the 'Macho' Image***

One of the aspects of Samoaan men's drinking which emerged from the data is the 'macho' image: that a man can and will drink large amounts of alcohol before they get drunk. A partial explanation of why Samoaan men are

perceived as violent when they drink is because of the 'macho' image of refusing to back down from trouble. This explanation was offered by an older Samoan-born former 'heavy drinker and drug-abuser' and two younger men, born and raised in Christchurch. The Auckland-based Samoan-born participant, who said his family name literally translates to 'Great Drinkers', said some Samoan men drink and get in trouble because of the perception that 'we are a proud people and we want to stand out, part of being macho'.

I think its part culture, part pressure, and it's part of being 'macho'. ... It's in our nature that we protracted and portrayed and in the nature that we manifest into some of these things. But Samoan men may be not just 'macho' ... it's in you that we are a proud people and we have to stand out, and much of the confrontation is because of that, that pride that we don't want to back down from anything.

We want to stand out in our sports, in our things that we do we always want to do the best and we have that *mana* that power that we are Samoans. I think in that sense it is a cultural thing but with that comes the pressure from that in itself and magnifies the drinking problem, I believe that's what it is **(NZ12 – Samoa-born Former Heavy Drinker Man, Auckland)**.

Incidentally, and somewhat surprisingly, there are some similarities between this participant's remarks about Samoan men 'not wanting to back down from trouble' and the comments from the two youngest New Zealand-born male participants who were born and grew up in Christchurch. The two friends were part of a larger group of mainly Samoan young men from a Pacific Island church group in Christchurch which was renowned for 'not backing away from a fight'.

... at one stage for about three years, it was quite dangerous and Samoans were well-known for being able to handle it [fights] ... if we drink and go together, you don't just look or fight for yourself, you fight for Samoa. When we fight the 'skin heads' ... it was just known that we were good fighters. You don't shy away, some of the boys started trouble but most of us didn't, but if there was a fight we don't run away **(CH02 – Young New Zealand-born Man Drinker, Christchurch)**.

But the participant's other colleague said they were part of the main players and they 'were looked down upon' by *palagi* and Samoans from other

churches because of trouble between their group and other gangs in Christchurch.

... there were young guys probably a couple of years ago who would drink and fight and we also when we drink we fight all the time. ... Our church got known as a gang ... you ask anyone a couple of years ago and they'll say [our church] boys are troublemakers, but we don't go looking but when trouble comes we don't shy away. ... Sometimes if we knew something really serious was going to happen we wouldn't drink, but if we did fight and we had a good one then we would drink hard to celebrate (**CH03 – New Zealand-born Young Man Drinker, Christchurch**).

### ***Drinking to Get Drunk***

Another feature of Samoan men's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol consumption is drinking with the intention to get drunk. An ALAC-sponsored pilot study (Lima, 1999) which examined the attitudes and behaviours, and the level of awareness of the effect of alcohol on Samoan people in Auckland found that some young Samoan people drink to get 'get wasted'. Warry (1982), noted a similar pattern of and attitude towards drinking to get drunk in Chuave, Papua New Guinea. Warry also noted in a personal communication with Marshall, that this type of attitude towards drinking means 'they will become drunk behaviourally whether or not they are actually inebriated physiologically' (1982: 97). Brief mention of this type of attitude towards drinking among Samoans was made by an older abstaining woman participant who noted some changes in the way some Samoan men comport themselves when drunk. She said whilst there isn't any excessive 'staggering along' among those who have been drinking, she noted fewer people deliberately 'staggering along' for the purpose of 'showing off' that they had been drinking.

Some older participants who grew up in Samoa recalled that during the 1960s and 1970s, advertisements over the sole government-owned radio which publicized *sivas* public dances, invited patrons to attend but warned that drunks or drunkenness would be barred.<sup>16</sup> An older *matai* participant

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<sup>16</sup> A common practice for some men was to drink before they would attend a dance by which time some would be quite inebriated. Dances were held in public places such as school



explained that he and his friends used to drink *fa'amafu* or methylated spirits to get drunk before they turned up at the dances. Fights, usually caused by the drunken men, often resulted, hence the prohibition of drunkenness to avoid unruly behaviour and fights among drunken patrons.

The observations of the New Zealand-born key informant, an abstaining mother, about one of her son's attitudes to drinking reflects a similar trend among young men's drinking. The mother said as her son was growing up and got to the drinking stage, she would often advise him to make sure he had a meal before drinking. She said the son's response would normally be: 'If I'm going out to have a good time I'm not going to eat because it dulls the effect of alcohol and I want the effect of alcohol' (**NZKI02 – New Zealand-born Woman Key Informant, Auckland**).

### ***Drinking as a Challenge***

A CCCS pastor who drinks moderately now, but was a heavy drinker before he went to Theological College, said during those days when he was a Samoan public servant, he would challenge any person that had a reputation as a 'big drinker' to drink with him. He said whenever he heard that so and so was a *tuna*, an eel, referring to someone who had a huge capacity to hold liquor, he would invite such individuals to go out on one-on-one drinking sessions with him.

I was a big drinker and every time I hear some one was a *tuna* I would deliberately invite that person to the pub and literally challenge him to drink more or faster than me ... and often those *tuna* would 'dry up' after a session with me. And every time I went to a party I would sit there from the start to finish and as people get drunk one after another, often I would take them home before I go home (**NZ12 – Samoan-born Pastor Drinker, Auckland**).

Some older Samoan-born male participants recalled when young men would deliberately get drunk and then issue challenges to *matai* or anyone else with whom they may have been angry. Drunkenness in that context was using

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buildings or church halls but patrons were charged admission fees to actually enter and participate.

alcohol as a disinhibitor in order to work up the courage to challenge whoever they may have felt aggrieved against. This style of drinking is similar to what MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) referred to as an opportunity for a temporary 'time out'. Similarly, Marshall (1979) described Trukese drunkenness as 'time out from the normal social routine, but not without limits. It is guided by rather clear-cut rules governing who the actors may be, with whom they may interact, and how they should comport themselves' (1979: 122). In his study of toddy drinking in the Polynesian society of Sikaiana in the Solomon Islands, William Donner (1994) noted that drinking in Sikaiana 'offers the opportunity to behave in ways that are not acceptable according to the more formal expectations for sober behavior' (1994: 1). Donner noted of Sikaiana drinking that

In the context of their involvement in modernizing processes, drinking is an opportunity to preserve intimate relations in a world system which increasingly causes differences among them in wages and specialized occupations. Drinking also creates a timeless stream of involvement that is opposed to the segmented and scheduled relations of modernity (Donner, 1994: 1-2).

### ***Men, Alcohol and Domestic Violence***

Domestic violence is one of the social problems identified by several participants and key informants in this study. Several women as well as men participants noted that there seemed to be a tendency towards domestic violence among some Samoan men as a consequence of alcohol overindulgence and drunkenness. The Samoan-born man who came to New Zealand as a teenager, who abused alcohol and drugs, and associated with gang members, remarked that as a consequence of his domestic violence and abuse, his daughters ended up joining gangs as a way of getting back at him. The participant recalled one particular incident where on one of his daughters' twenty-first birthdays, he had beaten up his wife, and one of the daughters challenged him to a fight.

That gang culture of violence, alcohol and drugs was part of their young lives at one stage, and there were even times when they would challenge me to fights. In the Samoan family we always have our daughters live with us for a very long time ... but now more and more families are drinking together, mum and dad, and then the daughter

joins in ... it's a new trend and it's happening to a lot of our Samoan families, mum and dad, son and daughter all drinking together **(NZ14 – Samoan-born Former Heavy Drinker, Auckland)**

But drinking as a challenge in another Samoan context, could also be related to a *taule'ale'a* drinking deliberately to get drunk so he could challenge the authority of the village matai or even someone else, which Lemert (1979) had alluded to in his study and was mentioned by several participants.

### ***Drinking More Openly in Samoa***

Another pattern which some participants have suggested has become noticeable over recent times is the number of people consuming alcohol openly in public places. A young Samoan-born woman participant who drinks said before she came to New Zealand nearly twenty years ago, drinking was confined to bars and clubs in Apia. However, over recent years whenever she returns home she has found that people are drinking alcohol out in the open more and more.

I found when I went back to Samoa that drinking was more out in the open, you go to the shops on the main road and there's a group of young guys drinking quite openly in a house and even in front of shops ... and it's not only young ones, there's also people of the older generations. I mean my two uncles are always in front of the shops and even on Sundays. ... remember our Sundays it's a day of God a holy day, you go to church you come home have *toonai* with the family, and have a rest. Now people drink on Sunday they're standing outside the shops drinking bottles of Vailima ... **(NZ06 – Samoan-born Young Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

The wife of a parliamentarian, referred to in the previous chapter, remarked that some *matai* of her village were also drinking openly during village council *fonos*, and said it is despicable, and grossly inappropriate, for *matai* to be seen drinking alcohol in those contexts. She lamented the growing availability of alcohol throughout the country, and noted that even the recent regulations which banned the sale of alcoholic liquor on Sundays haven't been adhered to by those licensed to sell liquor. She said, whether Samoans like it or not, alcohol has become part of Samoan life and it will continue to be a bane and

an additional burden to the government authorities which are supposed to police and enforce the liquor laws.

### ***Types and Limited Choice of Alcohol***

Some Samoan-born older adult men said that during the early stages of their 'drinking' they drank any form of alcohol they could get including methylated spirits and even perfumes. One participant said his introduction to alcohol was by way of sniffing white benzene, drinking methylated spirits and later still, *fa'amafu*. He said for him, the reason for drinking was for 'the high' that he got from alcohol. He recalled sniffing white benzene by sticking a corner of his *lavalava* into the bottle of benzene used to fuel benzene lamps, which were common in Samoa before electricity was widely available.

But if drinking methylated spirits or sniffing white benzene to 'get the high' was the above participant's pathway to drinking, drinking alcohol to 'feel the effect' or the euphoria has also been suggested as the reason for some young people's alcohol use. The New Zealand-born mother whose sons drink, for example, has noted that on advising one of her sons to ensure he eats before he drinks, his response was that he would eat before drinking before that would dull the euphoric effect of alcohol which he drinks to feel.

### ***Alcohol, Christian Principles and Fa'asamoa***

Whilst it has been posited that alcohol consumption has secured a place in the lives of many Samoans, others do not see alcohol as having any place or significance in their lives, or within *fa'asamoa*. The former drinking SDA *matai* key informant, for example, is adamant that alcohol has no value in Samoan people's lives. He added that alcohol has impacted negatively on Samoan people's health over recent years, suggesting that many of the 'new diseases' that afflict Samoan people these days were not present in Samoa twenty or thirty years ago. He blames alcohol for many of the 'new diseases' and social problems in Samoan society. The former 'heavy-drinker', said he regrets his 'bad habits' and many missed opportunities to do good deeds for other people because of his drinking. He claims that alcohol is one of the Devil's weapons used to lead people astray and consequently, to do terrible

things. He also blames some church leaders who are happy to receive respect and the status and dignity that goes with their positions, but who have been implicated in cases of sexual abuse and other conduct unbecoming of church leaders and their positions within *fa'asamoa*.

Another male key informant, a LDS bishop who is also a former 'heavy drinker' who has since abstained, echoed similar concerns about the role of some Samoan church leaders around alcohol and young people. The bishop says Samoan church leaders should stand up to the challenge of alcohol and drugs especially where it involves young people. He concedes that some of his own failings as a 'heavy drinker' during his 'other life' have provided him with the experiences to address young people's needs around alcohol and drugs. He argues that Samoan parents need to be more responsible in their duties as parents and as role models for their children. But most importantly, the bishop is critical of the unprecedented status accorded Samoan church leaders, and the material wealth which has been donated by people who can not afford it. The bishop said some of the pastors have obtained a status which they do not deserve when judged against the output of their missionary work.

Most pastors get given land planted with cash crops, as well as monetary offerings, the best food and many other material goods all because Samoans want everlasting life and divine blessings. They see church leaders as the bodily representative of the Almighty God and therefore, should be given the best of everything. Yet how many of the church leaders are doing the jobs they are supposed to be performing? And how many families are suffering because of the selfless giving of what they can't afford? **(SAKI03 – LDS Bishop Former Drinker Key Informant, Samoa).**

The bishop laments the 'poor role modelling' which some church leaders who consume alcohol provide for young people. He said for young people to be assisted out of their 'plight' with alcohol and drugs, church leaders need to be more accountable, and must be able to provide practical assistance in terms of counselling and especially as role models. He added that he would like to see educational programmes that raise awareness about the detrimental effects of alcohol and drugs, as well as other risky lifestyle behaviours which make them vulnerable to, and at risk of STDs, drug and alcohol-dependence,

and a whole raft of challenges, which makes young people's lives more vulnerable.

The bishop and his SDA counterpart are not alone in their condemnation of church leaders or the role of the church generally, with regards to alcohol within Samoan communities. A lay preacher of the CCCS who drinks alcohol recalls how some of the pastors that he knows still imbibe and some of his own relatives, including a cousin who is a pastor also drinks.

I have Mormon friends who smoke and drink and also friends who were heavy drinkers who once they became Mormons gave up smoke and alcohol completely. I guess with church leaders as well there are pressures that on some it's hard while on others it's not so hard so there are pastors in those kinds of situations ... I suppose we are talking about alcohol but there are also other pressures they as church leaders face and need to confront. I was sad to read recently that 75 percent of PI kids need remedial reading programmes ... and I thought what would happen if the power and strength of the churches were channelled to these sort of things rather than to building multi-million dollar church buildings and that ... I don't think you can blame the missionaries there's no way we can accuse the missionaries about religion and the way Samoan churches have approached Christianity, I think that would be most unfair **(NZ07 – Older Matai Drinker, Auckland)**.

The same participant said some of the worst members of his own family are relatives who 'are in the churches'.

When they come to family *fa'alavelave* you'd think that they would contribute like everyone else but they never ... yet they expect to be given special treatment by way of monetary donations and foodstuff by the families afterwards. I don't know if anyone has done a study of this and the types of Samoan people that are drawn to the church but I reckon it would be quite interesting the difference between a real Christian and a church-going Samoan. I think you would be quite surprised because there are those church leaders who have been implicated in mishandling of church funds. I can say from experience because I've worked with five *faifeaus* at our church congregation in Samoa and all of them have had a tainted reputation because of mismanagement of funds **(NZ07 – Older Matai Drinker, Auckland)**.

On his experience with alcohol, the participant said he knows from his past experience that alcohol is bad, but some people who have never experienced alcohol use may be confused and wouldn't know exactly what goes on in the drinker's mind.

... you know when I drank I said to myself well of course deep down you drink to get drunk otherwise, what's the purpose? So I suppose you rationalize and having gone through the process of getting drunk an important function of drinking is to talk and converse and joke ... alcohol never meant much to me until the drinking gets to that stage unfortunately, because in my case I get to the stage where I 'black out', I get to a certain stage when I reach that and it's a frightening thing when you get up in the morning not knowing ... I mean you don't know or remember anything no memory of what happened, that's the most frightening thing.

I don't know but from what I've read it's quite common. All I know is what the literature says that while you know exactly what you're doing, later you can't recall, there's no recollection and I now know that in law some people use that as their defence. But for our people a lot of them get caught up in this cycle of just getting drunk and sort of getting into trouble even to the extent to get in trouble with the law ... **(NZ07 – Older Adult Matai Drinker, Auckland).**

### **'Western' Influences**

An older adult male participant from Christchurch blames 'Western influences' for the alcohol-related problems in Samoa. While he did not elaborate on what those 'Western influences'<sup>17</sup> were, he said a lot of Samoan people died from drinking methylated spirits because they did not know the consequential effects.

Samoans are very inventive you know, because when I was growing up those who could not get homebrew, they drank methylated spirit, perfume, they drank it. And I think a lot of people died from that especially methylated spirit, their organs all burnt out and I can see why you know, now I reflect back no wonder they died, because some were so strong but they didn't have any understanding of the effect ... but I blame Western society for introducing alcohol into our land **(CH04 - Samoan-born Matai Drinker, Christchurch).**

Other participants blamed colonial administrators and the missionaries for introducing alcohol into Samoa, and for all the 'evil' which alcohol has caused

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<sup>17</sup> Whilst reference to alcohol is implicit in the participant's use of the term 'Western influences', he did explicitly refer to alcohol thus: 'I think the *palagi* bring their problems into the islands because I know now that alcohol is the most available drug in the world, but the *palagi* bring that to us ... looking at colonization all the *palagi* did is ruin the islands ... the introduction of not only alcohol but many other things like the motor car, and human nature as it is, everybody likes good things so they [Samoans] experienced with alcohol ... at the time only the elite can get access to alcohol' (*Samoa-born Mature Adult Male Drinker, Christchurch*).

Samoan people. An older woman, who teaches in American Samoa but was visiting in Apia when she was interviewed, said missionaries and other Europeans who brought Christianity and Western culture to the islands also brought their own values which impacted negatively on Samoan people and their culture. She referred to Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, and how her interpretation of Samoans and their values were misrepresented through Mead's own perspective.

Those are the kinds of European influences which have impacted on Samoan values ... even the missionaries brought Christianity along with their own Western values and I believe they actually wanted to 'gain' because they brought trade through European goods to exchange with our own material values ... it was through those early Europeans' influences that Samoan values such as *fa'aaloalo* within the Samoan *aiga* and the relationship between the brother and sister have diminished (**SA07 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa**).

Yet other participants do not blame outside influences, but Samoans themselves who have not been strong enough to stand up against this 'destructive vice' called alcohol.

### ***Blame it on 'Meths'***

A Samoan-born mature male participant, with evident scarring on his face which he says are the result of fights and violent behaviour during his 'heavy drinking' days, spoke about his introduction to 'drinking' via methylated spirits. He recalled one of his good drinking friends who died because of methylated spirit.

... they said his organs were 'burnt' from drinking too much methylated spirits ... yet we still drank 'meths', although we were wary of the effect following that fella's death because we didn't want to suffer the same fate. In fact we eased off the meths after his death, and went on to drink 'aki [cleaning spirit] which was available from the hospitals' dispensaries... (**NZ02 - Samoa-born Matai Former Drinker, Auckland**).

As a young man in his 20s, the same participant recalled how drinking and getting drunk was his and other friends' entertainment. They didn't even give any consideration to the effects of 'meths' on their health.



Drinking and getting drunk was our way of entertainment and feeling happy, we were never heedful of any effects on our health, it wasn't even a consideration for us when we were young ... in fact the methylated spirits which was used to light the benzene lamps, that's what we used to drink most of the time ... **(NZ02 - Samoan-born Matai Former Drinker, Auckland).**

The wife of the above participant also recalled how some men from her village in Savai'i had died apparently as the result of drinking too much methylated spirits.

In those days when I was a young woman growing up in the village I recall seeing some of the *taulele'a* going out to drink *fa'amafu* or *sini* [gin] and even methylated spirit in neighbouring villages because alcohol was prohibited in our village. There were people who died as a consequence of heavy consumption of 'unfiltered methylated spirit' ... *palagi* beer wasn't available then so whenever people got drunk it was always from drinking *fa'amafu* or methylated spirit **(NZ01 - Samoa-born Abstainer Wife of Matai, Auckland).**

Another Samoan-born mature male drinker explained how he was introduced to drinking by drinking methylated spirits when he was a teenager. The participant said he had tried every substance that was available, for example, sniffing white benzene as he was growing up, and sometimes he wonders whether it was through taking all those substances that his asthma hasn't disappeared altogether.

I did 'meths', I tried the white benzene which in those days was used to fuel the benzene lamps. I think that was the first substance which I tried when I was quite young because it wasn't so hard to do, when you go to buy the benzene from the store you just stick a corner of your *lavalava* in the bottle of benzene and then just have a sniff, it's similar to what some people did with car petrol later on in Samoa ... but my introduction to it was by using that white benzene. And then you started to go out with the older guys and they sent you around on errands, usually to buy methylated spirits, and then you would end up joining them with the drinking **(NZ04 - Older Male Drinker, Auckland).**

The same participant has asthmatic attacks from time to time and explained how he has 'managed his asthma' by drinking a few beers as soon as he starts sneezing ... 'that's the tell-tale signs that my asthma attack is coming' ... so he would immediately drink three or four beers and somehow that

seems to work for him. He noted that whenever he leaves the drinking too late when the sneezing starts, the asthma attack would hit him harder than if he drinks a few beers early. Sometimes, if the sneezing starts and there isn't any beer in the fridge his wife would go out looking for some beers from friends or relatives. That was during the days before Sunday liquor laws were introduced. Now, he said he has no problem getting beer from the supermarkets when the sneezing starts.

### **Other Patterns of Drinking**

Several other patterns of Samoan drinking have been discerned, some of which have already been alluded to in the previous chapters. Lemert's (1979) assertion, that Samoan drinking 'lacks all but the basic elements of patterning, is without ritual, and seldom if ever has it been the basis of village- or district-wide behavior' persists, to a large degree, forty years later. However, some aspects of ritualized drinking among some Samoan people in certain contexts were noticeable during the time of my fieldwork in Samoa. Christmas and New Year holidays, for example, are normally celebrated in Samoa with 'Christmas parties' where people 'party' and socialize and most people 'drink' in the company of others days before, during and after Christmas Day. Even Government functions then were both 'formal and informal' occasions where it would be normal to have alcohol - and food in abundance for guests to enjoy. On other occasions such as birthdays, graduations, and to a lesser extent, funerals, alcohol would be present and in most cases, 'drinking' takes place. The amount and type of alcohol consumed on these occasions may be influenced by the wealth of those providing the hospitality on these occasions, and by the conduct of key figures at these events.

Another interesting pattern of Samoan men's attitudes towards drinking was the generational difference in perceptions in terms of drinking responsibly which is worth a brief mention here. Whilst some older men pointed the finger at younger people as irresponsible drinkers, younger participants, including the younger health professional key informant, perceived older people or their parents' generations as some of the people who were irresponsible when consuming alcohol. This key informant, for example, when reflecting on

his own father's and that generation's drinking suggested that younger people 'seemed more interested in socialising when they went to nightclubs' than older people who 'tended to go to nightclubs for the ultimate purpose of drinking their heads off'. Similarly, the two New Zealand-born young men, who both drink, suggested that Samoan men of their parents' generation are less responsible in terms of drink-driving and drinking, and gambling than are people of their own generation.

Other negative aspects of drinking identified by older drinkers such as the waste of substantial sums of money to buy alcohol; or the domestic violence against women and children, for example, weren't such big issues with the two youngest New Zealand-born male participants. The pair weren't aware of any Samoan men who would sacrifice the family budget for alcoholic beverages although they considered fines for drink-driving as a waste of money and an area of grave concern.

### **Alcohol and Abstinence**

While some participants have suggested that they drink 'to be happy and have a good time', those who abstain were adamant that drinking alcohol was not necessary in order to have a good time. For some abstainers, having a good time means going out and 'hanging out' with friends without having to indulge in alcohol. One aspect of drinking which repulsed some abstainers is the detrimental effect of alcohol on Samoan values. Some New Zealand-born young abstemious participants and older women<sup>18</sup> observed that younger people were learning from older people including their own parents' examples:

I hope our people are committed to becoming more aware and I mean we can't expect our young people to stop drinking because they see their parents doing it, they see people of high status in the Pacific communities drinking ... we all learn by example, and the only way to perhaps suppress the problem [alcohol abuse] is by starting at the top ... **(CH08 - Auckland-born Married Woman Abstainer, Christchurch).**

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<sup>18</sup> Participants in this study have been divided into two age groups, young adults refer to the group aged between 25 to 44 years. Those 45 years and over make up the older adults group. See the Methodology chapter for a fuller explanation of the sample population.

Another New Zealand-born woman, who drinks, articulated her own experience through her conception of the value of *'aiga* and how her own household as she was growing up was home to relatives who came from Samoa. She explained how her father, a heavy drinker, had other values such as his work ethics which kept him away from home until evenings, six days a week. She noted, however, that alcohol was a major contributing factor to domestic violence, and attributed one of her brother's 'alcoholism' to her father's drinking practices and behaviour towards alcohol and alcohol use.

... because our home was home to all our *aiga* coming from Samoa so over time we had a group of boarders ... what I grew up in would have been a primary household for all those *aiga* who would come over from Samoa ...

... my dad was a very heavy drinker and he worked hard, worked six days a week we never saw him ... it was 6 o'clock closing in those days and they used to go up to the Star Hotel (**NZ16 - NZ-born Older Woman Drinker, Auckland**)

An older Samoan-born woman participant, who does not drink recalled that when she was younger and single, she went to 'bars' with her friends and sang and danced and had a good time without drinking alcohol. She remarked that whilst it had become the norm in Samoa over the years to serve alcohol at parties, she had recently held a house-warming party where there was food aplenty and no alcohol. She said because her husband, a former heavy drinker has abstained, and none of her two children or their spouses 'drink', there was no reason to put on alcoholic drinks at her house-warming party. So she warned everyone that was invited that there would be plenty of food but no alcohol.

On the question of wanting to remain a virgin until marriage, the participant noted that all her friends in her age group 'had the same ideals to remain a virgin until marriage, but that association with alcohol-use led other people to assume that sex was also likely to be involved.

... now young girls do not seem to value that anymore ... not that we all waited until we married to actually have sex, of course I had sex with my husband before we were married, but I knew this was the guy

I was going to marry. But the interesting thing at that time when we were partying and going out because I was friendly and went out with lots of Peace Corps people and I had a good time with them drinking and dancing ... and somebody a Samoan guy said that I had a reputation and there was this assumption that I was having sex with all these men I was going out with and I really felt like crying ... Anyway, I steeled myself and retorted that I don't care what anybody thought so long as I know myself that I wasn't doing it that's all that matters **(SA05 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa).**

On her values as a Samoan woman, the same participant said she has expounded to her own children the primary importance of people and relatives. 'The general values such as faithfulness, truthfulness and all those kinds of values, and most important of all, you value people more than you value things' (Ibid). Both her children are Bahai and do not drink alcohol, but they have come to appreciate Samoan people and those values which she has impressed on them. 'Now they value *'aiga* and they give money to relatives when they have *fa'alavelave* and that's very important to me because their father is *palagi*. Our Samoan values have been inculcated and are now entrenched ...' **(SA05 – Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa).**

As well, the same participant commented that she had noticed lots of changes in the types of places where people can drink in Apia these days, the types of people who drink, and what sort of alcoholic beverages being consumed. She noted that when she visited a restaurant where she and her husband used to go for takeaways recently, two young women were sitting there drinking beer.

That's a more recent change because you never would have come across women drinking beer in those days ... but those two girls were just sitting and chatting and just drinking beer, it's new there wasn't any of that in those days. But then in those days there weren't a lot of women who went to drinking places, if you 'drink' you got that look from people because women weren't expected to be drinking publicly unless they were with their husbands ... that's another change that you see women drinking anywhere really although to be fair I don't really know anybody that drinks a lot because most of my friends are casual drinkers. We had a young guy with two kids who used to work for us when we were living up at Afiamalu, no one in the family works except for this guy and they have a very low income but the father was a drinker and despite the very low income some money is put aside for the old man's beer every week **(SA05 – Samoan-born Older Woman Abstainer, Samoa)**

### **But Samoans' Attitudes and Behaviours are Changing**

Whilst the foregoing discussion has pointed out different patterns of consumption and varied Samoans' attitudes and practices around alcohol use, the data also show that people's drinking patterns and attitudes towards alcohol are changing. In particular, there seem to be generational and gender differences in practices and attitudes which may be touched on briefly here. One of the significant changes I have discerned from the data is a trend toward acceptance of alcohol in various contexts in both Samoa and here in New Zealand.

