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THE IMPACT OF TONGAN CULTURAL PRACTICES

ON

TONGANS' ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the
Doctoral of Philosophy in Development Studies

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to find ways in which the current practices of Tongan culture and of the church could be modified so that any economic adverse impact they have on Tongans could be alleviated. This research is particularly significant when contextualised in the current unfavourable economic environment surrounding Tongans in Tonga and overseas. The findings from this research are original contributions on the subject of cultural modification in the context of Tonga.

This study has used North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory to investigate the impact of current cultural practices in Tonga on Tongans' economic performance. North's argument that institutions and institutional change do matter in defining a society's economic performance underpins this thesis. In this context, Tongan culture is considered an informal institution. This research has used both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, relying largely on *tālanoa* or dialogue to collect the data.

One of key findings of this research is that cultural and church obligations place undue financial burdens on Tongans, especially at the nuclear family level. Many Tongan families have gone into debt through borrowing to finance these obligations. The research also identifies the social impact, such as tension among the extended family's members. Seventy per cent of the participants pointed out that while the culture of *fetokoni'aki* (*makafetoli'aki*) or reciprocity, *fevahevahe'aki* or sharing, *faka'apa'apa* or respect and *tauhi vā* or maintaining good relationships

with others should be upheld, some of their practices, such as elaborate birthday, wedding and funeral ceremonies and church donations, need to be modified by scaling them down.

The study also identified that there could be resistance toward this proposed change. I have introduced the *Makafetoli'aki* modification model, a culturally sensitive approach, to guide this proposed modification. This model adopts a communal approach where the King and the royal family, nobles, chiefs, church leaders, *'ulumotu'a* or head of the extended families and their members are asked to *fetokoni'aki* in making this change happen in a culturally appropriate manner.

I have used the Tongan phrase *makafetoli'aki* or reciprocity to develop the *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework, *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology and *Makafetoli'aki* modification model. These are original contributions of this thesis at the levels of theory, research and practice.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents

The late Sione Talikavili Fatafehi Afuha'amango

of Okoa & Neiafu, Vava'u and Pea & Tokomololo, Tongatapu

and

The late 'Alilia Lakai Fine Afuha'amango

of Noapapu & Ovaka, Vava'u and Houma, Tongatapu

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NOTES

Pseudonyms

I have designated each of the fifty participants a pseudonym using the word “*Maka*”. For example, Maka 1, Maka 2, Maka 3, Maka 4 and so forth. *Maka* is the suffix for *makafetoli’aki* (*maka-fetoli’aki*) and it means stone or rock. I view the fifty participants as the rock on which this thesis has been built on. Their information, life stories, experiences and knowledge are what underpin this thesis. At the same time, I respect their privacy and would like to honour their desire not to disclose their real names, but to use pseudonyms instead.

Font size and style

I have used Book Antique font size 12 for the text and Book Antique font size 8 for all footnote references.

Bibliography

I have used the APA 6th edition style for my bibliography and the Endnote software program to compile and generate my bibliography.

Currency

TOP = Tongan currency or *pa’anga*
NZD = New Zealand dollar (dollar)
NZD1 = TOP1.36 (as of 1st June, 2013)

In this thesis, *pa’anga* will be used when referring to Tongan currency and dollar will be used when referring to New Zealand currency.

Glossary

A Glossary of Tongan words, phrases and proverbs is listed at the end of the thesis. I have used a number of Tongan words, phrases and proverbs which I have translated into English in the context of their use in this thesis. I have used Tongan dictionaries, previously published translations and my own translation in compiling this glossary.

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Aid Program
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
CEC	Constitutional Electoral Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
FWCT	Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoT	Government of Tonga
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NIE	New Institutional Economics
NCW	National Council for Women
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NRBT	National Reserve Bank of Tonga
NZD	New Zealand dollar
SP	South Pacific
SNZ	Statistics New Zealand
TDoS	Tonga Department of Statistics
TOP	Tongan <i>pa'anga</i>
THPF	Tonga Health Promotion Foundation
TNYC	Tonga National Youth Congress
TRA	Tonga Research Association

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The ultimate objective of this thesis is to suggest ways in which the current practices of Tongan culture and of the church could be modified in order to ease the financial burdens placed on individual Tongans. This proposal is made in the context of the tight economic environment surrounding Tongans in Tonga and abroad. Given this environment, access to money, time, traditional food and *koloa faka-Tonga* or Tongan mats and *tapa* clothes for cultural and church ceremonies is becoming more difficult. Tongans are becoming more aware of this economic reality as they continue to make tough decisions between fulfilling their cultural obligations and meeting their basic needs such as food, shelter, education and clothing for their children.

This thesis maintains that Tongan cultural values of *fetokoni'aki* or reciprocity, *fevahevahe'aki* or sharing, *faka'apa'apa* or respect and *tauhi vā* or maintaining good relationships with others are important and should be upheld by Tongans. Tongan culture is an integral part of how Tongans live and has a significant impact on how they behave socially, economically and politically. However, some of their practices, such as elaborate birthdays, weddings, funerals and *misinale* or annual church donations, should be scaled down to a more affordable level. Christian principles and the church have a significant influence on Tongans' economic decisions, and these will also be looked at in terms of the impact they have on economic performance, and how they could be modified.

This chapter is divided into nine main sections: (i) Introduction; (ii) Aim of the thesis; (iii) Significance of the thesis; (iv) Contributions of the thesis; (v) My personal journey; (vi) Significance and conceptualisation of *makafetoli'aki*; (vii) Scope of the thesis; (viii) Structure of the thesis; and (ix) Conclusion.

1.2 Aim of the thesis

As stated above, the primary objective of this thesis is to propose modification to some of the current practices of Tongan culture and of the church as part of helping to improve Tongans' economic behaviour and performance. I commence by first identifying the cultural factors that influence Tongans' economic behaviour and, secondly, identifying how these factors and their practices affect Tongans' economic performance. Thirdly, I investigate ways in which current practices could be modified to alleviate any adverse impact they have on Tongans' economic behaviour. There are three research questions posed in this thesis:

- (i) What are the cultural values that significantly influence participants' economic decisions?
- (ii) How have these cultural values and their practices impacted on participants' economic performance?
- (iii) How can some of these practices be modified so that participants can have more balanced cultural, social and economic lives?

I hold the assumption that practices of Tongan culture have positive and negative impacts on Tongans' economic performance. Therefore, Tongans should have the opportunity to choose what they think will be beneficial for them, maintain those practices and let go of those that do not benefit them, or modify them so that any adverse impact they have can be minimised. This is the core focus of this thesis.

An increasing number of studies have concluded that culture is one of the key impediments to Tonga's successful economic development (Bollard, 1974; Fisi'iahi, 2006; Hau'ofa, 2005; James, 1998; Ka'ili, 2008; Prescott, 2009; Ritterbush, 1986; Sevele, 1973; Taylor, 2010). Bollard (1974) pointed out that "Tongan culture is an impediment to development and behavioural change is prerequisite for development" (p. 258). Fisi'iahi (2006) pointed out that Tongan-owned businesses directed a significant percentage of their profits toward cultural obligations, and this dampens any opportunity for the business to grow. The following statements capture some of the conclusions drawn from previous research on the subject of culture and its impact on individuals' economic behaviour at the international, regional and local levels.

Hyden (1983) drew the following conclusion on Africa:

The problem centres on the question of whether the relationship between the economy of affection and the formal economy, capitalist or socialist, can be disentangled and realigned in a new and more constructive fashion (p. 19).

Prescott (2013) said:

Problem debt will continue to cripple Pacific Island families unless some traditions are kept in check ... Large contributions to weddings, funerals and cultural events including church donations are highlighted as contributing factors to problem debt in the community (Manukau Courier, 2013, p. 5).

Ritterbush (1986) made the following conclusion about Tongan entrepreneurs:

The obligatory contribution in connection with the Tongan family, the church, and the government adversely affected not only indigenous entrepreneurs but also foreigners married to Tongans. Although many people did not consider their obligations to be a liability to the health of their businesses ... others admitted that such obligations posed an enormous financial burden on them ("Without *fua kavenga*, I'd be a millionaire by now") (p. 72).

Saffu (2003) reaches the following conclusion on Pacific island nations:

Given the collective nature of the South Pacific (SP) island societies [including Tonga], business is seen as an extension of the clan [or extended family in the case of Tonga]. The entrepreneur is first and foremost a member of the clan and is required to meet traditional obligations. SP island entrepreneurs' success should therefore not be measured solely in economic terms. Rather, success should be measured in terms of whether the entrepreneur has the ability to balance the competing interests of the clan. Failure to do so will inevitably lead to the collapse of the business (p. 65).

Taylor (2010) draws a similar conclusion in his recent study on Tonga:

As discussed ... addressing social challenges in the face of social progress will require a reasoned balance to be found between what are often competing traditional and modern values. While tradition is seen by many as a foundation for deriving a distinctly Tongan concept of progress, the need for Tongan culture to evolve in parallel is also acknowledged (p. 22).

The above statements indicate the scale of tension between traditional and modern economies and their often conflicting priorities. This, coupled with a deteriorating socio-economic and political environment in Tonga, warranted reviewing the current cultural and church practices. While previous studies, as highlighted above, have identified the impact of cultural practices on individual families' financial positions, they have not provided any solution as to how this impact could be alleviated. It is on finding that middle-ground, where cultural and economic priorities can be integrated, that this thesis will be focused (Taylor, 2010).

1.3 Significance of the thesis

Coupled with slow economic growth overseas, Tonga's economic performance over the last two decades has been unfavourable. This has placed many Tongans both in Tonga and overseas in a difficult financial position. During the period 2002–2012, Tonga's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth remained under 3 per cent, which was

below the Government's growth target of 5 per cent or more (Ministry of Finance (MoF) 2012, p. 21). Agriculture and fishery activities, the Tongan economy's mainstay, have declined due to falling production and weakening international prices. Remittances to Tonga have also declined in recent years, indicating the weaker economic situation in the senders' economy. Remittances to Tonga fell from 157 million *pa'anga* in the 2009/10 financial year to 113 million *pa'anga* in 2011/12 (National Reserve Bank of Tonga [NRBT], 2012, p. 28; Rohorua, 2009).

The Asian Development Bank ([ADB], 2007) reported that slow domestic economic growth continued to limit opportunities for employment expansion and the 700 new entrants to the Tongan labour force each year. Unemployment was last estimated at 5.2 per cent, with youth accounting for 43 per cent of the unemployed. The same report showed that unemployment and a lack of income-earning opportunities were major causes of poverty and hardship¹ in Tonga. The report estimated that about 5 per cent of Tongan households received income below a food poverty line of 703 *pa'anga*, and 23 per cent received income below a basic needs poverty line of 1,466 *pa'anga* per head per year (p. 7).

At the end of 2011/12, total Government outstanding debt was estimated at 352 million *pa'anga* or almost 50 per cent of GDP. During the same period, 90 per cent of the Government development budget was from aid money, and only 10 per cent was from domestic sources. This reliance on aid money places Government finances in a

¹ADB (2007) defined hardship as inadequate sustainable human development, manifested by a lack of access to basic services, a lack of opportunities to participate fully in the socioeconomic life of the community, and a lack of adequate resources (including cash) to meet the basic needs of the household or customary obligations to the extended family, village community and the church (p. 7).

vulnerable situation (MoF, 2012, p. 9; NRBT, 2012, p. 26). The Tongan political environment has also been unstable in the last decade, which has been fuelled by public demands for political reform. The riot of November of 2006 was a manifestation of the tension that existed in the current economic, social and political environment of Tonga.²

While there is very little literature available on modification of cultural practices, there is certainly a need to modify some of the current cultural and church practices. To this end, I believe this research is significant both in terms of adding new knowledge on the subject of cultural modification and, more importantly, in providing Tongans with alternatives on how to practice their culture and religion, given the current tight financial situation.

1.4 Contributions of the thesis

As discussed earlier, previous studies have identified the conflict between traditional cultural priorities and modern economic priorities. However, none of these studies have offered any suggestion on how Tongans could manage this situation better. Tongans continue to struggle with trying to strike the right balance between cultural and economic priorities. Taylor (2010) made a statement that “modifying Tongan culture and tradition may be increasingly seen as a challenge that has to be undertaken for social [and economic] progress to proceed in Tonga, but it remains far

² On Thursday 16 November 2006, riots erupted in Nuku'alofa, the capital of the tiny kingdom of Tonga. After a pro-democracy march ended outside parliament, an irate crowd of possibly 2,000-3,000 took to the streets. As they rampaged through town, they tipped over cars, attacked government buildings, smashed windows, looted businesses and then set them alight. Many people who weren't at the demonstration joined the riot. Amidst the stores, offices and hotels engulfed in flames, the looting continued. Beaming youngsters darted in and out of stores laden with looted boxes and sacks of goods as blinding waves of fire fell onto the road. For many Tongans, it was like a Christmas give-away bonanza that had come early. By the night's end, the mob had burnt down a remarkable 80 per cent of the Central Business District of Nuku'alofa. Six people were dead, and millions *pa'anga* damage had been done (AusAID, 2008, p. 5).

from clear how it can be brought about” (p. 20). This thesis is aimed at filling this gap. In this context, I consider the findings from this research an original body of knowledge and unique contribution to the literature on cultural modification.

The thesis also provides an in-depth analysis on how the cultural behaviour of sharing, reciprocity, respect and maintaining good relationships impacts on Tongans’ economic performance. The study also identifies the behaviour of *ngutulau* or gossip, envy, *fesiosiofaki* or jealousy and *fakamā* or feeling of shame as having a substantial impact on how Tongans behave during cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings, funerals and church activities.

In pursuing this research, I have developed three original concepts: *Makafetoli’aki* theoretical framework; *Makafetoli’aki* research methodology and *Makafetoli’aki* modification model, which all contribute to an enhancement of the theoretical, research and application models available not only for this study but for future research. The principal purpose of introducing this framework is to ensure that western-based theories, research methodologies and modification models are contextualised within the local cultural, social, economic and political setting.

1.5 My personal journey

This thesis was born from my own family experience where the culture of *fetokoni’aki*, *makafetoli’aki*, *fevahevahe’aki*, *’ofa* or love and *faka’apa’apa* were the order of the day. I was brought up by parents whose lives were centred on helping others, especially their extended families. Over the 20 years I stayed with them, 20 cousins came from the outer island of Vava’u to stay with us on the main island, Tongatapu,

for higher education. My parents would always remind me, and my two sisters, to love our cousins, no matter how hard it was to live on their very limited income. My experience made me believe that the culture of *fevahevahe'aki* and *fetokoni'aki* were very relevant and should be maintained. I believe that without my parents' willingness to help my cousins, they would not have had the opportunity to further their education and earn a good living. Some of these cousins have completed higher education overseas and have settled in the United States, Australia and New Zealand, and are living very successful lives with their own families.

There is a Tongan phrase "*ko 'etau nofo ni ko e makafetoli'aki*" or "the way we live is based on reciprocity", which resonates the reality of how Tongans live on a daily basis. They rely on each other's reciprocity for some of their basic needs, and they nourish those relationships through *makafetoli'aki* or reciprocity. This thesis echoes those cultural principles through the use of the concept of *makafetoli'aki*.

My perception of the Tongan culture and its importance in Tongans' daily lives was challenged though throughout my 20 year career working for the Government of Tonga (GoT), NRBT and the World Bank in Washington D.C., USA. Studies by the World Bank and ADB, among others, identified Tongan cultural practices as a major impediment to Tonga's economic developments (ADB, 1996, 2007; Hau'ofa, 2005; Helu, 2002; James, 1998; World Bank, 2010).

This contradictory situation left me with an ambition to, one day, find a middle ground where these two extreme experiences could be synthesised. My thesis serves that ambition and desire to help Tongans achieve a more balanced cultural, social and

economic life through reducing the substantial financial burden they face due to large cultural and church obligations. To reiterate, my purpose is not to challenge Tongan traditional culture, but to provide Tongans with an alternative on how to practice their culture in a financially prudent manner. I approach this study based on the Tongan cultural core value of *makafetoli'aki*.

1.6 Significance and conceptualisation of *makafetoli'aki*

1.6.1 The significance of *makafetoli'aki*

Makafetoli'aki literally means chipping each other's rocks or, metaphorically, to take turns in helping each other; reciprocity or *fetokoni'aki* (Churchward 1959, p. 319).

In this thesis, *makafetoli'aki* is conceptualised so that it can be applied at theoretical, research, implementation or practical levels. The way Tongans traditionally organise their economic activities is based on the principle of *makafetoli'aki*, *fetokoni'aki* or reciprocity. This thesis capitalises on this concept and will suggest that traditional and modern economic practices need to *fetokoni'aki* by agreeing to find a middle-ground where Tongans can practice their traditional culture in a way that does not adversely affect their financial positions.

I will also use this concept as a tool for contextualising western-based models in the Tongan cultural, social, economic and political environment. I will also use the concept of *makafetoli'aki* as my way of overcoming some of the cultural complexities in which this thesis is situated, especially the rigid Tongan social hierarchical structure that defines how every Tongan should position himself or herself and behave. I also rely on the principle of *makafetoli'aki* to engage with my participants.

Finally, I use the concept of *makafetoli'aki* or reciprocity to highlight that the main purpose of this study is not to criticise the Tongan culture but to help Tongans, especially young ones, in designing a pathway that they could consider in practicing their culture in a financially prudent manner. I believe this alternative will help alleviate some of the financial burdens currently being shouldered by many Tongans, both in Tonga and overseas. I will develop the *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework, *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology and *Makafetoli'aki* modification model based on the principle and practices of *makafetoli'aki*, which are key contributions of this thesis.

1.6.2 *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework

North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory underpins this study (North, 1990). This is chosen for three main reasons: (i) it argues that neoclassical 'rationality theory' should be contextualised based on the specific cultural, social and political situation of that particular society; (ii) it places culture at the centre of analysing economic behaviour and performance of society; and (iii) it assumes a society where the economical, social, political and cultural context change over time as a result of institutional change, both in informal and formal institutions (North, 1990, 1993, 2005; Alston et al., 1996).

This thesis argues that Tongans' economic behaviour and performance are significantly influenced by their practices of the culture of *fetokoni'aki*, *fevahevahe'aki*, *faka'apa'apa* and *tauhi vā*. Therefore, economic rationality should be contextualised within this Tongan cultural configuration. Furthermore, this thesis argues that Tongans' economic behaviour will change over time through informal institutional

change, mainly cultural change. This cultural change could be driven by interaction between the individual and his or her social context, integration with other cultures or through generational change.

Prescott (2007) pointed out that neoclassical microeconomic theory is not the best framework for understanding Tongans' economic behaviour, which this thesis endorses. He used Polanyi's (1957) embeddedness theory to understand the behaviour of Tongan entrepreneurs in New Zealand arguing that:

Tongan migrants operating businesses in western countries ... bring together traditional Tongan culture (*anga faka-Tonga*) and western market philosophies. The clash has some interesting implications for Pacific business sustainability in New Zealand. To appreciate these implications however requires adopting a theoretical framework of social embeddedness as opposed to the traditional western market constructs based on rational self-interest (p. 14).

I have chosen North's theory instead of Polanyi's embeddedness theory because North's theory is more powerful in explaining the changing nature of a society's economic path, and how institutions and institutional change determine this path (North, 1990, 1993, 2005).

While North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory underpins this research, I will also use other social theories to overcome some of the limitations imposed by this theory. One of the limitations posed by North's theory is the lack of detail in explaining how exactly culture impacts on an individual's or society's economic behaviour. I will draw on social theories from other social sciences disciplines to help explain this.

Another limitation imposed by North's theory is the lack of detail in defining culture. It refers to culture as an ideology or norms without detailing what this means

for a particular society (North 1990, p. 4). The Tongan culture is quite complex and it is more than just an ideology because it is woven into Tongans' daily social, spiritual and economic lives. For example, James (1998) said:

We [the World Bank] have not, however, labelled them [Pacific island culture] as "ideologies" to avoid the possibility of them being regarded as "mere ideologies" and dismissed on those grounds. In Tonga and Samoa, each [cultural] "domain" has a powerful and significant material base as well as its set of morally persuasive grounding ideas (p. 12).

The Tongan culture has a rigid hierarchical social structure; the royal family, nobility and commoners. The royal family plays a very influential role in the social, political, economic and cultural lives of Tongans. The church is also a very influential institution in the Tongan society, and tends to reinforce the Tongan culture of sharing, reciprocity, respect and maintaining good relationships.

I will introduce the *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework, which is a modification of North's theory, a western-based theory, so that it is properly contextualised within the complexity of the Tongan culture. I will also use this framework to address some of the limitations imposed by North's theory.

1.6.3 *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology

The current thesis relies heavily on qualitative research methodology to answer the key questions raised in this study. In regard to data collection, I have used existing Tongan research methodologies such as the *Tālanoa* model (Vaiioleti, 2006; Prescott, 2008) or "to dialogue" and the *Tōungāue* model (Kalavite, 2010) or "working together" along with the *Makafetoli'aki* model, which I developed to overcome some of the cultural issues faced in this research. Prescott (2008) first used the *tālanoa* methodology for economic research when generating data on culture and its impact on Tongan

entrepreneurs in New Zealand. He argued that *tālanoa* was very relevant as it gave participants the opportunity to contextualise their own stories. Part of that contextualisation is to allow participants to conduct the *tālanoa* in their preferred language.

The use of *tālanoa* and of Tongan language is relevant in this study, as it allows the participants, especially the old ones, to recollect and communicate their stories in their own language (Halapua, 2001; Niumeitolu, 2007). A total of 50 semi-structured *tālanoa* sessions were held in the Tongan language and then translated into English. The translated data was organised and analysed using the NVivo software program. I used NVivo software to organise the data into key themes because this was more efficient than manually categorising the data. At the same time, I also used quantitative data where appropriate.