For example, several participants have noted that what would not have been common in Samoa earlier, say fifteen or twenty years ago but is prevalent now, is drinking within the family context. Some participants remarked that in earlier times, when Samoan people were first allowed to drink, alcohol consumption was perceived as specifically associated with Samoan men whether at the pubs or among groups of men drinking *fa'amafu*.

More recently, however, some participants have noted that drinking at the home environment in Samoa isn't uncommon anymore. In fact, some participants said they would sometimes drink at home, whether with spouses or with family members, and even with their children. A Samoan-born woman married to a *palagi* said her own husband didn't discourage their children from having a glass of wine with meals when the children were as young as 13 years old.

... he [husband] tried to encourage the children to drink wine with the meal before they're even 13 I think, and I said to him how stupid he was to do that because our kids aren't French, only those French encouraged their kids to drink wine ... **(NZ10 - Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

The participant, who drinks and smokes, said she doesn't discourage her children and her sister's children from drinking but would instruct them to take their drink to another part of the house if she was entertaining visitors in the house. The same participant remarked that what is needed is to educate Samoan parents about both the negative and positive aspects of alcohol so that they may be able to address the alcohol problem with their own children.

I really think it's important to approach the parents and generate dialog to discuss alcohol with an open-mind ... rather than seeing alcohol as a bad thing there should be some strategies so that the kids don't see drinking as the problem but have some programmes to raise awareness ... and we don't have to wait for the teachers or others to tell our children, we as parents can discuss with them. I am doing the same thing with my nieces because I am really close to my sister and her children so we all sit together and drink **(NZ10 – Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

Another Samoan-born young adult mother of two said her own approach to her teenage daughter use of alcohol is that she lets her have a taste of her wine when they are together.

She always tries to drink my wine when we are there and we tell her to drink it and if she tries and doesn't like it then she knows what it is ... and may be later on in life she might tackle it but we will cross that bridge when we come to it as long as she knows the effect of it ... I just want to make sure that she will be in a safe environment, that if she asks things will be explained to her ... **(NZ09 - Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

In terms of a strategy to try and normalize drinking the same participant said rather than saying to a young person 'you can't do something' it would be more useful to explain to them that it's part of life but you have to do it in moderation.

Rather than saying to the kids you can't do something because they'll want to do it anyway, it's better to explain to them that it's part of life but you have to do it in moderation so that it's trying to teach them the value of whatever they may decide whether they want to do it ... in so doing your demystifying it so that they can actually talk it through and make sure their questions are answered **(NZ09 -Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland)**.

The participant's New Zealand-born husband who doesn't drink agrees and said 'if you tell a child not to do it they'll just go somewhere else and drink behind your back'. The husband said his abstinence stance on alcohol was part of the lifestyle which he was brought up in within his home environment. He said his parents were pastors in the SDA church and they never smoked or drank alcohol because they grew up in the church.

I do not drink alcohol I have never really ... probably because of the church. All my brothers and sisters when they were younger never smoked or drink ... but now I have a brother who smokes and drinks though he didn't use to ... I remember my brother telling me a story how he came home drunk one day and my father was really wild at him and gave him a hiding ... yeah but he never used to when we were growing up (**NZ08 – New Zealand-born Young Male Abstainer, Auckland**).

An elderly Samoan-born pastor, who has never touched alcohol, and who keeps exhorting his congregation to refrain from drinking explained that his church, the Reformed LMS of Samoa, prohibits alcohol consumption. He utterly dismisses the notion that alcohol has any good qualities for human beings. He said his own abstinence stance towards alcohol consumption has been espoused by his own adult children and mirrored by their abstinence from alcohol as well.

The CCCS pastor participant, who drinks, however, provides an interesting perspective on alcohol and the children. Whilst none of his children consumes alcohol, he said his children have all witnessed his drinking while they were growing up, and he hasn't hidden it from them. The participant is quite aware of his current position in the church and status within the community, and that he shouldn't be seen to be encouraging alcohol use. However, he also explained that he has been honest with his children about his drinking. He added that his 'subjective view' is that alcohol shouldn't be abused:

I guess it's a matter of our approach to alcohol ... I couldn't see much harm if I had may be two bottles and the children know because I'm not hiding anything from them, I am always straight with them and they appreciate that ... (**NZ12 – Samoan-born Pastor Drinker, Auckland**).

### ***Drinking and Food***

The above participant also brought up the issue of food as one of the reasons he drinks a beer or two before the evening meal. He said his wife when she cooks she makes the 'best food' and everybody and his friends know this. But he said he doesn't appreciate that good food unless he 'drinks a beer or two, and I don't hide it from my children'.



As my children were growing up they knew that I was the *faifeau* and they started asking why I was drinking ... so I tell them that I don't like food very much and I've always been selective with food ... but after I've had a drink I would have an appetite for food. So even when we have our family things, I don't drink openly when strangers are around, but my brothers-in-law know and they wouldn't bring it to me right away but they would put a carton of beer in the boot of the car for me ... **(NZ12 – Samoan-born Pastor Drinker, Auckland).**

Another older adult participant who started drinking in the early-1960s, related how in the early days of his drinking, he wouldn't have food during, or after drinking alcohol. He said during those days when he was 'quite a heavy drinker', food wasn't a priority and he could go on long drinking sessions without food. But he also admitted that he experienced bouts of 'blackouts' during some of those long drinking sessions. He said there were times in the past when his wife had told him that when they went to parties or functions that she could tell when he was getting drunk because 'his mannerism, his mood and his actions towards other women' would start to change.

She said when I drink I would reach a certain stage when my attitude and behaviour towards women would change ... that I would start to flirt and display sexual prowess ... even making advances and the conversations start to include sexual connotations ... **(NZ06 – Samoa-born Matai Drinker, Auckland).**

Lately, however, since he has been residing in New Zealand the participant's attitude towards food and drinking has changed. During the past three or four years, for example, he said he has ensured that he has a 'good feed' before going out drinking. Some times he would have peanuts or chips while drinking beer, something which is quite contrary to when he was a heavy drinker in his younger days.

Another older adult participant who was also a heavy drinker when he was younger explained how his own attitude to, and pattern of alcohol use have changed quite dramatically during the last few years.

Before, and especially during the early years when I was at Teachers Training College in Samoa, drinking was perhaps the most important aspect of mine and my other drinking colleagues' lives. Now I've slowed right down and although I still drink when my wife and I go to functions I no longer 'crave for a drink' when I am at home.

I still have a drink or two, sometimes I may have a glass of wine with my wife when we come home ... sometimes when I'm preparing dinner while comparing notes about our respective day's work we would have a drink. But it's no longer the heavy sessions of homebrew and ending up sleeping at someone else's place, or just drinking to get 'pissed out of our brains' which me and some of my friends used to do in those days (**NZ03 – Older Matai Drinker, Auckland**).

Younger participants also raised the need to have food when consuming alcohol. The two youngest New Zealand-born men participants interviewed in Christchurch explained the importance of having food when drinking alcohol. One of the two said he loves 'Samoan food' such as taro, *palusami*, and chop suey when he has had a few drinks. He said he has acquired a taste for Samoan foods because as he was growing up members of his father's extended family would come together for the Sunday *to'ona'i*. Whilst the other young adult participant was not too fussed about the kind of food he ate when drunk, he said he would always have a meal whether it's Samoan foods or not, when he had been drinking. Both participants could not remember how they learned to have a feed with or after drinking alcohol although they suspected it may have been through advertisements on television.

### ***Some Cultural, Economic, and Environmental Factors***

Some of the factors which have influenced Samoan peoples' drinking patterns, attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol may be categorized as economic, cultural, social, and environmental in nature. Recall that one of the major concerns raised by MPs when the 1971 Liquor Bill was debated in Parliament was the inevitable exposure of people in the villages outside of the Apia town area to alcoholic beverages if licenses were issued to resell liquor via small retail stores throughout the country. Some MPs expressed grave concerns that if that happened villagers who may not be knowledgeable in the use of alcoholic beverages may end up abusing alcohol or causing other problems within the village environment. Additionally, some MPs worried that if alcohol were to be sold in the villages that there would be adverse effects and ramifications that may impact negatively on traditional *fa'asamoa*.

The foregoing discussion has highlighted issues of alcohol abuse and the consequential effects of alcohol which participants and key informants have identified as detrimental to inter-generational, gender, environmental, cultural and social relationships which pose serious threats to *fa'asamoa* values and Samoan people's health and wellbeing. In time, if these were not addressed and strategies were not implemented to ameliorate the looming problems, the risk that Samoans living in the islands and in migrant enclaves may be confronted with economic, environmental, political, social and cultural challenges of huge proportions that could threaten *fa'asamoa* and all the cherished values it stands for.

### ***Other Social Changes in Samoa***

That changes which have occurred in Samoa since independence are undeniable. That Samoans have migrated internally and internationally during the second half of the twentieth century and more recently, is also a matter of fact. And that the winds of globalization have blown through the islands of Samoa bringing alcoholic beverages along with other Western commodities is also irrefutable. But whether the political, environmental, economic and social changes which have been deposited and now planted firmly within the landscape and seashores of Samoa are for better or for worse is debatable, and will no doubt be the topic of discussion and debate now and in the future.

Participants and key informants in this study have highlighted some of the changes in their narratives around alcohol and Samoan culture and social life. Samoans older and younger, women and men, New Zealand- and island-born, drinkers and non-drinkers, of different religious denominations, have provided several perspectives and a variety of experiences and practices which I have presented in this and other chapters to follow. Some participants and key informants have lamented the 'good old days' while others have welcomed the changes. Some have criticized the establishment of the beer producing venture while some have extolled the economic benefits to the Samoan economy. Yet others have widely condemned the adverse effects of alcohol on Samoans' health and social wellbeing.

I discuss some of the changes and alcohol-related problems since the establishment of the Samoan Brewery in the following chapter. I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of New Zealand-born and island-born participants

### ***New Zealand- and Samoa-Born***

One of the variables used in the selection of participants for this study is the participant's place of birth and socialization. This was a deliberate attempt to examine whether the physical, geographical and other environmental factors impacted on people's lifestyles and views of the world, in terms of their attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and alcohol use. More importantly, there has been a noticeable increase in the New Zealand-born component of the Samoan population in this country over the last decade or so. Macpherson notes that by 1996 'New Zealand-born Samoans comprised nearly 60 percent of the Samoan descent population of 101,000 in New Zealand and this trend is set to continue' (2004: 175). And whilst Macpherson argues that such simple dichotomies do not present the full picture, he suggests that the demographic trends indicate that 'over time the influence of New Zealand-born and educated will continue to increase' (Ibid, p. 175).

Macpherson (2004) further argues that people who had migrated from Samoa were generally disposed to support *fa'asamoa* in migrant communities. Macpherson contends that 'one thing [that] characterizes the transformations ... is that they represented attempts to ensure that *fa'asamoa* not only survived in the milieu, but that it was adapted to ensure that it remained relevant to life in the enclave' (Macpherson, 2004: 174).

In *A Personal Point of View* expressed in the Pacific Spirit '99 Conference Report (Lima, 1999a), I pointed out the need for a particular sector of the Pacific population, those who were born and raised in New Zealand, to be consulted and represented at Pacific Island forums, such as that Pacific Spirit Conference.

New Zealand-born Pacific people tend to be more fluid and adaptable in both the *palagi* and their respective ethnic Pacific ways than those born in the Islands. They also tend to assimilate more freely, and are

starting to demand their rightful share of things. This group of Pacific people have over recent years, conspicuously become noticeable, with a discernible lifestyle and world views that have become difficult to ignore. And Pacific Island community leaders should start listening and take heed. This group of mainly young people have become more marketable in today's neo-liberal environment, even if their skills and attributes are not necessarily conducive to the values and customs of traditional Pacific cultures and mores at times (Lima, 1999a: 38).

Since the Pacific Spirit '99 Conference, a lot has happened in the alcohol and drug sector including ALAC's continued support and strategic approach towards Pacific alcohol and drugs issues. Personally, I am especially encouraged by the number of New Zealand-born and raised Pacific colleagues who have been involved in a myriad of ways in the alcohol and drugs sector. Some of these young Pacific people have themselves, identified issues which need to be addressed and have taken leadership roles in implementing programmes, conducting research, and working with Pacific communities towards ameliorating, and hopefully alleviating alcohol-related problems plaguing Pacific peoples including Samoans in New Zealand. The national Pacific people's alcohol, drugs, and gambling survey (Ministry of Health, 2004), is another step toward growing and enhancing the data on Pacific people's alcohol and drugs information in this country. This is definitely a step in the right direction towards ameliorating the health problems and enhancing the health status of the ever-increasing Pacific population in New Zealand.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The chapter has examined some of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors which influence Samoan people's attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol. It argued that social and environmental factors that are part of individuals' socialization process influence, to a large degree, people's patterns of and attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and their drinking practices. The discussion explored men's and women's drinking patterns, the involvement of alcohol in their home environments, participants' introduction to alcohol use, as well as outlining reasons why some people drink and others abstain.

The data show that Samoan people's patterns of consumption are varied and people's attitudes and practices around alcohol use also vary. One of the discernible patterns in Samoans' drinking and attitudes towards alcohol is the generational and gender differences in practices and attitudes toward alcohol use. For example, one of the significant changes discerned is the seeming acceptance of alcohol in various contexts in both Samoa and in Samoan migrant communities in industrialized societies such as New Zealand.

Another change identified in the discussion is the perception that a growing number of Samoan women may be ingesting alcohol. Several participants in this study suggested that when Samoan people were first allowed to drink, alcohol consumption was perceived as specifically associated with Samoan men whether at the pubs or among groups of men drinking *fa'amafu*. Perhaps the perception that there is indeed an increasing number of Samoan women drinking as shown in the data gathered and analysed in this study indicate that more Samoan women, especially younger ones may be drinking alcoholic liquor.

Finally, the chapter discussed changes in Samoan people's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol, and briefly restated that economic, environmental, social and cultural factors shaped, to some degree the attitudes and practices around alcohol and its drinking.

## Chapter Eight

### **WIDESPREAD AVAILABILITY OF ALCOHOL IN SAMOA HAS IMPACTED ON HEALTH, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL WELLBEING**

#### **Theme: Alcohol Availability and Alcohol-related Problems**

*Alcohol production and distribution as an industry is peculiarly conducive to monopoly. It provides a uniform product, its manufacture offers large economies of scale, it has low carrying costs and is highly in demand (Douglas, 1987: 13)*

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I explore the availability of alcoholic liquor and the consequential effects on Samoan people's health and social wellbeing. I argue that the widespread availability of relatively inexpensive locally manufactured beer throughout Samoa, and the lack of resources to police and enforce liquor laws and regulations, adversely impacts on, and will exacerbate social and health problems in Samoa in the future. The discussion highlights the lack of an effective system to control the production, distribution, and sale of alcoholic beverages in Samoa.

Additionally, it examines the dynamics of the global market forces in terms of the changing ownership of beer production in developing countries, and discusses the recent acquisition of the former government-owned Western Samoa Breweries by Carlton Brewery of Fiji, a subsidiary of Foster's Brewing Group, one of the world's leading alcohol-producing transnational corporations (TNCs). Finally, as the new owners of the sole beer producer in Samoa, look to maximize profits from its investment, more types of alcoholic beverages will most likely be produced which may in turn, exacerbate alcohol-related social and health problems within Samoan society.

#### **Alcohol Availability**

A number of studies have examined 'the basic premise that restrictions on alcohol availability can have significant effects on alcohol consumption, and on associated problems' (Brunn et al., 1975; Casswell & Stewart, 1986;

Edwards et al., 1994; Jernigan, 1997, Edwards, Marshall and Cook, 1997; Tigerstedt, 2000; Room et al., 2002). Edwards et al. (1994), for example, have argued that:

Those studies which address the availability of alcohol have usually found that when alcohol is less available, less convenient to purchase, or less accessible, consumption and alcohol-related problems are lower. These studies are of two types: those which address restrictions on overall availability, and those examining specific alcohol policies in terms of their unique effects (Edwards et al., 1994: 130).

The study of the treatment of drinking problems by Edwards, Marshall, & Cook (1997) noted that 'availability of alcohol, and factors which influence availability (such as economic influences), are not the only factors of importance at a population level' (1997: 11). These authors argued that acceptability of alcohol consumption also plays an important part, and this is determined to a large degree by social and cultural values. For example, they noted that 'other socio-cultural factors such as racial, religious, occupational, and family influences may all contribute to drinking problems (Ibid, p. 11). Similarly, Holder (1989) noted that in addition to availability and promotion, the quantity and frequency of drinking are related to a number of other factors 'including the price of alcoholic beverages and the disposable income to purchase, as well as cultural values and norms which govern drinking behaviour' (1989: 140).

Other commentators have argued that in many societies, 'restricting and controlling alcohol availability' has been one of a variety of strategies which have been attempted to eliminate the adverse effects of alcohol on health and social wellbeing (Room et al. 2000: 18). Casswell and Stewart (1986), in their examination of international research on the effects of availability on drinking and alcohol-related problems suggested that, 'The premise that ease of access to alcohol influences the amount of alcohol people drink and also the amount of alcohol-related damage experienced is the basis of licensing systems which attempt to limit the distribution of alcohol' (Casswell & Stewart, 1986: 7). Additionally, Casswell and Stewart noted that in the 'past three or four decades social science research methods have been applied to the task of demonstrating a causal link between availability, consumption and



related problems' (1986: 7). After reviewing the international literature on the wide variety of methodological approaches used to investigate 'the role availability of alcohol plays in relation to per capita alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems', these authors concluded that: 'While not all studies have found significant relationships, the body of evidence taken as a whole is indicative of a real relationship between availability of alcohol and consumption and related problems' (Casswell & Stewart, 1986: 11).

Shaw, Cartwright, Spratley and Harwin (1978), posited that 'the level of consumption in a society is usually expressed in terms of per capita consumption' (1978: 81). The authors argued that the 'relationship between the level of per capita consumption and the prevalence of alcohol related problems was first noticed in periods when the availability of alcohol was suddenly reduced' (Ibid, p. 81). According to Shaw and colleagues, this pattern was well illustrated in Britain during the First World War, when the availability of alcohol was reduced by licensing hours. They argued that 'the consequent reduction in consumption was associated with such noticeable decline in alcohol mortality and drunkenness' (Ibid, p. 81). Moreover, the authors noted that changes in the prevalence of alcohol-related problems closely mirrored trends in the pattern of availability and consumption (Ibid, p. 82).

### ***Alcohol Availability in Developing Societies***

Room et al. (2002) have identified similar patterns to the above findings of Shaw and colleagues. In their recent examination of rates, patterns and trends in drinking and in alcohol-related problems in developing societies, for example, Room and colleagues argued that regulating the availability and conditions of alcohol use is one of the most effective means to reduce alcohol use and related problems. Moreover, they noted that there are many different ways through which regulation of availability 'can and has been done, some more effective and enforceable than others' (2002: 192). The authors also noted that: 'The potential impact of changes in alcohol availability on rates of problems is demonstrated by the natural experiments that occur in a society or locality when the supply of alcohol changes substantially' (Room et al., 2002: 18).

As well, Room and colleagues (2002) cited examples of the relationship between reduction in alcohol availability and decline in rates of alcohol-related health problems, two of which are of particular interest here. First, Hunter's (1993) study of alcohol availability and alcohol related problems among Aborigines in Western Australia, showed that in the 15 years before 1972, when Aborigines were banned from purchasing alcohol, which substantially limited their alcohol use, 'non-infant deaths from accident and violence had been steady in the range of 4-7% of male deaths and 2-5% of female deaths'. However, in the period between 1982 and 1986, 'when drinking by Aborigines was legalized, the proportions attributable to accidents and violence rose to 23% of male and 15% of female deaths' (Hunter, 1993: 83; cited in Room et al., 2002: 18). The second example cited by the same authors was the dramatic reduction in hospital admissions in the small Micronesian islands of Yap and Palau following an unexpected unavailability of alcohol. In her study of drunkenness and domestic violence in Palau, Karen Nero (1980) noted that in September 1989, when the islands became unintentionally 'dry' for more than one week, 'the incidence of injuries and accidents in Palau declined to the point that the hospital wards were nearly empty' (Nero, 1990; cited in Room et al., 2002: 18).

Increasing alcohol availability, however, does not necessarily translate into increased alcohol consumption as Holder (1989) has noted above. The ability of people to buy alcohol, and how much beer is consumed, would be determined by access to disposable income, rather than physical proximity to outlets. In the Papua New Guinea Highlands, for example, Grossman (1982, 1984) posited 'a direct link between the coffee flush, increased village income from coffee sales during that period, and more purchases and consumption of alcohol, particularly beer' (cited in Dernbach and Marshall (2001). Conversely, a decrease in income impacts on the ability of people to buy alcoholic beverages.

Such was the case in Samoa where beer consumption decreased dramatically following a lengthy Public Service Association strike in the early 1980s. At the time, Casswell and Smythe (1982) noted that immediately after the Western Samoa Brewery commenced brewing in 1978, estimated beer

consumption in Samoa increased from 3,569,500 litres in 1979 to 3,981,100 litres in 1980. In 1981, however, consumption dropped by 5.6 percent to 3,845,000 litres. This decrease in domestic consumption was attributed to the lengthy strike by members of the Western Samoa Public Service Association whose salaries were withheld by the government for the duration of the strike.

But other factors also impact on and influence alcohol availability and in turn, alcohol consumption in various contexts and in different settings. In New Zealand for example, trends in alcohol availability and consumption patterns of the past three decades or so have been influenced by liquor legislation, in particular, the 1989 Sale of Liquor Act and the promotion of moderation.

### ***Alcohol Availability in New Zealand***

Casswell and Stewart (1986) have noted that 'New Zealand has experienced a series of changes in availability and consumption patterns' (1986: 12). They noted that the successful populist temperance movement of the nineteenth century in New Zealand 'was a response to concern over the social problems associated with alcohol consumption' at the time.

Following the Second World War a period of considerable expansion of the alcohol market was accompanied by increases in alcohol-related problems ... and, particularly from 1960 onwards, by increases in availability, in the extent and sophistication of alcohol promotion, and by a decrease in the real cost of alcohol to the consumer (Casswell & Stewart, 1986: 13).

Stewart (1997), suggested that the trend in liquor licensing legislation in New Zealand (and Australia), particularly since the 1960s, had been towards deregulation. She noted that a review of liquor licensing in New Zealand in the 1980s 'culminated in a new Sale of Liquor Act substantially liberalizing access to alcohol' (1997: 394). Similarly, Linda Hill (1998) noted that the 'traditionally restrictive regime' in New Zealand was overturned in 1989 by a new Sale of Liquor Act. Hill concluded that the liberalization of licensing under the 1989 Sale of Liquor Act led to change, 'not only in the number, but in the style of public drinking' in New Zealand (1998: 15-17). Moreover, Habgood, Casswell, Pledger and Bhatta (2001), argued that the changes introduced by the Sale of Liquor Act which came into effect in April 1990

'created a very liberal alcohol environment ... [and] removed any controls on the density of alcohol outlets and since then the number of on- and off-licensed premises in New Zealand has increased markedly' (Habgood et al., 2001: 14).

But factors other than changes in legislation have influenced trends towards liberalisation of alcohol availability in this country. For example, Casswell and Stewart (1968) have suggested that 'economic interests of liquor trade groups, marketing strategies and changed cultural norms and values' influenced the general trend towards the liberalization of alcohol availability and the incorporation of alcohol into everyday life in New Zealand (1986: 15). Other changes in alcohol use in this country have been influenced by several factors including amendments to the Sale of Liquor Act in 1999. The amendments, in effect, removed any restraints on purchasing of alcoholic beverages by those aged 18-19 years. The amendments also resulted in the availability for sale of beer and wine (but not spirits) at supermarkets, and the sale of alcohol on Sundays. As well as lowering the drinking age limit from 20 to 18 years, some have suggested that the recent legislations have also resulted in the popularization of 'designer drinks' (Jackson, et al. 2000: S597) such as 'alcopops' (Habgood, et al. 2001: 14) on the market.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs in an Issues Paper *Lowering the Drinking Age*, (1999) reviewed the information which had emerged since March 1997 and noted that:

The most recent figures (for 1997) indicate an increase in consumption largely attributable to the advent of alcopops. Alcopops tend to be higher in alcohol content, carbonated and sweet, which is a combination making it easier to get drunk quickly as they 'go down easily'. Again there is no age breakdown but it is worth noting that the sales and marketing of alcopops are targeted specifically at the young, especially young females (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 1999: 6-7).

Another recent development in New Zealand's approach to alcohol and drugs related problems is that of harm reduction. In an examination of the development of New Zealand's national responses to alcohol related problems in the 1980s and 1990s, Stewart (1997) argued that the harm

reduction perspective of the Australian National Drug Strategy was regarded as a good model for New Zealand to draw on (1997: 393).

This approach is embodied in the major priority for alcohol: emphasis is on reducing excessive and hazardous drinking and the associated injury, violence and other harm, particularly on the roads, in the workplace, in and around drinking environments and at the home (Stewart, 1997: 393).

More recently, the New Zealand 2000-2003 National Alcohol Strategy (Ministry of Health, 2001b) recognized that there is a continuum of harm associated with the misuse of alcohol, and emphasized three broad categories of: supply control; demand reduction; and problem limitation. Of these three categories, 'supply control strategies attempt to reduce alcohol-related harm by placing restrictions on the availability of alcohol' (2001b: 21).

The most recent New Zealand drug statistics (Ministry of Health, 2001a: 9) show that the total volume of alcoholic beverages available for consumption decreased over the 1990-2000 period by 3 percent. However, the total volume of absolute alcohol available for consumption increased by 1 percent, to 26.3 million litres during this 10-year period.<sup>19</sup> The 1995 and 2000 *National Surveys Comparison* by Habgood et al. (2001), shows 'an increase in the percentage of the sample consuming in excess of 10 litres of absolute alcohol annually, from 27 to 29 percent. Similarly, those consuming in excess of 20 litres, increased from 12 percent to 14 percent. The changes, Habgood and colleagues argued, 'reflected increases in consumption among women and among 16-17 and 30-39 year olds of both genders' (Habgood et al., 2001: 7).

During the 1990s, 59 percent of Pacific people consumed alcohol, which makes the proportion of abstainers high in comparison with both the general population and the Maori population. The 1995 National Alcohol Survey showed that 87 percent of the general population and 80 percent of Maori consumed alcohol (MoH, 2001b: 17).

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<sup>19</sup> NZHIS Publications, <<http://www.nzhis.govt.nz/publications/drugs.html>>

### ***Alcohol Availability in Pacific Island Societies***

As mentioned in earlier chapters, alcohol availability and use in the Pacific is a relatively recent phenomenon. Alcoholic beverages were introduced to the indigenous people of Oceania during their first contact with beachcombers, traders, whalers and missionaries (Lemert, 1979; Heath, 1971; Marshall, 1976, 1979a&b; Marshall & Marshall, 1979; Casswell, 1986). Marshall (2004), for example, noted that 'Europeans offered it to islanders in at least some of their encounters, but these were too sporadic for this to have had much impact until the nineteenth century' (2004: 206). Moreover, Marshall argued that 'beachcombers and whalers often taught the islanders how to ferment coconut toddy ... and provided rather intemperate models for how to behave when drunk' (2004: 206).