Given the sensitivity of this study, I purposely *tālanoa* with people I knew. Participants' familiarity with the researcher gave them the trust to provide a true and accurate account of their lives rather than giving what they thought the researcher wanted to hear (Evans & Gruba, 2010; Manu'atu, 2000; Niumeitolu, 2007; Prescott, 2008; Stage & Manning, 2003). I looked at this exercise as part of practising the culture of *makafetoli'aki* or *fetokoni'aki*. My participants are people I have known³ in the past, and in this case I sought their *fetokoni'aki* by asking them to share their personal stories

³I need to clarify what I mean by saying that my participants are people I have "helped" in the past. What I mean by this is that the participants are people I have known in the past through my career in the Tonga Government or as member of the wider Tongan community or through the informal network. This means that they are not people from my own immediate extended family, church or local community but are from the wider Tongan community which I considered myself as being from that community as well, or an insider. I believe the use of word "help" in this context could be misleading because I have not literally given them anything in the past rather we have worked together as part of the same Tongan wider community. It is in this context, that I used the word "help", reciprocity or *makafetoli'aki*. To avoid any further confusion, I have replaced the word "help" with "known".

and experiences with the objective of finding answers to my thesis questions. In turn, I will give back the findings from this research hoping it will help them find alternatives to the way they practice their culture.

As Stage and Manning (2003) pointed out:

The manner in which entry is gained is the precursor to the trust and rapport critical to the quality of the interview conducted and data gathered. Researchers should carefully plan how they are introduced to potential respondents (p. 38).

Existing qualitative research methodologies are largely western-based and they need to be tailored to the local cultural, social, economic and political environment.

This research is no exception. The research method needed to recognise Tongan society's own socio-cultural dynamics, such as the rigid social hierarchical structure that defines every Tongan's social stance (James, 2005; Rohorua, 2009; Smith, 1999, 2004; Thaman-Helu, 2007; Tongati'o, 2010). This was critical in how I *tālanoa* with my participants. Two of the participants were from the nobility class, and the language I used was different to that used for a commoner.

1.6.4 *Makafetoli'aki* modification model

The conceptualisation of the theoretical framework, methodology and modification model is based on the culture of *makafetoli'aki* where everyone is asked to help make change happen in a peaceful and culturally appropriate manner. This approach is considered to be one of the key contributions of this thesis.

1.7 Scope of the thesis

The current research focuses on the views and performance of individual Tongans rather than the views of government, international agencies, researchers or academics. I chose to take this position for three main reasons: (i) the views of

individual Tongans, rather than government, international agencies, aid donors or researchers, is the centrepiece of this research; (ii) individual Tongans should influence the way Tongan society determines its economic, cultural, social and political lives; and (iii) individual Tongans should be part of the modification process and not just end users.

The research is physically located among Tongans in Tonga rather than the Tongan community overseas, to ensure that the cultural context is predominantly Tongan. This thesis assumes that Tongans' behaviour in foreign countries will change and will be moulded by the predominant culture in those countries. For example, the Tongan community in New Zealand will be very much influenced by New Zealand culture and lifestyle.

This thesis focuses on the current practices of Tongan culture and of the church. I assume these practices differ greatly from the traditional Tongan culture and its practices due to changes in the economic, social, political and cultural landscape of Tonga over the years. The entry of Christianity brought change to the Tongan economic, social and cultural settings, which also had an impact on Tongans' cultural and economic behaviours (Latukefu, 1974). The monetisation of the Tongan economy also brought major changes to the Tongan economy and the way Tongans conducted their economic activities. Other research defines the beginning of modern Tonga based on a different timeline. This thesis will not engage in any elaborate discussion of traditional Tongan culture and how it has evolved over the years, as that is outside the

scope of this thesis. However, I summarise the key features of the Tongan culture and its relevance to current practices as part of positioning the thesis in Chapter 3.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1: Introduction; Chapter 2: Literature Review; Chapter 3: Locating the Thesis; Chapter 4: Research Design; Chapter 5: Research Findings; Chapter 6: Discussion; and Chapter 7: Conclusion.

Chapter 1: Introduction, which is the current chapter, outlines the aim of this thesis, which is to offer an alternative for Tongans on how to practice their culture so that they do not end up with undue financial burdens being placed on them and their families. The chapter also highlights the significance of this study when contextualised in the current economic, social and political environment of Tonga. The chapter has discussed the concept of *makafetoli'aki* and its relevance to this study. The preferred theoretical framework and research methodology are also highlighted in this chapter. The chapter concludes with the scope and the structure within which this thesis has been conducted.

Chapter 2: Literature Review is an endeavour to review the literature on culture and its impact on individuals' economic performance. It starts by reviewing how microeconomic theory has evolved from a position where institutions, let alone culture, were not considered as having any impact on a society's economic performance to one where institutions, both informal and formal, as well as institutional change, were considered by some theorists as being central in determining a society's economic performance. North's Institutional Path Dependency

Theory, a branch of New Institutional Economics (NIE), articulated that culture, an informal institution, does have an impact on a society's economic performance. This chapter demonstrates why North's theory is relevant in this study. It continues by reviewing other social theories to give an in-depth understanding of how culture impacts on an individual's economic performance. It concludes with a summary of how culture specifically impacts on economic performance in the context of Tongan society.

Chapter 3: Locating the Thesis is aimed at locating the thesis both in the literature and in the Tongan social, economic and cultural environment. The chapter continues by highlighting some of the costs involved in current cultural practices during ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings and funerals. The chapter concludes with a summary of the current economic setting in Tonga.

Chapter 4: Research Design outlines the rationale behind the research methodology and the method applied in collecting and analysing the data. The chapter starts by explaining why qualitative research was the main research methodology used in this study. At the same time, it clarifies that quantitative research methodology was used where appropriate. This research relied on using more than one methodology. This chapter continues by highlighting the relevance of existing Pacific research methodologies, namely *tālanoa*, in the data collection. The chapter also describes how NVivo software was used in analysing the data. It concludes by introducing the *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology and its relevance in this study.

Chapter 5: Research Findings will report on the key findings generated by the data collected. Firstly, it will reveal how the culture of sharing, reciprocity, respect and maintaining good relationships influence Tongans' economic decisions. It will also identify how Christian faith and the church have very strong influence on Tongans' economic decisions. The chapter will also discuss how the behaviours of gossip, envy or jealousy and feeling of shame affect Tongans' economic behaviours. These factors work together to determine how Tongans conduct their daily economic lives. The chapter will conclude by analysing participants' views on what and how the current cultural practices should be modified.

Chapter 6: Discussion contextualises and interprets the findings concerning Tonga's current social, political and economic environment. The current tight financial situation in Tonga, and the unsustainable level of financial commitment to cultural and church obligations, makes the proposal for the scaling down of cultural and church practices quite timely and relevant. The chapter also discusses some of the challenges that are expected to be faced in proposing this cultural modification. The thesis introduces the *Makafetoli'aki* modification model as a way of overcoming some of the possible challenges that could emerge while implementing the proposed modification.

Chapter 7: Conclusion brings the key findings from this research and the implications for Tongans together. The findings from this research reinforce my stance that, given the current economic, social and political situation in Tonga and abroad, it is the right time to modify some of the current cultural and church practices.

Individual Tongans are faced with the unremitting situation of trying to allocate their limited amount of money, *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and time between family basic needs, cultural and church obligations.

This chapter closes with a report on Tongan leaders' readiness for change. It is interesting to note that the King and the royal family are more ready for this change than church leaders. A discussion of what some Tongan families are doing in terms of modifying their current practices is also included in this chapter.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the aim of this thesis, which is to find ways in which the current cultural and church practices could be modified so that any adverse impacts on Tongans' economic performance can be alleviated. The chapter also outlines the significant contributions of this thesis to the existing body of knowledge on this subject. It also outlines how this research was conducted deliberately; the preferred theoretical framework, the research methodology and the proposed modification model. It closes with an outline of the thesis structure.

The next chapter, Literature Review, will endeavour to review the existing literature on: (i) the evolution in microeconomic theory and how culture became an integral part of economic analysis; (ii) cultural practices and their impact on individuals' economic performance; (iii) current cultural and church practices in Tonga and their impact on Tongans' economic performance; and (iv) cultural modification – what and how?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to assess the existing literature available on culture and its impact on individuals' economic performance, with detailed attention being paid to the current practices of Tongan culture and their impact on Tongans' economic performance. Furthermore, it reviews the existing literature, if any, on cultural modification – what it encompasses and the challenges that emerge.

It is noted that there is very limited literature available on cultural adaptation both globally and locally. There has been an increasing amount of research on the impacts of the current cultural practices on Tongans' economic performance (Bollard, 1974; Fisi'iahi, 2006; James, 1998; Ka'ili, 2008; Prescott, 2009; Ritterbush, 1986; Sevele, 1973; Taylor, 2010). However, these studies have offered very little in terms of how to modify the current practices so that any adverse economic effects can be alleviated.

This chapter is divided into eight parts: (i) Introduction; (ii) Defining culture; (iii) Culture and evolution in microeconomic theory; (iv) Culture and its impact on individuals' economic performance; (v) Current practices in Tongan culture and their impact on Tongans' economic performance; (vi) Cultural modifications – what and how?; (vii) *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework; and (viii) Conclusion.

2.2 Defining culture

2.2.1 What is a culture?

Malinowski (1944) pointed out that culture should be considered as being the widest context for human behaviour and it is important regardless of which disciplines you are enquiring from. In economics, for example, enquiry into wealth or welfare

should not detach the economic individual from moral, spiritual, cultural and environmental considerations. Instead, economics should place “the economic man within the context of his multiple drives, interests and habits, that is, man as is moulded [sic] by his complex, partly rational, partly emotional cultural setting” (p. 6).

Malinowski refers to culture as follows:

It obviously is the integral whole consisting of implements and consumers’ goods, of constitutional charters for the various social groupings, of human ideas and crafts, beliefs and customs. Whether we consider a very simple or primitive culture or an extremely complex and developed one, we are confronted by a vast apparatus, partly material, partly human and partly spiritual, by which man is able to cope with the concrete, specific problems that face him (p. 36).

Malinowski’s definition above explains culture as ideas, beliefs and customs which condition how individuals go about coping with life on a daily basis. This thesis is in agreement with Malinowski, that Tongans’ economic performance is significantly influenced by their cultural environment.

The ASB Bank Polyfest Secondary School Cultural Festival, dubbed the largest cultural event in the world, identified its theme for 2012 as “My culture defines me.”⁴ This is a very powerful phrase in explaining the significance of culture in the lives of particular ethnic groups; Maori and Pacific. This theme speaks directly to the central argument in this thesis that culture does influence, condition, and even define, the way

⁴ The ASB Bank Secondary School Polyfest is an annual event held in Auckland every year which hosts more than 52 secondary schools, or over 50,000 students, who compete in their own cultural dances, arts and languages. This event is now in its 37th year and it attracts almost 100,000 people each year. Glover Park School was the host school for 2012 and in determining the theme for 2012 Polyfest, Glover Park School composed the theme ‘Culture Defines Us’. The Deputy Principal of Glover Park School explained the reason behind the theme in her speech delivered to the ASB Bank and Sponsoring Agencies of the ASB Polyfest Secondary School Cultural Festival on 1st December 2011 at ASB Bank Headquarters, ASB Bank Building, Albert Street, Auckland which I attended. She explained that the school thought of its own teaching model, which incorporates cultural learning into its curriculum. This is part of the school’s approach to provide the students with an educational environment that is culturally oriented. The majority of the students in this school are of Maori and Pacific ethnicity, and culture plays a significant part in how these students socialise in their educational environment. This theme captures the key argument in this thesis that culture influences the way Tongans behave socially, economically and even academically (ASB Bank, 2012).

Tongans behave socially and economically. Though established in an educational environment for an educational purpose, it reveals that the foundation for young Tongans' educational journey is their culture. Thaman-Helu (2002) attested to the same notion that young Tongans' educational orientation is very much shaped by their cultural upbringing. Wolgramm-Foliaki (2006) and Tongati'o (2010) argued for the same principle to be recognised among Tongan children in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools in New Zealand.

2.2.2 Cultural differences

Hofstede (1980, 2006) introduced five cultural paradigms which could be used to identify cultural differences among different nations: Power Distance (related to the problem of inequality); Uncertainty Avoidance (related to the problem of dealing with the unknown and unfamiliar); Individualism versus Collectivism (related to the problem of interpersonal ties); Masculinity versus Femininity (related to the emotional gender roles); and Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation (related to deferment of gratification). He pointed out that difference in individual's business behaviours in different parts of the world are driven by cultural differences (Harris et al., 2004).

Saffu (2003) reinforced the above characteristics when he assessed entrepreneurs' cultural environment in the Pacific. Drawing on Hofstede's cultural paradigms, Saffu (2003) and Ross (2009) argued that Tongan culture could be characterised by the presence of a strong social hierarchy or inequality, collectivism, masculinity, short-term orientation and low uncertainty avoidance. These are quite different from western-based cultures where social equality, individualism, gender

equality and uncertainty avoidance are an integral part of it. This thesis draws on these paradigms to identify the key characteristics of the Tongan culture and how they influence Tongans' economic behaviour. It is important to note the cultural differences between the Western and Pacific countries, and any other culture for that matter, as this will assist in explaining the different economic behaviours generated in these societies (Harris et al, 2004; Prescott & Hooper, 2009; Yusuf, 1998).

2.2.3 Cultural change

One characteristic of culture is that change does occur, although it may not be rapid or without resistance. In spite of resistance to change there are, however, three basic ways in which a culture changes over a period of time: diffusion, acculturation and evolution. Cultural diffusion occurs when one society is in contact with another society, with both societies being at the same level of development. Acculturation occurs when diffusion takes place between groups with differing stages of development. One example of acculturation is through colonisation, where a culture of a highly developed nation is imposed upon a lesser developed society. This is very typical among Pacific islands where cultures of more developed countries such as Britain, France and Germany have been imposed on them during colonisation. The evolution of culture, that is its development, takes place over time. Culture evolves over time and as a result modifications are made to meet the needs of the society. This evolutionary change in culture is regardless of any changes which may be brought about by diffusion and/or acculturation.

Kavaliku (2005) defines culture and cultural change as follows:

Culture comprises the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, intellectual and emotional features that characterise society or social groups. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also different modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs. ... Furthermore, culture is a dynamic reality. It changes either gradually or rapidly, over time. Indeed, it is a system that changes with each new idea, new development, each new generation and each new interaction with other cultures and/or peoples. Living cultures are based on legacies of the past, the ideas of the present and the hopes for the future (p. 22).

This thesis agrees with Kavaliku that culture does change over time as driven by new generations and through contact with other cultures and people. Informed by the various definitions above, this study endorses that culture: influences human behaviours in a society in a particular way; differs from society to society; and changes over time owing to diffusion, acculturation or evolution (Goldstein, 1957; Harris et al, 2004; Hofstede, 1980, 2006; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). These conclusions are drawn upon in arguing my position that Tongan culture does influence Tongans' economic behaviour and that it differs, in many ways, from other cultures, especially those in western societies. Finally, Tongan culture does change over time owing to interaction with other cultures and through generational change which, in turn, determines Tonga's economic path, hence the use of North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory in this thesis.

2.3 Culture and evolution in microeconomic theory

This section explains how culture eventually became an integral part of microeconomic analysis. It became prominent with the entry of New Institutional Economics (NIE) in the early and mid-twentieth century.

2.3.1 Neoclassical microeconomic theory

Microeconomic theory is a study of economics at the level of the individual economic entity: the individual firm, the individual consumer and individual work (Boyes & Melvin, 2005, p. 4). It examines how individuals and firms make decisions about work, consumption, investment, the hiring of labour and the buying of goods and services. Two key principles or assumptions that underline neoclassical microeconomic theory are: (i) scarcity; and, (ii) self-interest rationality. On scarcity, choices have to be made because of scarcity of resources. People do not have everything they want; they do not have the time or the money to purchase everything they want. When people choose some things, they have to give up, or forgo, other things. This study endorses this neoclassical position that resources are scarce, and hence the need for Tongans to make choices.

On self-interest rationality, neoclassical theory argues that an individual's economic choice is driven largely by wealth maximisation motives. Neoclassical theorists argued that it is part of the nature of human beings to pursue self-interest and to be able to make rational choices. Individuals make the choices that, at the time and with the information they have available, will give them the greatest satisfaction or utility. Non-economic factors such as values, norms, cultures and moral sources are secondary (Callahan, 2002; Ebeling, 2003; Frank, 1997; Marshall, 1948; Mill, 1965; Reisman, 1986; Schumpeter, 1951; Smith, 1970). The growing inability of neoclassical microeconomic theory to explain real-world economic situations, which vary significantly from country to country, led many economists to modify or extend

neoclassical theory to come to grips with this wide range of real-world issues. Even Marshall (1948) pointed out that:

[e]conomics is on the one side a study of wealth; and on the other, and more important side, a part of the study of man other motives such as religious and cultural could be more intense than economic motives and these should no longer be overlooked in the study of economic man (p. 1).

The current research challenges neoclassical economic theory arguing that Tongans' economic choices are made in the context of their cultural, social and economic setting. Furthermore, culture changes over time and that also influences the economic path of a society.

2.3.2 New Institutional Economic Theory (NIE)

NIE theory emerged in the early and mid-twentieth century in an attempt to make a point that institutions do matter, as its name suggests (North, 1990; Samuels, 1995). Key proponents of NIE included Coase (1937), who pointed out that neoclassical microeconomics theory had become more and more abstract and it was in fact little concerned with what happened in the real world. He also criticised economists such as Salter, who claimed that the normal economic system works itself (p. 387). Coase introduced the concept of transaction costs into economic analysis as a way of questioning the neoclassical assumption of a perfect market operation, where supply and demand will reach an equilibrium point via the automatic adjustment of the price mechanism. Coase argued that the neoclassical perspective only looked at what happened in the market when the final product arrived; it did not look behind the firm at what happened during the production phase. The cost involved in the process of production could only be understood through an understanding of the nature of the

firm and the cost of transaction (Coase, 1937; Commons, 1934; North, 1990, 1993; Williamson, 2000).

Williamson (2008) first coined the phrase “new institutional economics” with the intention of differentiating the subject from “old institutional economics”, which was associated with the work of people like Commons (1934). This thesis focuses on the new institutional economics. Williamson (2008) made the following statement:

The appearance and development of a new institutional economics [NIE] presupposes a predecessor – to which, NIE presumably both relates and differs. The common ground is this: unlike the neoclassical resource allocation paradigm (which focussed on prices and output, supply and demand, and was dismissive of institutions [Reder, 1999]), both older- and newer-style institutional economics insisted that institutions matter (Brousseau & Glachant, 2008, p. xxiii, foreword by Williamson).

This thesis focuses on new institutional economics, especially the work of North (1990). North, a strong proponent of NIE, advanced this theory by further defining institutions and showing how institutional change impacts on economic performance. He established the Institutional Path Dependency Theory based on the interaction between economics and institutions, which is the central theoretical framework underpinning this research.

2.3.3 Institutional Path Dependency Theory

North (1990) elaborated on Institutional Path Dependency Theory by arguing that not only do institutions matter, but history also matters. History matters because the present and the future are connected to the past by the continuity of a society’s institutions. North’s theory changed many economists’ views of development from being that of a process of growth spurred by new technology and capital accumulation to a dynamic process of institutional change. The theory has had significant impact on

major policy debates, ranging from socio-political law to development aid and development economics in general (Ménard & Shirley, 2014). North argues that institutions, both informal and formal, are key determinants of a society's economic growth (North, 1990; Rodrik et al., 2004, p. 133). Institutions are the rules of the game and these rules shape the way a society conducts its social, political and economic activities. These rules can either be conducive (or not) to desirable economic outcomes (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Hall & Jones, 1999; Ménard & Shirley, 2014).

North (1990) stated that "institutions define and limit the set of choices of individuals" (p. 3). Rodrik et al. (2004) further emphasised that the existence of important institutions such as a clearly defined system of property rights, a regulatory apparatus curbing anti-competitive behaviour, as well as the social and political bodies deemed to manage social conflicts, are essential elements of economic development. In their view, these are, in general, absent in poor countries causing a major drawback for many economic stabilisation policies in these countries. Rodrik (2007) went on to argue that while economic globalisation can be a recipe for countries that are trying to dig themselves out of poverty, success usually requires following policies that are tailored to local economic and political realities. This thesis is in agreement with Rodrik's position on the importance of formal institutions, but the focus here is on informal institutions, namely culture.

Institutions are divided into formal and informal. Formal institutions refer to explicit rules such as constitutions, laws and property rights, and informal rules refer to social conventions, norms, beliefs and values (Klein, 1999; Ménard, 2000; North,

1990). Dividing institutions into formal and informal institutions is critical in positioning the Tongan culture in this research. In this context, Tongan culture is viewed as being an informal institution that has a very significant influence on Tongans' economic behaviour.

Institutional constraints are the limitations that institutions place on individuals and the way they behave. These constraints include both what individuals are prohibited from doing and, sometimes, under what circumstances individuals are permitted to undertake certain activities (Klein, 1999; North, 1990; Rodrik et al., 2004). North demonstrates this point by referring to how people greet each other in different countries: they may bow, shake hands, or hug and kiss, for example. Sen (1987) reinforced North's argument by pointing out that people's behaviour patterns vary between regions and cultures. He stated that "it may not, of course, be at all absurd to claim that maximisation of self-interest is not irrational, at least, not necessarily so, but to argue that anything other than maximisation self-interest must be irrational seems altogether extraordinary" (p. 15). A similar situation can be seen in Tonga. For example, in traditional Tongan culture sisters and brothers are not supposed to eat, sleep, play or even sit together as part of respecting the taboo in the relationship of a sister and brother. Another example is the Tongan social hierarchy where the royal family, nobility and commoners are expected to operate at different levels.

On institutional change, North argues that institutions do change but only incrementally rather than in a discontinuous fashion. The incremental rate of change is due to the fact that informal institutions are embedded in society. In contrast, changes

in formal institutions can be achieved overnight owing to external shocks, such as civil war or natural disasters. The 2006 riot in the city of Nuku'alofa could be considered as an external shock to the Tongan economy, which led to a number of relatively rapid major changes in the political set-up of Tonga. Changes in informal institutions, on the other hand, are incremental because these constraints or rules are embodied in the customs, culture, traditions and codes of conduct which are deeply rooted in the society. In this context, there is considerable tension between those who see rapid change as being the only solution and those who see rapid change as an assault on their cultural values (North, 1990, 2005).

North's theory is relevant to an understanding of Tonga's economic performance, especially in recent years, when economic policies have failed to achieve sustainable economic development for the Kingdom. International agencies such as the World Bank and IMF, researchers and Tongan academics have integrated Tonga's social, political and cultural configuration in trying to understand the island's economic problems, rather than just focusing on economic policies (Bollard, 1974; Pulu, 2011; Fisi'iahi, 2006; Helu, 1997; Moala, 2011; Morton, 1978; Niumeitolu, 2007; Prescott, 2009; Saffu, 2003; Sevele, 1973; Taylor, 2010; World Bank, 2012, 2013). This study is an extension of that debate, arguing that Tongan culture, and its practices, has a significant impact on Tongans' economic behaviours and performance. This is underpinned by North's theory.

Niumeitolu (2007) argued that culture and the churches have very strong impact on Tonga's development and there has to be separation of power between the

state, church, nobility and the royal family. Pulu (2014) asked “how can these (democratic) principles be practiced under a parliamentary structure that starkly exhibits partiality towards noblemen over and above commoners?” (p. 113). Kennedy (2012) pointed out that Tonga’s land tenure system has been a significant impediment in Tonga’s economic development. The current system centralises land ownership in the hands of only a few: nobility and the royal family. This has to change as a pre-condition to successful political and economic reforms in Tonga. The World Bank recommended that special attention should be given to the role of culture and the church in Tonga’s development, as they are a significant part of Tonga’s social make-up (World Bank, 2012, 2013).

North’s theory and its application in this study have its own limitations. Firstly, development and culture are linked in a number of different ways, and the connection relates both to the ends and to the means of development. Another related problem is that cultural connections are quite complex (Sen, 2001, p. 3). In the case of Tonga, for example, there is continuing debate on the contribution that remittances make toward Tonga’s development. On one hand, it is considered a key source of income to many Tongan families, while on the other hand it is argued that this cultural practice makes many Tongan families in Tonga heavily dependent on their relatives overseas. Moreover, it places financial pressure on Tongan families overseas (Pulu, 2013; MoF, 2013; NRBT, 2012; Ratha & Mohapatra, 2007; World Bank, 2012, 2013).

Other factors such as geography and integration can also influence the economic performance of individuals and of the country as a whole. This

interdependency is very hard to measure. While measurement of geography and integration of economics can be approximated, the same cannot be said for institutions. This is an area where North's theory requires further development (Diamond 1997; Rodrik et al., 2004). This is particularly true in small island nations where statistical information is lacking. Moreover, the theory does not provide any in-depth analysis on culture and its impact on individuals' economic performance. In addressing these limitations, I draw on other social theories to further understand this relationship.

2.4 Culture and its impact on individuals' economic behaviour

2.4.1 Cultural embeddedness theory

Polanyi (1957) sought to demonstrate that an economy is trapped in institutions, both economic and non-economic. In challenging the neoclassical principle of self-interest rationality, Polanyi argued that social relations are not an outcome of economic activity but that economic activity is shaped by our social relations (Hess, 2004). Polanyi demonstrated his position by identifying two types of resource allocation and economic exchange in society: reciprocity and redistributive exchange, which are constituted on the basis of shared values and norms that have their roots in social and cultural bonds rather than monetary goals.

In summary, Polanyi's embeddedness theory offers two key propositions which are relevant to this thesis: (i) an individual's economic behaviour is embedded in their social relations, norms and values; and (ii) economic exchange is based on reciprocity and redistribution of wealth aimed at serving social ends. On the first proposition, the current research agrees that Tongans' economic behaviour is significantly influenced

by their social relations, norms and values. The Tongan culture of sharing, reciprocity and love tends to drive Tongans' economic decisions rather than the desire to maximise their material gain. The allocation of resources and economic exchange among Tongans, such as their money, *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and time, are also driven by the practices of reciprocity and of the church, rather than profit maximisation to a large degree (Morton 1978, p. 52).

2.4.2 Economy of affection theory

Hyden (1983) introduced the economy of affection as a mode of production that underpins most of the African economies. Hyden defines the economy of affection as follows:

It denotes a network of support, communications and interaction among structurally defined groups connected by blood, kin, community or other affiliations, for example, religion. It links together in a systematic fashion a variety of discrete economic and social units which in other regards may be autonomous (p. 8).

According to Hyden the functional purposes of the economy of affection can be divided into three principal categories: (i) basic survival; (ii) social maintenance; and (iii) development. Most economic activities and decisions in African rural areas are structured within this framework. On basic survival, many African families in rural areas rely heavily on their own network for their basic needs such as cash, food, labour or child care. These kinds of exchanges are normally confined to only a few individuals at a time, but, if taken together, they perform an extremely important welfare function in society that formal institutions cannot match. Similar findings have been identified in Tonga, where they found that existing in Tonga is a communal economy where money is not exchanged on commercial terms but rather to support

the community with the objective of helping each other (Bender, 2002; James, 1998; Morton, 1978; Tokuroi, 2006).

On social maintenance, this can range from gift-giving within the family to contributions toward religious or political purposes. There are examples of hospitality being offered to families who are in need. In Africa, this network also becomes critical when there is a large influx of refugees. This feature also becomes apparent when there are ceremonial functions such as weddings and funerals. Families are prepared to incur high economic cost in order to fulfil these obligations. Similar situations are found in Tonga. Many Tongan families go to elaborate expense during ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and birthdays in order to build or maintain their respective relationships within their social network (Cowling, 1990; Fakava, 2000; Taylor, 2010).

On development, the economy of affection reinforces communal support or cooperation in economic activities. This is a very common practice in Tonga where, traditionally, most of the key economic activities such as fishing, farming, weaving and *tapa* making are done in cooperation with others or on a communal basis referred to as *toutai*, *toutu'u*, *toulālanga* and *toulanganga*, respectively (Kalavite, 2010). I will elaborate on these terminologies in Chapter 3.

The economy of affection allows for a redistribution of wealth from the formal to the informal sector. For example, loan or credit facilities are available on an informal basis within the social network to support new businesses, farms, or for educational purposes. This is a common practice in Tonga, whereby members of an extended family with a stable income lend some money to other members to help pay for

children's school fees, medical needs, or just daily living expenses. Sevele (1973) warned against abusing this system which, if not carefully managed, often leaves a lot of the creditors without money because borrowers sometimes do not pay back their loan.

Overall, Hyden's economy of affection is very relevant to this thesis. The principles that define how the economy of affection works, which are based on affection rather than wealth maximisation, are very similar to the principles underpinning Tongans' economic behaviours, such as reciprocity, sharing and love. Hyden (2006) also pointed out that the economy of affection does have its own limitations in terms of economic development. While the economy of affection does offer a lot to the economic life of Africans, there are also drawbacks to this system that need to be cautioned against "tribalism" and "nepotism" in hiring practices are a major concern in most African nations, as it filters through at all level of recruitment, even within international agencies that operate in Africa. This is a useful finding as it reinforces that while culture does make a positive contribution to economic development it also has its own limitations (Tokuroi, 2006; Waters, 1992). A similar situation is also identified among Tongans' business practices whereby managers are expected to give priority to their relatives and friends over more qualified candidates (Fisi'iahi, 2006; Reddy, 1991; Ritterbush, 1986; Yusuf, 1998).

2.4.3 'I' and 'We' paradigm theory

Etzioni (1988) provides a strong case for the inclusion of social relations in understanding economic behaviour. Etzioni suggests three major changes to the

neoclassical theory of rationality as follows: (i) what people are after, (ii) how they choose their ways, and (iii) who is doing the choosing. The decision made on each of these steps is based on the 'I' and 'We' paradigm, where the 'I' is driven by the self-interest rationality to maximise utility, while the 'We' is driven by moral and value obligations within the society the people live in (p. 4).

Etzioni (1988) argues that what people are after is driven by the rationality to maximise utility as well as meeting moral obligations to the community. Individuals' economic decision-making is driven by both the individuals and their social collectives and the community (such as ethnic, racial group, peer group at work, and neighborhood groups). Individual decision-making does occur, but it is made within the context set by various collectivities (p. 4).

Etzioni's concept of 'I' and 'We' does represent Tongans and how they make their own economic decisions. On one hand is a desire to maximise an individual's utility, which represents the 'I'. On the other hand, there are cultural obligations and church commitments to fulfill to the extended family, village and church, respectively, which represent the 'We'. Tongans continue to face this dilemma on a daily basis and this thesis is an attempt to find a better way of balancing the 'We' and the 'I'.

2.4.4 Moral economy theory

Scott (1976) developed the moral economy theory as a way of explaining peasant communities in Southeast Asia and how they live and defend themselves against capitalism. Scott argued that social and economic practices among peasants in Southeast Asia were based on two moral premises: (i) the norm of reciprocity; and (ii)

the right to adopt the safety-first principle or what economists would call a risk-averse position vis-à-vis their environment. This orientation did not necessarily bring the highest profit to the farmers, but it satisfied their societal obligation to insure each other in the community if a natural disaster hit. Exchange of their farming products was based on reciprocity rather than a market price. Scott referred to the way the peasants constructed their economic activities as the “subsistence ethic.”⁵ In a way, Scott’s moral economy theory does represent traditional Tongan economic activities. The motive was very much to help each other through reciprocity rather than trying to make a profit. This was necessary in a subsistence economy, but now that Tonga is progressing toward a modern or monetised economy there has to be some modification to this subsistence way of living.

Scott also pointed out that redistribution of wealth among members of the same community was often reinforced or assured by the social pressure of gossip and envy. This implies that all were entitled to a living out of the resources within the village, and that a living was attained often at the cost of a loss of status and autonomy. Those who had better yields had an obligation to support those who had lower yields. He pointed out that “the force of gossip and envy and the knowledge that the abandoned poor are likely to be a real and present danger to the better-off villagers assures that excess supplies are distributed to the worse off villagers” (Scott 1976, p. 5). These

⁵ Scott (1976) refers to the pattern of reciprocity, forced generosity, communal land, and work-sharing which helped to even out the inevitable troughs in a family's resources which might otherwise have thrown them below subsistence as the ‘subsistence ethic’.

modest but critical redistributive mechanisms nonetheless did provide minimal subsistence insurance for villagers. The same social distributive mechanism has been identified in Tonga (Kalavite, 2010; Morton, 1996). Kalavite reported that the notion of *fakamā* or feeling ashamed tends to put pressure on Tongans to behave in a culturally appropriate manner.

According to Scott, the influx of Europeans and capitalism somehow put pressure on the Southeast Asian peasants causing a series of riots in countries like Burma and Vietnam, especially during the depression of the 1930s. While in the traditional peasant economy, reciprocity and work-sharing helped to even out the inevitable troughs in a family's resources which might otherwise have thrown them below subsistence, this practice was seen as being inefficient and non-profitable in the newly money-driven economy.

2.4.5 Protestant ethic

Weber (2009) made an attempt to contextualise the notion of self-interest rationality within the existing Protestant-based western culture. He considered the Protestant ethic as a culture upon which most European countries built their business ethic. One of the core principles that underpins the Protestant ethic is that working hard is within God's will and carries its own reward. Laziness and wasting time, on the other hand, was regarded as sinful and carrying its own consequences, one of which was to remain poor (Barbalet, 2008; Poggi, 1983; Weber, 2009). Weber identified this ethical principle as the basis of a western rationality whereby the individual was expected to work hard. Weber's approach is acknowledged in this research for its

powerful integration of the Protestant ethic, a cultural factor, into the analysis of economic rationality theory. Stamp (1939) also argued that individuals' economic behaviour is very much influenced by their Christian faith. This thesis draws on Stamp's and Weber's theories and argues that Christianity has shaped the way Tongans live and behave culturally, socially, economically and morally. Latukefu (1974) pointed out that at the centre of the Tongan culture are love, sharing and reciprocity, which are all Christian values pre-existing but reinforced by the arrival of Christian missionaries in Tonga.

Sen (1999) argued for a more central treatment of culture in economic analysis for developing countries. He pointed out that culture can exert a strong influence on human behaviour, and through that can affect economic choices and business decisions, as well as social and political behaviours. Therefore, development should not be assessed using the narrow definition of positive economic growth but allow for a broader definition whereby cultural enhancement should be one of the key outcomes of development. The next section will look at the practices of Tongan culture and their impact on Tongans' economic performance.

2.5 Cultural practices and their impact on Tongans' economic behaviour

This thesis argues that the current practices of Tongan culture of sharing, reciprocity, respect and maintaining good relationships, as well as the church, have a strong impact on Tongans' economic performance. These impacts are both positive and negative.

James (1998) concluded that:

...development for Pacific Island economies is conditioned by the country's social fabric, cultural heritage and traditions, all of which exert a powerful influence over the pattern and prospects for development. Recognising this, when providing analytical advice and support for policy makers in Pacific economies the World Bank is obligated to move beyond a perspective that focuses merely on economic factors to one that incorporates each society's social and cultural dynamics and which acknowledges the influence these aspects play in social change and economic decision-making (p. 5).

The above statement indicates that in order to understand the economic performance of Pacific societies there is a need to understand how culture impacts on economic performance and what can be done to lessen the impact. As highlighted in Chapter 1, a number of studies have identified culture as having a significant impact on Tongans' economic behaviour (Bollard, 1974; Evans, 2001; Fisi'iahi, 2006; Morton, 1978; Ritterbush, 1986; Saffu, 2003; Sevele, 1973; Taylor, 2010). However, none of them have indicated what can be done to alleviate the impact. This is where this study will be positioned.

Sevele (1973), in a study of the regional inequalities in Tonga's economic development, concluded that "some of the most significant obstacles to development in Tonga, are cultural, social and psychological in nature" (p. 280). He pointed out that Tongans do want higher levels of material well-being, but this is to a large degree constrained by the cultural and social boundaries within which the Tongan acts in his quest for economic development (pp. 320-321). For example, a man may spend most of the money he might have been saving for a house or agricultural tools on occasions such as funerals and weddings.

Sevele pointed out that:

The Tongan may believe that he should not spend so much on such occasions, but at the same time, he feels that it will be against the *anga faka-Tonga* or Tongan way of life to refuse a request for, say money from a relative even though the owner can ill-afford to part with the money (p. 321).

This creates a point of conflict between the need for material gain, on one hand, and the desire to satisfy a social end within the traditional way of life. This dilemma is at the heart of this thesis and its objective is to find ways in which Tongans can balance their cultural, social and economic priorities.

Sevele continued by arguing that Tongans are still strongly attached to their traditional way of life. Their attitudes towards hard work, accumulation of material wealth, fulfillment of various social obligations and so on are factors determining the social and economic behavior of the average household. This traditional way of life, however, is strongly instilled in the mind of the people and it will be difficult to uproot it instantly. Again, this thesis accepts Sevele's caution about Tongans not being willing to accept change. Sevele strongly recommended further research on the "operation on socio-economic development of socio-cultural, political and even religious factors" (p. 285). The current research is an extension of Sevele's suggestion and, in addition, it focuses on finding solutions in situations where culture and economic development are in contradiction.

Bollard (1974) argued that economic development in Tonga is bound by strong traditional customs and institutions based on communal production and distribution. He pointed out that "these conditions make many of the accepted models of economic development inappropriate, especially because they fail to account for social

constraints on change" (p. 1). "Social constraints" in this context refers to the traditional economic activities which are based on communal production and distribution defined by social kinship.

According to Bollard, communal production and distribution are inefficient and curtail economic development. He claimed that a pre-requisite to economic development is a change in the way Tongans conduct their economic activities, which he refers to as behavioural change. In Bollard's view, monetisation would bring about this behavioural change among Tongans, as individuals would rely less on social ties for the exchange of goods and services and more on money for these exchanges. The current study challenges Bollard's conclusion that Tongans' cultural behaviour will change through monetisation. It is not at all easy to uproot any society from their culture, traditions and values. Monetisation is not a sufficient condition to uproot people from their traditional way of life, culture and beliefs. This thesis will show that a precondition for change in Tongans' economic behaviour is a change in their cultural behaviours and practices, which North refers to as an informal institutional change.

Evans (1996, 2001) highlighted how traditional culture helped many Tongan families continue practicing their traditional culture of sharing. He illustrated his point by demonstrating how the culture of sharing has allowed many families in the island of Ha'ano to benefit from remittances sent by their relatives overseas. In this context, remittance is considered a very stable income for many families on the island. The senders were mostly family members, who sent money home to help their families with basic consumption costs such as household expenditure, and cultural obligations

such as church donations, fundraisings, funerals, weddings, birthdays and other social ceremonies. The recipient would redistribute some of this money through cultural obligations such as funerals, weddings, birthdays, and also through church donations and fund raising. Secondary recipients of this money would, in turn, give away part of it through similar social obligations, church donations and fundraising.

Two main conclusions that emerged from Evans's work are: (i) that the Tongan culture of sharing has been the key motive for Tongans overseas sending money to their relatives in the island of Ha'ano; and (ii) that this culture of sharing allows for a redistribution of income from those who have money to those who are in need of money, in this case the Ha'ano community. Without this redistribution mechanism those in Ha'ano would not have benefitted from it at all. Findings from Evans's work highlights how culture contributes to economic development, especially in terms of wealth redistribution, a point reinforced by other studies on Tonga (Bollard, 1974; Morton, 1978; Ritterbush, 1986; Wolfram, 2001). Scott (1976) and Hyden (1983) also identified the same behaviour in their study of Southeast Asia and Africa, respectively. Evans's study, however, does not offer much in terms of identifying how some of the current cultural and church practices could be changed to facilitate the changing socio-economic conditions now present in Tonga. This is an aspect central to the current research.

Morton (1978) demonstrated how communal ownership of resources creates a communal economy rather than a commercial economy. Morton referred to a communal economy as an economy where exchange of goods is between household

and household through the social linkages of kinship, friendship and neighbourliness. The primary principle of exchange in this economy is reciprocity (p. 51). Individuals do not necessarily prosper in this type of economy but the community does. The communal economy allows families in rural areas and villages to exchange almost every item that they produce locally. This includes agricultural products, seafood and any other goods that are locally produced. Money or credit is also mobilised through this system.

Like Sevele (1973) and Evans (2001), Morton argues that traditional culture does have an impact on individuals' economic behaviour. He argues that communal ownership of resources tends to impair the individual's economic pursuit while strengthening the communal economic base. He highlights how the culture of communalism dictates every aspect of a Tongan lifestyle. He also emphasises the contradiction that every Tongan faces trying to serve both the communal and commercial economy, each of which has its own principles, rules, values, rewards and sanctions (p. 51). However, it lacks any suggestion of ways in which individuals can modify their current cultural practices so that they can be in a better position to interface between the traditional and modern Tongan economy. The current thesis focuses on this gap.

Ritterbush (1986) offered an elaborate study on enterprises in Tonga and how culture influenced the way business people conducted their affairs. She found out that Tongan culture favoured the involvement, support and contribution of business organisations to community and socially desirable projects. This was largely due to the

communal nature of the society, where there was always a demand for some community project, and business organisations were seen as institutions which could afford to, and therefore should, give “handouts” as a way of sharing their profits.

Ritterbush concluded that:

Giving in to the immense pressures to conform to expected cultural and social obligations placed enormous financial burdens on indigenous-owned businesses. Some business persons actually neglected their customary obligations until their businesses became solvent. But this strategy often was costly in human terms – guilt, hurt feelings, increased pressure, or uncomplimentary slurs such as *nima ma’u* (selfish) or *ta’e’ofa* (uninvolving), which made life difficult for all but the thickest skinned individuals (p. 86).

Ritterbush’s conclusion was very similar to that of Sevele (1973) and Bollard (1974), who both highlighted the contradiction between the western economic principles and the Tongan traditional way of life. This is important in terms of identifying how culture impacts on Tongans’ economic behaviours. However, Ritterbush’s study lacked any concrete suggestion of how these contradictions could be addressed, which is the main focus of the current research.

Reddy (1991) in his study of managers in some of the Pacific islands, including Tonga, revealed how culture heavily impacts on the performance of managers. He pointed out that managers in Tonga informed him that Tongan people relied a great deal on kinship, family ties and other networks to help them get things done or done faster. This behaviour was readily extended to the formal institutional environment.

Managers also reported that in the Tongan culture people excessively over-spent their income in order to meet their cultural obligation or *kavenga* or *fatongia*. This cultural behaviour meant that there was very minimal, if any, left for investment or

savings. However, Tongan people who gave generously to their relatives and friends and to community functions gained a lot of social credit. Reddy's work is consistent with previous research in Tonga which highlights some of the contradictions between traditional and modern principles and practices. Reddy however does not offer any clear recommendation on how these conflicts might be alleviated or smoothed out.

Van der Grijp (1993) also highlighted the contradiction that exists as a result of the two economies, the western versus the traditional operating alongside each other (p. 220). He pointed out that Tonga was in a transitional phase whereby the tide of modernisation could not be reversed. He believed, however, that through change in the mode of production there would also be changes in the modes of thinking. For example, as more and more people engaged in commercial production rather than subsistence production, they would start to accept some of the principles that went with that mode of production, such as profit-making.

Van der Grijp (1993) pointed out that some Tongans attempt to adapt, while others try to retain the old ways or their traditional culture (p. 220). His position is very similar to that of Bollard (1974), who argued that monetisation would remove Tongans from their traditional way of life to a modern lifestyle. As earlier argued, monetisation or a change in mode of production is not a sufficient condition to change the lifestyle of Tongans. Van der Grijp (1993) and Bollard (1994) have overlooked a key part of Tongans' lifestyle, which is their culture. Tongans will not simply give up their traditional lifestyle because of a monetised economy. There will be certain resistance from Tongan society, especially the older generation, which Sevele (1973) alluded to.