With missionization and the beginning of commercial enterprises during the first half of the nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries, reflecting changing attitudes toward alcohol in their mother countries, spoke out against 'Demon Rum'. This set the stage for colonially imposed prohibition laws as foreigners claimed control over different island areas by the end of the nineteenth century (Marshall, 2004: 206).

In Chapter 5, I argued that colonial administrations and some early missionaries were either completely or partially successful, in controlling alcohol availability to Pacific Islanders through prohibitions and permit systems. Casswell's study of the supply and use of alcohol and the concomitant alcohol-related problems in Oceania (1986), noted that the levels of alcohol consumption in less developed countries were considerably lower than industrialized countries. Nevertheless, Casswell concluded that 'alcohol-related problems can still cause considerable costs in societies with vulnerable economies and undergoing major socio-economic changes' (Casswell, 1986: 1).

During the earlier half of the twentieth century, one way in which colonial administrators were able to control the availability or non-accessibility of alcohol to indigenous peoples was through the introduction of prohibition laws to 'protect' indigenous peoples. In Papua New Guinea, for example, it was an offence to sell liquor to the indigenous peoples (Marshall, 1980). Zelenietz and Grant (1982) have posited that alcohol availability was a

significant element which influenced alcohol use in Kilenge, West New Britain, in Papua New Guinea. In a more recent review of alcohol availability in the Papua New Guinea Highlands, Dernbach and Marshall (2001) noted a 'dramatic increase in availability since 1962, when drinking was legalized by the colonial government'. The authors also noted that 'drunkenness clearly contributes to outbreaks of group violence ... [and] efforts to reduce drinking by instituting alcohol bans probably have a positive effect of reducing the overall rate of violence' in the Papua New Guinea Highlands (2001: 37-38).

Other than Casswell's (1986) study of alcohol use in Oceania, the growing scholarship on alcohol and alcohol-related problems in Micronesian states (Marshall, 1979a&b, 1981; 1987a&b; Marshall & Marshall, 1976, 1979; Nero, 1990); and the Monograph on Beer and Modernization in Papua New Guinea (Marshall, 1982), little has been published on availability of alcohol and the extent of alcohol-related problems in Oceania, and specifically Polynesia. But the lack of published data on alcohol use and the concomitant problems in Oceania should not mask the visible economic, social and health problems faced by many sectors of Pacific population groups as a consequence of alcohol use and abuse. More alarming are the seeming lack of individual actions or of a collective strategy by Pacific Island governments to develop and implement policies to control access to alcohol, and to police and enforce what liquor laws they have in place to keep abreast with the increasing availability of alcohol in the region.

Recent data on alcohol consumption in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Samoa by McDonald, Elvy, and Mielke, (1997), show that per capita consumption is highest in the Cook Islands, which had 'the highest ratio of liquor outlets and lowest alcohol taxation regime' compared with other Pacific countries. The authors also noted that the promotion of responsible consumption, together with the option of abstinence for those so inclined, is an acceptable strategy for the Pacific (1997: 383).

### ***Alcohol Availability in Samoa***

In Samoa, whilst prohibition laws imposed and enforced by colonial administrators throughout the first half of the twentieth century were

unpopular, especially among sections of the population that deemed them racist, and a violation of the rights and freedom of individuals, those laws stemmed, to a significant extent, the prevalence of alcohol-related problems and drunkenness among Samoan people at the time. After the attainment of independence in 1962, however, prohibition was relaxed and the permit system was eventually phased out, particularly following the introduction of new liquor legislation in Parliament ten years later. As social, cultural, demographic, and political changes took effect during the second half of the twentieth century, Samoans took over the governing of their own affairs. The political changes effectively gave Samoan people a more hands-on role in the running of their own country which before was controlled by New Zealand's colonial administration, with policy formulation and planning effectively conducted and approved by the New Zealand Parliament in Wellington. As the Samoan political leaders assumed leadership of their nation, they had to address the consequences of the adoption of 'Western' lifestyle and cultural values which had started to influence Samoans' traditional way of life and worldview. These included tobacco use and alcohol consumption, both of which unfortunately, had concomitant social and health problems. I focus specifically on alcohol use here.

Whilst the 1971 Western Samoa Liquor Act provided the legislation within which to control alcohol production, distribution and consumption, the means by which such legislation could be policed and enforced were not readily available. To date, monitoring and enforcement of Samoan liquor legislation has been dependent entirely on the ability and availability of the police. And while the Commissioner of Police at the time of my fieldwork in Samoa, Asi Semisi, confirmed that monitoring and enforcing liquor laws were part of the police force responsibilities, he also conceded that this was not necessarily the force's highest priority (Personal Communication, December 2001).

The laissez-faire approach to control and enforcement of liquor legislation in Samoa, and the inevitable increase in alcohol availability will have undoubted impact on the cultural, economic, health and social wellbeing of Samoan people in the long term. There is a paucity of information available regarding the number of licenses issued by the Liquor Control Authority for reselling



alcoholic beverages, especially beer throughout Samoa over the years. Most recent data available on the number of permits issued by the Liquor Board to resell liquor during 2002 and 2003, however, indicate a growing trend for the two year period. In 2003, for example, 566 liquor licenses were issued, compared to 472 for 2002, an increase of 20 percent.

### ***Illegal Sale of Liquor***

As well as the increase in the number of licensed outlets to resell liquor, several participants in Samoa suggested there may also be unlicensed businesses, mainly small village store owners selling liquor illegally. This anecdote was confirmed by the Commissioner of Police, who said there have been cases of unlicensed stores selling liquor without licenses which have been reported to the police and the Liquor Control Board. He noted that in September of 2001, when a police inspection unit conducted spot checks in Upolu and Savai'i, several businesses were caught selling liquor illegally. He said the Liquor Control Board was coming down hard on unlicensed retailers and had taken steps to charge the non-compliant store owners. He said the board had also taken action against licensed retailers of premises where liquor is sold and consumed on the premises. He added that while some actions were taken in most cases when there were reports of illegal sale and consumption, there are a lot of unreported illegal activities around sale and consumption of alcohol which is a huge problem for the police and the Liquor Control Board.

The Police Commissioner also noted there have been breaches of the Sunday liquor sale ban which have been reported to the Liquor Control Board and the police. He said there have been instances in the past when some licensees have reportedly breached the Sunday liquor ban, and the police had attempted to catch the law-breakers on some occasions but he added 'that can often be difficult to prove'. Furthermore, the Commissioner remarked, children as young as 5 or 6 years old have been able to buy beer from the stores on behalf of their fathers or other older adults. He said this was illegal and there is also a moral aspect of parental responsibility to prevent the young people from being exposed to such environments.

He said it may be time for the lawmakers to review the liquor legislations because monitoring and enforcing them have been quite a challenge for the Liquor Control Board and the Police Force as well. He said Samoan legislation often follows New Zealand's, and he was aware that New Zealand had recently lowered the drinking age to 18. He added that perhaps the Samoan parliament should review its liquor legislation to ensure it is kept abreast of other more advanced countries like New Zealand.

### ***Increasing Beer Production in Samoa***

Recent data on beer production and consumption in Samoa available to me are scarce and incomplete. But what is available show that the trend of locally produced beer has increased steadily since the establishment of the Samoa Brewery. Data available for the 1970s decade, for example, indicate increased beer sales in Samoa immediately following the establishment of the brewery (Casswell & Smythe, 1982). During 1978, for example, when the brewery commenced brewing, 3,569,500 litres of beer were produced, 16 percent in excess of the budget forecast.

**Table 8.1: Estimated Consumption and Percentage Share of Alcohol Beverages in Samoa, 1971-1980**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Beer</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Wine</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Spirits</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>
1971	1,452,538	98.5	6,265	0.4	16,279	1.1	1,475,082
1972	1,354,649	96.8	12,529	0.9	32,086	2.3	1,399,264
1973	1,997,403	98.3	10,183	0.5	25,185	1.2	2,032,771
1974	2,148,749	97.2	18,839	0.8	44,033	2.0	2,211,621
1975	2,143,275	96.5	11,042	0.5	67,122	3.0	2,221,439
1976	3,064,104	93.8	16,352	0.5	186,877*	5.7	3,267,333
1977	2,505,505	91.6	181,613**	6.6	48,265	1.8	2,735,383
1978	1,950,075	94.8	38,345	1.9	69,586	3.4	2,058,006
1979	3,640,122	96.9	39,268	1.0	77,259	2.1	3,756,649
1980	4,124,935	97.2	53,627	1.3	64,940	1.5	4,243,502

\*NB: In 1977, 164,238 litres of vermouth were imported from New Zealand. Usually between 0 and 1,800 litres were imported.

\*\*NB: Another unexplained jump: New Zealand sold an unprecedented amount of 'other spirits' to Samoa (106,685 litres) in 1976; the next year, none, again.

**Source: Casswell, & Smythe, 1982**

In 1980, 3,981,100 litres of beer were sold, an increase of 11 percent on 1979. And whilst a prolonged Public Service strike resulted in a drop in beer sales in 1981 to 3,845,000 litres, the sales revenue increased by 5 percent on 1980 (Casswell & Smythe, 1982: 23). It is clear from the above data

(Table: 8:1), on alcohol consumption that alcohol availability has increased since the establishment of the Western Samoa brewery. In 1971 for example, estimated consumption of beer was 1,452,538 litres, more than doubling to 3,064,104 litres in 1976, and reaching 4,124,935 litres in 1980.

Another measure of increasing availability of alcoholic beverages is estimated per capita beer consumption. During the 1970s, estimated per capita beer consumption in Samoa increased by more than 100 percent between 1971 (9.91 litres), and 1976 (26.47 litres). Following the introduction of locally produced Vailima, beer consumption increased by 108 percent between 1978 and 1980. From 1971 to 1980, the overall increase in beer availability in Samoa was 167 percent (Casswell & Smythe, 1982: 30). Interestingly, despite this large increase in availability of alcohol during the 1971 to 1980 period, the population increased by only 6.6 percent, from 146,627 to 156,349 in 1971 and 1981 respectively (Western Samoa Statistical Abstracts, 1992: 3).

It is probable that the increasing availability of Vailima beer would have resulted in the decrease in *fa'amafu* and meths drinking which some older men participants and a key informant alluded to. The younger health professional key informant, for example, suggested that while he was younger his father had a homebrew and there were a lot of people in Samoa who were drinking *fa'amafu*. Lately, however, he noted that 'not a lot of people drink homebrew anymore' which he attributes to the stigma of it being a 'poor man's drink' (**SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional, Samoa**).

Another interesting feature of alcohol consumption in Samoa is the increase in wine and spirits consumption. During the 1970s, for example, estimated wine and spirits consumption increased as a percentage of total alcoholic beverages consumed from 0.4 percent to 1.3 percent for wine, and 1.1 percent to 1.5 percent for spirits in 1971 and 1980, respectively.

In recent years, Samoa Breweries Limited's total beer sales had fluctuated from 54006 hectolitres in 1994 to 46530 in 1998, increasing considerably to 70275 hectolitres in 2002. Interestingly, local beer sales had also fluctuated

from 44032 hectolitres in 1994 to 37610 hectolitres in 1999, and increasing significantly to 52168 hectolitres in 2002. The trend in beer exports for the same period, however, indicates a more regular growth in total volumes from 9974 hectolitres in 1994 to 13453 in 1998, and increasing to 18107 hectolitres by 2002. Whereas local sales and total production had fluctuated somewhat between 1994 and 2002, it is clear that beer export had increased significantly for the corresponding period.

### ***Rationale for a Brewery***

In the absence of complete production data for any accurate analysis, the following figures (Table 8.2) show the value of the brewery's revenue to the government revenues through taxes, import duties and excise taxes. Other benefits to the national economy include export earnings which contribute significantly to foreign exchange earnings, as well as business opportunities through product distribution networks which also provide extra work and employment opportunities.

**Table 8.2: Samoa Breweries Total Contribution to Samoan Government Revenues, 1990-2003 (WS\$000s)**

Year	1990	1991	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	2002	2003
Revenues to government	5,852	5,937	7,610	7,480	7,100	9,350	10,600	12,000	15,600	16,500

***Source: Adapted from Samoa Breweries Limited, Annual Reports***

Whether the brewery as a private business venture is profitable or not is not really relevant in the context of this discussion. What is important is the fact that increasing availability of alcoholic beverages, correlates with increasing social and health problems which many participants, including the Samoan Commissioner of Police, argued have increased in recent years. And whilst there is a paucity of data available, what is encouraging is that the Samoan government in collaboration with international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have worked on separate research projects on certain health aspects of Samoa people in recent years.

Even to the disinterested visitor to Samoa, it is apparent that Vailima beer has become widely available and can be obtained throughout the country where it is retailed from a large number of village stores. Many participants in this study were in agreement that alcohol, especially Vailima beer, 'is everywhere' and has become a commodity which can be bought 'chilled', even at the remotest of places. This trend of being able to buy chilled beer practically anywhere in Samoa, however, is in part because small stores have been a preferred way of breaking into commerce and that many returning migrants have set up such stores. For these stores to survive, they have to sell the whole range of commodities, and to stock items which have a good profit margin. Vailima beer, according to one participant in Samoa whose daughter and her husband run a small store, said there's a better profit margin from Vailima beer than most items in stock. A participant from Auckland who visited Samoa after the interview, but commented on alcohol availability when he returned said Vailima beer is everywhere in Samoa: 'I can count five stores selling Vailima beer within a half-kilometre of a particular road to my home from town. That's a lot of retailed Vailima beer sales when you consider that I live a few kilometres outside of the town area' **(NZ07 – Older Matai Drinker, Auckland)**.

At a Workshop on the Prevention of Alcohol-Related Injury in the Pacific Islands in Auckland, in August 1990,<sup>20</sup> Samoa's representative, Dr F. Aloaina, Medical Superintendent of the Western Samoa National Hospital, pointed out the lack of any adequate data on alcohol-related problems in Samoa. Dr Aloaina, however, noted that the availability of alcohol had increased in Samoa, with beer now being sold in every village (Duignan & Casswell, 1990).

### **Availability and Alcohol-Related Problems**

The literature shows that 'environmental controls on alcohol availability can affect alcohol use and thus alcohol problems' (Edwards et al., 1994; Dernbach & Marshall, 2001). Other authors have noted that the basic tenet of

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<sup>20</sup> The Workshop on the Prevention of Alcohol-Related Injury in the Pacific Islands, 2 – 3 August 1990, was organized by the Alcohol Research Unit, University of Auckland, in its role as a WHO collaborating centre for research and training in alcohol and drug abuse for the Western Pacific region.

economics is the relationship of supply to demand - supply is based upon demand, that those who supply goods are motivated by their potential to realize a profit, and supply attempts to affect demand. Thus, while suppliers can affect demand, the relationship of alcohol consumption and availability 'can be mutually stimulating and reinforcing of one another' (Edwards et al., 1994: 126-7).

Similarly, Holder (2000) argued that supply responds to demand:

Whenever there is a public desire for alcohol, a supply will be created (even if it is illicit); yet the supply and demand relationship is hardly one-directional. This is especially true if the supply of alcohol is legal and public, for there is also a clear potential for supply to influence demand (Holder, 2000: S461).

Furthermore, Holder (2000) noted that, 'the supply of alcoholic beverages, including its production, distribution and retail sale influence consumption and hence harm' (2000: S461).

The *WHO Project on Public Drinking* (Single, 1997), which assessed the availability of data on public drinking and the range of regulatory options available to reduce problems associated with public drinking in twelve countries, found that the availability of alcohol in a society will have a bearing on the nature and extent of problems arising from drinking in licensed establishments (Single, 1997: 425-448). Single remarked that: 'The overriding conclusion from the informant survey is that the prevention of problems arising from public drinking should be a major component in alcohol prevention strategies at the national, regional and community level' (Single, 1997: 447).

For Dernbach and Marshall, the 'recurrent finding in public health studies of alcohol policy around the world is that as the availability of alcoholic beverages increases, various other alcohol-related problems usually increase apace' (2001: 30). But what is the relation of alcohol to social problems, and what does it mean to say that a problem is alcohol-related? Room (1998a), has argued that for some kinds of problems, the link to alcohol is definitional.

There is usually little doubt that alcohol's relation to a death from alcohol poisoning, for instance, and the alcohol link is built into the category by which the health statistics are collected. Similarly, an arrest for drinking-driving is in itself a problem for the arrestee, and the alcohol link is built into the definition of the crime (Room, 1998a: 390).

A second more common mode of relation of drinking to problems, according to Room, is conditional and probabilistic. He noted that the risk of a car crash is increased when a driver has had a few drinks, although not every driver who has had a few drinks necessarily has a crash. That type of relationship, Room argued, 'is probabilistic rather than fixed: we can say that if there is more drinking-driving, there will be more car crashes, but we cannot be certain that a particular occasion of drinking-driving will result in a crash' (Room, 1998: 390). But Room also explained that the characteristic of alcohol's causal role and relation to problems are often influenced by cultural presumptions and perceptions. Moreover, Room noted that in a cultural context 'where drinking is defined as highly problematic alcohol may be assumed to be the cause of every bad thing that happens where someone has been drinking' (Ibid, 390).

In his critical examination of trends in the global alcohol industry, Jernigan (1997) argued that:

Alcohol use is responsible for between three and four percent of all global disease and disability. The burden of alcohol use falls heaviest on developing countries. Substantial research has made the link between how much alcohol is available to a country, and how great that country's alcohol problems will be (Jernigan, 1997: 11).

Recall that Shaw et al., (1978), in their examination of the prevalence and causes of drinking problems, found 'that reducing alcohol availability is likely to decrease per capita consumption and hence the overall prevalence of alcohol-related problems' (1978: 101).

For McDonald, Elvy and Mielke (1997), alcohol-related problems 'can be conceptualized in two ways: those resulting from drinking, and those problems arising from society's reaction to drinking' (1997: 387). Responses from senior police officers in McDonald and his colleagues' study mirror those of the Samoan Commissioner's explanations in my own study: that

alcohol is heavily implicated in, and a major contributing factor to crimes and offending in Samoa. Moreover, McDonald and colleagues' findings highlight many of the problems discerned in my own study among Samoans, especially those interviewed in Samoa.

### ***Alcohol-related Problems and Pacific People in New Zealand***

In New Zealand, there is a paucity of reliable data on alcohol-related problems as a consequence of Pacific people's alcohol use. Recently, however, some invaluable information is now emerging to fill this gap. The latest data from the Ministry of Health's *New Zealand Drug Statistics 2001 Report* contains invaluable data on Pacific people's alcohol use and alcohol-related problems. The report noted that when Pacific people were asked about a list of 14 problems associated with drinking in the annual Auckland Alcohol Survey, 46 percent of males and 27 percent of females stated that they had had at least one problem in the previous 12 months (Ministry of Health, 2001a: 21). Fifty-seven percent for male and 37 percent of female respondents had suffered at least one of 14 identified consequences of drinking once in the preceding 12 months recorded in the 1995 National Alcohol Survey (Ibid, p. 19).

For both Pacific respondents and the general population, hangover was the most frequent consequence of drinking. Forty-two percent of Pacific males and 22 percent of Pacific female respondents to the annual Auckland Alcohol Survey compared to 51 percent of men and 33 percent of women in the 1995 National Alcohol Survey reported suffering from a hangover from alcohol the day after drinking. Not remembering things that happened during the drinking episode was the next most frequent problem experienced by respondents in both surveys which affected twenty-two percent of Pacific males and 9 percent of Pacific females, compared to twenty-one percent of men and 11 percent of women in the general population (Ministry of Health, 2001a: 19).

A report of the first ever National Survey of Pacific People's Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2004) has recently been completed. The survey of over 1,100 people aged 13-65 years examines 'patterns of alcohol and drug use, including tobacco, kava, marijuana and



other drugs, gambling and related harm' among Pacific people in New Zealand. This report will be a significant addition to the data base on Pacific peoples' alcohol and drugs use and patterns of consumption (Ministry of Health, 2004).

### ***Samoans and Alcohol-Related Problems***

Some participants in Samoa and others in Auckland and Christchurch, including key informants in this study perceived alcohol as synonymous with social problems. Several participants and key informants remarked that lifestyle behaviours including alcohol abuse have impacted significantly on Samoan cultural, economic, and social wellbeing in many respects. Whilst individuals and key informants shared a variety of concerns including some unpleasant experiences as consequences of their own alcohol use, and the drinking of others close to them, such as spouses, relatives, and friends, the majority of those interviewed were in agreement that social problems have been a consequence of alcohol use, and abuse, in many Samoan contexts.

In a pilot study that I conducted on drinking behaviours and the level of awareness of the effect of alcohol among some Samoan people in Auckland (Lima, 2000), several focus group participants and key informants indicated that Samoan men's drinking behaviour impacted negatively on their physical health and on the economic and social wellbeing of members of their families.

Similarly, the study of the place of alcohol in the lives of Samoan women in Auckland, by Neich and Park (1988), found that alcohol does not have an important place in Samoan women's lives. However, the study also showed that because of the style of drinking and drunken behaviour practiced by many Samoan men, alcohol had very important negative effects for women.

Heavy drinking was linked with domestic violence, the depletion of the family budget, with motor crashes and, less frequently, with health problems. It was clear that most of the time when key individuals were talking about problems relating to drunkenness rather than health problems relating to long term alcohol consumption (Neich & Park, 1988: 12).

In this study, participants and key informants at the three research sites expressed concerns about the social and health problems related to alcohol use and abuse. There were similarities, as well as differences, in the types of concerns raised and problems experienced by participants in Samoa, Auckland and Christchurch, in terms of the detrimental effects of excessive consumption and the abuse of alcohol. In Christchurch, for example, all five New Zealand-born participants - three men, two who drink and one, a former heavy drinker, and two women abstainers - said that as individuals they have witnessed family members, some of their peers, and even people within their social networks who have experienced social and economic problems as a consequence of alcohol and other drug abuse.

### ***Social Problems Identified***

Several types of social problems associated with alcohol and drunkenness were identified by participants at all the three research sites. Some of the problems were common at only one site, or may even be present at two sites but not at the other. For example, the problem of the authority of the council of chiefs been challenged by a drunken *taule'ale'a*, or even another *matai* was common in Samoa, but was, not surprisingly, rarely mentioned by participants in Christchurch and Auckland. Some people in Auckland and Samoa mentioned the economic impact of families missing out on basic household items because the drinker, usually the father, may have spent family income on alcohol instead. A few participants mentioned the threat to parents' authority when parents and their children drink together. But one of the most common social problems identified by participants at both research sites as affecting Samoan people especially family members is that of domestic violence which I discuss next.

### ***Domestic Violence***

Domestic violence against women and children was identified by participants at the three research sites as one of the most common alcohol-related social problems among Samoans. In Christchurch, for example, all the four New Zealand-born participants mentioned that domestic violence often occurs when a father or husband gets drunk. One young New Zealand-born abstainer woman participant said her own father wasn't violent when drunk,

but she said parents of some of her friends often caused quite a lot of problems for the mother and children when they get drunk. She said she has not witnessed violence within her Pentecostal church environment although she has seen some drunken men make 'idiots' of themselves when they drink too much. The other young New Zealand-born abstainer woman participant, also recognized domestic violence as one of the bigger problems she has witnessed especially in Samoa, where she lived for a while as a teenager. She also recalled the verbal abuse and foul language which some of her own father's siblings used when they get angry while under the influence.

### ***Violence, Culture, and Alcohol***

In a paper presented at the Pacific Spirit '99 Conference on *Alcohol and Violence in Law*, Samoan lawyer [now Judge] A'e'au Semi Epati, suggested that 'alcohol had something to do with the breaking down of the defences and the normal checks' of Pacific people which result in them breaking the law. Judge Epati suggested that the reason for some Pacific people's law-breaking has something to do with their cultural upbringing.

... the way we were brought up has something to do with the way we react, and the way we react is loosened up by alcohol ... For example, we were brought up to be brave and fearless, and never to step back. When you're faced with a confrontation, do not step back. ... whenever a Pacific Island person is beaten up the reaction is go and throw a stone at him ... we never say can we go and discuss this? This was an accepted norm and the normal reaction that we were all brought up in. There was never any time where the reaction was reconciliatory and to talk it over (Epati, 1999).

On the issue of drinking, Epati argued that people's attitudes to drinking needed to change. Moreover, Pacific people, including Samoans need to be educated in handling alcohol.

We drink to get drunk, we do not drink for the purpose for which most people do, namely as a relaxant or a little stimulant, something to sit down and enjoy or to whet the appetite before a meal. ... We need to educate ourselves and to learn ... rather than say don't drink, learn how to handle it. It's a matter of attitude that we need to change in order to facilitate and accommodate, and then we will enjoy (Epati, 1999).

In terms of cultural upbringing Epati noted that it comes back to the suppression of feelings and emotions, especially anger: 'When Pacific people [in New Zealand] get angry, they do not express themselves very well and consequently, the moment they get drunk away go the checks, the suppressed anger and emotions come up, and that's when they break the law' (Epati, 1999).

### ***Alcohol and Family Members***

A New Zealand-born young man who drinks said whilst he has heard, and knows of alcohol related problems such as fights, domestic violence, and disputes which involved Samoan families as a consequence of drinking too much alcohol, that wasn't the case with his family because his parents don't drink alcohol. He also noted that members of his extended family were scattered throughout Christchurch, and so 'my extended family was more my church, families from church'. The participant, however, mentioned that his father's main concern was with his younger brother, who had a wife and young family, 'but still liked to drink and party ... always drinking in the weekend and stuff like that' (***CH02 – New Zealand-born Young Man Drinker, Christchurch***).

### ***Alcohol and Gang Fights***

The same participant also experienced alcohol-related problems by way of fights with the 'skin heads'.

It was bad because we had skin heads ... at one stage for about three years it got quite dangerous and Samoans were well known for being able to handle themselves in fights ... so if we drink and go together you don't just look or fight for yourself, you fight for Samoa when we fight the skin heads. And you don't shy away ... some of the boys started trouble but most of us didn't, but if there was a fight we don't run away (***CH02 – New Zealand-born Young Man Drinker, Christchurch***).

The participant also explained how at one stage, 'some of our boys' actions lead to our Church Hall being torched by some Black Power associates: 'Our Hall is right in town and it's one of the first Samoan churches here in Christchurch and it is quite well known ... and some of our boys got into a fight with some Black Power associates and, as a result, our church Hall got

burnt down. It was on the news on tv ...' (**CH02 – New Zealand-born Young Man Drinker, Christchurch**).

The other New Zealand-born young man, who drinks, who is from the same church as the above participant, explained how the group of young guys from their church 'got known as a gang'.

... it wasn't through just *palagis* but other Samoan Churches as well, we were quite looked-down upon. If you had asked anyone a couple of years ago they'd say the PIC boys are troublemakers blah blah blah ... but we just go down and when trouble comes we don't shy away. Sometimes if we knew something really serious was going to happen we wouldn't drink. But if we did fight and had a good one, then we would drink hard to celebrate (**CH03 – New Zealand-born Young Man Drinker, Christchurch**).

An older New Zealand-born man, a former heavy drinker, stated he experienced alcohol and drug-related problems during his younger years. He said both he and his twin-brother were about fifteen when 'we were just hanging out, we were in town all the time so we were part of this townie crowd'.

Yeah, Samoans, Maori, all brown and it was a 'brown crowd' and a couple of *palagis*. Basically, most of that crowd ended up in a lot of courts, community corrections, probations, that was the scene. Some of that crowd started up Black Power down there and some went to the Mob, that was a sub-culture, so we were in this middle phase where you're not old enough to be there but you're old enough to do your own thing ... and there was this smoking [dope], that was a big part of that (**CH07 – New Zealand-born Former Drinker, Christchurch**).