As North (1990) pointed out, change will be very gradual because of culture being deep-rooted in society, and cultural change will determine any change in the economic behaviours of a society.

James (1998)⁶ conducted a study on Tonga to identify ways in which social patterns and cultural traditions affect Tonga's national development. She pointed out some of the key contributions that traditional enterprises make to economic development in small island nations like Tonga. Firstly, traditional enterprise mobilises a lot of initiative, drive and organisational capacity, which are manifested in their operations. These enterprises may serve social ends rather than commercial ends, but the means employed involve large amounts of money and manpower which would have otherwise remained as unused. Secondly, traditional enterprises serve to build social integration, greatly reducing the need for what might otherwise be considerable outlays for welfare, policing and local administration.⁷ These are indications that both the people and the government are still relying on the traditional social security system for the provision of these services.

James (1998) also pointed out that to implement any change in these cultural and traditional values will be very difficult (p. 13). I accept James's position that to change Tongan traditional culture will be difficult. However, this thesis is not suggesting that the principles underpinning traditional Tongan culture be changed,

⁶Kerry James was contracted by the World Bank as lead consultant in a series of studies which aimed at a more in-depth understanding of the social and cultural structure of Pacific islands member countries. This decision emerged after many years of operation in the Pacific and a confirmation that culture does exert a very strong pressure on how Pacific people conduct their social, political and economic lives. In 1996 through to 1998, the World Bank funded a series of studies for six Pacific nations which included Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati. Prior to being a consultant for the World Bank, James had also conducted a number of studies on Tonga and many other Pacific island nations, focusing on the social and cultural fabrication of these island nations.

⁷ In 2012, the Government introduced a pension scheme for Tongans aged 75 and above where those that are entitled receive a \$65 monthly allowance (MoF, 2013).

but that some of their practices should be changed where they adversely impact on individuals' economic performance. I believe there is a good reason to suggest this change; otherwise Tongans will be trapped in financial debt if they cannot manage their cultural obligations carefully. Of course, this does not mean that one should ignore the political situation in Tonga. Tonga needs a political environment that is conducive to sustainable economic development (Pulu, 2013; Helu, 1997; Moala, 2011; Powles, 2012; Niumeitolu, 2007). Tonga is currently going through a process of democratisation. These proposed changes are particularly critical at a time when the economic environment⁸ in Tonga and the world is not favourable.

Saffu (2003) conducted a comparative study on five Pacific island economies on the characteristics of entrepreneurship in those island economies. This included the islands of Tonga, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands and Fiji. He assessed these characteristics based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions or paradigms. They include: (i) individualism versus collectivism; (ii) power distance; (iii) uncertainty avoidance; and (iv) masculinity versus femininity (Hofstede 1980, cited in Saffu 2003, pp. 59-62; Ross, 2009).

On collectivism, Saffu (2003) and Ross (2009) pointed out that many islanders going into business do so out of communal obligations and values, such as the need to help the clan or the extended family. In this context, business is considered as a

⁸ In this context, economic environment refers to GDP growth, inflation rate, remittances, unemployment rate, foreign reserves position and national debts which are outlined in Table 3.3. These key economic indicators for Tonga have continued to deteriorate during the period in which the field research was taken. According the Ministry of Finance (Tonga), national debt has continued to increase and in 2012/13 this has reached almost 500 million *pa'anga* compared to 351 million *pa'anga* in 2007/08 (MoF, 2013).

“collectivist” affair. On power distance, unequal distribution of power within institutions and society is generally accepted in the Pacific region, and this can be an asset when you enter the business industry. For example, in Samoa the older entrepreneurs are more likely to receive the respect and status necessary for their businesses to function profitably. On uncertainty avoidance, Saffu found that Pacific islanders rely on extended family and the clan for security, especially at times of uncertainty. On masculinity versus femininity, Saffu pointed out that entrepreneurship in the Pacific remains largely a male role.

Overall, Saffu confirmed that the western entrepreneurship style is very different from that practised in the South Pacific, which is largely influenced by the cultural context. He concluded by proposing an integrative model of the cultural dimensions and characteristics of Pacific island entrepreneurs. He argued that the success of Pacific island business lies in the ability of the entrepreneur to balance the competing interests of the clan or extended family and the business. Failure to do so will inevitably lead to the collapse of the business. Success may also be measured by the status of the entrepreneur in society. He also argued strongly for training of entrepreneurs on how culture impacts on business operations in the Pacific region. Saffu has advanced the argument for an integration of culture into business, which is a major part of the current research. Some of the thinking he proposed is considered in the current research, especially his proposal for training entrepreneurs. Others have made the same proposal that Tongan entrepreneurs need training on business operations (Ritterbush, 1986; Soakai, 2003; Yusuf, 1998).

Prescott (2009) conducted in-depth research on the relationship between culture and the economic behaviour of Tongan entrepreneurs in New Zealand. He concluded that culture continues to have a strong impact on the economic behaviour of Tongans, both negatively and positively. On the positive side, the strong presence of a social network and social capital supports Tongan entrepreneurs' sustainability. Many Tongan businesses that operate in New Zealand target the Tongan community as their main market. They rely on their existing social network for their market, which includes the extended family, church members, village reunion, family reunion, and community groups. Take, for example, some of the Tongan businesses in New Zealand which focus on selling root crops imported from Tonga. The owner will distribute bags of root crops to his extended family, church members, village members, and even the Tongan men's *kava* groups⁹ until all the imported food is finished. He will then return a month or two later to collect the money.¹⁰

On the negative side, Prescott found that the culture of sharing is partly responsible for a high rate of failure of Tongan business in New Zealand. According to the author, sharing or giving is a core value within Tongan culture and the production and distribution of basic economic commodities such as food is through sharing. This communalism does not sit well with the western business model of profit maximisation. The contradiction identified in this study, again, reinforces the findings

⁹A brief survey conducted by members of the Pioneer *Kava* Group in Auckland in 2009 identified that over 200 Tongan men's *kava* groups existed just within the Auckland region. These *kava* groups are normally men from the same church, or ex-students of the same school or are from the same extended family or village in Tonga. Their main purpose is to come together and *tālanoa* while drinking *kava* juice. Sometimes, these groups are used for fund raising. On average each *kava* group has an active membership of 20 to 30. In some cases the active membership can reach 100, such as the *Fofo'anga kava* group.

¹⁰This is becoming a growing business among Tongans, whereby the importer will import containers of root crops and sell them to the Tongan community. The food does not go through the mainstream market, such as the flea market or grocery stores, but it is sold entirely through the extended family, church members, and the wider Tongan community, especially those that the importer knows through his social network.

from earlier studies that culture does have an impact on economic performance, both negatively and positively. However, like the earlier studies, Prescott does not offer any clear guidance on how these contradictions could be moderated or smoothed out. This is the focus of the current research.

2.6 Cultural modification – what and how?

This thesis argues that while it is essential to retain the core values underpinning the Tongan culture such as *fetokoni'aki* or reciprocity, *fevahevahe'aki* or sharing, *faka'apa'apa* or respect and *tauhi vā* or maintaining good relationships, it is suggested that some of these current practices be modified. It is noted that there is very limited literature available on cultural modification – what needs to be modified and how to go about doing it – both at the global and local levels. As discussed in the previous section, many studies have identified the adverse impact that current cultural practices have on individual and business economic performance and the need for a modification in some of these practices. However, there is very limited discussion on how this cultural modification should be structured or pursued.

Fisi'iahi (2006) pointed out that Tongan business owners need to be aware of this impact and the consequences if nothing is done about it:

A major concern for small family-run businesses is committing their funds to church offerings, while the business encountered [sic] financial problems. By the same token, over-commitment of employees and their families to church obligations may affect their abilities to sustain their socio-economic wellbeing and overcome hardship. Understanding why this is important and the extent to which people are aware of the consequences of these actions would be useful in identifying priorities of Tongan people (p. 233).

One of the key challenges with any proposal for cultural change is a lack of freedom to express opinion publicly, owing to the strong presence of a traditional

culture of respect, loyalty and maintaining good relationships embedded in a very rigid hierarchical system (Thaman-Helu, 2002; Taylor, 2010; Tu'ipulotu-Afuha'amango, 2012). As Taylor (2010) said, "the challenges that restrict reasoned public debate may have to be tackled before other priorities for social progress can be effectively addressed" (p. 31). Sen (1999) made the point that "achieving a balance in socio-cultural reform is inevitably difficult but needed, must be publicly debated and negotiated for the work of public valuation cannot be replaced by some cunningly clever assumption" (p. 110).

Saffu (2003) partly addresses the contradiction between culture and entrepreneurship in the Pacific by strongly recommending the need for training, focusing on providing skills that would help Pacific entrepreneurs to become more adept at manipulating the cultural and business environment. He said:

... the ability to synthesize and incorporate various aspects of the traditional cultural business practices would be a highly essential attribute to concentrate on during the training session. ... Appropriately designed training programs should incorporate cultural nuances and norms and should focus on how the entrepreneurs can become adaptable, flexible and blend the modern and the traditional (p. 68).

Saffu continued by arguing that training should incorporate the clan, especially the most influential members of the clan. Training should be customised with emphasis on how Pacific entrepreneurs can expect to work within existing social values and community obligations and at the same time realise the goals of the business. The current research agrees with Saffu on the importance of training, especially those who are influential in the community, such as church leaders, extended family leaders, chiefs and influential members of Tongan society. This is

part of responding to 'how' a modification to some of the current practices could be introduced to Tongan society.

2.7 *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework

While North's theory has underpinned this study, I have also drawn on other social theories in analysing the way culture impacts on individuals' economic behaviour for three main reasons.

Firstly, North's theory does not provide any in-depth analysis of how culture impacts on individuals' economic choices. This relationship is far from clear. North (1990) refers to culture as "codes of conducts, norms of behaviour and ideologies" (p. 37). This is rather abstract and does not explain clearly the realities of how culture impacts on Tongans' economic choices and behaviour. I address this theoretical gap by borrowing other social theories that clearly explain this relationship (Evans, 2001; Hyden, 1983; Morton, 1978; Polanyi, 1957; Ritterbush, 1986; Scott, 1976).

Secondly, as the *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework is also an adjustment of Douglas North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory, it is well situated in the Tongan cultural environment. Given the significance of culture in the lives of Tongans, this theory is the best fit for this research. North's theory was developed in a western-based culture, and it is important to acknowledge the cultural differences that exist between different societies and ethnic groups.

Thirdly, institutional path dependency theory assumes a smooth and linear progression from primitive culture to modernity, with culture withering away. This is certainly not the case in Tonga. Despite progressing toward a western or modern type

of economy the traditional sector is still very strong. Bollard (1974) made the assumption that the monetisation of the Tongan economy would result in a behavioural change conducive to positive economic development. This view is disputed by the current research because monetisation has not changed the way Tongan people behave.

The existence of traditional and modern economies in Tonga, or a mixed economy, will continue to generate conflicting situations. This is the background to the current research and, in my view, is not well articulated in North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory. The *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework is used in this context to indicate that changes will need to be negotiated between the different layers of Tongan society: such as different age groups; different social classes, such as commoners, nobility and the royal family; and different economies, such as traditional and modern.

Finally, for these cultural practices to change there has to be some intervention at individual, village, community and national level. North's theory assumes that traditional culture will automatically disappear as Tonga progresses in its economic development. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Tonga. Tongans continue to practice and embrace their traditional culture despite socio-economic development in the island. Even in rural areas, Tongans use money to support their cultural and church obligations. Evans (2001), in his very insightful study of the people of Ha'ano, attempted to make this very point; that the Tongan culture of gifting is still being

practiced within a transnational context.¹¹ The assumption in Institutional Path Dependency Theory that traditional culture will naturally wither and be replaced by a modern economy is disputed in this thesis. An essential part of this thesis is to recommend an intervention to educate the Tongan people as to why a cultural modification is necessary at this point in time.

The *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework has been developed to overcome the challenges identified above. It is based on the principle of reciprocity, which is fundamental to this thesis. The sensitivity of the subject under investigation requires a theory that is culturally sensitive, which I believe is offered by this framework.

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review has depicted four general conclusions: (i) the rationalities behind individual's economic choices are driven by both economic and non-economic factors; (ii) culture does impact on individual's economic behaviour both positively and negatively; (iii) modification to some of the current practices is a necessary pre-condition to further economic development; and (iv) any proposed modification is expected to be faced with some resistance from certain sectors of society and therefore requires careful intervention.

The review has also confirmed that limited literature is available on cultural modification. While previous studies have highlighted the adverse economic impact and the need for modification, they offer very little in terms of the 'what and how' of

¹¹Evans (2001) argued that people of Ha'ano, an island in the Ha'apai Group, who migrated overseas, send money home to the families in Ha'ano, which they use for further gifting to the church and other members of the village. Therefore, the practice of gifting is enhanced, rather than weakened, through remittances sent by those Ha'ano people who move overseas.

making this modification. This is the focus of the current thesis, and it will contribute an original body of knowledge on cultural modification, which could be used in Tonga or other culturally based societies. At the theoretical level, I have also introduced the *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework, which has a number of inferences. It is an adaptation of North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory to ensure it is contextualised in the Tongan cultural, social, political and economic environment. It is acknowledged that North's theory also has its own limitations and, therefore, I have also drawn on other social theories in understanding culture and its impact on individuals' economic behaviours.

The next chapter, Chapter 3: Locating the Thesis, will aim to contextualise the thesis in the current Tongan cultural, social, economic and political environments. The chapter will also highlight some of the current practices in cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings and funerals, and church practices such as *misinale* or church annual donations, *ngaahi pola konifelenisi* or preparation of a Tongan feast for a church conference and *fakaafe faka'osita'u* or preparation of a Tongan feast for an end-of-year church service, and some of the costs involved. These examples are given to help demonstrate my point that some of the costs involved in these ceremonies are unsustainable and should, therefore, be modified.

CHAPTER 3: LOCATING THE THESIS

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to locate the thesis in the Tongan cultural, social, economic and political environment. As part of situating this study, I have outlined the estimated cost of birthday, wedding and funeral ceremonies, as well as the church annual obligation, compared to the average household income in Tonga. The purpose is to demonstrate my point that the current level of spending on cultural ceremonies and church activities is unsustainable and needs modification. Given the problem of unemployment, rapid population growth and the unfavourable economic environment in Tonga and overseas, this research is much more urgent than one might think.

This chapter is divided into nine parts: (i) Introduction; (ii) Tongan economy – a dual economy; (iii) Geography and population of Tonga; (iv) Political environment; (v) Economic environment; (vi) Tongan culture; (vii) Christianity and the church; (viii) Income level versus cost of cultural and church ceremonies; and (ix) Conclusion.

3.2 Tongan economy – a mixed economy¹²

Morton (1978), among others, pointed out that the Tongan economy is characterised by the existence of a traditional, subsistence or communal economy alongside a monetised, market or modern economy. In making this distinction, Morton adopted the term ‘dual economy’ to denote the traditional and modern economies and their distinctive characteristics (p. 51). For the purpose of this thesis, I have used the

¹² In this context and for the clarity of the discussion, I have used “mixed economy” to explain the Tongan current economic system where traditional and modern economic principles are both operating and are overlapping each other. In pure economic term, “mixed economy” refers to an economy that is characterised by both market and planned economic principles.

term “mixed economy” to explain the current Tongan economic system where both traditional and modern economies are in operation.

In traditional Tongan economy, the production of goods and services is based mainly on the *fāmili* or extended family unit and the exchange of these goods and services is facilitated through the institution of reciprocity or *fetokoni’aki* (Morton 1978, p. 51). Members of the extended family form a *kulupu tōungāue* or cooperation group, which will *fetokoni’aki* or help each other through working as a group to meet their basic economic needs (van der Grijp 1993, p. 98). Within this system, individual members take turns in getting help from the rest of the team. For example, three major economic activities that traditionally conducted within the *toungāue*¹³ system are: (i) *toulālanga* or working together in mat weaving; (ii) *toulanganga* or working together in *tapa* making; (iii) *toutai* or fishing and; (iv) *toutu’u* or working together in farming.

This economy rewards maximum distribution rather than the accumulation of resources (Ka’ili, 2008; Morton, 1978; Ritterbush, 1986; Saffu, 2003; Taylor, 2010). This reward is in the form of social approval and prestige. Once money has entered the communal economy it is difficult to save because of the dispersing effect of the principle of exchange operating within the communal economy. This explanation of the cultural function of money is quite significant in this study because even in a modern and monetised Tongan society, a large amount of money is directed toward cultural functions. It directly influences the way Tongans spend their monetary income, *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and time. For example, instead of providing for the

¹³ The word *toungāue* is made up of *tou* and *ngāue*. *Tou* stands for taking turn and *ngāue* stands for working. So *toungāue* means people are taking turns in working together collaboratively.

needs of their own immediate family, many Tongans direct a large amount of their income to cultural and church obligations. Money has a significant social function in the Tongan society.

Table 3.1: Tongan mixed economy

Traditional Tongan economy	Modern Tongan economy
communalism	individualism
economic gain is seen as a means toward non-economic or social gain	priority given onward maximising economic gain
land tenure system was based on feudalism system where the chiefs inherited the land	land is inherit through male lineage birth-right which at death is passed on to the male successor ¹⁴¹⁵
profit sharing and wealth distribution	profit maximisation and wealth accumulation
economic production through cooperation, collaboration and sharing of tasks	economic production through competition and specialisation
investment is aimed at building relationship as part of social capital investment	investment is aimed at producing surplus economic value
exchange of goods and services is facilitated through the institute of reciprocity	exchange of goods and services is facilitated through the monetary exchange system
core values – cooperation, respect, loyalty, sharing, giving, maintaining good relationships and fulfillment of mutual obligations	core values – individual rights and freedom; independence, equality and access; privacy and fulfilling self-interest motivations

Source: Adapted from: James, 1998; Morton, 1978; Thaman-Helu, 1999; van der Grijp, 1993

Table 3.1 above depicts the principles that underpin traditional and modern economies. These are the dichotomies that are present in the Tongan “mixed economy”, which every Tongan has to balance on a daily basis. This research is an attempt to find ways in which the contradictions that exist in these two overlapping

¹⁴ The Land Act (revised 1988)

¹⁵ The Land Act (revised 1988) also required that “... every male Tongan subject by birth upon making application in the prescribed form to the Minister of Lands shall be entitled to receive subject to the provisions of this Act a grant of land not exceeding 3.3387 hectares as a tax allotment...” (p. 13).

spheres could be smoothed out or alleviated. Most importantly, is to find a way to ease financial burdens on Tongans trying to serve two opposing demands placed on them by a mixed economy.

3.3 Geography and population of Tonga

3.3.1 Geography

The Kingdom of Tonga is an island nation comprising about 150 islands, most of which are uninhabited because the entire population is distributed over only 36 of the islands (Rutherford, 1977, p. 4). It lies between latitude 15 and 23.5 degrees south and longitude 172.5 and 177 degrees west within the Pacific region. It covers a total area of 362,000 square kilometres, of which 747 square kilometres is land. On the largest island of *Tongatapu* is the national capital, *Nuku'alofa*. The islands of Tonga are divided into three main groups: the biggest group of *Tongatapu* lies just below the Tropic of Capricorn, the Ha'apai group is about 150 kilometres north, and the Vava'u group is a similar distance to the north of Ha'apai. The other minor groups are 'Eua and the *Niuas*. Tonga is located 2,000 kilometres northeast of Auckland, New Zealand.

3.3.2 Population of Tonga¹⁶

The 2006 Census reported that the total population was 101,991. This compares with 97,784 people in 1996, and represents an increase of 4.3 per cent or 4,207 people. This increase in population represents an average annual rate of growth of 0.4 per cent or an increase of 421 people per year between 1996 and 2006. The male

¹⁶ The latest population census took place in 2011 and it reported that the total population of Tonga was 103,252; an increase of 1.2 per cent from 101,991 in 2006. The 2011 Population Census also reported that net urban migration continued to persist. However, for a major part of the discussion in this section I have maintained the 2006 Population Census data as that was the demographic context upon which this thesis has been based.

population accounted for 51,772 or 51 per cent of the total population, while the female population accounted for 50,219 or 49 per cent of the total population.

Seventy one per cent of the total population, or 72,045 people, reside in the main island group of Tongatapu, while the remaining 39 per cent are spread throughout the other island groups of Vava’u (15 per cent), Ha’apai (7 per cent), ‘Eua (5 per cent) and the Niuas (2 per cent). The 2006 Census indicated that Tonga still had a very homogeneous population, with over 96 per cent of the total population being of Tongan ethnicity. The other 4 per cent includes part-Tongan (1.4 per cent), European (0.6 per cent), Fijian (3 per cent) and Asian (1 per cent) (Tonga Department of Statistics [TDoS], 2008).

Table 3.2: 2006 Census population by age group

Age	Number	Share (%)
0-4	13,782	14
5-9	12,844	13
10-14	12,320	12
15-19	10,350	10
20-24	9,191	9
25-34	13,653	13
35-49	15,225	15
50-59	6,466	6
+60	8,159	8
Total	101,991	100

Source: Adapted from Table G4 of the TDoS (2008, p. 254).

The 2006 census data show a net flow of people from the outer islands of Vava’u, Ha’apai, ‘Eua, and the two Niuas toward the main island, Tongatapu. Of the 72,045 people living on the main island of Tongatapu, about 23 per cent live in the capital city of Nuku’alofa. ADB (2007) pointed out that this rapid increase in

urbanisation puts pressure on the physical infrastructure, which is already inadequate for the current population. This is in addition to many basic services being inefficiently delivered and often charged at a very high rate (p. 9). The census counted 17,462 private households with 101,144 household members. Almost one-quarter (23,057) of all people that live in private households live in households with 10 people or more, and 3,750 people live in households with 15 people or more.