The participant said his Samoan father never knew what he and his brother were up to until they went to Court.

We were probably the first Samoans in the Court Rooms down there ... we became notorious and recognized as trouble, not that we were evil or anything like that ... we just kind of did our own thing but we kept that away from dad as far as possible. I think when we were smoking in town and if he saw us, we'd crush our smokes and held them in our hands, and do whatever so he didn't see us smoking because we saw that as respect (**CH07 – New Zealand-born Man Former Drinker, Christchurch**).

A Samoan-born older man, who drinks, admitted he abused alcohol during his younger years, although he 'had never touched alcohol' when he first arrived in Christchurch. He said when he became interested in alcohol, because most of his rugby mates were drinking, he wrote to his mother in Samoa to ask her permission for him to drink.

Before I touched alcohol, I had to write to my mother back in Samoa ... that I think I'm going to have a drink of alcohol. And I was quite fascinated that she replied that it's really up to me. I had to ask my mother, it was that respect thing that I had to ask my mother that I wanted to drink alcohol (**CH05 - Samoa-born Male Drinker, Christchurch**).

And whilst the participant didn't relate any problems in terms of violent behaviour or alcohol-related problems in relation to his drinking, other than to say he abused alcohol during his younger age, he regretted wasting lots of money on alcohol, especially money he should have spent on his family.

I sort of abused alcohol during my younger age, but I enjoyed myself. What I am saying is, in the sense of being happy, not going out to look for fights ... just to enjoy, but I knew I was abusing it drinking too much. I spent a lot of money but now I have a family and then I sat down and thought, about the money I spent shouting my friends and I thought, come on, grow up (**CH05 - Samoan-born Older Male Drinker, Christchurch**).

An older Samoan-born woman drinker interviewed in Christchurch also noted that a lot of her clients were victims of domestic violence, including some men as victims, but that there don't seem to be a lot of mechanisms in place for those affected to get help. She said the Service she works for provides assistance in most areas of health and social problems, but that there seems to be a cultural expectation that domestic violence happens when the husband or the father gets drunk. She said part of her work, at least lately, was to attend to some Pacific women who were suffering from domestic violence but do not know where to go for assistance.

A New Zealand-born young woman abstainer, who lived in Samoa for a while during her teenage-years, did tertiary studies in Auckland during the 1990s, and was living and working in Christchurch at the time of the interview suggested that alcohol abuse is a phenomenon that has afflicted many

Samoan people in both the islands and in New Zealand. Having lived in each of the three sites of this research, the participant made some interesting and insightful observations about the differences in Samoan people's attitudes towards alcohol, and other people's perceptions of the effect of alcohol on Samoan people. For example, she noted that alcohol has become so 'entrenched into being alive' in Samoa that it has become a normal part of life for some people.

Constantly, alcohol seems to be a major part of one's life, it's in Samoa growing up, the socializing going out for drinks is a lunch time, after work time, or weekend type thing. Alcohol has become so entrenched in the *fa'asamoa* that it's hard to take it out. ... Marriage break-ups and promiscuity are so high now that the friends I love and adore and hang out with are cheating on their husbands, and husbands cheating on their wives, because they are more free to do so **(CH01 – New Zealand-born Young Woman Abstainer, Christchurch).**

On the social scene in Auckland and Christchurch, the same participant noted that alcohol is very much a 'Kiwi thing' whether you're in Auckland, Dunedin or Christchurch. But she also argued that:

The island scene in Auckland is pretty strong, but the people I go out with are friends and they are very protective and they allow me to not drink. ... Samoans and Pacific Islanders down here [Christchurch] are different from Samoans in Auckland. Down here they very much fit in to mainstream, in my judgment. **(CH01 – New Zealand-born Young Woman Abstainer, Christchurch).**

The other New Zealand-born young woman abstainer, who grew up in Auckland but was interviewed in Christchurch, stated that whilst she wasn't exposed to alcohol, and never picked up drinking, she knew of some girls who picked it up at age fourteen, fifteen or sixteen. She said for some young people 'alcohol is the only scene for them and there's drugs and other things which result in unwanted pregnancies, diseases and things like that, it just opens them up to other things, and threats as well' **(CH08 – New Zealand-born Young Woman Abstainer, Christchurch).**

In Auckland, some participants expressed similar concerns to those expressed above. And because the majority of Auckland participants were Samoan-born and introduced to drinking in Samoa before they came to New

Zealand, some of their experiences and concerns about alcohol-related problems were more to do with the wasteful use of scarce money spent on buying alcohol ahead of other more important commodities for the family. But some Auckland participants' experiences around alcohol were unique, and are highlighted here. For example, the New Zealand-born young man abstainer, a Seventh Day Adventist adherent, who never drank alcohol when he was growing up, said he 'never really picked up drinking' although some of his friends from church drank. But he recalled how he had tried drinking once, and 'never liked the taste of beer'. He never experienced any problems with alcohol at home because his parents 'never drank or smoked because they were being brought up in the church'. He said the closest experience he has had with drinking was with one of his brothers who started 'drinking and smoking away from home'.

I remember my brother telling me a story how he came home drunk one day, and my father was really wild at him and gave him a hiding ... but for me, I hear stories about friends and other people drink-driving and all the hardships that come with alcohol (**AK09 – New Zealand-born Young Male Abstainer, Auckland**).

When asked whether it 'bothered him' that his wife would have a glass of wine now and then, the participant said that his wife's moderate drinking 'was fine with me so long as she can control it, as long as she can control her drinking that's fine' (**NZ09 – New Zealand-born Young Male Abstainer, Auckland**).

In contrast to the above participant's negligible exposure to, and experience with alcohol, the experience of a Samoan-born former heavy drinker who abused alcohol to the extent that 'it affected the brain, joined gangs, and beat people up' was extreme.

I abused alcohol to the extreme, and it wasn't just alcohol, there were drugs, associations with gangs like the Black Power, we did everything that was bad. And I even got beaten up by other people in the pubs sometimes, and you don't know what happened. My whole life at the time was controlled by alcohol, my wife and my children lived in fear when I came home drunk (**NZ14 – Samoa-born Former Heavy Drinker, Auckland**).



In Samoa, one of the more worrying trends related to the alcohol and drugs environment is the severity of alcohol-related violence. Some participants and key informants in this study observed that violence tends to be an attendant companion to alcohol and drugs. The health professional key informant from Samoa, for example, noted that whilst there may not be a lot of fights in Samoa now as there were a decade ago, the results of the fewer fights are a lot more deadly because they now use guns. Because they now use guns there are a lot more serious injuries. He said there is a perception that more and more young people are carrying guns around.

### ***Binge Drinking***

Another issue raised by most participants is the alcohol-related harm caused by alcohol especially through binge drinking.<sup>21</sup> Binge drinking has become a growing phenomenon in both industrialized and developing societies over recent years. It has become a common phenomenon which has been perceived as one of the recent trends in people's patterns of alcohol use throughout the world, in both developed and developing countries.

The Alcohol and Liquor Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC) chief executive, Dr Mike MacAvoy, in a recent report which outlined current attitudes and behaviours of New Zealanders towards the consumption of alcohol, noted that binge drinking had become 'endemic' in New Zealand. The report entitled: *The Way We Drink: A Profile of Drinking Culture in New Zealand* shows that 'drunken behaviour is a part of mainstream New Zealand culture. It's not just the behaviour of young people or dependent drinkers' (ALAC, Media Release, 04 March 2004). The ALAC report also shows that Pacific people are less likely to drink at all but when they do drink, they drink heavily. The report categorized the Pacific adult population (18+ years) into people who are:

- 'Non-drinkers' (46 percent of Pacific adults compared with 19 percent of all New Zealand adults)

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<sup>21</sup> Binge drinking is generally referred to in some contexts as hazardous drinking. ALAC notes that binge drinking is when a man has more than six standard drinks at one time, or more than four standard drinks at one time for a woman, especially if it's a short period of time. Binge drinking can be very dangerous and those who binge drink are more likely to experience alcohol-related violence and injury.

- ‘Conscious moderators’ (14 percent of Pacific adults compared with 29 percent of all New Zealand adults)
- ‘Constrained binge drinkers’ (10 percent of Pacific adults compared with 23 percent of New Zealand adults)
- ‘Uninhibited binge drinkers’ (31 percent of Pacific adults compared with 29 percent of New Zealand adults).

From the above categorization, the rate of uninhibited binge drinking by Pacific adults is higher than the total New Zealand adult population. Moreover, the report found that 22 percent of Pacific people compared with eight percent of all adult New Zealanders, were more likely to have drunk more than 10 glasses on the last drinking occasion (ALAC, 04 March, 2004 Media Release).

### **Alcohol Accessibility in Samoa**

Alcohol became more accessible during the early post-independence years in Samoa. In 1971, ten years after Samoa’s independence, the Liquor Amendment Bill was introduced, passionately debated, and subsequently passed into law. One of the most serious concerns expressed by MPs who opposed the bill was the anticipated detrimental consequences of drunkenness once liquor was accessible in villages located outside of the Apia town area.

During the Liquor Bill debate, for instance, former Prime Minister, Mata’afa Fiame, expressed profound sorrow that the bill, if passed could impact on the social relationships among the chiefs and orators in the villages. Whilst he was aware that the granting of a permit to sell liquor was subject to consent of *ali’i ma faipule* of the villages, he was mindful of other complications that could arise from widespread availability of liquor. One of his main concerns was that the village chiefs may not be unanimous on whether to support liquor licence applications, and those differences could cause divisions among chiefs and in turn, impact on the dignity of the village council authority.

One section may decide to set up a liquor club in the village and the other section may not. Another thing is that *matai* may drink liquor together with untitled men and that could affect the usual courtesy the untitled should pay to the *matai*. ... There is a saying that one who knows what is good and fails to do so is a sin. It is my personal conviction that if we, as members of this House know that liquor is bad for our people, and this is my own personal conclusion drawn from experience, we should therefore do whatever we consider to be for the best interest and welfare of our people (Mata'afa Fiame, Liquor Bill Debate, 14/12/1971).

Mata'afa proposed that the particular legislation be referred to all citizens of the country 21 years of age and over to decide on the matter in the form of a referendum. He argued that if the majority of the people decided to support the legislation, then the Government could pass the legislation in line with the people's wish. The former Prime Minister, who was Chairman of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS) at the time, also explained that the CCCS had recommended to the Parliamentary Bills Committee that the matter be referred back to the general public for their views and consultation. Other members opposed to the bill, expressed concerns that the bill would result in increased consumption and more importantly, it would expose people out in the villages to alcohol.

At the time of the debate, it was generally acknowledged by parliamentarians that most of alcoholic beverages were drunk in Apia and the surrounding areas. The general tone of MPs' arguments during the debate of the bill was that people in the villages weren't knowledgeable about alcohol use and that making alcohol available for sale outside the town area, historically where alcohol had been consumed since its introduction by Europeans, that the social organizations of the *nu'u*, village and *itumalo*, districts would be affected.

Some MPs were more concerned about controlling the availability of, and access of liquor to people who 'drank to their hearts content and have become drug addicts or those who become alcoholics'. MP Leota Pita, for example, argued that the spread of liquor should be considered a disease that was prevalent in Samoa.

Here in our own country we see good families being broken up all because of liquor. ... I am able to say this with confidence because I happen to be witnessing happenings of this nature in overseas countries when I was there in that families have been depressed and experienced great hardship because of the liquor question. We are presently attempting to develop our hospital services in order to cater for the various diseases that are prevalent in the country and I strongly feel ... that we should in the same manner attempt to remedy the spread of liquor consumption because I consider this as a disease, and we must do all we can in order to remedy this disease (MP Leota Pita, Liquor Bill Debate, 14/12/1971).

Former House Speaker, Hon. Leota Ituau, who confessed to consuming 'liquor to some extent', remarked that some people of his constituency had instructed him 'to inform the House that they do not support the Bill for the importation of liquor into our country'. Leota cautioned that Parliament 'should take every measure to have this liquor returned to the country from which we imported same'. In response to a question posed by one of the members on how to cut down a tree that is already growing, Leota remarked: ... this is the place where we can take measures in order to fell or cut down this tree which is already growing. This Parliament has all the powers to take any measures to cut down this tree (Leota Ituau, Liquor Bill Debate, 14/12/1971).<sup>22</sup>

In their defense of the proposed bill, members of the Bills Committee, and supporters of the bill argued for the freedom of the individual to decide whether to drink liquor or not. A former Bills Committee chairman, Asiata Lagolago, in support of the bill noted that a similar bill was proposed in 1958 'but was left in abeyance since that time'. The MP noted that the proposed bill 'would serve to protect the interest of our people as a whole ... and would protect the individual rights of the general public'.

The 1971 Liquor Bill was nevertheless, passed into law and has since been amended several times to accommodate recent changes in the liquor industry and to reflect changing attitudes to alcohol in Samoa. From the

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<sup>22</sup> Leota was responding to an analogy by MP Leilua Iuliano, who noted thus: 'Sir, we know that if a young tree grows up and there is a bend in it, it is always a move in the right direction to try and straighten that bend before the tree grows up to a fair size. In this manner I feel that this matter or problem which we are presently facing should have been rectified and corrected long before this. It will be very hard to correct it at this point' (MP Leilua Iuliano, Liquor Bill Debate, 14/12/1971).

comments and experiences of the participants in this study with regard to the negative consequences and alcohol-related problems which have resulted from the increased availability of alcohol, and the changing dynamics in the ownership of the profitable monopolistic sole brewer in the Samoa islands, the social and health problems will continue to increase with the increasing volume of alcohol production and consumption. Samoans have a saying *Ua fasia fua Foaga ae le'i fai misa*, that someone who had no say in the decision making may nevertheless, be severely affected by the consequences of decisions made by others.

### ***Liquor Control: an International Problem***

One could argue that one of the most problematic aspects of alcohol production and alcohol use is that of lack of control. Jernigan (1997), for example, has argued that societies which have 'little control over the supply of alcohol ... are suffering rising alcohol problems at the same time that national governments and statistics understate their importance' (1997: 74). But Room and colleagues (2002), argued that '[d]ifferent societies employ different mixes of strategies in controlling problems from drinking, with the particular mixture often reflecting quite deep-rooted aspects of cultures' (2002: 166).

In the case of Samoa, where alcohol was not available until its introduction by Europeans less than two hundred years ago, controlling the availability and access of alcohol had evolved from partial prohibition to total prohibition, to permit systems, to a more recent liberalized market controlled by the Samoa Liquor Control Authority. But the policing and enforcement of the liquor legislation depends entirely on the police and their ability to provide the monitoring and enforcement of those laws. The Commissioner of Police, for example, noted that in circumstances where serious crimes which involved people from the villages, the police depend to a large extent on the help of the village chiefs and orators in accessing and apprehending offenders from the villages. The Commissioner also noted that sometimes, the village chiefs may not be very forthcoming with assistance which makes the police work more cumbersome and challenging. But he was confident that if the police officers continued to work in collaboration with the various village councils of

chiefs, that would enhance the relationships and that would be very helpful and convenient for the police.

Moreover, the Police Commissioner pointed out that alcohol has been implicated in most of the crimes which the police force has had to deal with over the years. He said alcohol seem to be implicated in most cases of drink-driving, speeding, and other more serious crimes, even murder. One of the more problematic issues involving liquor is the policing of licensed premises where people were allowed to purchase and consume alcohol. These include monitoring patrons in places such as hotels, night clubs and public bars, as well as village stores which sell liquor and allowed patrons to consume alcohol outside the premises. The policing work that is required to enforce the liquor laws involves police officers patrolling night clubs for under-aged patrons, or for violation of closing hours which require constant attention from police officers, who also have other duties and responsibilities over and above policing and enforcing liquor laws.

Furthermore, the Commissioner explained that whilst the police get assistance and cooperation from some club owners and proprietors, others were not so co-operative and sometimes, the police officers get criticized in the media for trying to do their job. At times, some bar owners would blatantly ignore the police, telling them 'it is none of their business' coming in to the clubs and making a fuss. The Commissioner, however, also stated that some proprietors were often quick to ring the police whenever there was trouble such as fights at their premises.

### ***Liquor Control in Samoa a 50-Year-Old Problem***

Fifty-one years ago, a Liquor Commission of Inquiry (1953) appointed to examine the importation, supply and sale of intoxicating liquor in Samoa recommended among other things, that control of liquor by *matai* may be 'greatly lessened' with a breakdown of the Samoan social system. And, as there were no laws consistent with adequate control that could be devised to define the entitlement to intoxicating liquor, the Liquor Commission recommended that the only alternative which appeared feasible at the time was to control the supply and consumption administratively at the individual

level. The Commission also recommended that: 'Any system of control adopted should be of such kind as to be adaptable to changes in the social life of the community'. The Commission suggested that a 'properly constituted and politically independent authority such as a board or committee ... should be capable of adapting its administration to meet the changing conditions which will arise in the future' (Liquor Commission Report, 1953: 30).

Unfortunately, whilst the Samoan Liquor Control Board continues to function as the authority that oversees liquor legislation in Samoa, it is not unfair to argue that its role is primarily as an administrator and collector of liquor licencing fees, and that both policing and enforcement of the liquor laws are completely dependent on the Commissioner of Police, who is also a member of the Liquor Control Board. Consequently, legislation such as the Liquor Act 1971, and the subsequent amendments (1978, 1986, 1993), have become out-dated and somewhat ineffective.

Since my fieldwork in Samoa, some significant changes have occurred in Samoa both at the macro-level and to a lesser extent, at the micro-level. Global economic changes have swept small nation states into the neoliberal frameworks of governance where large government departments have been transformed into lean and mean policy-advisory Ministry machines, for the sake of transparency and accountability, catchwords which were common in industrialized societies such as New Zealand, for instance, during the 1980s and 1990s. Privatization, for example, was the 'norm' and in Samoa, at least during the late-1990s, the government's profitable brewery was one of the industries which needed to be better-managed and more profitable. Hence the need to 'flog off' the sole brewery to one of the world's top-ten beer producers, Fosters Brewing Group of Australia, through its beer and leisure arm Carlton and United Breweries (Marshall, 2004: 212).

In the light of new developments and recent changes to the ownership of the sole producer of beer in the Samoan liquor industry over the last few years, therefore, it is likely that controlling the availability of alcohol in Samoa will continue to be a problem. Sadly, the Samoa Liquor Control Authority

depends primarily on the Samoan Police force for monitoring and enforcement of the nation's liquor laws, which as mentioned earlier, has limited resources and more pressing concerns.

### ***Increased Availability of Illicit Drugs***

But the somewhat ineffective control and enforcement of liquor legislation in Samoa have been grossly exacerbated by the increasing availability of illicit drugs. The literature suggests that in several contexts, alcohol and illicit drugs go hand-in-hand, so that those who drink alcohol also do drugs. And whilst some participants in this study seemed more concerned about young people being exposed to illicit drugs than to alcohol, some have argued that legal drugs such as alcohol and tobacco pose a greater health threat (Bugge, March, 2004). These merit brief discussion.

In an article entitled: *Legal Drugs Pose Highest Health Threat*, Axel Bugge (2004) argued that spiralling illicit drugs-related problems has become a huge worldwide phenomenon which even the most industrialized countries are struggling to address. The first report of The Neuroscience of Psychoactive Substance Use and Dependence global body, noted that: 'There are about 200 million illegal drugs users worldwide, or 3.4 percent of the world population. ... Illegal drugs contributed 0.8 percent to global ill health in 2000' (Bugge, 2004).

The report added that: 'The health threat from legal drugs, like alcohol and tobacco is much greater than that from illegal narcotics'. For example, the report stated that in 2000, alcohol accounted for 4.1 percent and cigarettes 4 percent of global ill health. The World Health Organization (WHO), Director-General, Dr Lee Jong-Wook, has stated in a recent statement that: 'Health and social problems associated with the use and dependence on tobacco, alcohol and illicit substances require greater attention by the public health community' (Bugge, 2004). It is clear from the findings of this recent global report that whilst illicit drugs worldwide has increased in recent years, the main global health burden is due to licit drugs such as alcohol and cigarettes (Bugge, 2004).



In a recently-published article on the global economy of alcohol and drugs in Oceania, Marshall (2004) examined the new patterns of manufacture, movement, and use of legal and illegal substances in the region. Marshall argues that while alcohol 'is clearly in the Pacific to stay ... the major profits from these drugs leave the islands and line the pockets of stockholders in the major [transnational corporations] TNCs that control their manufacture and distribution' (2004: 218). Unfortunately, at least in the case of Samoa, outlets or small village stores which are licensed to resell TNC's products are left to the village *fono a matai* to monitor and enforce by way of village regulations to ensure order, peace, and quiet, and to control and monitor the concomitant violence that often impact on villagers' lives.

But the inefficient enforcement of liquor laws is not a problem confined to developing countries. The WHO Project on Public Drinking in twelve countries (Single, 1997), for example, found that as well as the three most commonly indicated problems associated with drinking,<sup>23</sup> 'many of the informants in the survey expressed concern that the enforcement of alcohol licensing laws receives very low priority on the political agenda' (Single, 1997: 425-448).

### ***Political and Economic Agenda***

Some ten years ago, Finance Minister, Tuila'epa Sa'ilele, currently Samoa's Prime Minister, spearheaded the government's drive to promote investment in tourism and manufacturing at an investment promotion mission to Australia. In a 1992 April monthly report by the South Pacific Trade Commissioner, Bill McCabe, entitled: 'Samoans Sell the Samoan Way', he observed that 'no country can expect to attract serious, long-term investment unless it can offer ways to commit funds with confidence.' Samoa, according to the South Pacific Trade Commissioner, had done its homework well: 'Its legislation has been streamlined and new acts introduced. In the late 1990s, it established the Department of Trade, Commerce and Industry specifically to assist entrepreneurs in matters of trade, and commercial and industrial development' (McCabe, 1992: 47).

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<sup>23</sup> The WHO Report cited: underage drinking, impaired driving, and alcohol-related violence, as the three most commonly indicated problems associated with drinking in public venues (Single, 1997: 425).

Within the ensuing decade, however, the Samoan government's major shareholding in the highly profitable Samoan Brewery was acquired by Carlton Brewery, an Australian transnational corporation which owns 63 percent of Carlton Brewery (Fiji) Ltd. While the Samoa Breweries, the sole beer producer in Samoa has continued to be a very profitable investment for its new owners, its impact on the Samoan economy may not necessarily be ostentatious, at least according to a few participants in this study and several opinions expressed in the media.

The withdrawal of governments from controlling interests in trading and commercial activities was promoted by the World Bank as a key part of its structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which urged privatization of government businesses, but in the process created other problems. SAPs were the source of widespread international criticism through the 1970s and 1980s (McMichael, 1986).<sup>24</sup> Asthana (1994), for example, noted that one of the most fundamental objections to the SAPs related to its impact on health and health care expenditure. Asthana argued that while the World Bank suggested that health and education sectors are generally better protected than other public sectors when there are expenditure reductions, evidence suggested that declines in health spending are significantly related to both indebtedness and participation in adjustment projects (1994: 59).

But controlling the manufacture and sale of any products or commodities such as alcohol, for example, which may be central to the economic welfare of developing economies, may be easier said than done. The recent advocacy of the alcohol (and tobacco) industries by a Samoan Cabinet Minister, to boost the government's 'flagging economy', for example, has several consequences which require some discussion. In July 2003, Samoan Trade Minister, Hon. Hans Joachim Keil, said Samoa needed unique products, like alcohol and tobacco, industries which have already been

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<sup>24</sup> Philip McMichael (1996), for example, observed that World Bank lending emphasized what were considered investments, such as energy and export agriculture, rather than social investments, such as education, health services, water facilities, and housing. In addition, as a global operation, the Bank found it more convenient to invest in large-scale, capital intensive projects that might for example, have common technological inputs and similar appraisal mechanisms.

established (Radio New Zealand International, 08/07/2003), to enhance economic growth and development. This particular case highlights the conflict of interests and contradictions between an individual's religious convictions on the one hand, the wider consideration of national economic development strategies at the macro-level, and the costs to government of managing the downstream consequences of the strategies, on the other hand.

The above case of conflicting private and official positions of the Samoan Minister of Trade highlighted above is not an isolated incidence in a small developing economy such as Samoa. The Samoa-based medical professional key informant, for example, stated that in Samoa a large number of politicians and lawmakers smoke and consume alcohol. In such situations therefore, the key informant argued that 'one may find that there would be a conflict of interest which contradicts a person's own personal behaviours and practices insofar as alcohol use and other so called lifestyle risk behaviours are concerned' (*SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa*).

Similarly, in situations where individuals who are MPs or Cabinet Ministers but who may also have other personal or family interests such as shareholdings in businesses which may have connections to and relationships with industries such as alcohol or tobacco, for example, there may be conflicts of interest when, as MPs or Cabinet Ministers, they debate bills and legislation in Parliament which could inadvertently compromise the profitability of their other interests. Or could it be a matter of what Dernbach and Marshall (2001) have pointed out, that when people are confronted by externally imposed conditions, they must construct their own existence in relation to those conditions? (2001: 36). Sahlins (1994) made similar observations about people being caught up in situations 'they did not create or control yet cannot avoid' (1994: 16).

In a similar vein, the Samoan saying *Ua fasia fua Foaga ae le'i fai misa*, that someone who had no say in the decision making may nevertheless, be severely affected by the consequences of decisions made by others is

relevant. The recent changes in the ownership of alcohol production in developing countries by TNCs, controlled from Western countries by their executives who are unaffected by the alcohol-related problems in developing countries in which the product is sold, may be more appropriately considered a case of what the Samoans refer to as *E a ulu tafe ae selefutia ai Vaisigano*, that heavy rains at the mountain brooks *Ulu* inland of Magiagi, floods and damages the banks of the Vaisigano River. The decisions on the production, distribution, and promotion of alcohol consumption in developing countries such as Samoa, made by TNC executives from their locations in industrialized societies far away from the consequences with little regard for their social and health costs and consequences, are evidence indeed of people suffering as a consequence of decisions made by others.

Whilst the above observations paint a gloomy picture of future possibilities in terms of ownership and control of Vailima beer production, distribution, and promotion to the Samoan general public, it does not relieve the Samoan government from its primary responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its population is not compromised.

### ***Beer Production in the Hands of TNC***

Whether people like it or not, alcohol is in Samoa (and many other developing societies) to stay. Its manufacture, distribution, and availability to the Samoan public have recently been controlled by a TNC which has, and will continue to reap the economic benefits for many years to come. According to its 2002 Annual Report, Samoa Breweries Limited earned a \$1.6 million after-tax profit from revenues of more than \$9.8 million, an increase in profit of about 18 percent over 2001.<sup>25</sup> For the 2002-03 financial year Samoa Breweries celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a record \$5.774 million net profit. This was despite a decline in revenue 'due to a slowdown in economic growth over the period in question'. Interestingly, a posting on the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website noted that: 'The record profit was attributed to greater efficiency and good management. The shareholders are set to receive a final dividend of 7.5% for 2002-03, making

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<sup>25</sup> 'Business Briefs – Samoa' *Pacific Islands*. January 2004 Current Issue, <<http://pacificislands.cc/pm22002/pmdefault.php?urlarticleid+010>>

up a total of 15% for the 12 month period' (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, October, 2003).