Table 3.2 above shows Tonga's population composition by age. Tonga has a young population with a median age of 21 years. In 2006 more than half, or 58 per cent, of the population were under the age of 25 and only 8 per cent were 60 years and older. An understanding of the age composition is critical in this study. For example, it is assumed that with a high percentage of youth population there will be a strong push for change in the current practices of the Tongan culture. The younger generation has greater exposure to other cultures and to the influence of a modern economy. For example, an increased number of Tongans have married into other ethnic groups or have stayed overseas for a long period of time, which could have an impact on their willingness to observe Tongan traditional culture.

According to the 2011 population census, there was a steady net migration from the four outer islands to Tongatapu between 2006 and 2011. This movement has also been associated with an annual growth in urban population of 0.5 per cent and rural population of 0.2 per cent in 2011 (TDoS, 2011). The population movement reflect the greater opportunities and better infrastructure that is available on Tongatapu, and in particular Nuku'alofa. This movement has consequences for where to build

infrastructure and provide services. However, it also creates other challenges. For example, MoF (2013) identified signs of poverty in urban areas of Tongatapu, where some families who migrated from outer-islands are faced with problems of unemployment, sub-standard housing and over crowdedness (p. 14). The government has continued to deal with this high rate of urban migration through building more government secondary schools, improving the infrastructure, air and sea transport services and providing incentives to the tourism and agricultural sectors in the outer-islands. The objective is to create similar opportunities in the outer islands which could help reduce the rural–urban migration and the problems associated with it.

3.4 Political environment

King George Tupou VI is the current Head of State presiding over an advisory Privy Council with the Prime Minister as the Head of Government. The royal line has remained in power since 1845. King Taufa’ahau Tupou IV died in 2006 and was followed by his eldest son, King Tupou V who died in 2011. The King commands considerable status and power. His extensive powers are derived from the 1875 Constitution and, with the exception of some voluntarily relinquished authority, have, until the 2010 reforms, remained essentially unchanged.

The Prime Minister nominates the Cabinet, although both he and Cabinet are formally appointed by the King. The Cabinet holds executive authority. The Legislative Assembly or Parliament is a single-chamber assembly, comprising 17 People’s Representatives elected by universal suffrage, and nine Nobles’ Representatives elected by the holders of 33 noble titles of the Kingdom of Tonga. The

Assembly held its first elections under a reformed electoral and constitutional process in November 2010, after reforms were agreed by the Parliament that year. There has long been consensus in Tonga on the need for democratic reform, with an on-going role for the royal family but in a constitutional, rather than executive, role.

In November 2006, eight people were killed and 75 per cent of downtown Nuku'alofa was razed in riots and arson attacks. It has been estimated that the cost of rebuilding Nuku'alofa city will be more than 100 million *pa'anga*. The riot damaged both infrastructure and the many businesses that were uninsured against civil unrest. Reconstruction and re-establishing businesses and confidence in the sector is a medium to long-term exercise.

The 2006 riot was an unexpected event in the history of Tonga, yet remarkable in this thesis because of its implications. In my view, the riot was a manifestation of the frustration, tension and pressure that Tongan people are currently experiencing, which this thesis argues provides the right platform for a change; in this case cultural change. Though many claimed that the riot was a result of a spill-over of anti-government sentiment due to the perceived slow pace of democratic change, I believe the issue is more than just political tension. The uncertainty in the political environment coupled with a creeping economy left many Tongans frustrated, angry and pressured and the riot was a way of releasing that tension. Following the 2006 riot, Moala (2009) wrote:

The solution to Tonga's problems is going to involve more than just a system reform. Reforming into a democracy does not solve problems of poverty, crime and social injustice. There is much more to be done than just a change to the system ... [one may ask] are there things in our culture that can offer us guidance for our future? (p. 3).

Moala (2011) challenges the Tongan authority that social and political reforms are a necessary pre-condition to overcoming the economic, political and social turmoil that has overshadowed the island of Tonga for the last two decades. He also suggested that perhaps there are certain elements in the Tongan culture that should be modified as part of re-constructing a social, cultural and political environment that is in harmony with the dynamic of modern Tonga.

3.5 Economic environment

3.5.1 Economic growth

Since the beginning of the 2000, the Tongan economy has had relatively low GDP growth, remaining at an average of just 1.4 per cent compared to an average growth of 3.2 per cent for other Pacific island nations (MoF, 2012). The sluggishness in the Tongan economy has been further compounded by the global economic crisis, which has had a severe impact on small island nations. The 2006 riot placed further pressure on an economy that was already struggling with too many challenges. Remittance, which is the main source of foreign exchange for the country, was also affected by the global crisis as many Tongans overseas lost their jobs. Tonga's external position was worsened by the government's rapid increase in its external debt, which in 2012 was estimated as being equivalent to over 40 per cent of Tonga's GDP (MoF, 2012; NRBT, 2012). Overall, growth in the Tongan economy has been slowed. Table 3.3 overleaf shows some of the key economic indicators for Tonga.

Table 3.3: Key macroeconomic indicators

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
GDP growth rate (%)	2.0	-0.4	-1.2	4.7	-0.2
Inflation rate (%)	12.2	1.2	5.0	3.8	2.5
Remittance (TOP million)	202.8	175.2	157.4	146.5	113.1
Current account balance (TOP million)	-75.0	-121.9	-120.9	-64.5	-56.1
Public debt (TOP million)	180.4	224.9	258.3	304.4	352.1
Foreign reserves (TOP million)	89.1	136.1	170.5	203.8	246.1

Sources: MoF, 2012, 2011, 2008; NRBT, 2012, 2010, 2009

The continued slowed recovery in the international economy means that the prospect for real growth in Tonga is still very uncertain. Heavy reliance on remittance as a major source of income for many Tongan families could also be affected, as many of the Tongans overseas work in areas such as construction, which could easily be affected during economic downturn. High international fuel prices together with continued decline in the value of the *pa'anga* also put pressure on the country's foreign reserves and inflation rate.

The agriculture and fishery sectors remain the largest contributors to Tonga's overall economic activities, accounting for over 20 per cent of the island's total GDP. However, these two sectors have weakened in recent years, aggravated by poor export prices and a decline in fishing conditions. The squash-pumpkin crop, which is exported to Japan and Korea, is the dominant export but it is also facing declining demand from the market. *Kava*, root crops and vanilla are also important but future

prospects for these export items are quite uncertain (ADB, 2007; MoF, 2012; World Bank, 2010).

The tourism sector, while relatively undeveloped, is identified as Tonga's priority sector for growth. It is one of the few sectors that offer a realistic prospect of sustainable growth in incomes and employment. Tourist arrivals include returning nationals who are visiting Tonga for family reunions, ex-student reunions, church conferences, family weddings, birthdays or funerals. Again, this indicates the strong tie that Tongans overseas have with their relatives in the islands which, again, reinforces some of the Tongan core values of *fetokoni'aki*, *fevahevahe'aki*, *faka'apa'apa* and *tauhi vā*. Despite many years of being away from Tonga their connectedness to their homeland does not depreciate.

3.5.2 Remittance

Remittance, which traditionally accounts for 31 per cent of GDP, had fallen to about 27 per cent in 2009. In 2009/10, private remittance inflows to Tonga reached a total of 157 million *pa'anga*, representing almost 85 per cent of the total transfer to Tonga in that year. However, this fell to only 113 million *pa'anga* at the end of 2011/12, reflecting the deteriorating economic and financial positions of Tongan families overseas (MoF 2012, p. 93; NRBT 2012, p. 28). Remittance has continued to be Tonga's main source of foreign exchange compared to export and tourist receipts. ADB (2011) showed that in 2009, 91 per cent of households were receiving cash remittances averaging 3,067 *pa'anga* per year (pp. 6-7). The report also revealed that remittances

support consumption and education, as well as significantly improving the income of very-low-income households.

It must be noted that the level of remittances are subject to the job opportunities of Tongans overseas. Decline in remittance inflows to Tonga always coincides with periods when Tongans overseas have suffered job losses and a higher cost of living. For example, in New Zealand many Tongans are employed in low income areas and these are likely to be the first areas to have job cuts if there is any downturn in the economy. Despite this decline, remittance continues to provide stable income for many households in Tonga, and it continues to be the main driver of the Tongan economy in this very tough economic environment.

Remittance is significant in this study as it reinforces the strong kinship ties that exist in the Tongan culture. Studies have shown that church and cultural activities are key drivers for the high level of remittance flows to Tonga (ADB, 2004, 2011; Bollard, 1974; Evans, 2001; Sevele, 1973). This is evidenced in the seasonal variation in remittance flow, where it peaks during the month of May because of *konifelenisi fakata'u* or annual church conferences, *Sapate faka-Me* or children's White Sunday, *Sapate Fa'e* or Mothers' Sunday and *Sapate Tamai* or Fathers' Sunday. The same peak occurs in December when relatives send money home for *Kilisimasi* or Christmas festivities, *Faka'osita'u* or end-of-year church service, *Uike Lotu* or New Year Prayer Week and many other family events which take place during the December and January months. During these periods there is a lot of food preparation for family and church functions.

3.5.3 Inflation

The inflation rate for Tonga as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) remained relatively high during the period 2005/06–2008/09, driven largely by very high imported oil and food prices. Second-round effects of oil price increases were also felt in the domestic inflation index through increases in electricity, water and transport costs. The high imported¹⁷ inflation rate has been dampened by a more favourable domestic inflation rate. At the end of 2011/12 Tonga's annual inflation rate was 2.5 per cent (NRBT 2012, p. 24).

3.5.4 Public debt

In 2011/12, government total outstanding debt was estimated at 352 million *pa'anga* or almost 50 per cent of GDP (MoF, 2012, p. 9; NRBT 2012, p. 26). Of this amount, 323 million *pa'anga* or 92 per cent was from external sources while only 8 per cent was from domestic sources. The significant increase in external debt is due to the Government's external borrowing to finance the reconstruction of Nuku'alofa city following the 2006 riot. The three major creditors for Tonga are China, the World Bank and ADB.

3.5.5 A sign of poverty

In many ways, Tonga's development has progressed well compared to other Pacific nations. For example, the literacy rate for Tonga is 98 per cent, a rate that places Tonga above many developed nations. Strong kinship ties as well as extensive subsistence agricultural productions mean that there is no food poverty in Tonga.

¹⁷ Imported inflation refers to an increase in prices due to the increase in prices of imported goods such as oil, food and other items that are included in the basket of consumer goods from which the CPI is measured.

Strong family ties also mean that many Tongan families are well supported by the remittance from relatives abroad.

However, certain indicators also point to the possibility that certain sectors of the population are experiencing hardship.¹⁸ ADB revealed that high rates of unemployment and lack of income-earning opportunities have left many Tongans in a hardship situation (ADB, 2007, pp. 6-8). The survey estimated that about 5 per cent of Tongan households received incomes below the food poverty line of 703 *pa'anga* per head per year, and 23 per cent received incomes below the basic needs poverty line of 1,466 *pa'anga* per head per year, meaning that they experienced periodic difficulties in meeting their daily costs of living for food and other essential expenditures (ADB, 2007, p. 7). In Tonga, subsistence production tends to offset this problem and hence minimises or avoids basic food shortage among many Tongan families.

The 2009 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) for Tonga has also identified hardship¹⁹ faced by Tongans. The survey revealed that the depth of hardship had increased, meaning that more people are facing hardship. Tonga has maintained its traditional social safety nets in the face of the income decline, which helps to protect the more vulnerable groups. This finding means there is a case for the Government (and development partners) to take steps to alleviate hardship now, to avoid prolonged high levels of poverty (TDoS, 2010).

¹⁸ According to ADB (2007) hardship is defined as inadequate sustainable human development, manifested by a lack of access to basic services, a lack of opportunities to participate fully in the socioeconomic life of the community, and a lack of adequate resources to meet the basic needs of the household or customary obligations to the extended family, village, community and/or the church. (p. 7)

¹⁹ This is using the ADB definition of hardship as referred to in footnote 18.

Hardship among the Tongan people is often alleviated by private remittance. Remittance increases the average incomes of the poorest households. Remittance income is also relatively stable, offsetting the high vulnerability of the economy to fiscal contraction, natural disaster, crop diseases and fluctuations in world markets (ADB, 2007).

3.6 Tongan culture

According to Morton (1996) “The Tongan Way” or *anga faka-Tonga* is “frequently invoked in everyday life in Tonga as both the defining element of Tongan identity and as the values and behaviours that comprise Tongan culture” (p. 20). Tatafu (1997) also pointed out that the majority of the Tongan people still hold firm to their culture as the basis for how they organise their lives. Kalavite (2010) echoed the same point, that “Tongans generally are very proud of their unique culture” (p. 26).

This thesis argues that *anga faka-Tonga* will continue to have a very significant impact on Tongans’ economic behaviour and performance. The cultural core values of sharing, reciprocity, respect and maintaining good relationships are important as they help maintain the society’s unity and harmony. However, some of their practices needed to be scaled down; given the financial burdens they place on individual families and the current unfavourable conditions in Tonga and overseas.

In order to appreciate the richness as well as the complexity of the *anga faka-Tonga* or Tongan culture, this section will be devoted to an explanation of it. I will focus on six fundamental aspects of the culture that are essential, are still practiced today and are significant to this study. These are *fakatu’utu’unga ‘o e sosaieti Tonga* or

social structure; *nofo 'a kainga mo e seakale 'o e nofo 'a kainga* or kinship ties and kinship circle; *ngaahi tuku fakaholo mo e fahu* or traditions, customs and the *fahu* system; *ngaahi tefito'i 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* or Tongan core values; *tui faka-Kalisitiane mo e siasi* or the Christian faith and the church; and the *ngaahi koloa faka-Tonga* or Tongan mats and *tapa*.²⁰

3.6.1 Social structure

The Tongan social structure is based on a hierarchy of four “successive layers or strata of people each with their own code of behaviours, rights and duties and accepted living standards” (Crane, 1978, p. 33). This hierarchy has at its peak the *Fale 'o e Tu'i* or royal family and the King; *kau nōpele* or the nobles and *hou'eiki* or chiefs in the second layer; an emerging third layer which is the *kau ma'olunga 'o Tonga* or elite of Tonga; and at the base of the structure are the *ha'a me'avale* or *tu'a* or commoners. Morton (1996) refers to the third layer as the burgeoning “middle class” of commoners who have gained a certain amount of wealth and prestige through education and employment (p. 23).

This social stratification is rather rigid and upward mobility, especially to the royal family and the nobles' layers, is unheard of. A commoner by birth can never come to hold an aristocratic title. Those born into the royal family or the nobility remain so for the rest of their life, unless the rights are confiscated by the King. For example, the right of succession of King Tupou IV's son, 'Alaivahamama'o, was

²⁰ These six fundamental aspects of the Tongan culture are modified version of Crane (1978) and Kalavite (2010) definition of six fundamental aspects of the Tongan culture.

confiscated by the King in 1980 because he married a commoner without his father's permission (James, 2005; van der Grijp 1993, p. 23).

The royal family and the nobles have a very strong power base in the current social hierarchy derived from their ownership of the land. Van der Grijp pointed out that the King was the personification of the whole of Tongan society because of his access to the land and his control over a large number of the Tongan nobles and chiefs. The nobles and chiefs in turn have substantial control over the land and the people who live and work on it. The chief will give the land to the *'ulumotu'a* or the extended family leader of the *kainga*, who in turn distributes the land further. In return for getting land from the nobles and chiefs, the commoners are expected to serve the nobles, chiefs and the royal family throughout their entire lifetime (van der Grijp, 1993). This relationship is bound by the Tongan core values of *faka'apa'apa* and *tauhi 'eiki* or serving the royal family, nobility and chiefs. *Tauhi 'eiki* is a term used to explain how the commoners serve the chiefs, nobles and the royal family. The social stratification is also reflected in the Tongan language where terms used for commoners are different from those for nobles and also for the royal family. For example, eating is *kai* for the commoners, *'ilo* for nobles and *taumafa* for the royal family. Table 3.4 below illustrates this language stratification.

Table 3.4: Tongan language variations

Word	Commoners	Nobles	Royal family
eat	<i>kai</i>	<i>'ilo</i>	<i>taumafā</i>
sleep	<i>mohe</i>	<i>toka</i>	<i>tōfā</i>
walk	<i>'alu</i>	<i>me'a</i>	<i>hā'ele</i>
sick	<i>puke</i>	<i>tengetange</i>	<i>pupuluhi</i>
bath	<i>kaukau</i>	<i>takele</i>	<i>mulumulu</i>

Understanding the Tongan society and its very rigid social hierarchy is critical in this research. Any proposed modification emerging from this study will need to be well communicated to the different levels in this hierarchy, starting with the royal family right through to the so called 'commoners' of Tonga. This research gives due diligence to designing a communication strategy that will be culturally acceptable in a stratified society like Tonga, hence the application of the notion of *makafetoli'aki*. As James (1998) pointed out:

The style of command in government, church and state bureaucracies, as it is in the family is for the superior to give orders and for subordinates to accept them without too many questions. It is "not Tongan" to confront, argue, or disagree with a social superior. For example, every Tongan has the right to approach the King and petition him, but few avail themselves of this right of access (p. 43).

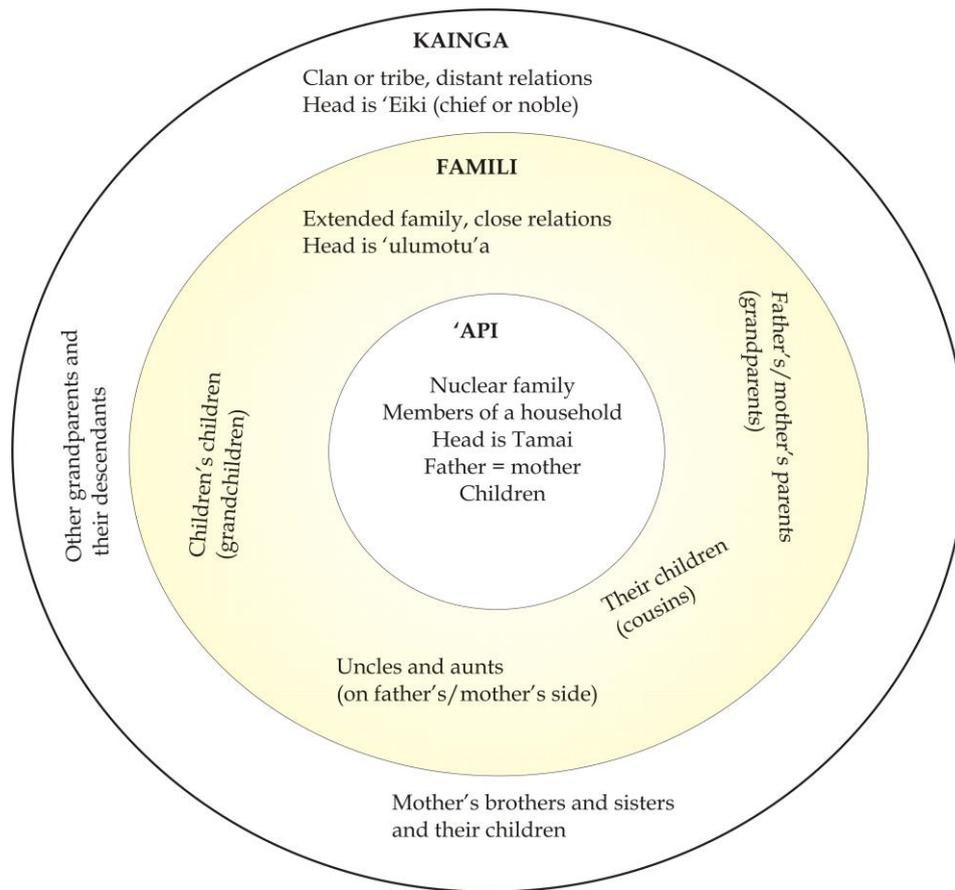
3.6.2 Kinship circle and kinship ties

The Tongan kinship ties or *nofo 'a kainga* is based on a kinship circle or *seakale 'o e nofo 'a kainga*. This is the foundation of the *anga faka-Tonga* or the Tongan culture. Figure 3.1 below clearly defines how each one is expected to relate to each other within the *'api* or household, *fāmili* or extended family and *kainga* or clan, tribe and distant relatives. The *'api* or household is the inner circle of close relations, which is very

similar to a nuclear family structure, even though in the Tongan culture this may include adopted children, a son-in-law or a daughter-in-law. The *fāmili* or extended family is the wider circle of close relations. It consists of all the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws on both the mother's and father's sides. The *fāmili* is a very important unit for both economic and social reasons. It is looked upon by members of the extended family as a security network, which one can rely on when there are funerals, birthdays, weddings or any major life crisis in the family. The *kainga* or clan consists of the distant relatives which may include the whole village. Crane (1978) summed up this system by pointing out that the kinship circle provides a very strong security system for all Tongans (p. 9).

The way individual Tongans organise their social lives is controlled by their positions in the social hierarchy as well as how they are related to each other in the kinship circle. A person's status can be higher or lower in relation to other people within the kinship circle depending on age, gender, and relationship with other members of the society (Kalavite 2010, p. 31). This is denoted in the *fahu* system (discussed further below). Kalavite (2010) also pointed out that with some kin there will be rights, and with others, duties. Within the families all wealth is shared by all the family members. The kinship circle and the relationships that underpin it provide a very strong social welfare system where the obligations and responsibilities are reciprocated (Bollard, 1974; Saffu, 2003; Sevele, 1973; van der Grijp, 1993).

Figure 3.1: Kinship circles and kinship ties



Source: Adapted from Crane, 1978, p. 8.

3.6.3 Customs, traditions and the *fahu* system

Another important aspect of Tongan culture is the customs and traditions of human existence: of births, marriages and death (Kalavite 2010, p. 30). Tongan culture places great importance on these key life events, symbolised by the *kātoanga fai'aho* or birthday ceremony, *kātoanga mali* or wedding ceremony and *putu* or funeral ceremony. There are specific protocols which must be observed when conducting these ceremonies. Everyone in the ceremony has a part to play, a relationship to observe and an obligation to fulfill.

As Crane (1978) pointed out that “there are also key players throughout the procedures of these ceremonies with some having rights to claim while others have duties to fulfill” (p. 3). This distinctive relationship is reinforced during birthdays, wedding and funerals in terms of the role of people in the *fahu*²¹, *fa’ē huki*²² and *liongi*²³ positions. For example, the *fahu* has the highest and most privileged position and the people, usually female, in this position are honoured and have rights to everything, especially the *koloa faka-Tonga*. On the other hand, the *liongi* or *fa’ē huki* hold the lowest position and they have no rights whatsoever during these celebrations. Individuals hold privileged positions such as *fahu* on their mother’s side but a *liongi* or lowly level on their father’s side. Thus every Tongan has these dual roles throughout their lifetime.²⁴ This is how the *anga faka-Tonga* positions everyone in the Tongan society. According to Kalavite (2010), “there are no two persons in Tonga holding the same rank within a kinship group” (p. 31).

During these ceremonies the presentation of *koloa faka-Tonga* and feasting must be undertaken to mark the importance of the event. These customs and traditions are quite significant in this study, because of the cost that is involved in the performance of these cultural customs and traditions. Kalavite (2010) pointed out that these ceremonies are more expensive when it is a member of the royal family. She said that

²¹ *Fahu* is usually the father’s eldest sister or her children, who are especially chosen at funerals, weddings, and birthdays to receive the best *koloa faka-Tonga* and food; the *fahu* sits at a special and highest place during the ceremony. (Kalavite, 2010, p. 32)

²² *Fa’ehuki* is one of the maternal relatives, usually one of the mother’s brothers, who accompanies and serves the bride, groom or the birthday person during the wedding or birthday ceremony. *Fa’ē huki* literally means a mother-to-sit-on, which means the groom, bride, and birthday person can sit on their lap during the ceremony (Kalavite, 2010, p. 32).

²³ *Liongi* are usually the maternal relatives of the deceased. They are from the mother’s family. They are lower in rank and are meant to serve anyone during the funerals. They wear the biggest *ta’ovala* or mat and are responsible for making the food throughout the duration of the funeral (Kalavite, 2010, p. 32).

²⁴ During the writing of this thesis I have been a *fahu* at my youngest maternal uncle’s funeral and also a *fa’ehuki* at my paternal aunt’s grandchild’s wedding.

“these [ceremonies] put financial pressures on many more people because these occasions involve the whole country as specific nobles and their people carry their *fātongia* or obligation to the King and nobles” (p. 31).

3.6.4 Tongan core values

Every society or ethnic group has its own core values that are embedded in its socialisation processes. Crane (1978) explained that values are beliefs that people think are important and worthy. Among the core values of the *anga faka-Tonga* are ‘*ofa* or love; *fetokoni’aki*, *foaki* or giving, *fevahevahe’aki*, *mo’ui fakatokolahi* or communalism and *fua fatongia* or the fulfilling of obligations.

On the other hand, there are also negative behaviours which are associated with how Tongans practice these core cultural values (Ritterbush, 1986; van der Grijp, 1993). Some of the more significant behaviours included *fesiosiofaki* or envy, *ngutulau* or gossip, *fakamā* or shame and *fakavahavaha’a* or competition. For example, the behaviours of *fakamā*, *fesiosiofaki* and *fakavahavaha’a* are sometimes what drive a person to give so much money during a *misinale* or church donation ceremony, birthday, funeral or wedding, rather than a genuine willingness to help. Similarly, you can feel *fakamā* if you do not fulfil an obligation, such as not contributing to a family funeral, wedding or birthday. These negative motives have an enormous influence on the way Tongans practice their culture, which I will illustrate later.

3.6.4.1 Value of ‘*ofa* or love

Crane (1978) pointed out that ‘*ofa* is the chief value of *anga faka-Tonga* (p. 3). Churchward (1959) defines ‘*ofa*, *fe’ofa’ofani* or *fe’ofa’aki* to mean “love, to be fond of, or

to be kind to one another” (p. 700). Kavaliku (1977) refers to *fe'ofa'ofani* or *fe'ofa'aki* as indicating that there is a relationship to be looked after where love is the underlying principle. For example, within a family, *fe'ofa'ofani* or *fe'ofa'aki* is seen as the most important relationship that children must maintain among themselves. The parents will always advise their children to be *fe'ofa'ofani* or *fe'ofa'aki*. By practicing this value they should be able to help each other in the future. Similarly, in an extended family there is an expectation to *fe'ofa'aki* or to give assistance to the needs of their family because they know they can and expect a return of their *'ofa* from them (p. 67).

3.6.4.2 Value of *fetokoni'aki*, *makafetoli'aki* or reciprocity

Churchward (1959) defines *fetokoni'aki* as when people help each other by mutual sharing, co-operate through working together, show concern for one another or respect or honour one another (p. 178). The value of *fetokoni'aki* has a rather all-encompassing meaning and application in the Tongan culture. It is the single most powerful value that underpins the kinship circle and how various relationships are maintained within this framework. The household, extended family and distant relatives take turns in helping each other knowing they can rely on each other to reciprocate, especially in times of need. Morton (1978) describe *fetokoni'aki* as an ideology that prevails upon individuals to materially assist kin, neighbours and friends, particularly those who need assistance (p. 87). *Fetokoni'aki* and *makafetoli'aki* are used interchangeably in the Tongan language to mean reciprocity.

Saffu (2003) pointed out that this kinship system provides a strong social security for the Tongan people but it is often overlooked by outsiders. The value of

fetokoni'aki, as will be shown later, is also the most fundamental value underlining the economic behaviour of Tongans. As Morton (1978) pointed out, the Tongan communal economy operates entirely on the principle of *fetokoni'aki* (p. 52).

An understanding of the far-reaching impact of *fetokoni'aki* on the economic behaviour of Tongans will help in an appreciation on why Tongans behave the way they do. For example, despite the tough world economic situation Tongans overseas still manage to send money home. Some common Tongan phrases will help to illustrate the significance of *fetokoni'aki* or *makafetoli'aki* in the Tongan culture and language:

- (i) *Ko 'etau nofo ni ko e makafetoli'aki* or the way we live relies on us helping each other or reciprocating.
- (ii) *Si'isi'i femolimoli'i* or though it is small let us share it.
- (iii) *Pikipiki hama ka e vaevae manava* or let us hold our canoe together while we share the food left on board.

Fetokoni'aki or *makafetoli'aki* is central in this thesis as a key driver for Tongans' economic behaviour. I have also used the concept of *fetokoni'aki* or *makafetoli'aki* in terms of seeking approval from Tongans to share their life stories, experiences and knowledge so that I can establish a framework on how Tongans could modify their current cultural practices.

3.6.4.3 Value of *foaki* or giving

Gift giving or gift presentation are very much part of the Tongan core values. Gift giving tends to reinforce the relationship that exists and the *fatongia* or obligation that must be fulfilled within the kinship circle, where some have duties to give while

others have the rights to receive. Gift giving takes place when a family has a birth, death, wedding, christening or graduation; for *fakaafe* or church food offerings; and sometimes gifts are given to visitors or friends. These gifts can be in different forms; food, money or Tongan handicrafts. The type and amount of gifts given will depend on the occasion taking place within the kinship circle, where some have duties to give while others have the rights to receive. Gift-giving can vary substantially depending on the occasion, the amount of money, food and *koloa faka-Tonga* the family have, and whether donations from extended family and the community have been given.

Gift giving is also a very significant part in the spiritual life of Tongans. It is looked upon as a way of giving back something to their God in return for his love and provision. For example, two major religious events that are quite significant in the Tongan culture are the *fakaafe* and *misinale*, both of which are within the church environment with the objective of acknowledging God for his love. The practice of *foaki* through *fakaafe* and *misinale* are quite significant in this study because it has a great impact on the expenditure patterns of Tongans. The practice of gift giving to the church can sometimes be made in a highly competitive atmosphere, in which the participants vie with one another to give the most (Evans, 2001; van der Grijp, 1993).

3.6.4.4 Value of *fua fatongia* or mutual fulfilment of obligations

Fua fatongia is the responsibility to fulfil an obligation to members of the *fāмили*, *siasi* and *fonua*. Every Tongan has a *fatongia* to fulfil within their '*api*, *fāмили* and *kainga* throughout the year and throughout their lifetime. These *fatongia* protocols are taught to or moulded into the individual Tongans by their families, churches, communities or

just by observation. For example, a brother has to *fua fatongia* or fulfil his obligations to his sister and her children during cultural ceremonies demonstrating the core value of *faka'apa'apa* or respect between brother and sister. Fulfilling an obligation reinforces the reciprocity system and the communal living that underpins Tongan society. Each family has their own *fatongia* towards one another and they are expected to fulfil those obligations. The cultural value and practice of *fua fatongia* is also seen as being a very strong welfare system that tends to look after elderly people and those who are in real need. The absence of a government social welfare system or of care facilities in Tonga partly explains this point.

People are considered as being *ta'e'ofa* or without love; *siokita* or selfish; or *nima ma'u* or not wanting to give, when they do not deliver their *fatongia* to their kinship circle. It is *fakamā* or great shame if the *fatongia* are not fulfilled and, as a result, some people take extraordinary measures to be able to fulfil their obligations to the best of their ability, such as taking out significant loans (Cowling, 1990; Fakava, 2000). *Fakamā* is a cultural sanction that puts pressures on many Tongans to fulfil their obligations. Hence there is already in the culture a social sanction which ensures that Tongans fulfil their obligations. There are Tongan expressions commonly used among Tongans to express their feelings of shame or joy when they are not able to fulfil their obligations:

- (i) *Ko e me'a fakavale he anga ka ko e masiva* or it makes you feel like a fool when you are poor and cannot fulfil your obligations.
- (ii) *Kehe pe ke lava 'a e fatongia he te tau fe'ao pe kitautolu mo e masiva ki he mate* or let us fulfil our obligations [and not worry about being rich] because we will always be poor until we die.

- (iii) *Si'i pe ka e ha* or it does not matter if what we take is small as long as we show up.

3.6.4.5 Value of *mo'ui fakatokolahi* or communalism

The value of *mo'ui fakatokolahi* is the strongest cultural fibre which binds Tongans together, at the extended family level, the community, the village or at the national level. Tongan people live, act and make decisions on a communal basis, which is reinforced by a culture of reciprocity, love, sharing and caring. Individual Tongans are sometimes more concerned with the community than their individual families or themselves.

The culture of communalism is quite clear in the way Tongans traditionally conduct their basic economic activities such as fishing, weaving, planting and *tapa* making. As I will explain later on in this chapter, these activities are done on a communal basis, rather than on an individual basis. Tongans work together rather than working individually. Morton (1978) refers to the way Tongans conduct their economic activities as the “communal economy” in which the primary principle of exchange is reciprocity (p. 51).

Saffu (2003) also pointed out that for many Pacific island people going into business stems from communal obligations and values such as the need to help the clan or the extended family. In other words, business can be seen by many as an extension of the entrepreneur's clan or extended family (p. 65). Saffu also suggested that the ability of the entrepreneur to meet traditional obligations and maintain close ties with the clan or extended family is essential for economic success. Communalism

is significant in this study because of its possible impact on the economic behaviour of Tongan people.

3.7 Christianity and the church

Christianity and the church play a significant role in shaping Tongans' cultural, social, spiritual and economic life. It is noted that the church is one of the most influential institutions in Tongan society, and the *faifekau* or church minister is held in very high regard. This thesis will argue that it is critical to acquire the support of the church if the proposed modification is to go forward in Tongan society. Many Tongans will agree to the change not because they believe it, but because the church and the *faifekau* support it. As James (1998) said: "Ministers of the church are held still in almost universal high regard, especially in rural villages" (p. 19).

Though religion is not within the scope of this thesis it is critical to provide a brief explanation of Christian principles and how they have become some of the founding principles for many aspects of the Tongan way of life. It will be argued that Christian faith and the church have had very significant roles in shaping the Tongan culture since its introduction 200 years ago. For example, all official meetings conducted by government departments in Tonga, such as the opening and closing of Parliament's annual sessions, are expected to start and end with a prayer. The law of Tonga as depicted in the Tongan Constitution declares that:

The Sabbath Day shall be kept holy in Tonga and no person shall practice his trade or profession or conduct any commercial undertaking on the Sabbath Day except according to Law; and any agreement made or witnessed on that day shall be null and void and of no legal effect (Latukeyu, 1975, p. 118).

Moala (2009) pointed out that Tongan culture as it has evolved over the past 200 years has become “a carefully sculptured mix of traditional Tongan value systems, biblical principles and morality, as well as Western law and order” (p. 91). The core Tongan cultural values of love, sharing, reciprocity, caring and cooperation are also core biblical values. The Christian principles and the Tongan cultural core values tend to reinforce each other.

Marcus (1980) claimed that with the arrival of missionaries much of the current official definition of *anga faka-Tonga* was established. He argued that the strong influence of missionaries and of Christian principles led Tonga to developing a “compromise culture” which integrated Tongan culture with a version of European culture. As James (1998) also pointed out, “the designation of the true Tonga custom and what was to be abandoned, was the outcome of selective and highly interested negotiations on the part of leading Tongans and Europeans alike, overt or covert, in concert or in opposition with one another” (p. 99).

During the 2006 Census, it was recorded that 98 per cent of the Tongan population were Christian. The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga is the dominant church in Tonga, with 37 per cent of the population belonging to this church, followed by Roman Catholic, Latter Day Saints and Free Church of Tonga. Church schools are currently responsible for providing about 82 per cent of the secondary school education and the Government is responsible for the remaining 18 per cent. The churches also provide 50 per cent of the in-country post-secondary training for Tonga.

This implies that the churches will continue to have significant influence on the young Tongan population through their education system and teaching.

The influence of Christianity and of the church, as an institution, on Tongan society is quite significant in this study. They have a significant role in shaping the current practices of the Tongan culture of love, reciprocity, sharing, caring and respect. Some of the church activities, such as the annual *misinale* or church annual donation; *ngaahi pola konifelenisi* or preparation of a Tongan feast for a church conference, *fakaafe faka'osita'u* or preparation of a Tongan feast for end of year church service, *Sapate faka-Me* or children's White Sunday, *Sapate Fa'e* or Mothers' Sunday, *Sapate Tamai* or Fathers' Sunday, *faka-Sepitema* or Women's September Day, *faka kuata* or quarterly meeting, all have financial implications which most of Tongan families have to prepare for every year. This means that the church, as an institution, influences the way Tongans allocate their money, *koloa faka-Tonga* and food. This thesis argues that these practices need to be modified as part of modifying the Tongan culture and, ultimately, eliminating financial burdens on Tongans.

3.8 Income level versus cost of cultural and church obligations

This section will explain the average household income²⁵ in Tonga compared to the cost of Tongan cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings, funerals and church *misinale*. These cultural and church ceremonies mobilise a large amount of money, food, *koloa faka-Tonga* and time, which can go far beyond an individual's level of income. This section gives an indication of the significant financial burdens the

²⁵ I have used the average household income rather than average individual income for this analysis because Tongan families usually fulfil their cultural and church obligations as a family rather than as an individual.

current cultural and church practices place on Tongans compared to their average income.

3.8.1 Tongan household income

TDoS (2010) reported that the average household in Tonga receives 19,881 *pa'anga* a year from employment, of which 16,690 *pa'anga* is from cash receipts and 3,191 *pa'anga* is from income in-kind. Income from employment is the largest source of income for an average Tongan household, representing 54 per cent of an average household's income. The second largest contributor to Tongan household income is remittance receipts, which represent 15 per cent of the total household income.

Remittance, for example, is most likely to be from children, a spouse or members of an extended family who live and work abroad. Remittance can also be receipts from fund raising by churches or community groups visiting Tongan communities abroad (p. 40).

The third largest source of income for Tongan households is from irregular gifts received, which represent 14 per cent of total household incomes (p. 40). This includes cash, handicrafts and food that are normally exchanged during birthdays, weddings or funerals. These exchanges are mainly driven by reciprocity among members of the extended family, church, community group or the village and it is a big part of what individual families rely on for their ceremonies (TDoS, 2010, p. 37). James (2002) estimated that in a single funeral about 20 families donated food, *koloa faka-Tonga* and money, which she estimated at 2,000 *pa'anga* per family (p. 235). Table 3.5 below shows the average annual household income in Tonga.

Table 3.5: Average annual household income (TOP)

Income Type	Cash	In-Kind	Total	Share (%) of total income
Income from employment	12,776	2,483	15,259	54
Property income	288	0	288	1
Welfare, Child Support, NPF	166	0	166	1
Remittance	3,461	708	4,169	15
Total Household Income	16,691	3,191	19,882	71
Irregular gifts received	2,330	1,692	4,022	14
Other receipts	607	0	607	2
Imputed rent	0	3,572	3,572	13
Total	19,628	8,455	28,083	100

Source: Adapted from ToSD, 2010, pp. 40-50.

3.8.2 Tongan household expenditure

TDoS (2010) reported that the average household in Tonga spends 66 per cent of their total income on consumption goods and services such as food and education. Twenty per cent is spent on non-consumption activities, which are largely cultural and church activities. The details are presented in Table 3.6 overleaf. It is important to note that capital or investment expenditure by an average Tongan household, as represented by house construction, home loan repayment and savings, is very minimal. House construction represents only 1 per cent of an average household expenditure, home loan repayment represents another 1 per cent, and savings represents less than 1 per cent of an average Tongan household expenditure as shown in Table 3.6 below. As noted by Saffu (2003), Pacific islanders place higher priority on maintaining key social relationships, thus building their social capital rather than financial capital.

Table 3.6: Average annual household expenditure (TOP)

Expenditure Type	Total	Share (%) of total expenditure
Consumption expenditure	18,606	66
Non-consumption expenditure:	5,520	20
Special events (weddings, funerals, birthdays, graduations, etc.)	1,202	4
Church contributions	1,664	6
Village contributions	77	0
School contributions	169	1
Other cash gifts	2,249	8
Cash remittance	159	1
Other expenditure:	4,150	15
House construction	265	1
Home loan repayment	267	1
Savings	46	0
Imputed rent	3,572	13
Total	28,276	100

Source: Adapted from TDoS, 2010, pp. 40-50.

3.8.3 Market prices of *koloa faka-Tonga*

Koloa faka-Tonga is one of the most valuable forms of wealth that Tongan families have. Table 3.7 overleaf is a summary of the average market prices for these *koloa faka-Tonga*, which are core parts of presentations during birthdays, weddings, funerals or any other traditional Tongan ceremony.

Table 3.7: Current average market price of *koloa faka-Tonga* (TOP)

Item	English translation	Current Market Price
<i>Fihu lau teau</i>	One layer white fine mat (100ft.)	3,500
<i>Fihu fatuvalu</i>	One layer white fine mat (80ft.)	2,000
<i>Fihu fatufa</i>	One layer white fine mat (40ft.)	1,000
<i>Fihu fatuua malele</i>	One layer white fine mat (20ft.)	600
<i>Konga kie fute hongofulu</i>	One layer white fine mat (10ft.)	300
<i>Konga kie fute fa</i>	One layer white fine mat (4ft.)	100
<i>Fala fihu fute nimangofulu</i>	Two layer white fine mat (50ft.)	2,000
<i>Fala fihu tolungokumi</i>	Two layer white fine mat (30ft.)	1,800
<i>Fala fihu uangokumi</i>	Two layer white fine mat (20ft.)	1,000
<i>Fala fihu tahanima</i>	Two layer white fine mat (15ft.)	600
<i>Fala fihu tahaua</i>	Two layer white fine mat (12ft.)	400
<i>Fala paongo tolungokumi</i>	Paongo fine mat (30ft.)	1,500
<i>Fala paongo uangokumi</i>	Paongo fine mat (20ft.)	800
<i>Fala paongo tahanima</i>	Paongo fine mat (15ft.)	600
<i>Fala paongo tahaua</i>	Paongo fine mat (12ft.)	400
<i>Fala tofua tolungokumi</i>	Tofua fine mat (30ft.)	1,300
<i>Fala tofua uangokumi</i>	Tofua fine mat (20ft.)	800
<i>Fala tofua tahanima</i>	Tofua fine mat (15ft.)	400
<i>Fala tofua tahaua</i>	Tofua fine mat (12ft.)	300
<i>Ngatu (ngatu) lautefuhi</i>	Double layer <i>Tapa</i> (100 ft.)	3,000
<i>Ngatu (ngatu) launima</i>	Double layer <i>Tapa</i> (50ft.)	1,500
<i>Ngatu (ngatu) tokauanoa</i>	Double layer <i>Tapa</i> (20ft.)	700
<i>Ngatu (ngatu) fuatanga</i>	Double layer <i>Tapa</i> (10ft.)	500
<i>Ngatu (ngatu) 'uli</i>	Double layer Black <i>Tapa</i> (10ft.)	500
<i>Ngatu (pepa) lautefuhi</i>	<i>Tapa</i> lined with cloth (100ft.)	2,000
<i>Ngatu (pepa) launima</i>	<i>Tapa</i> lined with cloth (50ft.)	1,000
<i>Ngatu (pepa) fuatanga</i>	<i>Tapa</i> lined with cloth (10ft.)	300
<i>Kato teu</i>	Ornamental basket	300

Sources: (i) Talamahu Market, Nuku'alofa, Tonga; (ii) Tokaikolo Christian Church Women's Group, Tofoa, Tongatapu; (iii) Lelei Finance, Otahuhu, Auckland, New Zealand; (iv) personal communication with Longomapu Women's Weaving Group, Vava'u; and (v) Tokaikolo Christian Church Saturday Flea Market, Mangere Bridge, Auckland.