Ironically, the alcohol industry in Samoa, once a monopoly of the Government-owned Western Samoa Breweries, has been acquired by Carlton Brewery Limited. Shortly after its acquisition of the sole brewer in Samoa the company made known its intention to make lots of money from its investment by exporting *Vailima* as a niche product to new market areas (Sagapolutele, 2003).<sup>26</sup> In a sense, it would seem unfortunate that the Samoan government and the majority of Samoan people may no longer benefit from a very profitable beer producing entity since government sold its majority shareholding to overseas shareholders who are now benefiting from this highly-profitable venture. Admittedly, the Samoan government will continue to derive benefits from the now-privately-owned entity from the operation through company taxation, income taxes from employees, and revenues from export and excise taxes, and a variety of other economic benefits from the distribution and resale of liquor as mentioned in the foregoing discussion. However, what the Samoan government needs to ensure now is that this profitable monopoly beer producer, now owned by one of the world's largest beer producing TNCs, be made accountable to, and contribute fully towards the amelioration of health and social problems, as consequences of alcohol use and abuse. But this may be easier said than done, and provides a thorny situation from the government's point of view. Whilst revenue from both the excise tax, company and income tax, as well as employment opportunities generated by a business entity such as its former beer producer may be significant for Samoa's national economy, government also has to consider how to address the attendant social, health, as well as the environmental consequences of a brewery.

But how could a small developing country with a total gross domestic product (GDP) which is a fraction of the total revenues of the new owner, that now

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<sup>26</sup> To commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Samoa Breweries, the company launched a new 'super-premium lager' Vailima Gold beer product for local and its widening export market. The new product, "aimed to satisfy beer lovers' demand for a premium beer using a method called the high gravity brewing that is designed to give it full-flavour, yet be less filling with less calories". (Sagapolutele, F. 'Samoa Breweries Unveils Low-Cal Vailima' in *Samoa News*, 15 December 2003).

decides on volumes of beer production, and types of alcoholic beverages manufactured, and is largely responsible for the economic, social and health costs to its people, make such a powerful TNC accountable? Ideally, beer producers in developing countries should be made to act responsibly, and be accountable for the health, social and economic effects and consequences of their products.

In *Thirsting Markets: The Global Impact of Corporate Alcohol*, a critical examination of the worldwide alcohol industry, Jernigan (1997) argued that 'national and international organizations, coalitions, governments and corporations can act to avert a global epidemic of alcohol-related problems (1997: 74). One of the many recommendations proposed in this report was that: 'A portion of tax revenues from alcohol should be earmarked for a fund to support alcohol problems research, prevention and treatment, said fund to be administered by public health experts and citizen representatives without financial connections to the alcoholic beverage industry' (1997: 79).

A similar proposition by Barbor (2000), in his commentary to an editorial in *Addiction*, entitled: "ICAP and the Perils of Partnership" by McCreanor, Casswell and Hill (2000), which called for the alcohol industry to provide 'dedicated tax levies or unrestricted grants that contain no limits on the types of topics of research and prevention' rather than the industry 'enhancing its image by token amounts of funding for irrelevant research and prevention activities' (2000: 195). McCreanor, Casswell and Hill, in their reply to commentaries to their editorial, conceded that some of the alcohol research they carry out is funded through an earmarked tax.

At any rate, the new owners of the sole brewery in Samoa, with absolute control of the production and distribution of beer products, now plan to produce other liquor products such as spirits or pre-mixed drinks at its newly-acquired and very profitable, liquor producing venture. Clearly, as has been experienced elsewhere in other developing and industrialized societies, changes in private ownership of production and the types of products produced, such as mixed-spirit drinks to be readily available, will inevitably result in the exacerbation of alcohol-related problems in an already

vulnerable developing economy such as that of Samoa. Meanwhile, the social and health problems which several participants and key informants in this study suggested have a potential to increase exponentially in years to come, will have to be addressed by the Samoan government, by NGOs, and church organizations.

A Samoan medical practitioner who has been practicing and promoting 'creative approaches' to healthy lifestyles and interactive communications with patients in Samoa, was saddened by the Trade Minister's advocacy for the alcohol and tobacco industries to boost Samoa's flagging exports mentioned earlier. He was more surprised by the Minister, a devout Mormon, expressing such views and attitude towards these products which are major contributors to people's poor health status through risky lifestyle behaviours.

### ***The Impact of Alcohol in National Economies***

This apparent contradiction stems from the difference between the roles alcohol consumption plays in one's personal life, and that which it plays in the economy which one manages. It is generally acknowledged in the literature that alcohol production is a useful means of earning revenues for various island economies. Room and Jernigan (2000), for example, argued that while 'alcohol production and trade can be of significant economic benefit to national economies ... alcohol's contribution to total production varies widely from country to country' (2000: S525). The authors argued that alcohol production 'is growing in importance in developing countries at a rate faster than in the developed world'. The authors noted for instance, that between 1990 and 1995, the output growth rate amounted to 5.3 percent in developing countries, in contrast to 1.3 percent in industrialized countries' (Ibid, S525).

Closer to home, Marshall (2004) observed that in 'the relatively small economies of most Pacific Islands countries, a brewery can become an important revenue earner' (2004: 213). In the case of Samoa, for example, Strachan (1988) noted that in 1988 the Western Samoa Breweries Limited, the sole producer of alcohol in Samoa was 'the single largest revenue earner in the country, with a turnover of 12 million tala (\$A8.5 million) and a workforce of 130' (Strachan, 1988, cited in Marshall, 2000: 213).

Interestingly, and far from surprising, Samoa Breweries has continued to be a successful and profitable investment for its new owners. In 2001, for example, Samoa Breweries posted a net profit of \$2.1 million. A year later, it recorded its fifth year in a row profits, earning \$1.6 million after-tax profit from revenues of more than \$9.8 million. Profitability and good news for the former government-owned brewery didn't stop there (*Pacific Magazine*, January, 2004). At the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment, the brewer of Vailima beer announced a record net profit of ST\$5.77 million for the 2002-03 financial year. This was despite a decline of ST\$1.17 million revenue due to a slow down in economic growth over the period in question (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, October, 2003).<sup>27</sup>

The phenomenon of alcohol use and abuse and the concomitant health and social problems, however, are not unique to Samoa. The recently-published edition of *Globalization and Social Change in the Pacific Islands*, for example, includes an exploration of 'new patterns of substance manufacture, movement, and use for the region known as Oceania or the Pacific islands' (Marshall, 2004: 200-221). Marshall documents how alcohol has found its way into the centre of many Pacific peoples' social lives. Furthermore, Marshall argues that while beer, 'the drink of choice everywhere in Oceania ... is brewed locally in a number of island countries, the financial capital, the equipment, the ingredients, and the technical know-how to make it all come from abroad and are not locally controlled' (2004: 207-218).

### ***Quandary for Government - Role for a New Mediating Agency?***

The above situation presents a quandary for the Samoan government which is not uncommon among developing societies. On the one hand, government has an obligation and responsibility to ensure the public is protected from problems caused by alcohol use and abuse. On the other hand, it desperately needs revenues from the brewery to fund its structural infrastructure, and national development projects. This clearly puts the government in a catch-22 situation which I believe, requires some

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<sup>27</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Economic Update - Samoa*, October 2004.



independent mediation between government and private alcohol and tobacco producers. For example, rather than establishing a Parliamentary Committee which may have a bias towards the government's view of issues, or an authority like the Liquor Control Board which is a Government-appointed entity working for the government, an independent agency, located outside of the machinery of government, but with clear guidelines and an understanding and appreciation of the attendant problems related to products such as beer, for example, as a mediating agency between the two sides would be a more tenable option. Such an agency would, on the one hand, be charged with monitoring product quality to ensure consumer protection and safety, while on the other hand, a body which would safeguard interests of the business community as well.

Such a mediating agency could include as members, professionals such as medical practitioners who are providing services to those whose lives may have been affected by alcohol-related crimes, violence and other problems. Medical practitioners, alcohol and drug counsellors, and other professionals who come face to face with the consequences of alcohol and drunkenness in their everyday work, for example, are well aware of the 'real' consequences of alcohol use and generally have the welfare and best interests of the population at heart. Other people with business skills who understand the economics and politics of international business requirements, but are not affiliated to the industries involved, could also play useful roles in such an endeavour. The proposed agency could play a crucial role in mediating, and promoting educational programmes to raise awareness of the detrimental consequences of alcohol-related abuse. It could also be a watchdog on behalf of the general public, to ensure, both the government and the business community have transparent and responsible policies and processes in place for the best interest of the public. Such an agency could in future, provide useful policy advice in terms of economics, health and social problems and a range of issues including the adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs.

The perception of the Samoan health professional key informant, for instance, that the Samoan Trade Minister's promotion of alcohol and tobacco

is a contradiction, is worthy of a brief diversion. 'It is a conflict of interest him being Mormon promoting alcohol in the public arena when his church is against that ... so for someone to put his own personal and religious beliefs is very surprising and not good at all in terms of health effect' **(SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa).**

The same key informant said the Minister's contradictory position is not dissimilar to many other Samoan parliamentarians' perspectives and practice when it comes to economic and social policy issues.

... a significant number of our parliamentarians drink, so to imagine that they would move legislations that may change policy is almost impossible ... it's difficult because the people in parliament smoke and drink ... but they're mainly binge drinkers usually weekend drinkers **(SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa).**

The key informant further remarked that some of his own health professional colleagues drink because alcohol is very socially acceptable. With regards to the positions of the churches on alcohol consumption in Samoa, the key informant explained that:

... with the Catholics, it's acceptable to drink, and the EFKS although it was rejected before now quite a significant number of preachers do drink ... so I think a lot of these *faifeaus* drink ... the modern ones take wine ... and so as a younger person observing the phenomenon, it's now acceptable and allowable to drink ... **(SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa).**

### ***Need for New Ideas and Strategic Planning***

It appears from the above observations of the medical professional key informant that there needs to be some new way of addressing alcohol- and drug-related problems in Samoa at the moment. Whether we like it or not, alcohol and other drugs are part of everyday life, and are responsible for much chaos and pandemonium which have impacted enormously on individuals and members of their families and networks. While evidence-based quantitative data may not be available to support these assumptions, anecdotal evidence gleaned from the experiences of participants and key informants in this qualitative study indicate that alcohol-related problems such as domestic violence, injuries resulting from drink-driving, serious

crimes committed by those under the influence of alcohol, as well as the negative impact of drinking and drunkenness in the villages and public places require serious attention on the part of political and community leaders. The concerns expressed by the health professional key informant, when asked how he would approach the problem of binge drinking and what strategy could be used to reach those of the older generations that seemed impervious to changing their attitudes towards alcohol use, and the suggestion, tongue-in-cheek, that it may be 'a matter of waiting for another Samoan generation to come' before anything can be done about it, is a worry and should be shared by everyone. His remark that the younger generation is better than the older generation is a sad indictment on what he perceived as poor role modeling by parents.

... this generation is better than your [researcher's] generation ... in the meantime it's going to be very difficult to change the habits and behaviours and it's only by emphasizing disease and sickness that they will change and hopefully they will change before they die. For a significant number of them it's only when they're sick, that's when the clock ticks. ... I had three guys in their mid-50s, they are heavy drinkers and have been drinking for most of their lives ... they have heart disease and became very sick, and when you tell them this [alcohol] is the reason why, they stopped because they wanted to live **(SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa).**

The health professional key informant explained his strategy which, he said, is a combination of a New Zealand approach and a Samoan strategy. He said there are lots of compromises to get the messages across to some people. At the same time, 'you're giving the patient the power to decide on their life chances because once you've given them that power and let them decide then it's obvious that you've made the two options so distinct'. He said he tells his patients that:

... if you want to do this you live, if you want to die do this ... rather than say if you want to stop alcohol because is just part of that rather than focus on the negative aspects of drinking ... instead of saying don't drink or you will die or you will have a car accident, you can say to them here's how long you will live because your heart is so bad ... **(SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa).**

But the key informant observed that over recent years, 'alcohol isn't such a big deal' in Samoa anymore. He said when he was growing up 'it was a big deal just to get *Vailima*'.

For years my dad had a homebrew and there used to be a significant number of families with homebrews and there were a lot of people drinking homebrew those days. Lately, not a lot of people drink homebrew anymore ... I suppose homebrew has the stigma of [being] a poor man's drink **(SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa)**.

Additionally, the key informant said alcohol is no longer a big feature in the younger generations' lifestyles. Rather, he said going out for many young people in Samoa is more to be sociable and for comradeship, to dance and be sensible, and not so much to drink alcohol.

When I was young you drank till you're drunk ... when you walk into a club you have to have something [drink] in your hand ... now these kids go to night clubs more for the purpose of listening to new music and for the comradeship. Not too many people 'drink their heads off' it's mainly to dance and enjoy **(SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa)**.

### ***An Emerging Drinking Pattern among Young People***

It could be surmised from the foregoing comments that there is a new pattern emerging regarding young Samoan people's drinking relative to their own parents' drinking style and attitudes towards alcohol. The Auckland-based Samoan Trade Commissioner in New Zealand, Vaitu'itu'i Apete Meredith, in an informal telephone conversation, for example, remarked that he agreed with the health professional key informant's observations that only a minority of young people in Samoa abuse alcohol. He said his own children are now at that age where they're starting to go out to socialize, and noted: 'It's amazing that they don't seem to be into alcohol for the sole purpose of getting drunk ... they just go to hang out and socialize and meet their friends, it's just a different attitude to when we were at that age' (Personal Communication, February, 2004).

But is such optimism justified? One of the major concerns expressed by several participants in this study was the perception that more young people, especially in Samoa, were exposed to alcohol at a young age. Some participants and key informants, for example, suggested that young people in Samoa are consuming alcohol at an earlier age than perhaps their parents' generations. In a 1994 Survey of the Apia Urban Youth, funded by the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 33 percent (4,738) of 14,440 youth surveyed answered yes to the question 'Have you ever had a drink of beer or spirits?' Of the 4,738 youth who had drunk alcohol, 38 percent said they drank regularly. Eighty-two percent of the regular drinkers were males while 17 percent were females.<sup>28</sup> Forty-six percent of all youth surveyed were full-time students, 29 percent were in full-time paid employment, and 25 percent were neither students nor in full-time paid employment (Samoan Department of Statistics, 1995-1996: 7). Interestingly, the Samoan youth drinking data have some similarities to the recent New Zealand data on youth drinking which identified Youth as one of the high-risk groups (Ministry of Health, 2001b).

### ***But Times Are Changing ...***

On the economic front, for example, government-owned entities, including the profitable Samoan Brewery, have been privatized. Such privatized companies operate under a different set of constraints than those which are owned by governments and which may be operated in the public interest, rather than in the interests of private shareholders who seek maximum returns. This privatization might be expected to lead the company to seek concessions from the Samoan government which would have the effect of expanding its potential legal market. The liberalization of liquor legislation in New Zealand which resulted in the lowering of the drinking age to 18, for example, have just started to take effect with substantial increases in the number of young people drinking and driving causing serious injuries and even death in recent months. The owners of the Samoan brewery might be expected to pursue such a concession, possibly using the New Zealand case as a precedent, to increase the size of their domestic market and the profitability of its investment.

Another possibility which might go hand in hand with a reduction in the minimum legal age for drinking would be the introduction of a wider range of products which are known to appeal to younger drinkers. One of the recent

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<sup>28</sup> The Apia Urban Youth Survey was conducted in August 1994, and surveyed 14,541 youth between the ages of 10 and 34. Forty-six percent of all youth surveyed were full-time students, 29 percent were in full-time paid employment, and 25 percent were neither students nor in full-time paid employment (Samoan Department of Statistics, 1995-1996: 7).

changes in New Zealanders' drinking patterns is the switch to ready-mixed spirit drinks 'that lure younger drinkers' for the 'sugary base and bright labelling' (MacLeod, 2003).

There is evidence of concern with the social consequences of recent economic shifts in Samoa. In a cover story in the January 2004 issue of *Islands Business*, for example, which reviews the progress of Samoa's recent economic and political reforms, it would appear that 'Beneath all that glitter and growth' (Pareti, 2004), the impact of good economic growth 'had not spread out as widely' as the Samoan government leaders would have liked. A recent study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), called the 'Priorities of the People – Hardship in Samoa', confirmed that the unemployed, especially the youth and school dropouts, are resorting to crime, prostitution and drugs' (Pareti, 2004). The report noted that:

The existence of hardship in Samoa is difficult for some to understand and accept. Communities have always taken care of all their members, sharing food and goods between the richer and poorer members.

But this traditional system is strained by modernization, the need for cash, a shift away from subsistence farming, growing population and the movement of people to towns (ADB, 2002).

It is ironic that the external agencies which exerted the pressures for structural adjustment programs, which led to the divestment of the brewery and indirectly to the social and health consequences, outlined above, are now highlighting and arguing for mitigation of the effects of that policy. Far from suggesting that Samoa's alcohol policy should mimic the examples of the European countries cited above, what I am arguing is that whilst it is paramount to ensure that policies do not infringe or violate the freedom of the individual to choose whether or not to imbibe, it is also just as important to ensure that individual freedom to drink or not to drink does not usurp the impact of alcohol use and abuse on society's welfare and best interests.

## **Chapter Summary**

The discussion has explored elements of the relationship between the availability of alcoholic liquor and the consequential effects on Samoan people's health and social wellbeing. It has argued that the widespread

availability of relatively inexpensive locally manufactured beer throughout Samoa, and the lack of resources to police and enforce, the liquor laws and regulations, have adversely impacted on, and will exacerbate social and health problems in Samoa. The discussion has also highlighted the lackadaisical system to control the production, and sale of alcoholic beverages, particularly beer in Samoa.

Alcohol-related problems were briefly examined, and the liquor legislation and the alcohol-related problems confronting Samoans were outlined. The discussion also pointed out social problems such as domestic violence and binge drinking, and made mention of recent report findings which show that legal drugs such as alcohol and tobacco were more likely to cause greater harm than illicit drugs. The discussion also pointed to the threat of beer producing ventures, such as the Samoa Brewery, in the hands of a large TNC, which could in future develop alcoholic products such as 'alcopops' that have been shown to be both attractive and detrimental to the health of young people. While the solution to this situation, closer regulation of the activities of the TNCs by the Samoan government, may seem obvious, the real constraints of the Samoan government were also highlighted. The difficulties which face the governments of small states which have to regulate the activities of TNCs in the national interest while avoiding imposing conditions which might encourage them to relocate to some more 'welcoming' state were also outlined.

## Chapter Nine

### THEME: DRINKING AS TRENDY BEHAVIOUR

#### *Minor Themes:*

**Drinking a Hazardous Activity**  
**Alcohol as Boundary Marker**  
**Alcohol as Reward for Service**  
**Alcohol as Gift**  
**Host Responsibility**

*Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler whoever is led astray by them is not wise.*

*(Proverbs 20: 1)*

*Alcoholic beverages are high-risk beverages if used inappropriately. ... As mood altering beverages, they require unique attention on the behalf of the public's well-being and safety (Holder, 1989).<sup>29</sup>*

## Introduction

This final fieldwork chapter discusses the remaining themes discerned from the data. First, it examines, albeit briefly, the hypothesis that alcohol and the drinking of it is perceived by some Samoan people as 'trendy' and an elitist lifestyle behaviour. It argues that the association of alcohol with Europeans in the nineteenth and prohibition in the first half of the twentieth century in Samoa accorded alcohol and its consumption an 'elitist' status in the eyes of some Samoans. In turn, alcohol was perceived as a prestigious and sought-after commodity. Second, it explores the perception that alcohol became a 'boundary marker' of class status and of social standing in Samoa because it was considered an exclusive commodity which not everybody could afford to drink. Third, it explores the use of alcohol as a reward, a token of appreciation for work and service to the 'aiga. Fourth, the use of alcohol as gift, and its function as a lubricant for conviviality and sociability are briefly examined. Finally, it discusses drinking as a hazardous activity especially

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<sup>29</sup> Holder, Harold D. (1989), 'Drinking, Alcohol Availability and Injuries: A Systems Model of Complex Relationships'. In Giesbrecht, N. et al., (Eds.), *Drinking and Casualties: Accidents, Poisonings and Violence in an International Perspective*. London: Tavistock/Routledge.



among men and young people, because of its detrimental effects and consequences on the individual and family, as well as society generally.

### **Lifestyle: A Definition**

The *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* describes lifestyle as 'all the observable characteristics of a person, e.g. his manner of dress, way of speaking, personal appearance, domestic habits, and choice of friends, which serve to indicate his value system and attitudes towards himself and aspects of his environment'.<sup>30</sup>

A number of studies dealing with lifestyle issues have claimed that lifestyle is difficult to define because it is 'used for different purposes, and it appears in many areas in a large number of the social, medical and technical sciences' (Johanson, et al. 1995: 339; Grant, 1989; Giddens, 1991). In the primary health care discourse, for example, Johanson and colleagues, have noted that 'recent research in the medical and social sciences have pointed to the significance of factors associated with lifestyles of individuals and groups for the health status of a population' (1995: 339).

### ***Lifestyle as Routine Practices***

In defining lifestyle as 'a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces', Giddens posited that in modern social life the notion of lifestyle takes a particular significance: 'The more tradition loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstituted in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and the global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options' (Giddens, 1991: 3-4).

In *Modernity and Self-identity*, Giddens (1991) argued that:

Lifestyles are routinised practices, the routines incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and favoured milieux for encountering others; but the routines followed are reflexively open to change in the light of the mobile nature of self-identity (Giddens, 1991: 81).

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<sup>30</sup> Bullock, A. Stallybrass, O. & Trombley, S. (1988) *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*. London: Fontana Press.

Giddens also noted that 'the notion of lifestyle is often thought to apply specifically to the area of consumption' (1991: 82). It is within this context of consumption that the concept of lifestyle has been used in this discussion.

### ***Risky Lifestyle Behaviours***

In New Zealand, alcohol is part of the contemporary lifestyle of many New Zealanders. Alcohol 'is a legal, regulated and widely available product ... [and] is a feature of New Zealand life. For many, it is a symbol of hospitality, and it is used on occasions to celebrate events in people's lives' (Ministry of Health, 2001). For some groups of the population, however, their lifestyle behaviours and attitudes toward alcohol have put them more at risk of, and vulnerable to, alcohol-related harm.

The National Health Committee (1997) noted that certain behaviour patterns of individuals are the causes of premature death in New Zealand society.

Some of these important 'life-style factors' are diet, smoking, alcohol intake, physical activity, sexual behaviour and more general risk taking. Health-damaging behaviours are more common among people in lower socioeconomic groups in New Zealand (Hopkins et al. 1991; Mann et al. 1991), as in other developed countries. There is evidence that life-style factors explain some of the effect of social conditions on health and resulting health inequalities ... (National Health Committee, 1997: 45).

Pacific people as a sub-group of the New Zealand population have recently been recognized as one of the 'at risk groups' in terms of alcohol use and alcohol-related harm. And whilst there is also recognition of the 'large gaps in our knowledge base about Pacific peoples and alcohol' (Ministry of Health, 2001), information that has emerged in recent years show that some Pacific drinkers drank in a manner that put them at risk of future physical and mental health problems (Ibid, pp. 16-17).

Whilst information which has become available about Pacific people's use of alcohol show that over half of the adults reported no alcohol intake in the 12 months prior to the survey, more than a third of the drinkers drank in a manner which put them at risk of future physical or mental health problems (Ministry of Health, 1999). Moreover, an earlier study of hospital admissions

between 1987 and 1991 (Bathgate et al. 1994), 'found that alcohol and drug abuse or dependence were the most common reasons for the admission of Pacific men, and the third most common reason for the admission of Pacific women' (Ministry of Health, 2001: 17).

### ***Hazardous Drinking***

Hazardous drinking is a risky lifestyle behaviour perceived by some participants in this study as a growing phenomenon among Pacific young people. Hazardous drinking has been defined by the World Health Organization as 'an established pattern of drinking that carries with it a high risk of damage to physical or mental health, but has not yet resulted in significant medical or psychiatric effects' (Saunders et al. 1993). In a sense, the above definition of hazardous drinking is not an inaccurate interpretation of the patterns of alcohol consumption by several participants in this study. Anecdotal evidence of some Pacific young people abusing alcohol to the extent that they would sometimes drink till they 'pass out', for example, is a worrying trend.

Two recent ALAC pilot studies: one which explored the perceptions of host responsibility among young Pacific people in Dunedin (Siataga, 2000); and another which explored drinking behaviours and awareness of the effect of alcohol of Samoan people in Auckland (Lima, 2000), found that there was little awareness among participants in both studies of the effect of alcohol on physical health.<sup>31</sup> In the Dunedin pilot study, participants perceived binge drinking as 'generally a part of a wider New Zealand society drinking culture. Participants perceived drinking as a normative alcohol consumption practice across cultures' (Siataga, 2000: 5).

### ***Hazardous Drinking in New Zealand***

The 1996/97 New Zealand Health Survey (Ministry of Health, 1999), showed that 17.3 percent of adults indicated a pattern of drinking which put them at risk of future physical or mental negative effects from alcohol. Moreover, people between 15 and 24 years, especially men, were more likely to drink in

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<sup>31</sup> The study of Samoan's drinking and level of awareness of the effect of alcohol on health, however, found that women had a better understanding and were more aware of the adverse effect of alcohol on health than men.

a hazardous manner. The National Alcohol Strategy 2000-2003 (Ministry of Health, 2001a) identified Maori, Offenders, and Youth, as high-risk groups in New Zealand which are more susceptible to alcohol-related harm than others. But other groups in the population such as young women, older people, poly-drug users, and Pacific peoples, have also been identified as other at-risk groups facing particular challenges in relation to alcohol (Ministry of Health, 2001a: 16-17).

But as stated above, the information that is emerging reveals hazardous drinking patterns amongst Pacific people (Ministry of Health, 2001a). For example, the examination of the place of alcohol in the lives of Tokelauan, Fijian, Niuean, Tongan, Cook Island and Samoan people found that:

For most of the participants, the concept of being a drinker related to drinking enough to get drunk. The concept of being a non-drinker included people who never drank and people who drink occasionally. This means there was less scope for an 'in between' kind of drinking: that is, the concept of moderate drinking (ALAC, 1997).

But this pattern of drinking among Pacific people is not unique to those in New Zealand.

### ***Drinking in Samoa a Hazardous Activity***

Hazardous drinking is also increasingly common among drinkers in the islands. In Samoa, as one key informant has suggested, 'drinking your head off' used to be the primary reason for drinking. While the health professional key informant, however, conceded that over recent years, Samoan people, particularly young ones do not necessarily 'drink their heads off' anymore, alcohol consumption is sufficiently serious to have been incorporated as part of the National Disaster Preparedness Programme overseen by the National Samoa Red Cross Society (NSRCS). Secretary General of the NSRCS, Namulau'ulu Tautala, for example, stated that because of the negative 'after effects' and detrimental consequences of alcohol use and abuse, especially by men, involving women and children, alcohol abuse has been categorized within her organization's Disaster Preparedness programme which addresses issues such as hazards, vulnerability, and disasters.

We have a formula within which we assess the danger and hazard which may expose family members to, because of a person's drinking and drunkenness. That's why we call alcohol a hazard, because when it has been used irresponsibly, and abused by a member of a family, we may be able through our programme to ascertain the level of risk, and try and anticipate the hazard which threatens other family members **(SA13 – Secretary General, Samoa Red Cross Society)**.

The Secretary General explained that through the same NSRCS programme, her organization is able to assess the soundness of family structures, and how the husband's drinking may adversely affect other family members, especially the mothers and children.