3.8.4 Average cost of a Tongan traditional birthday ceremony

Tongans place very high value on life events such as birthdays, weddings and milestones such as graduation from university. Birthdays are normally celebrated at the age of one and 21. During the ceremony there are certain positions that will be acknowledged through the presentation of *koloa faka-Tonga*. The most important positions are those of the *fahu* and the reverend church minister who conducts the ceremony. Depending on the family's status in the community, the presentation could also include other members of the extended family, nobility and even members of the royal family. Table 3.8 overleaf provides the average cost of a Tongan cultural birthday celebration. This varies from family to family and there is no particular guideline that restricts how much you can give. In addition to the presentation of *koloa faka-Tonga* there is also entertainment in the form of *tau'olunga* or solo dance with *tekiteki* or money being put on the dancer to be gifted to the birthday person, the *fahu* or the *faifekau* or reverend minister. An average *tekiteki* for a solo dance could range from 200 *pa'anga* to 5,000 *pa'anga*.

Table 3.8: Average cultural cost of a Tongan birthday ceremony (TOP)²⁶

Items	Individual item cost	Average total cost
Presentation to the <i>fahu</i> (sister of the birthday person's father): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fala paongo uangokumi</i> 800 • <i>Ngatu (ngatu) launima</i> 1,500 • <i>Fihu fatufa</i> 1,000 • <i>Konga kie fute hongofulu</i> 300 		3,600
Costume of the birthday person (<i>Vala Fai'aho</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fihu fatufa</i> 1,000 • <i>Ngatu (ngatu) launima</i> 1,500 • <i>Konga kie fute hongofulu</i> 300 		2,800
Presentation to the <i>faifekau</i> (Rev. minister): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fala paongo uangokumi</i> 800 • <i>Ngatu (ngatu) launima</i> 1,500 • <i>Fihu fatufa</i> 1,000 • <i>Konga kie fute hongofulu</i> 300 		3,600
Presentation to the second <i>faifekau</i> or Reverend minister: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fala paongo tahanima</i> 500 • <i>Ngatu (ngatu) fuatanga</i> 500 • <i>Konga kie fute hongofulu</i> 300 		1,300
Presentation to the '<i>eiki</i> of the <i>kātoanga</i> (noble): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fala paongo tahanima</i> 500 • <i>Ngatu (ngatu) fuatanga</i> 500 • <i>Konga kie fute hongofulu</i> 300 		1,300
<i>Tekiteki</i> or money for the solo dance	1,000	1,000
<i>Vala 'o e fa'e huki</i>	500	500
Cost of a Tongan style feast for 200 guests²⁷ (approx. 20 tables of food)	15,000	15,000
Total		29,100

²⁶This is based on discussions with wives of ministers at the Tokaikolo Christian Church in Tonga and New Zealand, members of the Langafonua a Tonga Women's Group, womens' groups belonging to the Wesleyan Church on Tongatapu, New Zealand and Vava'u, Tongan womens' groups in Tonga and New Zealand. I have also had permission to interview individual families who have had birthdays in the last five years in Tonga and in New Zealand. Some birthday celebrations can cost far more than the average provided here. At the same time, there are some families who manage to keep the cost well below this average estimate.

²⁷In preparing a Tongan style feast for a guests of 200 it is expected that at least 20 roasted piglets will be prepared for this feast. Each table will have a roast pig on it. The average cost of a small or roast piglet is 150 *pa'anga*. Therefore, the cost of 20 piglets is estimated at 3,000 *pa'anga*. In New Zealand, the current cost of a good size roast piglet averages at 200 dollars.

3.8.5 Average cost of a Tongan traditional wedding ceremony

A typical Tongan wedding takes almost a week to be completed and includes eight major stages: (i) *faitohi* or formal proposal by the groom to the bride's parents to marry their daughter; (ii) *fakalēlea* or pre-wedding evening get-together of the bride's and groom's extended families; (iii) *kātoanga mali* or formal wedding ceremony; (iv) *'ave 'o e mohenga* or taking of the bride's belongings to the groom's house; (v) *'Uluaki Sapate* or first Sunday service ceremony of the newly-wed couple; (vi) *fai 'o e 'api* or newly-wed couple's first night together; (vii) *'ave 'o e 'api* or taking of the bed-sheet to the groom's mother as proof of the bride's virginity;²⁸ and (viii) *tali 'o e 'api* or groom's mother acknowledging the bride's virginity by a further presentation of *koloa faka-Tonga* and food to the bride's family.²⁹

The ultimate purpose of this elaborate procedure is to honour the bride for her obedience to her parents and remaining faithful to her husband-to-be. Again, this places a lot of financial burden on the bride and the groom and their respective families. Table 3.9 reflects the average cost of a formal Tongan wedding to the bride and her family. This excludes the cost for the bridegroom and his family but this thesis assumes that the cost for both sides would be very similar.

²⁸ The newly-wed couple is expected to have their first intercourse on this night and the bed-sheet is expected to be stained with blood if the bride is a virgin.

²⁹ As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the current practices of the Tongan culture refers to how things are done currently, which has changed over the years, especially during the post-Christian period and when Tonga became monetised. This situation has further changed through international trade and migration. Therefore, Tongan culture and current practices refer only to the last 50 years. Different families would make their own variations to the above phases but, in general, these are the protocols that should be observed when having a formal Tongan wedding.

Table 3.9: Average cultural cost of a Tongan wedding ceremony (bride)³⁰ (TOP)

Items	Individual item cost	Average total cost
Phase 1: Items to be exchanged with the groom's family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-20 cartons of drinks and cakes • <i>Fala tofua tahanima</i> • <i>Ngatu (pepa) fuatanga</i> • 1 medium size pig • <i>Vala fa'ē huki</i> 	 500 400 300 500 300	 2,000
Phase 2-3: Registry and Church Services		
Phase 4: Feast and Presentation of Koloa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost of a typical Tongan ceremony as shown in Table 3.8 plus the following: • <i>Koloa mole</i> • <i>Vala mali</i> <i>Ngatu (pepa) launima</i> <i>fihi fatufa</i> • <i>Vala kai</i> <i>Ngatu (pepa) fuatanga</i> <i>konga kie</i> • <i>Vala Sapate</i> <i>Ngatu (pepa) fuatanga</i> <i>konga kie</i> 	 29,100 5,000 1,000 1,000 300 100 300 100	 36,900
Phase 5: Taking of the mohenga <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mohenga faka-Tonga (Tongan bed)</i> <i>Fala tahanima(x6@\$500 each)</i> <i>Fuatanga ngatu (ngatu)</i> • English furniture 1 queen size bed dining table set lounge suite other items 	 3,000 500 2,500 1,000 2,500 2,000	 11,500
Phase 6-7: First Sunday church service and feast: It is assumed here that the groom's family will provide the Sunday feast	N/A	N/A
Phase 8: Taking of the 'api (white sheet) to the groom's family Cakes and drink are presented to the groom's family after they present the white sheet to the mother of the bride.	300	300
Total (bride)		50,700

³⁰This does not include the basic costs such as the wedding gown, transport, rings and so forth. This is just the cost of the cultural obligations that are required during a Tongan traditional wedding. The cost provided in the table is only for the bride and it excludes the cost incurred by the groom and his family.

3.8.6 Average cost of a traditional Tongan funeral

The protocol of a Tongan funeral can take up to two weeks to be completed. As most Tongan families have relatives coming from overseas the burial will normally wait until all the relatives arrive. There are six main phases in a Tongan funeral. Phase one is the *nofo'akime'a* or mourners coming to mourn the deceased body prior to burial, which can take up to one week. The second phase is *'āpō* or the wake, followed by a midnight dinner. The third phase is the *tanu* or burial and *feipulua* or giving of food to mourners after the burial. This is followed by *feitu'ui* or presentation of food, money and *koloa faka-Tonga* to the *fahu* and the deceased's immediate family. The fifth phase is the *pongipongi tapu* or marking the last day of mourning together with *maumau* or presentation of more *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and money to the *fahu* and the deceased's immediate family. The final phase is an additional *nofo'akime'a* for three more nights if the deceased is a commoner. The length of mourning could be much longer depending on the deceased's social status in Tongan society. Throughout these various phases there is an elaborate exchange of food, money and *koloa faka-Tonga*.

This cost can increase to a much higher level if the deceased is from the nobility, royal family, or a wealthy family (James, 2002; Kalavite, 2010). In paying for the funeral cost, some families have their children share the cost, and in most cases they are financed by a loan from the bank. Table 3.10 overleaf demonstrates the average cost of a Tongan funeral if the deceased is a commoner. Most often the immediate

family borrows heavily³¹ from the bank and finance companies in Tonga to pay for this expenditure (Fisi'iahi, 2006; James, 2002; Prescott, 2008, 2013).

Table 3.10: Average cost of a nuclear family member's funeral³² (TOP)

Items	Individual item cost	Average total cost
Phase 1: Mourning period until relatives arrive		
• Dinner for an average of 50 people @ 10 per person for 7 nights	3,500	
• Food for the group that does the evening prayer (<i>failotu</i>) @ 200 per night for 7 nights	1,400	4,900
Phase 2: Night of the wake and burial		
• Dinner for everyone who attends the wake (approx. 400 people) @ 30 per person	12,000	12,000
Phase 3: Distribution of food and <i>koloa faka-Tonga</i> after burial or <i>feipulua</i>		
• Two kilos of meat for everyone who attends the burial (500 people) @15 per person <i>Koloa</i> for the <i>fahu</i>	7,500 2,500	
• <i>Koloa</i> for the ' <i>ulumotu'a</i> and other extended families that attended @500 per <i>koloa</i> for 10 families	5,000	
• <i>Koloa</i> or donation to all the church ministers that conducted the funeral service (on average 5 Ministers normally attend) @500 per minister	2,500	17,500
Phase 4: <i>Feitu'ui</i>³³ or presentation of <i>koloa</i> and food to the <i>fahu</i>: <i>Fala uangokumi</i>		
• <i>Ngatu (pepa) launima</i>	1,000 1,000	
• <i>Puaka toho</i> or 1 large pig	1,000	3,000
Phase 5: <i>Pongipongi tapu</i> (last day of mourning)		
• Lunch for those that attend (average of 100 people @ 15 per head)	1,500	
• <i>Maumau</i> to the <i>fahu</i> (presentation of food items to the <i>fahu</i>) such as lollies, cakes, drinks, biscuits, etc.	1,000	2,500
Phase 6: Additional three nights of mourning		
• Dinner for an average of 50 people for 3 nights @10 per person	1,500	
• and food for the group that does the evening prayer (<i>failotu</i>) @ 200 per night for 3 nights (600)	600	2,100
Total		42,000

³¹ In a detailed discussion with the Reserve Bank of Tonga, I was informed that Tongans heavily borrow from the banking system for three main reasons: children's education, church donations and cultural obligations. These datum are not published due to confidentiality reasons.

³²This cost does not include the normal cost of a funeral such as the funeral home, funeral services, funeral car and the grave-yard.

³³*Feitu'ui* is the presentation of food and *koloa faka-Tonga* in honour of the deceased by the members of the immediate family, such as the grandchildren, to the *fahu*.

3.8.7 Average annual cost of an average family's church obligations

A typical family's annual church obligations could include *misinale*, *Sapate faka-Me*, *Sapate Fa'e*, *Sapate Tamai*, *faka-Sepitema*, *faka-kuata*, *ngaahi pola konifelenisi*, *fakaafe faka'osita'u* and *fakaafe uike lotu*. Table 3.11 overleaf demonstrates the costs involved in fulfilling all the main church activities during the year. These obligations could be different from family to family depending on which church they belong to as well as their level of commitment to church activities and obligations.

The above discussion captures some of the current costs of cultural ceremonies in Tonga. For example, the average cost of a Tongan traditional wedding for the bride is estimated at 50,700 *pa'anga*. I strongly believe that some of these protocols could be foregone without even affecting the principles on which these practices are based. For example, in a Tongan wedding ceremony there is no need for *'ave 'o e mohenga* or taking of the bride's belongings to the groom's house. Instead, the newly-wed couple can just buy their own furniture after they are married, based on what they can really afford. In a Tongan funeral, instead of having an additional three days mourning after the burial, the occasion should end with the deceased's burial. The cost of looking after those people who stay back for further mourning places additional financial burden on the family who has already made substantial expenditure to reach the point of burying their deceased in a culturally appropriate manner. In addition, the time that people have to give up in order to fulfil these cultural obligations can cost individuals in terms of salary foregone and businesses not being operated. These commitments could also affect Tongans' performance at the workplace.

Table 3.11: Average annual cost of a nuclear family's church obligations³⁴

Item	Average estimated cost (TOP)
<i>Misinale</i> or annual church donation (range from 1000 to 10,000)	5,000
<i>Fakamānatu</i> or acknowledgement of a deceased member of the church (could range from 1,000 to 10,000)	5,000
<i>Sapate faka-Me</i> or White Sunday	500
<i>Sapate Fa'e</i> or Mothers' Sunday	500
<i>Sapate Tamai</i> or Fathers' Sunday	500
<i>Faka-Sepitema</i> or Women's September Day	500
<i>Fakaafe kilisimasi</i> or preparation of Tongan feast for Christmas church service	3,000
<i>Ngaahi pola konifelenisi</i> or preparation of Tongan feast for church annual conference	3,000
<i>Fakaafe faka'osita'u</i> or preparation of Tongan feast for End-of-year and New Year church services	3,000
<i>Fakaafe uike lotu</i> or Feast for the New Year Prayer Week	3,000
Fund raising for various church activities	1,000
Total	25,000

It has also been identified that cultural commitments can put pressure on family members' relationships, such as between wife and husband, children and parents and in-laws and among different members of an extended family.³⁵ There are also incidences when a member does not reciprocate or contribute to a family event and that can cause *fakamā* or shame for that member for a long time. This thesis is an

³⁴This is the average cost for a family that is a member of the Wesleyan, Methodist or Tokaikolo, Free Church of Tonga, Church of Tonga and Siasi Konisitutone, which have more than 50 per cent of the Tongan people attending those churches. This could vary from the donation made by a member of other denominations such as Mormon, Catholic or Seventh Day Adventist. Van der Grijp (1993) also gives detailed account of the different donations made to the church during the year (p. 207).

³⁵In a detailed conversation with a number of women in Tonga and in New Zealand they informed me that cultural obligations can place great pressures on a family's relationships. One young couple had to move away from the city where their parents stayed just to avoid any involvement in all the cultural and church obligations. A Tongan female told of how she often argued with her non-Tongan husband about their financial matters because of the amount of money she spent on cultural obligations or to support her parents who were still in Tonga. There are many stories of this nature that get told verbally but are not recorded anywhere in the literature.

endeavour to find ways in which these social tensions could be smoothed out so Tongan individuals and families do not have to face undue financial pressures.

3.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to locate the thesis in the Tongan cultural, social, political and economic environments. It also highlights the cost of some of the current cultural practices such as birthdays, weddings and funeral ceremonies, as well as church obligations, and compares them to average household income in Tonga. This is part of contextualising the cost of cultural ceremonies within Tongans' average income level, reinforcing my position that these practices are financially unsustainable.

The next chapter will be devoted to an explanation of the research design, which encompasses the methodology and method used to collect the data. Given the sensitivity of the research topic, cultural modification, a major highlight of the next chapter is the introduction of the *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology, which is an attempt to contextualise western-based research methodology within the Tongan cultural context. This framework relies on the principle of *fetokoni'aki* or *makafetoli'aki* to underpin this research.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research design, which is to articulate what data was required, what methods were used to collect and analyse this data, and how all of this is going to answer my research question. This thesis seeks to contribute to the literature on the socio-economic development of Tonga by addressing some of the cultural factors understood to impede Tongans' economic performance and ways in which these factors and their practices could be modified to alleviate any adverse economic impact on individual Tongans. The three key questions that are raised in this thesis are as follows:

- (i) What are the cultural factors influencing Tongans' economic behaviour?
- (ii) How do these cultural factors and their practices impact on Tongans' economic lives?
- (iii) How should these cultural practices be modified to alleviate any adverse impact they have on Tongans' economic performance?

Previous studies have identified how some of the current cultural practices have adversely impacted on the economic performance of Tongan individuals and businesses. They have also highlighted the need for modification of some of these practices but have not suggested how to go about making these modifications (Fisi'iahi, 2006; Prescott, 2008; Sevele, 1973; Taylor, 2010). This study is situated in this gap, and its purpose is to provide ways in which Tongans could modify the way they practice their culture so that they are not financially disadvantaged.

My experience was unique to me and this research was an opportunity to find out about other Tongans' experiences. I realised that Tongan society is very diverse;

young versus old Tongans; full-blooded versus half-caste Tongans; educated versus un-educated Tongans; high-income-earning versus low-income-earning Tongans; and Christian versus non-Christian Tongans (Pulu, 2011). I had to carefully configure my sample within this context which, in my view, was the most difficult part of this whole research. As Madison (2005) said:

The experience in your life, both past and present, and who you are as a unique individual will lead you to certain questions about the world and certain problems about why things are the way they are. It is important to honour your own personal history and the knowledge you have accumulated up to this point, as well as the intuition or instincts that draw you toward a particular question – understanding that you may not always know exactly why or how you are being drawn in that direction (p. 19).

Designing the research methodology was one of the most challenging parts in this thesis. Firstly, culture holds a very significant position in the lives of Tongans and delving into this subject needs sensitivity and care. Secondly, Tonga's hierarchical culture and the importance of respect tend to restrict Tongans from publicly discussing any proposal for change, such as the topic of this study (Fisi'ahi, 2006; James, 2005; Ritterbush, 1986; Taylor, 2010; Tu'ipulotu-Afuha'amango, 2012). As James (2005) pointed out about the Tongan nurses' strike in 1981, "the protest was much or more about status and traditional respect than about class relations or civil service procedure" (p. 315). Thirdly, this research began after the 2006 riot in Tonga, and I was very conscious that this study could be seen as further challenging the status quo. This was the setting in which I have developed the methodology and method for this research.

Underpinning this research methodology is the principle of *makafetoli'aki* or reciprocity. In this context, I sought the help of the participants and the wider Tongan community in providing their stories and life experiences to verify my argument. In turn, the knowledge gained through this research will be given back with the objective of helping Tongans with an alternative on how to live a more balanced cultural and financial life. I refer to this research approach as the *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology, to be known as the *Makafetoli'aki* model. As Northrop (1947) suggested, "one must begin not with the facts nor with deductive reasoning nor with a hypothesis but with the problem and the problematic situation, because at the beginning of inquiry this is all that one has" (p. 134).

This chapter is organised into seven main parts: (i) Introduction; (ii) Research methodology; (iii) Pacific and Tongan research methodologies; (iv) Data collection; (v) Data analysis and dissemination; (vi) Data quality; and (vii) Conclusion.

4.2 Research methodology

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It is wider than the research method, as it also considers the logic behind the methods used in the context of the research and explains why a particular method or technique is being used and not the others (Adams et al., 2007; Duffy, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Northrop, 1947). It is important to note that there have been many studies in the area of socio-economic development in Tonga by both indigenous and foreign researchers. They each have their way of approaching their fieldwork. Researchers such as Ritterbush (1986), van der Grijp (1993) and James (2002), among others, have

spent some time in Tonga to conduct fieldwork. Researchers such as Sevele (1973), Bollard (1974) and Kami (1995) have used a quantitative approach to address economic development issues in Tonga. Fisi'iahi (2006), among others, used both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to undertake his research.

4.2.1 Ethical approval

Before embarking on my fieldwork, I had to seek ethical approval for the study, which was given by the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee during the mid-phase of this project, and well before I pursued my first field visit in December 2008. In addition, I had to seek the Tonga Government's approval for this research to take place in Tonga. (Refer to Appendix 1 for the application for approval of research in Tonga.) The Tongan Government has a policy that all researchers in Tonga must seek the approval of the Cabinet prior to commencement of any fieldwork. To fulfil this requirement I filed an application with the Prime Minister's Office attaching an outline of the research topic. I was granted the Government of Tonga's approval in November 2008. In conducting the field interviews, I requested the consent of 50 participants and obtained this from all of them. Seeking approval from the University and the Tongan Government went quite smoothly. I also found participants were quite willing to give their consent to be interviewed during my fieldwork.

The next key consideration was whether to take a quantitative or qualitative approach to this study. While I relied heavily on a qualitative research method to acquire my primary data I have also used a quantitative approach to verify some of the data. Quantitative analysis was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data.

As such, this research has adopted a mixed method approach where a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was taken in collecting my data. Qualitative research methodology is a search for meaning and it includes the environmental factors and treats participants as subjects, whereas the quantitative approach seeks to identify existing truths by isolating the significant variables and controlling for contaminating factors (Duffy, 1985, p. 225).

4.2.2 Qualitative research methodology

The nature of this investigation makes qualitative, rather than quantitative, research methodology more appropriate. Qualitative research strives to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences. This methodology is especially important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour (Duffy, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Patton, 2001). Through such research we can analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner, or which make people like or dislike a particular thing. This is the essence of this research, which seeks an in-depth understanding of how cultural factors influence and impact upon the economic behaviour of Tongan people: what are the key cultural drivers and motivations for their economic behaviours?; what is the impact?; and, what could be done to improve these behaviours and their impact on the outcomes?

As Merriam (2002) pointed out:

Qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting – what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what’s going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting.... The analysis strives for depth of understanding (p. 5).

The definition reinforces the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis, namely North’s Institutional Path Dependency Theory, which argues that human economic behaviour is not fixed on economic rationality but is also influenced by individuals’ interaction with their cultural, social and political environment. In this case, culture is assumed to have a significant impact on Tongans’ economic behaviour and, hence, the relevance of qualitative research methodology in this work.

The qualitative approach has its own advantages which are quite relevant to this study. It allows the researcher to obtain a more realistic feel of the world that cannot be experienced in the numerical data and statistical analysis used in quantitative research (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2001). It also allows the researcher to obtain first-hand experience providing valuable meaningful data (Duffy, 1985). It was relevant that this study take a qualitative approach as it reinforced my position that it is the perspective of the participants that is most important rather than the researcher, government or academics. My intention is to view the issues as understood by the participants. However, it is important to note that in pursuing this research I have also been guided by my own ideas, perspectives and hunches derived from my own experiences as an insider to the research community. The information gained through

this research tends to complement my own experiences and therefore gives me the assurance that the information collected is representative of the subject being studied. Furthermore, the qualitative approach allowed me the opportunity to describe and interpret experiences in a more meaningful way.