You know the majority of the alcohol-related problems such as child abuse, women abuse, are all a consequence of alcohol. Now sexually transmitted diseases and non-communicable diseases have been on the increase in Samoa, and again, alcohol is the culprit. Alcohol abuse is the main cause of social and health problems, it is responsible for much of the problems we are faced with in Samoa right now **(SA13 – Secretary General, Samoa Red Cross Society)**.

But the concern with hazardous drinking in Samoa is not confined to the Red Cross. The Secretary General of the Samoa Red Cross also noted that in recent years, Church-based organizations as well as other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including many Women's Village Health Committees have been working closely, and in conjunction with the Samoan Ministry of Women Affairs to promote similar social and health programmes to address alcohol-related problems in Samoa. Other programmes which help raise awareness of the detrimental effects of alcohol use and abuse, have also been initiated.

It can be deduced from the foregoing explanation that drinking as hazardous lifestyle behaviour can have physiological complications, some of which are the lifestyle non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, gout, and obesity among others. While, as with other groups of the population, a range of social and economic factors impact on Pacific people's health, hazardous lifestyle behaviours such as alcohol abuse have certainly contributed to the poor health status of Pacific people in New Zealand and in the Pacific.

### **Alcohol as Trendy, Elitist Lifestyle Behaviour**

Several participants in this study suggested that drinking alcohol is considered trendy and elitist by some Samoans. Some male participants, especially older drinkers and former drinkers, said drinking was perceived as trendy and elitist because not many Samoans were able to have access to, or could afford to buy alcoholic beverages during the times of colonial administrations in Samoa. As Jernigan (2000) has noted, 'the status of alcoholic beverages as luxury items is not a new phenomenon. What is new in the marketing-driven commodity chain is the ubiquity of images of the product' (2000: S471).

As noted in earlier chapters, until the early 1960s, varying degrees of alcohol prohibition were imposed on the majority of the Samoan population except Europeans, some *'afakasi*, and a few Samoans who held privileged positions such as members of the Legislative Council. Since independence years, however, alcoholic beverages have become accessible to most Samoans whether they could afford it or not. For some of those who hadn't been able to buy alcohol before independence, being able to buy and consume alcohol in places such as the Returned Servicemen's Association (RSA) club, which a few years earlier had been the exclusive domain of Apia's business elite and a few Samoans of high standing in the community, was a sign of upward mobility. As the head of a Samoan Government Ministry participant observed, being able to drink alcohol at the time was 'a social endorsement and recognition of you as part of that elite'.

But not everyone could drink at those exclusive places in Samoa during those early days. Social and Sports Clubs such as the Calliope Lodge, Royal Samoa Golf Club, Apia Yacht Club, and others were quite selective in accepting people into their memberships, and those who could patronize and were accepted to enter their premises. In some cases, membership were based on economic ability to pay relatively expensive subscriptions, social standing in the business community, or other criteria such as seniority in Government and company positions. Some of the people who were accepted for membership or permitted to enter those premises were Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament.

Over recent years, however, following Samoa's independence, popular and exclusive drinking places such as the Apia Club, and the RSA, which used to permit only club members and their guests in their premises, started to accept new members, mainly from the growing government bureaucracy, most of whom were Samoans who hadn't been allowed to join or drink there before. Being accepted to membership of a once-exclusive social organization in Apia, for example, was interpreted by one participant as recognition of his position and acceptance of him by members of that club.

A pastor participant in Auckland, who was employed in a high-profile job within the Samoan Public Service, recalls how he became one of the youngest members of the RSA in the early-1970s. He surmised that he was accepted to RSA membership because he was in a popular and prestigious position with the local media where everyone in Samoa knew who he was. He admits to enjoying that status of being a member of the once-exclusive RSA club.

Drinking and socializing with those people who were members of the RSA at the time was a special recognition of me and a few other young colleagues and our acceptance into that elite circle of mainly businessmen and other important people ... **(NZ10 – Older Man Drinker, Auckland).**

But as time went by, and motels, and new hotels and public bars sprung up in Apia and the town area, more people were seen at those drinking environments, and the once-exclusive places including hotels and night clubs became popular entertainment 'hang outs' for a more diverse section of the Samoan population. Not surprisingly, as more people started socializing and drinking more frequently, as public bars and liquor outlets competed for patrons and more business, barriers to entrance into some of those once-exclusive clubs gradually disappeared. During the past ten or so years, for example, the RSA has become just another drinking place and a venue for socializing for a wider section of the Samoan general public in Apia.

The same is apparently true of the situation in nearby American Samoa. With rapid social change and globalization in more recent decades; as Samoa's

economy 'developed' and a growing number of people from a wider demographic base were introduced into the workforce and paid employment; and as more people would have been perceived as conspicuously well-off, to the extent that drinking no longer was a marker of status and wealth; drinking became less of an exclusive act or marker of social standing anymore. As the pastor key informant from American Samoa aptly observed:

Whilst alcohol may have been perceived as an elitist commodity when it was first introduced to American Samoa, it later became just another commodity which was affordable to people in employment and also to the unemployed. Since then, it stopped being a marker of economic status because it became affordable and readily available to most people (**ASKI01 – Pastor Abstainer Key Informant, Pago Pago**).

The perception that drinking is also trendy and elitist and a marker of affluence and status, in New Zealand was also raised by a New Zealand-born participant. The young woman who drinks, said her sister who is a lawyer and lived in Wellington with her high-profile husband drink because they can afford it, and that's their 'trendy lifestyle'. She said her brother-in-law drinks Canadian Club and her sister has 'had to cut her alcohol down' because she's a very heavy smoker. Whilst she didn't explain in detail the relationship between her sister's drinking and being a lawyer, she noted that her sister and her husband had to entertain clients and therefore there was an expectation that alcohol would be part of their style of life.

The origins of this perception, at least among older Samoans in New Zealand, seem to be similar to those of their age mates in Samoa. In Christchurch, an older Samoan-born participant who drinks distinguished an 'elitist lifestyle' by the types of beer drunk. He said while he was introduced to alcohol through drinking his family's *fa'amafu* in Samoa, he later had 'elite type of friends and we started drinking imported alcohol because we could get access to imported alcohol'.

... I never liked homebrew anymore ... and with the friends I had they were people with money and status. So homebrew was not in our level we moved on to another level ... I was socializing in the evenings but I never had any idea of any consequences of abusing alcohol, because we abused alcohol (**CH04 – Older Samoan Male Drinker, Christchurch**).



The same participant observed that in 'those days' when he was a young man just starting to drink, only the 'rich people' could afford to drink alcoholic beverages.

The average Samoan don't know anything about it only the elite type of people who could get permits and could afford to buy beer ... ordinary Samoans didn't know how to go about such things, it's just like nowadays, a lot of people come here they don't know where to go for immigration problems and those welfare things ... May be that's why we Samoans looked and thought it's only the '*afakasi* and the rich people that can drink alcohol ... but it's because a lot of Samoans were ignorant so they just didn't worry about it.

But Samoans were inventive you know, because when I was growing up those who couldn't get homebrew they drank methylated spirits and perfumes, they drank it and I think a lot of people died from that especially the methylated spirits, their organs all burnt out and now I can see why **(CH04 – Older Samoan-born Male Drinker, Christchurch)**.

Interestingly, the participant stated that he was the 'bottle store manager' for his mother's *fa'amafu*, which 'was the best homebrew in town and everybody including the cops drank there'.

I was the person who knew which grades of *fa'amafu* were hidden under which undergrowth around our house. In those days there weren't any fridges so the bottles of homebrews were kept under the bushes away from the sun. When people came to drink and I didn't like them I would fetch the 'newly-bottled brew', but for those that I liked I would give them the 'older brew' because the older brew was just like *palagi* beer. So I was involved in alcohol all my life when I was growing up **(CH04 – Older Matai Drinker, Christchurch)**.

Even Samoans who had not directly experienced the discrimination were aware of it and implicated it in the widely held perception that alcohol was trendy. The New Zealand-born woman key informant, whose two sons drink alcohol, observed that because Samoans were prohibited from drinking alcohol, some would have perceived drinking as a privilege reserved for *palagi* and later, '*afakasi*':

When alcohol first arrived in Samoa, *matai* were dead against it [alcohol] to be allowed into Samoa, and one of the reasons why they wouldn't allow it was that the traders and sailors who used to drink ... showed disgusting behaviours when drunk, so they [*matai*] wouldn't allow the stuff to be brought ashore.

But things changed when the *palagi* came to Samoa and inter-married, and *palagi* wanted alcohol, and later the *'afakasi* wanted it, and so it became a thing of privilege and Samoan people started saying, we want that too. If *afakasi* can get it then why can't we? **(NZKI02 – New Zealand-born Woman Key Informant, Auckland).**

But the same key informant also remarked that many Samoan people lack an understanding and awareness of the effect of alcohol on their physical and mental health. She said alcohol has been accepted in many different contexts in New Zealand, and young people have been introduced to it at an early age.

It has become more acceptable among young people, it's like a given thing that everybody will go out and drink and you get introduced to it at an early age. It can be while you're still at school and you're playing sport. If you play sports you would know that there is going to be a happy hour afterwards, so it has become an acceptable part of society and even though some of us older ones may not see it quite like that, I think amongst younger people it is definitely considered quite acceptable, and is promoted as such. Like I remember when my daughter played netball ... there were happy hours so you get introduced very early on to it **(NZKI02 - New Zealand-born Woman Abstainer, Auckland).**

It is possible, however, that other elements may join alcohol consumption as part of a 'trendy' lifestyle and may indeed undermine alcohol's status in this area. The younger health professional key informant from Samoa stated that over recent years, there has been a change of focus on healthy lifestyles and behaviours which he said, as a medical professional, was quite encouraging. He said in Samoa, more people were exercising and a significant number of people seemed to want to live healthily.

A lot of people in Samoa now come up to the hospital to have check ups, which is something very unusual. They just want to know what their health is like ... They would say, I just want to plan 'cause I am getting old and I have kids and that's something that they want to know, especially if they drink. And that's the attitude and that's why they want to stop drinking, and there's a lot of health messages from the Health Department about health. So instead of drinking their heads off, the drinking is just to be sociable. Unlike perhaps your generation when drinking was 'cool' and there's that thing about how many drinks you can take while still standing ... **(SAKI04 – Younger Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa).**

The above health professional key informant said that in Samoa in recent years changing behaviours and attitudes towards healthier living are reflected in the increasing number of people exercising, especially men who drink, now going out to walk and playing golf at the new golf course. He said while many of these men still drink afterwards, the difference is that now they play golf and exercise and then they drink.

Whereas before it was drinking and no exercise, now there is a slight change of perception about golf and comradeship instead of just alcohol ... I see a lot of *faiifeau* go there now and they have the comradeship through the golf and exercise rather than around drinking and thinking around whisky ... the PM is out there every week so there's twelve or so people following him all the time **(SAKI04 – Young Health Professional Key Informant, Samoa)**.

Interestingly, up until the 1980s in Samoa, playing golf was perceived by many people as an elite sport, played by business people and those who could afford the relatively expensive subscription fees. Since the addition of a second golf course around the outskirts of Apia town area, however, more Samoan people have commented about the increasing number of people playing golf. As the health professional key informant has indicated, playing a round of golf and then drinking afterwards has become one of the changes in lifestyle behaviour and changing attitudes towards healthier living among many Samoan people. If this is the case, the same association with elite lifestyle which originally led people in Samoa to drink, may lead more to exercise more and to reduce high risk behaviour such as drinking.

The situation for Samoans raised in New Zealand is somewhat different because a wide range of public health messages promoting participation in exercise and moderation in the consumption of alcohol, targeted at a range of age groups, have been routinely broadcast over a long time. These campaign messages are produced by professional marketing and advertising firms, on the basis of research among target audiences and do not depend on tangential connections with, or on observations of the activities of elites. The public respect for and celebration of successful sports people and attempts to link them with low alcohol and smoke free lifestyles is another feature of public health campaigns in mass media in New Zealand which

would be expected to be evident in Samoans in Samoa and those who had resided for longer periods of time in New Zealand.

### **Alcohol as a Social Boundary Marker**

Alcohol consumption was perceived by many Samoan people during the 1960s to 1980s as a symbol of status and class, what Dwight Heath has referred to as a 'social boundary marker' (Heath, 1990). Heath explained that:

One extreme version of drinking as a social boundary marker is the self-righteous pride that some teetotallers take in considering abstinence a proof of their moral superiority to anyone who ever drinks.

Another extreme of drinking as a social boundary marker is represented by those who exalt heavy drinking and frequent drunkenness as important and appropriate behaviour (Heath, 1990: 269-272).

Similarly, Room et al. (2002) argued that 'access to alcohol use may be a marker of social standing'. Room and colleagues further noted that

In many religions, notably including Christianity, an alcoholic beverage has a sacramental function. In other religions, notably including Islam, the believer is forbidden to use alcohol, and abstaining from drinking becomes a marker of religious identity' (Room et al, 2004: 14).

An editorial in *The New Zealand Herald* (December, 15, 2003), cautioned that: 'Everyone, young and old, needs powerful messages to counter the notion that unlimited drinking is somehow stylish.' Unlimited drinking, drinking until there is no more alcohol left, or drinking to 'get wasted', are how some people have defined Pacific people's alcohol drinking style.

But Heath has noted that whatever else they may be, alcoholic beverages are not free goods. 'As economic commodities, they tend to represent relatively high value in small volume and play a variety of roles in the economics and prestige systems of societies that use them' (1990: 272). Furthermore, Heath argued that:

As a luxury, drinking can be used as a symbolic marker, not only of ethnicity and other reference-group membership, but also of social and economic status. Illustrative customs include occasional use of a few exceptionally valuable beverages by only a select few, drinking as conspicuous consumption, and drinks as gifts in systems of prestation that signal one's affluence, power, prestige, philanthropy, sophistication, or other special qualities (Heath, 1990: 272).

Another type of boundary marker identified is boundary lines within familial relationships, in terms of parents and children drinking practices. The New Zealand-born mother key informant, for instance, explained that in her home as her children started to grow up and have their friends, they would ask if they could bring their friends home for drinks. At first, her daughter asked whether her boyfriend could have a drink at home, and he did. Her elder son, when he was about eighteen, brought some friends home and asked if they could have a drink, and they did. She said they didn't drink a lot, but she thought about it and she didn't feel good about it. She later talked with her son and told him she did not think that their drinking at home was a very good idea, that it was probably better for them to do their drinking elsewhere.

And it's about boundaries too ... you know, being a non-drinker and female, and being in the house with a lot of young males who are drinking ... because I think with young men who have been drinking there are things that could happen and could go wrong, and as a mother I don't really have to deal with that one. So I suppose on the one hand you could say I have been irresponsible by telling him to take his drinking elsewhere, but on the other hand it's been an unspoken rule that if you drink you drink away from the house and come back and sleep, but nobody comes home drunk (**NZKI02 – New Zealand-born Woman Key Informant, Auckland**).

The same key informant also noted that of her three children, only her youngest son pushed the boundaries when he started drinking. She recalled how he had come home once, quite drunk even though he knew the unspoken rules: 'He had been out with his friends and when he came back I remember he must have been very drunk because he spent the whole night throwing up, he's the only one that pushes the boundaries about' (**NZKI02 – New Zealand-born Woman Abstainer, Auckland**).

Another form of boundary with which alcohol was associated with in some participants' experiences was the brother and sister relationship within the

*fa'asamoa*. The *feagaiga* or sacred covenant between *tuagane* and *tuafafine*, brother and sister was perceived by some as one of the most valued traditional institution in *fa'asamoa*. But other participants have also noted that this once-sacred covenant may have been demeaned because of alcohol use. An older woman participant abstainer, for example, argued that in situations where alcohol has been consumed, the indelible boundary lines which 'literally keep the *feagaiga* sacred', may be blurred and even crossed under the influence of alcohol.

You know to most Samoans, this is one of the most treasured values of *fa'asamoa*, the sacred covenant between the brother and sister, the sister is the apple of the brother's eye, and all the *tapu* the taboos which provide protection to both sides in case there's any inappropriateness in their brother/sister relationship because that is sacred. But what's happened, you see some siblings now, *ua tau'upu*, the sister and brother quarrel, they even say *upu masoa*, swear words which cause grief and shame, especially when they drink alcohol. They even lose respect for the parents or the *matai* or elders which is *o le luma o se aiga*, brings shame and stigma to the family (**NZ02 – Elderly Wife of Matai Abstainer, Auckland**).

Another older woman abstainer expressed similar misgivings about the way the *vatapuia*, the sacred boundary between the brother and sister which during her own generation had been treasured by Samoans, but are no longer meaningful to the younger generations. And like the above observations of another older woman participant, she said sometimes, the *feagaiga* between the brother and sister is 'most threatened' when both the brother and sister drink alcohol. She said the special relationship which was once a central element of Samoan values has diminished somewhat, especially with the younger generation. She said whilst she still experience, and witness mutual respect among older Samoan people, there seemed to be a sense of disinterest and lackadaisical attitude towards its practice among her circle of friends and networks.

An older woman participant, who does not drink, expressed similar misgivings regarding the *feagaiga* and its diminishing importance. She said in beer clubs and other places where alcoholic beverages were consumed, the brother and sister may be drinking together, and then they may dance together, and then there may be 'bad language' and the boundaries between

them dissolve. She suggested that the commercialized market economies where both the brother and sister now earned wages meant the sister isn't dependent on the brother anymore, and so when they are in the drinking environment, each as an individual may not see the need for the traditional boundaries which marked out the relevance of the *feagaiga*. Interestingly, her explanation of the current blurring of those traditional boundaries of the brother and sister sacred covenant, have come about because of 'outside influences'. She said things such as videos which have been introduced to Samoa from outside have had detrimental effect on many Samoan traditional values and perceptions of the outside world, just as alcohol has had adverse effects on the *feagaiga*.

Similarly, a Samoan-born former school teacher who grew up in a 'traditional village environment', said the *feagaiga* has been debased because the social boundaries of *vatapuia*, sacred relationships have been blurred, especially where alcohol is involved.

If you look at some Samoan families now, brothers and sisters are drinking together, even some parents drink with their children when they have a party at home. And therein lies the problem, the special relationships between the parents and their children, and between the brother and sister, the boundaries which before, may have been quite explicit through parents' *fa'atonuga*, advice and constant reminders to the children, have been ineffective or have simply stopped. In some cases, these may be implicit although with children now speaking English most of the time, and some parents' advice and messages may not be getting through to the kids, the *vafealoaloa'i*, mutual respect may be diminishing.

And alcohol has played a big role in some of the breakdown of these relationships. How many fathers have ended up having sexual intercourse with their own daughters or other close female relatives when they have been under the influence of alcohol? And how many brothers have used foul language in the presence of their sisters and parents when they have had too much to drink? (**NZ03 – Samoan-born Matai Drinker, Auckland**).

The same participant related a story of one of his relations whose life was controlled by alcohol to the extent that during one of his drunken diatribes, he swore and said words to his sister which are the ultimate insult in *fa'asamoa*.

Sometimes it is hard to understand how this normally timid and shy person could be transformed into a different man when he drinks. Yet he is one of the nicest guys of my 'aiga, always full of *fa'aaloalo* respect, and always willing to make sacrifices for his parents and sisters. But surely, it has got to be the alcohol and its influence which changes him to the extent that he forgets the social boundaries and *tapu* of the *feagaiga*, our sacred relations with our sisters in our *fa'asamoa* (**NZ03 – Samoan-born Matai Drinker, Auckland**).

Likewise, an older former school principal participant in Samoa said sometimes, some Samoan men totally change from nice people to 'misfits' when they have had too much to drink. He said the *tapu*, or prohibitions, in sacred relations such as the relationship of the father and daughter, brother and sister, mother and son, have been threatened and abused, especially through alcohol use. Interestingly, instead of blaming alcohol totally 'for these changes and transformations in some men's attitudes and behaviours when drunk', the participant partly blamed the *palagi* houses with rooms and walls which he said, 'allowed unscrupulous and evil Samoan fathers and men to behave inappropriately' inside their homes.

Before in Samoa, the *fales* were open, no walls, no rooms, and people could see from outside what was going on inside the *fale*. Now, even during the day someone who is drunk and wanted to commit incestuous acts can do so within the confines of their houses. These *fale palagi* have brought with them other problems which are further complicated by alcoholic beverages.

You know, for some people once they've had a few beers they want to be intimate with their wives, it's natural for many people. So some people who drink and that includes some church leaders, once they have had a few 'shots' because some of the pastors have bottles of liquors, they end up committing adultery. So I think the *palagi* houses with walls hide away from public view sinful acts such as incestuous relationships committed inside the *palagi* houses (**SA08 – Older Matai Drinker Participant, Samoa**).

But a Samoan-born woman participant in Christchurch, who drinks, who said her introduction to alcohol was under the tutelage of her father, a heavy drinker of 'ava, and alcoholic beverages, stated she has no problem drinking with her brothers. In fact, she said she drank more when she was with her brothers in Samoa than over here.

... alcohol was always part of our lives. In fact, I drink more when I was with my brothers there than over here, and I also get drunk more



when I was with my brothers. Even now with my husband and the girls I don't really drink but it's only when I'm with my brothers that I kind of drink (**CH06 – Older Samoa-born Woman Drinker, Christchurch**).

A New Zealand-born young woman participant who lived for some time in Samoa during her teenage years before she returned to New Zealand, said she could see an advantage in drinking with family because 'one is actually safer to be socializing with one's brother ... that to have family members present, is safer for the young woman'. She also wondered about the ideal way of living within *fa'asamoa*, and what most people lived.

My experience of growing up there [Samoa] was always the ideal way of living, what the *fa'asamoa* is, and what most people live. Even in the older generation, when I look at my uncles and aunties they were extremely disrespectful and used foul language at each other when they got angry (**CH01 - New Zealand-born Young Woman Abstainer, Christchurch**).

The experiences of two women participants, one born in New Zealand and the other in the islands, that there was safety among family and with brothers in contexts where alcohol was consumed, is also an interesting though understandable position for women. It is clear from the foregoing comments and experiences of some participants that 'boundaries' which were crucial in maintaining social relationships in *fa'asamoa*, especially within the Samoan family institution have been blurred, even violated by some people under the influence of alcohol.

### **Alcohol as Part of Gifting**

The use of beer in gifting has been practiced in other parts of the Pacific in a very interesting manner for the past three or four decades. In the Western Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea, for example, sociologist, Andrew Strathern (1982), noted that Mount Hagen senior men 'have attempted to mediate the problems signaled by younger men's alcohol consumption by introducing cartons of beer and bottles of whisky, gin and rum into their *moka* exchanges' (1982: 140).

... specifically by inserting them as 'solicitory' gifts which *pek renom*, 'scrape' at the 'skin' of their prospective donors and make them produce a large main gift in return. Here, beer replaces legs of pork,

as an item for pleasurable consumption in advance of what may be painful giving (Strathern, 1982: 140).

In Chuave, located in the eastern sector of the Papua New Guinea Simbu Province, anthropologist Wayne Warry (1982), noted that the use of beer in ceremonial contexts is most important to the village.

When beer is used in exchanges, it is said to 'have work' or be a part of *bisnis*, a Pidgin term to describe not only ceremonies themselves but also those social relationships recognized by particular exchanges. Thus a person's *pamili*, *bisnis o tambu* is recognized through the gift of beer. In Chuave ceremonies, beer has become, without question, a primary social valuable and medium of exchange rivalled only by gift of pork (Warry, 1982: 83-84).

Marshall, Piau-Lynch, and Sumanop (1982), have noted that beer's increasing popularity and availability is tied closely to advances of the cash economy. The authors observed that in Papua New Guinea beer 'mediates between the modern cash economy and the traditional prestige economy'.

Sales of coffee, cattle, cocoa and other commodities yields cash used to buy beer. Beer is then exchanged via traditional avenues and patterns of gifting to demonstrate power, achieve higher status, reciprocate previous prestations and advance political careers. Exchange of beer earns prestige for the giver(s) and follows an age-old Melanesian pattern of production, exchange and consumption (ibid, pp. 452-453).

The same appears to be true of Samoa. Two central elements of traditional *fa'asamoa* which some participants suggested, have been endorsed by, and practiced using alcoholic beverage are gifting and reciprocity. Alcoholic liquor has been used for gifting to relatives and friends, and in some cases has become part of reciprocal gift exchanges. Once alcohol finds its way into exchanges which are an integral part of Samoan social life and social network maintenance, it is on its way to becoming a central element of Samoan social life. Gifting alcoholic beverages to friends and male relatives has been a practice which was common among many Samoan people in the islands, especially since the relaxation of liquor prohibition in Samoa following independence.

The Catholic priest participant, who drinks, said gifting alcohol has been practiced within some Samoan circles especially among people who know each other well, and often, for friends and older people who consume alcohol. It is done as a parallel to the traditional practice of the *'ava o le feiloaiga*, the kava ceremony to welcome guests in which *matai* who attend bring along *tugase* or kava stems as gifts to be offered for the guests. It is an admirable aspect of our *fa'asamoa* which we have adapted into our *taligamalo*, hosting of guests whether at the district, village or even at the *'aiga* level.

Lately, I have witnessed changes in our practice of gifting in relation to alcoholic beverages. I don't know how these changes came about but over recent decades, and especially in environments and Samoan communities outside of Samoa, we see some Samoan people bring along a *fagu malosi* or bottle of liquor, usually whisky, rum, gin or vodka, and it has been used in place of the *tugase*, but because in our *fa'aaloalo* where we avoid using the common name of *fagu malosi*, the bottle of 'powerful liquor' would be referred to as *'ava* as in the *tugase*, so that instead of our traditional *tugase*, someone who is well-acquainted and knows that you like drinking whisky may then bring along a bottle of whisky as a gift for the host, or someone you are going to visit **(NZ11 – Older Catholic Priest Drinker, Auckland)**.

The participant surmised that it may be that *tugase* are not readily available in places outside of Samoa that some people still practice the *'ava* ceremony but using alcoholic liquor in place of the *'ava*. He also wondered whether the increasing ties of alcoholic liquor to the cash economy, may have given it an economic value which may be seen by some people as having more worth than *'ava*. At any rate, the participant suspected that because *tugase* are now sold as a cash crop in the local market, this may have deterred some people from using it more regularly, and may have resulted in its unavailability for the traditional practice of gifting it by *matai* at the *'ava* ceremony. He said he would be sad to see alcoholic liquor being used as a proxy for the function of the *tugase* in Samoan traditional customs and practices. He added that the Samoan spirit of giving is not just a Christian principle, that it has always been part of Samoan people's values, 'it was there when the missionaries came, it's inbuilt in us'. The priest said the Samoans value things that are not commonly available, and alcoholic liquor wasn't available to everyone in earlier days and so some people placed a value on it to the extent that gifting

it was seen as something special. He recalled when he was posted as a priest in Savai'i, how he had to travel to Apia to give *palolo* to relatives and friends whenever there was a heavy *palolo* rising in Savai'i.

Because *palolo* only rise once or sometimes, twice a year, it was seen as a valuable food item because it was rarely available, and so it was gifted by Samoans who had them to relatives who lived in town or villages where *palolo* wasn't available. That was a value which was admirable because often, for many Samoans, that would be the only time of the year when they can visit family members elsewhere in the country, when they have something valuable to give. **(NZ11 – Older Catholic Priest Drinker, Auckland).**

Because of the rarity of alcoholic liquor in colonial Samoa, its value as a prestigious commodity which only *palagi* and *afakasi* could afford or possess, in a sense made it an item of high value as the same priest noted:

And alcohol had somehow found a place within that practice of giving valuable commodities to others, although over recent years as it has become widely available, its uniqueness and prestige would have waned somewhat. But I think instead of using alcohol irresponsibly as some of our people have been doing in several contexts, it may be timely for our people who host parties to make sure alcohol is served responsibly and consumed in moderation **(NZ11 – Older Catholic Priest Drinker, Auckland).**

Even with its declining prestige value it remains popular as a gift particularly among males. A Samoan-born young woman participant, who drinks, cited the example of her boyfriend who always buys a carton of beer to take with him whenever he goes to visit his uncle and his cousins. The participant noted that when her own brothers visit Samoa they always buy bottles of liquor to take with them.

When I asked him [husband] why he had to buy beer rather than food or something else to take when he visits his uncle, he says he [uncle] asks for beer and that's what he buys. ... When my brothers go home they buy bottles of liquor, when my boy friend goes to Samoa he would buy two bottles of liquor. Again, the explanation is that people expect them to bring liquor so they can drink together with them ... **(AK06 – Young Samoan-born Woman Drinker, Auckland).**

The New Zealand-born woman abstainer key informant remarked that over recent years, especially since her elder son reached the drinking age, she has observed 'how alcohol has crept in as being part of giving'.

There's an older *matai* in Wellington who often talked about how often he gets a bottle of whisky as a gift, sometimes he receives it as gift and then he would gift it to someone else. It has become like acceptable practice, and my boys do it. When they go back and forth to Samoa, I was absolutely appalled when [my younger son] brought two bottles of whisky for one of his mates. And it's funny because [my older son] never brings whisky, he always brings back Vailima, and it's become an accepted practice (**NZKI02 – New Zealand-born Woman Abstainer, Auckland**).

It is clear from the above examples and experiences of some participants that the use of alcohol as gifts among some Samoan people, a practice which convey meanings of generosity and reciprocity has secured a place in some people's practices.

In *Gifts as Economic Signals and Social Symbols*, for example, Camerer (1988) argued that 'gifts symbolize and convey meaning ... and may serve many social functions' (1988: S181). Some participants noted, and these were not dissimilar to my own experience of drinking among close friends in Samoa, that paying for drinks when one can afford it doesn't necessarily make me obligated to buy the drinks next time around. However, there is usually an implicit expectation that the turn of others to buy the drinks would come whenever they were able to do so. So whilst there may be no specific obligation, especially if those involved are members of a close group of friends, workmates, a sports team and so forth where everyone would have a turn to buy then, or at a later occasion, often, there is a good understanding among members of the group that everyone would at some stage, reciprocate and buy the group drinks.

Similar insights were expressed by the older health professional key informant abstainer, who commented that Samoan values of *fa'aaloalo* respect, and *talimalo lelei*, being hospitable and good hosting, have adapted to incorporate alcoholic beverages over recent years.

Samoans are hospitable and generous when hosting relatives, friends or guests. For many, they want to offer the best they can get, and alcohol seemed to fit into that category, especially because it was rare for Samoans to have access to it. But whereas traditional Samoan custom of hosting involved only food because there was no alcohol in

those days, the introduction of alcohol as a *palagi* commodity has been perceived by some Samoan people as an item of prestige, and as such has become part of some people's means of expressing their *fa'aaloalo* and *faimaea lelei*, offering the best of what they have, even if it has other negative consequences. I guess it is the rarity of alcohol in those days which made it an item of value to many Samoans that some people went to great length to make sure they could offer alcoholic liquor when they host people.

But I think it's fair to say that there is also an element of addiction that comes into play here, a behavioural preference as opposed to a cultural practice. You may find that some Samoan hosts may want to retain their cultural values of providing the best food, but at the same time they may also want to give something else which was extra special, even if such an item was introduced alcohol (**NZKI03 – Older Health Professional Key Informant, Auckland**).

The same participant added that whilst alcohol has some positive aspects which have been portrayed in its value as medicine, food, and as a lubricant for sociability and conviviality, Samoan leaders including *matai*, church leaders and *tagata niuali* people in prestigious positions such as teachers, doctors, lawyers and similar occupations, have a responsibility to provide leadership in promoting host responsibility, and to raise awareness of the detrimental effects of alcohol on people's health and social wellbeing.

### **Alcohol as Reward, Token of Appreciation**

Another reason given for offering liquor in some contexts was to reward staff for their work, or family members for their contributions to family *fa'alavelave*. A former school principal participant, for instance, recalled providing liquor at end-of-year parties which he hosted for members of his teaching staff at different schools at which he was principal. He said it was a form of reward, a means to show his appreciation for the effort and hard work put in by staff during the school year. Similarly, with regards to the participant's family members, providing alcoholic beverages was a token of his appreciation of and gratefulness to members of his extended family for services rendered to him as the *matai*, and service provided on behalf of the extended families. Since he has been living in New Zealand for the last eight years, however, he has managed to abstain from drinking alcohol.

Another participant, a small-business operator, also provided alcohol as reward for his employees as a token of his appreciation for their hard work. This employer does not 'drink' but says part of his strategy to acknowledge workers' hard work and good performance involves buying a few drinks for his staff at the end of the working week. He would buy a few beers on Friday afternoon and invite his staff to sit down together for a few drinks while they talk about the work that was done during the week. At other times, he would accompany some of his workers to a 'beer club' where they would drink, play pools, and just to talk among themselves. He encourages his workers to give their wage packets to their spouses and put aside small amounts of money for them to spend on drinks. This strategy, this employer says, is to ensure the workers do not overspend on drinking and neglect their family obligations and responsibilities.

It's an opportunity for them and myself to talk about our work and discuss the week's staff performance while they have a few drinks. Some people don't normally have a lot to say among themselves or even to me as the employer. But when they have a few drinks, they tend to 'open up'. After all, my workers are like members of my family, they serve me through the work that they do for which they get paid. Sometimes, during these brief drinking sessions, staff are able to share with me issues which they may not necessarily want to bring up if we didn't get this opportunity to socialize and talk about things openly **(SA02 - Young Adult Male Employer Abstainer)**.

Although the employer does not drink, he says he is well aware of Samoan men who work hard all week, receive their pay packets on Friday, and go and spend most of the money on drinking. Sometimes, staff members ask for wage advances early the following week to pay for family groceries and other *fa'alavelave* because they had spent their wages on drinking during the weekend. He rationalized that instead of adding extra 'cash' to their pay packets as 'bonuses' it was sometimes more ideal to buy a few beers and invite staff to drink together before they go home.

A matai participant, who drinks, also expressed similar insights about the experience of a young cousin who owns a large plantation in Savai'i. He said the cousin uses liquor as incentive for workers some of whom he remunerated on a casual basis, for their labour on the plantation. The participant said when his cousin goes to Pago Pago, American Samoa to sell

his produce, liquor such as whisky and rum which he could buy there relatively cheaply, would be brought back for further plantation labour. He said sometimes, food is not too high on the workers' agenda, preferring to work for less money in return for a 'good drinking session' afterwards.

But certain forms of drinking may ultimately undermine the sense of unity which these drinking sessions are supposed to promote. A value paramount for Polynesians, according to Lemert, is that of psychic rapport with one's fellows. While this may be achieved in such sessions, it is not always the case as Lemert observed: 'Destructive drinking ultimately thwarts the desire for this state by isolating the drinker from relatives and friends' (Ibid, p. 207). While Lemert emphasized the isolation of the drinker from his immediate family such as his wife and children, another common isolation which had more important consequences to the 'destructive drinker' was in the form of a snub from fellow-drinkers. It was not uncommon for Samoan drinking groups or even casual acquaintances who met up at drinking places to have individuals that drank alcohol irresponsibly or acted strangely when they have drunk too much. Those individuals sometimes, find themselves unpopular as drinking partners or acquaintances. Quite often, those drinkers either change their behaviour or they would find themselves unwelcome even ostracized by their fellow drinkers. In some cases those types of drinkers may move on to the next drinking circle until they are pushed out, or in some extreme cases, beaten up by other drinkers. In those situations, the unpopular drinker may find himself quite isolated, even drinking alone.

But solitary drinking was not a common Samoan drinking practice. In fact, the only solitary drinking case identified in this study is that of the CCCS pastor<sup>32</sup> who 'drinks a beer or two at home' on his own before his evening meal. However, this is an exceptional case in relation to the rest of the participants' style of drinking. An explanation for this solitary drinking is that being a pastor of a church denomination which doctrines prohibits drunkenness, it is imperative to keep his drinking away from the public eye, more than being an

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<sup>32</sup> In his younger days before he went to Theological College, this pastor enjoyed drinking in the company of his friends. In fact he said he was a heavy drinker in his younger days and often challenged older drinkers who had reputations as 'heavy drinkers' on one-to-one drinking sessions to see whether those 'heavy drinkers' could foot it with his capacity as a 'bigger drinker'. Since becoming a pastor, however, he no longer drinks openly in public.



unsociable attitude towards drinking. The participant said he had been questioned by his superiors in the past about his drinking and he feels obligated to keep a low profile about alcohol use. But he said he was well aware that he wasn't the lone drinker among his peers some of whom have also been incriminated for their alcohol use.

In contrast, the Catholic priest drinks with a colleague and among young men who are in-training at a private social club at the seminary. The priest is one of several participants who do not see anything wrong with alcohol, as long as it is consumed in moderation.<sup>33</sup> Now, while he will have a drink among young trainees at the local seminary, he hopes his example of having two or three drinks then stop and have a meal may be good role modeling for the young seminary trainees. He said to treat alcohol as 'evil' thereby, exonerating the perpetrator or the irresponsible drinker from blame for his actions is wrong. He said 'if you prohibit something it gives the impression such a thing is evil'. He cited the example of some of his Mormon friends who, despite church doctrines which prohibit two lifestyle behaviours, drinking and smoking. He said rather than prohibit drinking totally, which many people react against negatively and result in alcohol abuse, 'wouldn't it make more sense to raise awareness of the detrimental effects of excessive use and abuse so people may make their choices based on awareness and knowledge of those effects'?

### **Alcohol and Host Responsibility**

Observations and comments by participants and key informants have pointed to the lack of understanding and awareness of some people about the effect of alcohol on their health and wellbeing. Yet during the past decade or so, host responsibility has been promoted as an alternative and appropriate strategy to minimize alcohol-related harm in New Zealand. The Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC), for example, has been promoting host responsibility among some high-risk groups, such as Maori people,

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<sup>33</sup> The priest recalls when he first arrived in Rome where he did seminary training, that asking for a glass of water was not the normal thing to do during meals because even at breakfast, wine or beer was drunk whenever people have their meals.

through their programme *Manaaki Tangata* as a means of promoting drinking in moderation to reduce alcohol-related harm.

Among Pacific people, host responsibility has not gained a lot of ground although constant efforts by organizations such as ALAC, to set in train processes which could promote the concept have gathered momentum over the last few years. Pilot studies which gauged Pacific people's understanding of host responsibility, as well as recent efforts to translate key literature into Pacific ethnic languages, such as Samoan, for example, have already begun. But the concepts of host responsibility and drinking in moderation are somewhat problematic in the Samoan cultural context wherein hospitality and generosity translates to providing food and drink in abundance. As the study of the place of alcohol in the lives of Pacific people has found, to promote drinking in moderation within Pacific cultures may be seen as promoting stinginess or meanness (ALAC, 1997).

In terms of Samoan people's attitudes to alcohol and drinking in moderation, the older health professional key informant noted that alcohol was a Western commodity which was introduced by Europeans just as some Europeans brought the Bible to Samoa. And because it was an introduced commodity, Samoan people who perceived the European God as more powerful, and European technology such as 'man-o-wars', firearms, clothes, tools, and even food as superior to traditional Samoan gods and stone-age technology, that Samoans placed more values on 'European things'.

Samoans are hospitable, courteous, and respectful people whose cultural values enshrine cordial relationships and harmonious interactions among themselves and in their relationships with visitors. One of the Samoan values which is most endearing is the desire to give the best of everything when hosting guests and visitors. I guess one of those commodities which many Samoans have come to hold in high regard when they host people is alcoholic liquor. Because liquor was an introduced commodity some people regard it as an item of value which they must provide whenever they entertain guests, friends and family members. Over the years, the practice of offering alcohol to guests, just as they would greet fellow-Samoan guests with the '*ava o le feiloaiga*', the kava ceremony, so has offering alcohol become traditional and integrated into their practices in that respect (**NZKI03 – Older Health Professional Key Informant, Auckland**).

The same key informant, who does not drink, explained that Samoans in the past were particularly inclined to offer what wasn't commonly available when they hosted visitors. He said the 'Samoan mentality' of wanting to offer something such as food that was rare, later included alcoholic liquor. Samoans wanted to offer 'the best they could get for visitors' and it just became common practice for those who could afford it to offer alcohol to friends and relatives, and especially to important guests.

It was Samoan custom and norm to offer the best and often, that norm was to offer the best food for visitors. And because we didn't have a special drink accept for the 'ava, which was only used in ceremonial occasions anyway, so alcoholic liquor became something special that served that function as something special. But over recent years, as alcoholic beverages became more readily available, it has lost that sense of prestige, and now you see it being used more as an addiction by some people (**NZKI03 – Older Health Professional Abstainer Key Informant, Auckland**).

Similarly, the Catholic priest participant noted that being host is an important and endearing value and norm of *fa'asamoa*. But he said over the years, alcohol has found its way into and a place within our *taligamalo*, hosting of guests. He said he still practices that Samoan generosity and spirit of hospitality when Samoan visitors he knows and respects visit Auckland. He said he would look for something special that he knew the other person was fond of, such as a favourite food and he would take that along when he visits. Likewise, when some people come to visit him, they also bring gifts of sorts, often things such as 'rarely available in Auckland Samoan food' for him when they visit.

### **Drinking for Sociability and Conviviality**

The majority of participants in this study have stated that drinking in Samoa is mainly a social activity done mostly in groups. That most Samoan people drink to be sociable and for conviviality were a common pattern or type of drinking expressed by both drinkers and abstainers. Some participants have used alcohol in other ways which are worth exploring, briefly, in order to try and understand why alcohol and alcohol use has become such a pervasive phenomenon within Samoan social life.

Several participants both in the islands and in New Zealand admit using alcoholic beverages as a means of enhancing conviviality at social gatherings, what Bales (1959) referred to as 'social drinking'. Some people have offered alcoholic beverages to guests as a matter of courtesy, to make them feel welcome, as well as to be sociable when they are with friends and relatives.

A former Samoan school principal *matai* who is now a church pastor in Auckland, for example, related incidences in Samoa in the past where he had shared alcoholic drinks with family members when they gathered to discuss important family matters, or in occasions where he had invited family members scattered throughout the islands of Samoa and overseas, to come together for family re-unions. According to the former school principal, the purpose of providing alcoholic drinks at those occasions wasn't to get family members drunk. Rather, the liquor was provided to make people feel at ease and foster goodwill towards each other, to talk and share experiences, and to enhance conviviality among members of his family, some of whom may have not seen one another for many years.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter examined the foundations of the perception by some Samoan people that alcohol is a marker of trendy lifestyle behaviour. This was attributed to the fact that alcohol was prohibited to Samoans during first, Germany and later, New Zealand's colonial administrations, and that drinking was perceived as prestigious when prohibition was finally done away with following Samoan independence. It was noted, however, that over time the widespread availability of alcohol meant that this association with prestige declined in significance.

This raised a second question which was how to explain the continuing movement of alcohol into the central institutions of Samoan social organisation despite growing awareness of the negative consequences of alcohol use. It sought to locate mechanisms which are producing a wider use of alcohol. It considered briefly the incorporation of alcohol into the practice

of gift giving and noted that the inclusion of liquor as an acceptable element of the all important reciprocal exchanges at the centre of Samoan social organisation is one such vector. It considered briefly the use of alcohol as a reward and as a token of appreciation, particularly in the context of employer-employee and manager-managed relationships. These relationships, which are becoming increasingly common as a formal labour market has become established in Samoa, are another vector for the expansion of the range of contexts in which alcohol is now routinely consumed. The chapter noted briefly, the competitive element in hosting which led people to seek to provide the most 'desired' commodities for guests as a sign both of respect for them and of the host's capacity to provide these. The inclusion of alcohol into this practice, alongside food which was the traditional 'currency' of this competitive hosting, provided another example of the ways in which traditional institutions have provided vehicles for the encroachment of alcohol into social organisation. The incorporation of alcohol into these 'traditional' practices may make it seem as if liquor is a 'natural' part of the practice of *fa'asamoa*. The sum of a range of these apparently unobtrusive incorporations is the expansion of the place and consequences of alcohol in Samoan culture.

## Chapter Ten

### CONCLUSIONS AND A WAY FORWARD

*O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! That we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!*  
(William Shakespeare, *Othello*)<sup>34</sup>

*Drinking wine was obviously acceptable to Jesus. In fact, his first miracle involved turning water into wine at a marriage banquet. ... The Bible even mentions wine's medicinal value, for the apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to 'use a little wine for the sake of [his] stomach.' – 1 Timothy 5: 23; Luke 10: 34 (Awake! March, 2004: 21).*

This study has examined how Samoan culture, *fa'asamoa*, has changed since contact with Europeans, and how these changes have influenced Samoan people's perceptions and use of alcoholic liquor. It explored the relationship between alcohol consumption and culture among Samoans here in New Zealand and in the home islands. It has outlined the general impacts of European agencies on Samoan social institutions, and the introduction of alcoholic beverages since the early nineteenth-century which shaped, to a considerable degree, contemporary attitudes of Samoan people towards alcohol. This served a useful purpose in providing a background to the fieldwork chapters that followed.

At the outset, I posited several questions to help focus and guide this inquiry. I suggested that a central focus of the study was to examine whether Samoan people's drinking behaviours 'violate traditional norms' which Macpherson and Macpherson (1990) suggested, causes certain sorts of illness among Samoans. Chapter 6 attempted to explore the impact of alcohol on the norms and values of *fa'asamoa*, and how these may have impacted on Samoans' economic, health and social wellbeing. It was not able

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<sup>34</sup> Cited in ALAC 2003 Corporate Plan, <<http://www.alac.org.nz>>

to establish what illnesses may have been caused and to whom. This inability to determine and identify specific physical ill-effects of alcohol on Samoan people has been due largely to the unavailability of health statistics and other data on such things as alcohol-related injuries and accidents from Samoa. Whilst some data on alcohol availability and per capita alcohol consumption, which have been analyzed in chapters 4 and 7, indicate increased availability of alcohol in Samoa, which implies higher consumption within a stagnant population, reliable data on health consequences have not been available. An impact assessment and qualitative exploration of economic, social, physiological, and psychological consequences of alcohol use by Samoans would provide a more detailed data set on the adverse effects of alcohol on Samoan people in the islands and in migrant communities. Until such time as good baseline demographic, economic, health, and social indicator data, and reliable time series data sets are available, a comprehensive statistically based assessment of the impacts of alcohol in different areas of Samoan life is beyond reach. What this study has been able to do more successfully, has been to gather and use qualitative data to identify the concerns which Samoans have about the impact of alcohol on their society. It has been able to outline their understanding of how the introduction of alcohol has shaped their social organisation and relations, how it currently influences these and how they see its future impact on their culture.

Other questions posed at the outset, (see Chapter One, page 3), have been examined in this discussion in various degrees, and addressed either individually, or in the course of the general discussions. One of the questions which received relatively little attention, however, is the extent in which lifestyles and worldviews of New Zealand-born and island-born Samoans in relation to alcohol consumption differ. Whilst I have alluded to this conscious attempt to include Samoan-born and New Zealand-born participants in this study as a means of exploring the impact of the socialization process on people's attitudes and practices around alcohol, inadequate analysis was offered in this regard. To some extent, this is a consequence of the nature of this study which can identify some of the qualitative differences between the two populations and some of the causes of these, but cannot establish that these are typical of the populations from which the participants were drawn.

While I have referred to the work of Graves et al. (1975; 1979a) which discussed drinking and violence, and drinking patterns of Polynesians in the New Zealand context, the empirical data on New Zealand-born and Samoan-born participants in this study focused more on differences and similarities in drinking contexts, and varied experiences and did not delve deeper into the reasons for those differences. This means that causes could not be established and that certain questions remain unanswered, but the contrasts are important and require more in-depth analysis. These might be more effectively established using a standard survey instrument with large, random sub-samples of both Samoan and New Zealand-born populations which controlled for and sought to establish the effects of a number of variables such as age, gender, education, worldview and lifestyle, commitment to *fa'asamoa*. Such an approach was clearly beyond the resources available for this study and it is not entirely clear that such approaches are either practicable, or culturally appropriate for reasons outlined in an earlier methodology chapter. They can, however, usefully augment the qualitative studies and suggest relationships which might be explored by other approaches. It is a matter of some regret that the results of the first national study of Pacific people's alcohol and drug use, with which I was centrally involved, did not become available until shortly after this study was completed.

Alcohol consumption levels and the styles of drinking differ from society to society and reflect the cultural patterning of alcohol use. The international literature on drinking styles and various types of alcoholic beverages that people imbibe is voluminous. Some similarities across and within cultures have been discussed in the foregoing chapters. And while I have argued in earlier chapters that there is a paucity of data on drinking patterns and attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol in Oceania, I also acknowledged the growing volume and stature of the literature on studies of alcohol and other drug use, and drunkenness in Micronesia by Marshall (1987, 1993), Marshall & Marshall (1979, 1990), Schwartz & Romanucci-Ross (1979), and Nero (1990) in recent years. Similarly, the literature on alcohol use and drunkenness in Papua New Guinea, as documented in Marshall (1979, 1982b) and Riley and Marshall (1999), has also grown.



Polynesia, however, has not been as well-endowed with alcohol studies, although Lemert's cross-cultural study of drinking pathology in Samoa, Cook Islands and Tahiti, which Marshall (1982) rightly noted, has provided a vintage starting point for research in alcohol and culture in Polynesia. Since Lemert's study, other more recent work by Casswell (1986; 1989) on supply and alcohol consumption in Oceania societies; and Lindstrom's (1987) monograph on drugs in the Western Pacific, have contributed to the early work by Lemert. The study by McDonald, Elvy and Mielke (1997), and the current WHO-sponsored Survey on Non-Communicable Disease Risk Factors in Samoa and three other Pacific countries (WHO, forthcoming), will add to the much-needed literature on alcohol in Polynesia. Our understanding of Pacific people's alcohol and drug consumption, both in the islands and here in Aotearoa New Zealand, will be enhanced when the findings of the first national survey on patterns of alcohol and drug use, gambling and related harm amongst Pacific people in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2004) become more widely available to scholars, to policy analysts and intervention services.

In all of the above studies, alcohol and drugs have been identified as hazardous, and as risk factors may impact directly and indirectly on Pacific people's health and economic and social wellbeing. For some time, this damage was mitigated by constraints on supply and cultural attitudes to alcohol use. Clearly, alcohol and drugs have become more pervasive, invading even the most remote areas of Oceania over recent years. The actual impact is of course dependent on Pacific people's attitudes to and use of alcohol and patterns vary from place to place and over time for reasons which are not yet clear because of the lack of data. As data which become available from time to time, show an increasing trend towards hazardous drinking and drug abuse by Pacific youth (Ministry of Health, 1997; Brown, 2000; Siataga, 2000), explorations of alcohol and drug use and abuse in Pacific people's lifestyle, become a pressing need and require urgent attention at both the local, national, regional, and international level.

The New Zealand National Alcohol Strategy 2000-2003 (Ministry of Health, 2001b), was a consequence of government's recognition that there are large

gaps in our knowledge base about Pacific peoples and alcohol. This 'lack of meaningful data has often hampered efforts to tailor specific strategies for minimizing alcohol-related harm, to meet the needs of Pacific communities' (2001b: 16). While the 1996/97 health survey (Ministry of Health, 1999) found that over half of all Pacific adults reported no alcohol intake in the previous 12 months prior to the survey, more than a third of Pacific drinkers drink in a manner that put them at risk of future physical or mental health problems. Of particular concern are the statistics which show that 'hospital admissions between 1987 and 1991 found that alcohol and drug abuse or dependence were the most common reasons for the admission of Pacific men, and the third most common reason for the admission of Pacific women' (Bathgate et al. 1994). More recently, one of the most worrying trends in Pacific people's drinking is their 'extreme drinking patterns' (ALAC, 2004). For example, while Pacific people are more likely to be non-drinkers – 46 percent compared with 19 percent of all New Zealand adults, 31 percent of Pacific adults compared to 29 percent of New Zealand adults have no restrictions on their drinking (ALAC, 2004). Based on these recent data, it is clear that Pacific people in this country, the majority of which are Samoans, are at increasing risk of alcohol-related harm. This is a serious problem which can have adverse effects on Pacific Islands and Samoan communities in particular, and negative impacts on New Zealand society in general in the future if these trends continue unchecked.

The Pacific population in New Zealand is projected to grow at a higher rate than the general New Zealand population. It is estimated to reach 414,000 in 2021, an increase of 58 percent over the estimated Pacific population at June 2001. This projected increase in the Pacific population in New Zealand over the next twenty years from 6% to some 9%, and the younger age structure of the Pacific population, means an increasing number of Pacific young people will reach the drinking age and will become exposed to alcohol and alcohol-related problems in the future. Sadly, recent data has shown that a growing number of young people, including young women, are drinking in a manner that is hazardous to their health and wellbeing. Samoan young people are no exception.

Yet as this study has shown, younger New Zealand-born Samoans whose socialization into alcohol use has occurred in different circumstances may be changing. Some of these are changing their own alcohol use patterns because of their exposure to the social and health consequences of older Samoan people's drinking. Some in fact, reported that older peoples, including parents, were irresponsible users of alcohol and that their own use was, in part, a reaction to this fact. Can such individual actions, or rather reactions, stem the tide? Obviously not, because some young participants' alcohol use reflected the heavy and hazardous use of their usually male, parents. While awareness of the consequences may lead to some changes in individuals' attitudes to and use of alcohol, it will not be enough to bring about widespread change in Pacific and Samoan populations.

Widespread attitudinal change is likely to require some systematic educational programmes which help raise awareness among Samoan communities about the adverse effects of alcohol. Whilst moves in this direction have begun, such as those implemented under the Samoan Red Cross Society's National Disaster Preparedness Strategy alluded to in Chapter 7, much more needs to be done to ensure communities are informed and involved in educational raising awareness strategies. The success of these strategies, however, will depend on an understanding of attitudes to alcohol and this study has sought to make a minor contribution in this area. Public education strategies raise a number of other issues, of what types of strategies may be appropriate, who should be involved in the planning and delivery, where would such strategies be implemented, and how would such programmes be funded? This study has revealed that Samoan cultural practices and attitudes to hospitality can frustrate public education initiatives, such as the 'Host Responsibility Programme' which are founded on non-Samoan attitudes and values. An educational approach which was to work with Samoans would need to start from a somewhat different set of premises. However, the study has also shown that there are some inter-generational differences and that as a New Zealand-born generation starts to modify their approaches to their parents' culture, some of these messages may begin to get more traction.

### ***A Lot Remains to Be Done***

There are no easy answers to the questions posed above. Nor are there any quick-fix schemes which can address alcohol and the concomitant problems. Room et al, (2002), for example, noted that while 'most developed societies have built systems of regulation of the alcohol market' as part of their social and health policies, 'many developing countries have little in the way of structures, leaving a large gap as industrialization processes bypass old systems of social control at a personal, communal or local level' (2002: 220). This brings up the issue of traditional Samoan social control such as the authority of the *fono a matai* which many participants and key informants in this study have suggested, has been threatened by some Samoan people's alcohol use. Recall, the Samoan Police Commissioner's observation that the cooperation and support of the *fono a matai* in different villages were crucial to the success of police work in other crime-related matters discussed in some detail in Chapter 6. This sits ominously alongside the Commissioner's real concern about the inconsistent decisions by individual village councils regarding support for store owners' applications for licenses to sell liquor, the increased number of licenses supported by village *matai*, and the lack of resources to monitor and enforce the liquor laws in Samoa.

### ***Alcohol, Abstinence, and Fa'asamoa***

So far, this thesis discussion has focused, to a considerable extent on alcohol and the drinking of alcohol by and among Samoans in various contexts. But how does *fa'asamoa* explain abstinence and those who abstain or who choose to limit their alcohol consumption to levels and to contexts which might be considered anti-social? What pressures and/or barriers confront those who abstain, and in what contexts would those arise? Or has alcohol been incorporated and integrated into the customs and practices of *fa'asamoa*? To gain some insights into, and a better appreciation and understanding of these questions, the following experiences of and explanations from some abstaining participants and observations and experiences shared by some former heavy drinkers may be useful in tailoring specific strategies and interventions for minimizing alcohol-related harm among Samoans and Pacific people in New Zealand.

In some cases these are likely to be associated with religion and religious organisations which play a significant role in Samoan lives both in New Zealand and in Samoa. Recall the experience of a Samoan-born former heavy drinking participant, who came to New Zealand as a teenager, who insisted that alcohol has found a central place in Samoan social life. The participant admitted he was a heavy drinker who 'abused alcohol to the limit', and considered himself fortunate to be still alive after the abuse of alcohol and drugs, and the pain and heart-ache he put himself and his family through for many years. He said his family name which literally translates to 'Great Drinkers' became a curse because there was an expectation that members of his family would be 'big drinkers'. That was a 'cultural stigma' which he said he had to carry around with him for many years. He also said that since those 'difficult times' when he was a violent, wife-bashing individual, he has turned his life around, and has even changed his name. The participant's former life of drugs and alcohol abuse, gambling and the concomitant violence and crimes has since been transformed to an abstinent Christian life. He has also changed his last name, and is now working with community groups and with Pacific Island people within the Pacific Island Baptist Church environment.

Another former heavy drinker key informant, a bishop of the Mormon Church at the time of the interview, said his former lifestyle in his younger days of which drinking and smoking were of significant importance resulted in his wife threatening to leave him. His life, however, 'took a dramatic turn for the better' when he joined the Latter Days Saints (LDS) Church which has clear proscriptions on alcohol and tobacco use. In these environments, where abstinence is the norm and is indeed rewarded with recognition within the church, refraining from alcohol use becomes easier and is positively sanctioned. It is, in effect, a religious version of Alcoholics Anonymous which uses both peer pressure and theological doctrine to encourage abstinence. Evidence that heavy drinkers can 'turn their lives around' and become leaders in the church may have particular attraction to Samoans who have respect for those who attain religious leadership roles and who are able to speak with authority about the consequences of alcohol abuse for themselves and their families within the church.

In some cases, however, other forms of activity will be necessary to reduce alcohol use. An older woman abstainer, whose husband was a former 'heavy drinker', explained that alcohol has become synonymous with success in terms of the way that it has been used increasingly by some Samoan people to celebrate achievement. Often, alcohol is the focus of celebrations of success and achievements such as graduation from tertiary studies, admission to higher educational levels, or job promotions. Furthermore, alcohol use may no longer be confined to these special occasions. Participants also argued that alcohol and the drinking of alcohol at Samoan family celebrations have become the norm, that it is now generally accepted, and in many cases even anticipated, that alcohol would be available and consumed at these occasions. Unlike other substances which were consumed by leaders to mark achievement, alcohol's consumption is more widespread.

But this inclusion of alcohol in ceremonies does not happen by chance. The same participant suggested that the leaders of individual families these days play major roles in determining the types of ceremonies and the scale of celebrations in contemporary Samoa. She said *matai*, and especially those who consumed alcohol, often sway family decisions to include alcoholic beverages because of their own inclinations to imbibe rather than for cultural reasons. This raises the question of whether over time the use of alcohol has become a requisite of these functions, and whether it becomes involved in the escalation of consumption which is often a feature of these competitive exchanges.

But it is not simply the occasional highly public celebrations and family events in which alcohol is starting to find a central role. The same participant observed that alcohol and its abuse has had a negative impact on other more fundamental institutions of *fa'asamoa*. The *feagaiga*, the sacred covenant between the brother and sister, which was once held in high esteem within *fa'asamoa* and was central to Samoan social organization has been tarnished and dishonoured by people, especially men, who often, under the influence of alcohol, do and say things which have led to its degradation. Other informants noted that other social boundaries were becoming blurred

and other social relationships were being transformed by alcohol. On occasions where people were drinking together, and more particularly where people were drinking to excess, the boundaries between groups of people and between those in particular relationships to one another were more often violated and caused damage, not only to particular relationships, but to relationships in general. Where these are central to the reproduction and maintenance of *fa'asamoa*, their degradation will clearly have longer term consequences for the culture. This would, for people who are fiercely proud and protective of their culture, be expected to generate widespread concern about the consequences of alcohol use for that culture.

But concern with the increasing significance of alcohol in Samoan life was not universal. An older adult abstainer participant, a pastor who said he has 'never tasted alcohol in his whole life', whose adult children are abstainers, argued that 'alcohol has no place in Samoan peoples' lives, whatsoever'. The participant was adamant that there is absolutely no room within *fa'asamoa* for alcohol and alcohol use. His church doctrines, he said, prohibit alcohol consumption simply because the Scriptures are full of prohibitions and injunctions against alcohol consumption. He said when someone consumes alcohol his or her mood changes, the behaviour turns from *fa'aaloalo* and obedience to *le 'ano'ano*, impudence or disrespect and disobedience. Yet, he surmised, some people are making excuses that having a few drinks is useful to *fa'amalosi le tino*, to make the body stronger, to whet the appetite, and even to recharge the heart.

But there is not even unanimity among those who preach the same gospel. The study showed that pastors and church leaders consume alcohol and are able to justify their use. The variant use seems to derive from different interpretations of the purpose to which alcohol is put and the scale on which it is consumed. The abstaining pastor said any pastor who consumes alcohol would deliberately stay away from preaching abstinence because they know that they have to practice what they preach. He asks: 'How could a pastor who drinks tell the church members not to drink if he himself is drinking?' He said there are pastors who drink and he has actually seen liquor bottles in some pastors' offices. 'The excuse is alcohol keeps the eyes open, and helps

improve oral language skills'. He said he hasn't found in the Bible any instructions for pastors to consume alcohol. And whilst he admits Jesus was present at the wedding in Galilee where wine was consumed, and where Jesus turned water into wine, he said there wasn't any advice for people to get drunk. Rather, wine was provided to toast the bride and groom, and not to get drunk.

Furthermore, the abstaining pastor noted that in congregations where pastors or church leaders drink, often there is chaos and disarray. And some pastors who drink have been known to have humiliated some congregations and brought disrepute to some church denominations because of their disgraceful and reprehensible conduct as a consequence of alcohol use. The above observations of some participants in this study highlight the diversity of opinions among Samoan people around alcohol and its consumption. Their observations, however, may throw some light on the difficulties which could confront initiatives targeted at Pacific communities, though could provide useful pointers on the different structures and institutions of Samoan society which impact on any strategies intended to address alcohol problems among Samoans.

### **Way Forward**

In 1997, the Ministry of Health released a set of initiatives entitled: Making a Pacific Difference: Strategic Initiatives for the Health of Pacific People in New Zealand. The document was intended:

... to enable policy makers, the funder and providers to respond appropriately, effectively and efficiently to the health needs of Pacific people over the next decade. Its purpose is to make a positive difference in the provision, delivery, monitoring and management of health services (Ministry of Health, 1997).

Seven years after the release of the Pacific Strategic Initiatives document, there hasn't been any follow up, as far as I am aware, on whether or not the strategies proposed, and those that were implemented, have benefited



Pacific peoples in terms of their health and wellbeing.<sup>35</sup> Whilst anecdotal evidence that the delivery of health services to Pacific communities, at least around Auckland, have resulted in more convenient accessibility to, and cheaper primary health care services for many Pacific people, there has been no follow-up appraisal and evaluation of how appropriate, equitable, and acceptable some of these services have been for Pacific people. As indicated in the Strategic Initiatives document (Ministry of Health, 1997), 'Monitoring the responsiveness of health services to the needs of Pacific people is important to improve acceptability' (Ibid, p. 44). In 1999, I proposed the need for an evaluation of the health services provided by our Pacific providers to ensure the quality of services provided by Pacific for Pacific people were of a quality relative to if not better than what other minority ethnic groups and the general population received from mainstream providers (Lima, 1999). Whilst the Ministry of Health monitors health service contracts individually as part of their normal contractual arrangements with service providers, I believe it is high time that an overall appraisal and evaluation of the types, quality and appropriateness of health services provided for Pacific communities were implemented. After several years of health service provision for Pacific communities by Pacific providers, a mid-term assessment and review of processes, design, and quality of services been delivered is well-overdue. Such a review would not only be useful to ensure those providing services have been made accountable to their communities, it would also provide an opportunity to review whether the policies are relevant and responsive to ensure the health sector has responded appropriately, effectively and efficiently to the health needs of Pacific people.

For example, the National Alcohol Strategy 2000-2003 (Ministry of Health, 2001b), has identified Pacific peoples as one of the 'at increased risk' groups in terms of alcohol-related problems. Whilst it needs to be acknowledged that

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<sup>35</sup> A request to the Pacific Health Section of the Public Health Intelligence Directorate, Ministry of Health, for information on whether an evaluation and review of the primary health services provided for Pacific communities by Pacific Health Service Providers, wasn't available as this thesis was being concluded and bound for submission. Manager of the Pacific Health Unit, Mr Tupu Araitī, indicated he would pass the query around to his colleagues for comments on how they could help, and then feedback to the researcher. More than three weeks after the request for this information no response had been received.

the Ministry of Health in conjunction with the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs have recently funded the first ever National Survey of Pacific People's Alcohol, Drugs, and Gambling consumption (Ministry of Health, 2004), which would provide meaningful and invaluable data, large gaps in our knowledge base about Pacific peoples alcohol and drugs (A&D) sector need to be addressed immediately. Workforce development in this sector will have been buoyed by the Ministry of Health scholarships for further postgraduate and undergraduate training of Pacific workers in the sector.

### ***Need for Ethic-specific Data***

But much more needs to be done to ensure the momentum gained on Pacific people's health does not stagnate, or stop altogether. It is much easier to paddle a moving canoe than a stationary one. The area of health research and in particular, at least in the context of this thesis discussion, alcohol and drugs, need to be taken further. The national Pacific Islands Survey of Alcohol, Drugs, and Gambling alluded to earlier, have a certain emphasis on the four main Pacific ethnic groups. This was inevitable in light of the limited funding resources, but also because of the methods used for the survey. The large Samoan population meant the response rate of Samoans would be high whilst smaller ethnic groups would struggle to feature. But the valiant effort by the research team, who were unwavering in their attempts to reach as many smaller Pacific ethnic populations such as Niue and 'Others', is proof that Pacific people when empowered with knowledge, confidence and proper training can achieve and succeed in conducting research with their own people. More importantly, training and working alongside members of Pacific communities in a research environment such as the Pacific alcohol, drugs and gambling survey, offered opportunities for Pacific people to be involved and join the workforce.

As noted above, a particular limitation of this study was the non-availability of statistical data from Samoa for use in the analysis alongside those on alcohol consumption and alcohol problems among Pacific and Samoan communities in New Zealand. This was due largely to limited research resources, timeframe, as well as the changing focus of the thesis as it evolved. The inability of the researcher to travel with any regularity and for long period of

times were primarily due to personal, family, community, and other commitments which were unrelated to the thesis research. But my inability to browse government departments' data may not necessarily be the only reason.

Data on alcohol consumption and the attendant social and health problems in Samoa and in other Pacific states as well, in fact in developing countries generally, are scarce. With the exception of Melanesia, especially Papua New Guinea which have been well-endowed with studies on alcohol use and social problems; and the work of Marshall, who with his other colleagues, have published extensively on alcohol and drinking in Micronesia over the last twenty or thirty years. Polynesia, however, hasn't been so well-endowed with alcohol studies. The current study funded by the World Health Organization (WHO) on non-communicable diseases and lifestyle behaviours in Samoa and other Pacific countries would be a good starting point in gathering data for Pacific countries, especially Polynesia.

### ***Goodwill and Strategic Planning Needed***

But the Pacific region is vast and diverse in terms of languages, size of population, social and political organizations, and 'states of readiness to carry out research'<sup>36</sup> that there is a need for some strategic planning and of course, funding resources to conduct research on alcohol and alcohol-related problems in the region, in particular, Polynesia. The goodwill of international organizations such as the WHO, UNDP, and those of regional bodies with resources and expertise could be encouraged to collaborate on strategic projects and interventions across Pacific nation states to address alcohol-related problems in the region. Collaborative strategies such as the International Collaborative Research Grants Scheme (CRGS), a three-way partnership between the Health Research Council of New Zealand, the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council, and the Wellcome Trust, a UK-based charity, that aim to improve health outcomes for people in developing countries, is one example. The scope of the scheme, according to

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<sup>36</sup> Roizen, J. (1989), 'Opportunities and Problems in Conducting Research on Alcohol and Casualties in Developing Countries' in Giesbrecht, N. et al. (eds.), *Drinking and Casualties: Accidents, Poisonings and Violence in an International Perspective*. London: Tavistock/Routledge.

the HRC, was deliberately broad, to foster the development of effective and innovative collaborations with communities and nations of the Pacific. And whilst current research conducted under the CRGS scheme do not cover alcohol-related problems future initiatives could target alcohol and drugs research that builds capacity among Pacific Island health researchers, both in the Pacific and within New Zealand.

### ***Need for More Resources***

But several factors other than goodwill and strategic planning are needed to address alcohol-related problems in developing economies. Room et al (2002), in a very enlightening exploration of drinking practices and how to control and prevent alcohol-related problems in developing societies, for example, found that 'in the absence of mitigating factors such as religion, and unless public health counter-measures are taken, these problems tend to increase with development' (2002: 217). Moreover, the authors argued that a policy focus on alcohol problems as well as resources to alleviate them remain scarce in the developing world, and that these factors, together with economic and social development, will 'create the conditions for an epidemic rise in alcohol problems' in developing societies (Ibid). In light of these authors' findings, it is imperative that resources in terms of research and project funding, and perhaps more importantly, the need for Pacific workforce development in health services and other sectors, need to be encouraged as well.

### ***Need for Social Impact Assessment***

This thesis has outlined the development and growth of alcohol production in Samoa, the increasing availability of alcohol throughout the country, and the concomitant social problems. But there has been no systematic effort to assess the environmental, economic, and social impact of alcoholic liquor in Samoa. While the foregoing discussion shows that revenues earned from beer production by the Samoan government have been increasing over the years, no social impact assessment has been conducted on its impact on Samoan families most affected by alcohol use. This may point to the quandary in which governments find themselves when the revenue on which they are dependent for funding government programs comes from industries and activities which are ultimately potentially hazardous for their citizens.

One might assume that when the government no longer owned the industry, it would be in a better position to evaluate its impacts but is this necessarily so? The change of ownership of such an important entity to a small developing economy such as Samoa from government to private entities, is a quandary for a government which, on one hand, must ensure policies were conducive to its economic interests and that of the privately-owned brewery while, on the other hand, is confronted with the growing alcohol-related health and social problems among its people.

At the international level, the literature is convincing that 'the world has an alcohol problem' (Jernigan, 1997). The literature also shows that developing societies suffer more alcohol-related harm because the process of development makes regular heavy drinking more feasible (Room et al, 2002: 218). Moreover, Room and colleagues noted that 'it is increasingly foolhardy to view alcohol policy solely as a matter to be discussed and settled within national borders' (Ibid, p. 225). Arguing for a global approach to alcohol problems, Room and colleagues (2002) have rightly concluded that in the context of developing societies: 'A global perspective on alcohol policy needs to acknowledge and take into account all these characteristics and contradictions of alcoholic beverages, and yet to focus and act on the public health policy goal: to minimize the harm from drinking' (2002: 228).

At the regional level, alcohol and drugs-related problem initiatives aimed at addressing the economic, environmental, health, and social problems currently afflicting Pacific Island peoples, require some regional framework under which these strategies are coordinated among Pacific societies. Regional initiatives require strategic planning and collaboration among countries of the region and international organizations such as the WHO, UNDP among others as mentioned earlier. Other collaborative efforts with neighbouring industrialized economies such as Australia and New Zealand, as part of their developmental aid funds could also be explored towards addressing alcohol-related problems in the region.

At the national level, individual Pacific nation states have to 'own up' to the fact that alcohol and the concomitant problems is a phenomenon which

needs to be addressed, sooner rather than later. They require updated legislations to ensure enforcement and monitoring mechanisms are put in place so that the Liquor Control Board is not totally dependent on the police for those functions in enforcing the legislations. One way of addressing this could be by way of a levy on alcoholic products, such as that collected from alcohol producers in New Zealand, specifically targeted for that specific purpose of monitoring and policing liquor laws.

### ***Need for More Research on and Awareness of Adverse Effect on Health***

One way of addressing Samoa's growing health and social problems as presented in the foregoing discussion would be a systematic documentation of the health effects of alcohol, the alcohol-related traffic offences and crime rates, as well as an economic and social impact assessment of alcohol on Samoan people. This thesis hasn't been able to provide quantitative data on the health and social problems many participants in this study alluded to. A detailed assessment of the adverse effects of alcohol among Samoan people, especially those living in the fringes of the Apia town area, would merit urgent attention.

Another area which requires urgent attention is the need for information on the adverse effects of alcohol on health and wellbeing. Some of the initiatives to raise awareness among communities of the detrimental effects of alcohol have been initiated by non-government organizations such as the Red Cross Society and some church organizations. But resources for educational programmes to assist in raising awareness may not be available. Hence the need for government agencies, non-government organizations, and regional and international agencies to work together to devise and implement programmes would be paramount. Just as important, the communities at the village level need to be consulted on and involved in any initiatives which would target them. This is paramount for the success of any community initiatives in Samoa and throughout the Pacific region. This is also the case with Pacific communities including Samoan groups in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The few statistics which are becoming available suggests that this matter is not one which can wait. In New Zealand, ALAC's recent report entitled: *The Way We Drink: A Profile of Drinking Culture in New Zealand* shows that Pacific people are the highest non-drinkers in New Zealand. For example, 46 percent of Pacific people are more likely to be non-drinkers compared with 19 percent of all New Zealand adults. However, of the 'uninhibited binge drinkers', those 31 percent of Pacific adult drinkers compared with 29 percent of New Zealand adults, have no restrictions on their drinking and are more likely to have drunk more than 10 glasses on the last drinking occasion. This is a very serious indictment of the status of Pacific people's health and the attendant problems this group of the New Zealand population will face immediately, and in the future.

Statistics New Zealand projections indicate that the Pacific population will continue to grow at a faster rate than the total New Zealand population. The Pacific population is projected to reach 414,000, or 9 percent of the total population by 2021. The New Zealand government seems to be well aware of the consequences of poor health status of this growing population group, and the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with other government agencies, such as ALAC, for example, have contributed to efforts to ensure Pacific people were informed about the adverse effects of alcohol. Gathering data on Pacific people's alcohol and drugs consumptions and providing resources in Pacific languages of the detrimental effects of alcohol on health and wellbeing are certainly steps in the right direction.

## **Appendices**

List of Appendices

Consent Form (English)

Consent Form (Samoan)

Information Sheet (English)

Information Sheet (Samoan)

References & Works Consulted



## CONSENT FORM

(THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS)

### ***Examining Alcohol and Pacific People's Health within the Framework of Fa'asamoa***

Researcher: Ieti Lima, Research Fellow,  
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Supervisors: Associate Professor Cluny Macpherson,  
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Private Bag 92019, Auckland

Professor Sally Casswell, Director,  
Alcohol & Public Health Research Unit  
University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019, Auckland

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

I understand that I may withdraw myself, or any information traceable to me at any time up to 14 days from the date of interview without giving a reason.

- I agree to take part in this research                      Yes [ ] No [ ]
- I agree to the interview being audio taped              Yes [ ] No [ ]
- I need a Samoan interpreter                                      Yes [ ] No [ ]

Signed: .....

Name: .....  
(please print clearly)

Date: .....

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS  
COMMITTEE  
on ..... for a period of ..... years, from ...../...../.....

Reference: 2001/160

## MALIEGA E AUAI I LE SU'ESU'EGA

### ***A'afiaga o le Soifua Maloloina o Tagata Pasefika I le 'Ava Malosi: Iloiloga o So'otaga o le 'Ava Malosi, Soifua Maloloina ma le Fa'asamoa***

Ali'i Su'esu'e: Ieti Lima, Research Fellow,  
Sociology Department, University of Auckland,  
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Fautua ma Faatonutonu: Assoc Professor Cluny Macpherson  
Sociology Department, University of Auckland  
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Professor Sally Casswell, Director  
Alcohol & Public Health Research Unit  
University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019,  
Auckland

Ua mae'a ona ou faitauina ma ua ou malamalama foi i le mafua'aga o lenei suesuega, "A'afiaga o le soifua maloloina o Tagata Pasefika i le 'Ava Malosi: Iloiloga o So'otaga o le 'Ava Malosi, Soifua Maloloina ma le Fa'asamoa".

Ua faamalieina a'u i faamatalaga ua tuuina mai ma ua ou malamalama foi e mafai ona ou fa'amaamulu mai le auai i lenei sailiga i soo se taimi lava e aunoa ma le tuuina atu o se mafuaaga. Ua faailoa mai foi ia te a'u e le o loo faafoeina lenei suesuega, e malu puipuia faamatalaga uma o le a ou tuuina atu ma e le faalaua'iteleina pe faailoa lo'u igoa i ni faamaumauga ma lipoti o lenei sa'iliga.

Ua ou malie e auai i le suesuega	loe [ ]	Leai [ ]
Ua ou malie e pu'e i se laau pu'eleo le talanoaga	loe [ ]	Leai [ ]
Oute manaomia se faamatalaupu faasamoa	loe [ ]	Leai [ ]

Suafa: .....

Sainia: .....

Aso: .....

FA'ATAGAINA E LE KOMITI E PUIPUIA LE SOLOGA MANUIA O TAGATA LAUTELE MAI SU'ESU'EGA FAASAIENISI A LE IUNIVESITE O AUKILANI (UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE)

Aso ...../...../..... mo se vaitaimi e ..... tausaga, afua mai I le aso ...../...../..... *Reference: 2001/160*

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**Title:           Examining Alcohol and Pacific People's Health  
                      within the Framework of Fa'asamoa**

To: .....

Talofa lava

My name is Ieti Lima. I am a student at The University of Auckland enrolled for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the Department of Sociology. I am conducting this research for the purpose of my thesis on the effect of alcohol on Pacific people's health. I have chosen this field because there is a paucity of information regarding the effect of alcohol on Pacific people's health.

You are invited to participate in my research and I would appreciate any assistance you can offer me. As part of my thesis I am conducting interviews with individuals, focus groups and key informants from the Samoan communities mainly in Auckland and one other main Centre in New Zealand. A smaller number of individuals and key informants will be interviewed in Samoa for this research.

I would like to interview you but you are under no obligation at all to be interviewed. Interviews would take about three-quarters of an hour to an hour during the day or in the evenings. I would prefer to audio-tape the interview but this would only be done with your consent and could be turned off at any time or you can withdraw information any time up to 14 days after the date of the interview.

If you do wish to be interviewed please let me know by filling in the Consent Form (attached) and sending it to me, or phoning me on Tel: 3737 599 ext. 4814 (work hours) or 528 4075 after hours. All information you provide in an interview is confidential and your name will not be used.

Thank you very much for your time and help in making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please phone me at home at the number given above or write to me:

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***For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:***

The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Subjects Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office - Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland. Tel. 373-7999 extn 7830

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE on ..... for a period of  
..... years, from ...../...../.....

Reference: 2001/160

## FA'AMATALAGA E FA'ATATAU I LE SU'ESU'EGA

**A'afiaga o le Soifua Maloloina o Tagata Pasefika I le 'Ava Malosi:  
Iloiloina o So'otaga o le 'Ava Malosi, Soifua Maloloina ma le Fa'asamoa**

Susuga: .....

Talofa lava

O a'u o Ieti Lima, o loo ou a'oga i le Iunivesite o Aukilani mo le su'eina o lo'u fa'ailoga o le Doctor of Philosophy i le Matagaluega o Sociology. O lenei sa'iliga e su'esu'eina ai le a'afiaga o le soifua manuia o tagata pasefika, mafua ona o le taumafalia o le 'ava malosi. O le su'esu'ega e aofia ai ni talanoaga ma tagata taito'atasi, talanoaga ma vaega toatele (va o le 5 ma le 8 tagata), poo ni fetufaa'iga foi ma nisi o le mamalu o tagata Samoa o loo galulue i galuega faapitoa e a'afia ai le soifua maloloina; galuega su'esu'e faapitoa mo mataupu tau le soifua maloloina; nisi o ta'ita'i o le atunuu e pei o Susuga i Faafeagaiga; Alii ma Tamaitai Foma'I; atoa ai ma nisi o taiulu i nisi o Faalapotopotoga mo Tupulaga Talavou. O nofoaga e faia ai lenei sailiga e aofia ai Aukilani, se isi 'A'ai i Niusila e pei o Ueligitone poo Karaiesetete, faapea ma Apia i Samoa.

E talosagaina ma le faaaloalo sou maliega e fai sou sao i se talanoaga mo lenei sailiga. Ua faamoemoe e faaogaina se la'au pu'eleo (tape recorder) e pu'eina ai ia talanoaga pe a tusa ai ma lou finagalo. Afai e te finagalo malie e te auai, o le a le avea lea maliega ma mafua'aga e taofia ai lou toe faama'amulu pe fa'amuta foi lou auai i le suesuega i soo se taimi lava e aunoa ma le fesiligia o se mafua'aga o lea tulaga. E avanoa foi ona faaui i tua sou sao poo ni faamatalaga na e tuuina mai mo le suesuega, i soo se taimi lava i totonu o le 14 aso talu ona tuuina mai ia faamatalaga.

Ua faamoemoe o le a malu puipua uma faamatalaga ma finagalo faaalua mai le faailoaina faalauaitete, e oo lava i le faamaumauina o ia manatu i totonu o le lipoti o le sailiga.

Afai e te finagalo malie e auai i lenei sailiga, faamolemole faatumu le pepa o le "Maliega e Auai i le Suesuega" lea o loo faapipii atu faatasi iinei, ma auina mai ia te a'u:

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Mo nisi faamatalaga e fia fesili ai e faatatau I le faatagaina o lenei sailiga,  
faamolemole faafesota'i mai le:

Ta'ita'ifono, Komiti e Puipuia le Sologa Manuia o Tagata Lautele mai  
Su'esu'ega Faasaienisi, Iunivesite o Aukilani - Tel. 373-7999 extn 7830

FA'ATAGAINA E LE KOMITI E PUIPUIA LE SOLOGA MANUIA O TAGATA  
LAUTELE MAI SU'ESU'EGA FA'ASAIENISI, IUNIVESITE O AUKILANI  
(UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECT ETHICS COMMITTEE) i  
le aso ..... /..... /..... mo se vaitaimi e ..... tausaga, afua mai I le aso  
...../...../..... Reference: 2001/160

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