While I relied heavily on a qualitative approach for this research, it was inevitable that I had to also use the quantitative method to help verify some of the information collected during the field interviews. As Duffy (1985) pointed out, choosing just one methodology narrows a researcher's perspective and deprives him or her of the benefits inherent in a variety of research methodologies. Combining the two approaches and pulling on the strengths of each method counteracts the limitations posed by both.

4.2.3 Quantitative research method

The quantitative research approach originated in the natural sciences and was concerned with investigating things that could be observed and measured in some way. Such observations and measurements can be made objectively and repeated by other researchers. Duffy (1987) argues that quantitative research begins with aims, usually in the form of a hypothesis to be proven or disproven. A hypothesis is normally the foremost requirement before research can start. In addition, implicit in quantitative research is the requirement for an objective observer who neither participates in nor influences what is being studied. The essence of a quantitative research approach rests on the assumption that there is an objective truth existing in the world that can be measured and explained scientifically. Hence, its key focuses are

to progress the measurement of reliability and validity of data. This was of particular relevance in this study, where a lot of information gathered during the interview could be verified through the collection of numerical data. For example, a lot of the participants informed me that a certain amount of their income was directed toward church *misinale*. I verified these claims by consulting with church officials and church ministers to use their records to verify these claims.

The quantitative approach has its own weaknesses. Firstly, this approach cannot provide the researcher with information on the context of the situation where the studied phenomenon took place. As this study focused on human behaviour, it was essential that I gained an understanding of the participants' behaviour within their own cultural, social, political and economic environment. This could not have been picked up if I was to take a quantitative approach. Secondly, as Cormack (2010) argued, in a quantitative approach, participants are usually kept in the dark about the study, and are often left untouched by the research itself but are expected to transfer the findings into practice. People are treated merely as a source of data. This research sees the participants not only as part of the process but as key beneficiaries of the outcome (p. 134).

It is worth noting that the different approaches adopted in this research generated findings that were consistent. For example, the case study of a participant's funeral³⁶ confirmed the participant's claim that "he relied heavily on his children to

³⁶One of the old male participants (Maka 14) in this research died during the course of this research, in April of 2011. I had the opportunity to go back and attend his funeral, and was given permission by his children to use this event as a small case study

support him for all his needs” (*Maka* 14). The children of the deceased participant informed me that they paid for most of his funeral’s cost, which was estimated at 50,000 *pa’anga*. Extended family members and other members of the community and church contributed, but a significant part of the cost outlay was met by the children of the deceased participant. Bryman (2007) emphasised the point that bringing more than one finding together has the potential to offer understandings that could not otherwise be picked up (p. 9).

4.2.4 Establishing a Research Advisory Group

The research advisory group consisted of five key informants.³⁷ I selected my key informants based on: their knowledge of the subject under investigation; their trustworthiness; and their knowledge of the research community (Shank, 2002, p. 57). At the initial stage of this research, I felt it was necessary to have an advisory body with members who could guide me during my research work. I was particularly keen to have a young member in this group as I needed some insights into the way young Tongans were thinking.

The advisory group continuously assessed my research findings and checked them against their own experiences, knowledge and personal stories. These exchanges of views, perspectives and life stories allowed for a rich and thorough interpretation of the data. The perspective, life experiences and story of the young informant were

in my research. I was able to collate all the costs related to this funeral, including the food, *koloa faka-Tonga* and money that was spent during the entire funeral.

³⁷ The five people I selected as my key informants were: the current Minister of Education of Tonga; Talking Chief from the island of Nuapapu; Reverend President of the Tokaikolo Christian Church; a Tongan Secondary School Principal; and a young Tongan-born female student at the University of Auckland.

particularly significant in affirming my proposition for a cultural modification, which was supported by the findings from the 13 young participants' responses. She also helped interpret some of the responses given by the young participants through her own experiences and stories.

In pursuing this research, I have relied heavily on Pacific research methodologies for my approach. As such, it was critical that I considered some of the existing research methodologies in the Pacific region, Tonga in particular, to ensure any approach taken in this research was culturally appropriate. In reviewing the existing methodology also established the *Makafetoli'aki* model methodology, which is an extension of the existing Tongan research methodologies, namely the *Tālanoa* and *Tōungāue* models.

4.3 Pacific and Tongan research methodologies

Pacific research methodologies are still in their infancy, but as some Pasifika researchers such as Anae et al. (2001) have suggested, "if research is to make meaningful contributions to Pacific societies, then its primary purpose is to reclaim Pacific knowledge and values for Pacific peoples" (p. 8). It is important to acknowledge the Pasifika research methodologies that have emerged from the work of some Pasifika researchers such as the Tamasese et al. (2005) Fa'afaletui³⁸ model from Samoa; the MaUa-Hodges (2000) Tivaevae³⁹ model from the Cook Islands; the Kupa

³⁸It is the critical process of weaving (tui) together all the different levels of knowledge frames from within the 'houses' of collective representation, in order that the Samoan world view is substantially enhanced and added to. (Tamasese et al., 2005).

³⁹Cook Islands patch-quilt.

(2009) Te Vaka Atafanga⁴⁰ model from Tokelau; the Nabobo-Baba (2006) Vanua⁴¹ model from Fiji; and the Smith (1999) Kaupapa Maori⁴² research methodology.

As Smith (2004) has established, the increased engagement of Pasifika researchers in actual research work has shifted the Pacific researchers from seeing themselves as passive victims of research, to seeing themselves as activists who are engaged in the actual research. It must be noted that though these researchers come from very diverse Pacific cultures, these methodologies draw on cultural principles which are quite similar in many societies, such as reciprocity, communalism, sharing and making decision through consensus. I have purposely chosen to use Pacific research methodologies as my main method for conducting this research as that is what I am most familiar with, and I agree with Smith that Pacific researchers need to develop research methodologies relevant in the Pacific cultural, social and economic environments.

Tongan research methodologies are also emerging. As Kalavite (2010) pointed out, the significance of works by Tongan researchers such as Thaman-Helu's (2002) Kalala⁴³ model; Ka'ili's (2005, 2008) and Mahina's (2008) Tauhi Vā⁴⁴ model; Manu'atu (2000) Malie-mafana⁴⁵ model; Vaiioleti's (2003, 2006) and Prescott's (2008) *Tālanoa*⁴⁶

⁴⁰Tokelau boat or canoe, also called *tepaopao*.

⁴¹Fijian term for land.

⁴²A Maori plan, a philosophy, and a way to proceed. Embedded in the concept of kaupapa is a notion of acting strategically, of proceeding purposefully (Smith, 1999).

⁴³Sweet-smelling flowers, or trees or plants bearing sweet-smelling flowers, of any kind (Churchward, 1959); a garland of sweet-smelling flowers.

⁴⁴Keeping good relationships. Soakai (2003) argued that the *Tauhi vā* model should be used for privatisation of electricity in Tonga as an alternative to the privatisation approach suggested by ADB, IMF and the World Bank (p. 14).

⁴⁵Aesthetically pleasing state and the emotional feeling of warmth.

⁴⁶To talk (in both formal and informal ways), to tell stories or relate experiences, etc (Churchward, 1959).

model; and Kalavite's (2010) *Toungāue*⁴⁷ model should be acknowledged. Common to all these different Tongan research methodologies is that they are culturally based. They all signify the values that underpin the Tongan culture and the importance for researchers to understand these cultural environments when building and engaging with Tongan people. The *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology is further progress in the same path. Two research models that are particularly relevant to the current research are: Prescott's (2008) *Tālanoa* model and Kalavite's (2010) *Toungāue* model.

4.3.1 *Tālanoa* model

Tālanoa is defined as "to talk in an informal way, to tell stories or relate experiences" (Churchward, 1959, p. 447). *Tālanoa* is also a group encounter, where a space is created for people to tell their past, their issues, their realities and aspirations and, using their own cultural methodologies, to produce a more authentic Pacific knowledge (Vaioleti, 2003). Prescott (2008) pointed out that in researching people from the Pacific, *tālanoa* is a specific form of communication that is similar to interviewing and that addresses the challenges of race, culture, beliefs and society. He introduced the *Tālanoa* model to economic research during his research on Tongan businesses in New Zealand in 2008, which indicated the relevance of a qualitative approach in economic research. This study is part of this on-going search for ways in which the socio-economic conditions of Tongans can be improved and, similar to Prescott, chooses to use the *Tālanoa* model in order to gain an in-depth and honest understanding of Tongans' economic behaviour.

⁴⁷The concept of *toungāue* is used when Tongans work together, where everyone is expected to take turns in helping each other. In weaving, the term *toulālānga* refers to women taking turns to help each other in weaving their individual mats.

The *Tālanoa* model has been used widely in this research to converse with my academic supervisors, key informants, participants and the wider Tongan community. The model puts both yourself and your participants at ease to converse freely with each other. According to Kalavite (2010) *tālanoa* can be formal or informal. Formal *tālanoa* occurs when a time and a place is arranged so that a *tālanoa* is conducted on a particular topic. Informal *tālanoa* occurs when the topic under investigation has emerged from a *tālanoa*, or the topic is initiated during a gathering that was not meant for the purpose of discussing the research topic (pp. 130-133). For example, a discussion about an elaborate wedding celebration could trigger the audience to talk about some of the Tongan cultural practices and their impact on Tongans' financial position. These informal *tālanoa* often take place when Tongans come together during funerals, weddings, birthdays, church or a *faikava-Tonga* gatherings or family reunions. Both formal and informal *tālanoa* have been used interchangeably in this research to gain knowledge into the subject under research.

The *Tālanoa* model was very appropriate in this research because some of the issues discussed were sensitive, and through the *tālanoa* process participants were comfortable to share their stories with myself as a Tongan. We could easily relate to each other through *tālanoa*, whereas if it was a very structured interview it would be very difficult for them to express their views in that format. In this thesis, *tālanoa* refers to a situation where a semi-formal interview was conducted, and *pōtālanoa* refers to a situation where an informal conversation took place.

4.3.2 *Tōungaue* model

Kalavite (2010) defined *tōungaue* as working co-operatively within a group of people in Tongan communities. All the members of the group work for one member at a time/on a day, then for another person on another day, and so on until everyone has had their turn to be helped by the group. *Tōungaue* is a means of *fetokoni'aki* among the Tongan people so that they can get things produced easily and quickly (p. 125). The principle underpinning the *Tōungaue* model is *fetokoni'aki*, *makafetoli'aki* or reciprocity, which is also the core value that underpins the current research methodology.

4.3.3 *Makafetoli'aki* model

The Tongan phrase '*ko 'etau nofo ni ko e makafetoli'aki*' means 'we live based on the principle of reciprocity or through helping each other'. For example, when an immediate family has a funeral, the other members of that extended family or community gather to help the bereaved family on the understanding that it would be reciprocated in the same way in future. In this context, I had to ask my research community for their help and, in return, would provide them with something that could help them live a more comfortable socio-economic life. Inevitably, this whole thesis, that is, the theoretical framework, the research methodology and the modification model, had to be based on the principle of *makafetoli'aki*. This is what underpins the way Tongans live on a daily basis and also this thesis.

This model also provided a pathway where western-based qualitative research methodology could be positioned within a Tongan cultural, social and economic environment. This model acknowledges that western and Pacific research

methodologies should be able to complement, rather than contradict, each other in our drive to better understand the way Tongans live and behave. Patton (1985) pointed out that respondents often remarked on the problems involved in applying western methods of evaluation to programs in developing countries. They questioned specific types of research designs and measurement techniques (p. 9). Matsumoto (1994) also highlighted that researchers need to be aware that culture has a strong impact on research method and outcome. While there is no single right way of pursuing research, it is important that the cultural environment is taken into consideration, hence the development of *makafetoli'aki* research method. As Saafi (2009) also revealed:

One could argue that is our way ('the Pacific way') to form balanced and reciprocal relationships and *vā* between different ways of knowing rather than set up an Aristotelian true/false dynamic of conflict or competition. This would ideally invoke a relational space of co-operative interaction-across and interchange-between knowledge traditions (p. 36).

The *Makafetoli'aki* model also reinforces the fact that this research took more than one approach to finding the answers to the thesis questions. While I relied heavily on a qualitative approach for my primary data I have also used the quantitative approach to verify or quantify some of the key findings derived from the qualitative data. Within the broad qualitative research framework, I have used more than one method to collect my data: semi-structured interviews (*tālanoa*); observation through participation; small case studies; and informal *pōtālanoa*.

The model also emphasises the need to ensure that the cultural values of respect and maintaining good relationships do not get in the way of finding the truth and what really works for Tongans. While we should respect and maintain our

relationships with each other, it is important for the participants, and the researcher, as an insider, to tell the truth. In addition, this methodology warned that the cultural behaviour of *fakamā* or shame, and *fakangalingali* or wanting to please others, should not get in the way. Participants were encouraged to speak the truth even if it contradicted the status quo. The intention was to seek for the truth and, on that basis, determine what works best for Tongans, especially young ones who will become the future decision makers and influencers in Tongan society.

The principle of *makafetoli'aki* or reciprocity enabled the researcher to negotiate among the different social classes, extended families, churches, villages and the wider Tongan community, to agree that cultural modification is necessary and therefore should be implemented. The *Makafetoli'aki* model is one of the key contributions that this thesis makes toward the existing Pacific and Tongan research methodologies. The *Makafetoli'aki* model should be applicable in any other cultural setting as the principles of *tauhi vā* or maintaining good relationships, *faka'apa'apa* or respect and *fetokoni'aki* or reciprocity, are culturally universal. The model ensures that the researcher takes into account the local social, economic, cultural and political environment in contextualising his/her research methodology and method.

4.4 Data collection

The primary method used to generate the data was through semi-structured interviews with 50 participants using a set of broad questions to guide the interview. This was supported by participation through observation, small case studies and informal *pōtālanoa*. This gave me the opportunity to really gain an in-depth

understanding of Tongan people and their perceptions, experiences and viewpoints on the research topic. The data collection procedure started with designing the question guide, selecting the participants and then finally the actual collection of data through interviews, participant observation, small case studies and informal *pōtālanoa*.

4.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Initially, I thought it would be best to employ a set of structured⁴⁸ questions so that I could easily extrapolate and analyse the data. The questionnaire was designed in the English language and reviewed by both of my two supervisors. Once they approved the English version, I then translated all the questions into the Tongan language.

Three of the key considerations for designing the question guide were: clarity, relevance to the research topic, and time constraints. It was critical that the questions asked were clear so that I could get the right answers. It was also important that the questions asked were directly relevant to the research topic. Finally, it was critical to keep the interview duration within a reasonable timeframe otherwise it would become a burden to the participants. The time allowed for each interview was a maximum of one hour.

The draft guide questionnaire was trialled with one of the participants. During this brief trial it became apparent that using structured interviewing was not going to work. There was an obvious degree of uneasiness when the participant was directed

⁴⁸In its simplest form, a structured interview involves one person asking another person a list of predetermined questions about a carefully-selected topic. The person asking the questions ("the interviewer") is allowed to explain things to the interviewee (or "respondent" - the person responding to the questions) does not understand or finds confusing.

with questions such as “how much do you normally donate towards church or other cultural obligations?” I immediately stopped the interview and changed the subject of our conversation. At that point, I knew straightaway that future participants would not be comfortable with the way the questions were directed at them. As Manu’atu (2000) pointed out, the researcher and the participants have to establish a good relationship and the right atmosphere before they are willing to cooperate with each other. In this case, a structured interview did not create that atmosphere. This meant that I had to change the interview style from structured to semi-structured interviewing. Stage and Manning (2003) pointed out that “it is important that researchers pilot interview protocols so that they can receive early feedback about the clarity of questions, flow of the questions and skill of the interviewer” (p. 41).

The decision to switch to semi-structured interviewing was a very good judgement, as this method proved to be the most successful way of engaging and gaining detailed information from my participants. I noticed that the participants were very relaxed, comfortable and felt secure enough to discuss issues, ideas, opinions and experiences that were sometimes quite sensitive to them. For example, young participants were not ashamed to express their frustration, anger and regrets during the interview, especially when discussing the volume of cultural obligations they have to be involved in. The old participants were not ashamed to express their attachment to the traditional culture as they discussed their experience. Participants were able to freely express their emotions. For example, two participants cried as they told their personal stories.

There was a lot of detail and sensitive information given during this series of *tālanoa*. Kvale (2007) pointed out that the use of semi-structured interviewing helped to increase the rapport between the participants and the researcher. The use of an interview question guide also provided an opportunity for me to probe, clarify and follow up conversations to achieve specific and accurate responses from the participants.

4.4.1.1 Guiding questions

The questions asked during the interview were very much determined by the scope and objective of this study. A total of 20 questions were asked, which were broadly categorised into the following key areas: (i) what are the key cultural factors that drive Tongans' economic behaviour? (ii) how do these cultural factors impact on Tongans' economic behaviour? and; (iii) how can these factors and their practices be modified to ensure Tongans lived a more comfortable financial life while still respecting their culture? The questions helped to guide the discussion toward the research objectives. At the same time, having open-ended questions gave the participants the flexibility, freedom, trust and the respect to give their whole story and not just part of it (Manu'atu, 2000; Niumeitolu, 2007; Rohorua, 2009). Refer to Appendix 7 for the Interview Guiding Questions.

4.4.1.2 Second round of interviews

The outcome of the first round of interviews necessitated having another round of interviews to intensify my understandings of some of the themes emerging from the data. There was a strong contrast between the responses given by young participants

as compared to the middle-aged and old participants. While I was able to interpret and analyse the responses of the old and middle-aged participants, I felt I did not have sufficient knowledge to elaborate on or interpret the responses given by the young participants. I felt I had an obligation to go back and ask them to tell me more about their own experiences, opinions, concerns and perceptions.

The second phase involved recruiting and interviewing an additional ten young participants, focusing on a more in-depth and detailed interview on what and how the practices of the Tongan culture could be modified. Refer to Appendix 8 for the Interview Guiding Questions.

4.4.1.3 Third round of interviews

The findings from the first and second interviews prompted a need for a third round of interviews. The focus of the third round of interviews was twofold: firstly, to understand Tongan leaders' readiness for the change proposed by middle-aged and young participants; and secondly, to gather information on what Tongans were already doing in terms of modifying their own cultural and church practices. This involved interviewing six Tongan leaders, three church ministers, a senior staff member of the Palace Office and two senior government officials. Refer to Appendix 9 for the Interview Guiding Questions. I also held informal *pōtālanoa* with many Tongans during this trip, focusing on what they had done in terms of modifying their birthday, wedding and funeral ceremonies or their church *misinale*, *ngaahi pola konifelenisi* and *fakaafe faka'osita'u*. The result is integrated into the thesis as part of the Conclusion.

4.4.2 Participant observation

Kvale (1996) pointed out that “if you want to study people’s behaviour ... the observations of field studies will usually give more valid knowledge than merely asking subjects about their behaviour” (p. 104). This form of data collection places the researcher in the midst of the community he or she is studying, giving the researcher the opportunity to gain a close and intimate familiarity with a given group of individuals and their practices through an intensive involvement with people in their cultural environment.

Owing to the lack of data available on participants’ expenditures on cultural and church obligations, observation of participants was needed to help verify the information given by the participants. For example, there was no formal record of the amount of money participants spent on cultural and church obligations and all they could give during the interview was an estimate of what they thought they gave. Attending some of their own cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings and funerals helped confirm the amount participants or their families spent during these ceremonies.

Over the eight years of this research work (2004–2012), I observed through participation over 60 cultural events both in Tonga and in New Zealand, mainly birthdays, weddings, funerals, graduations and family re-unions. In addition, I attended numerous church activities such as *misinale* and *ngaahi pola*. Six of these events were of particular interest to me as they directly involved some of my participants. These included the funerals of two of my participants (2006, 2012); the

weddings of three of my participants (2008, 2010, 2012), and the *misinale* of my own church in which I am a treasurer to one of the small fellowship groups (2012). In order to attend these various events, I had to integrate some of my research work while attending these cultural obligations in Tonga and New Zealand.

During funerals I was allowed to watch all the presentations of *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and money. I was also able to view closely the amount of *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and money presented to the *fahu* and the reverend church minister. During some of the church *misinale* I was able to record the amount that each family donated as they were often called out from the front of the church so everyone could hear it. In two of these events I was allowed to use them as small case studies, which I will explain in the next paragraph.

4.4.3 Case studies

As I mentioned before, one of the key challenges facing this research was a lack of available data on the research topic. As such, it was important for me to take a multi-method approach in order to ensure the primary data I gained through interviewing the 50 participants was valid and reliable. I used a case study approach to observe in detail two cultural ceremonies during my fieldwork.

A case study approach enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, the case study method involves selecting a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true essence, investigate contemporary real-life phenomena

through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events and their relationships (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2001; Stage & Manning, 2003).

Merriam (2002) pointed out that:

The process of conducting a case study begins with the selection of the “case.” The selection is done purposefully, not randomly; that is, a particular person, site, program ... because it exhibits characteristics of interest to the researcher. The case might be unique or typical, representative of a common practice, or never before encountered. The selection depends upon what you want to learn and the significance that knowledge might have for extending theory or improving practice (p. 179).

In this research, two cases were chosen to be studied; namely a funeral of one of the old participants and a wedding of one of the young participants. I felt it was important to conduct these two case studies as they would certainly provide an in-depth understanding of the cost involved in such cultural ceremonies.

The deceased’s children allowed me the opportunity to access and record all the information I needed. Throughout the funeral proceedings I was able to record all the expenses that were incurred. I was also able to record the amount of *koloa faka-Tonga*, money and food presented to the *fahu* and the reverend ministers. I had similar opportunity to observe and collect the necessary data from the wedding ceremony I studied. Information from these two small case studies is integrated in the findings in Chapter 5, such as the cost of the participant’s wedding as shown in Table 5.1 and of the participant’s funeral presentation to the *fahu* and *faifekau* as shown in Table 5.2.

4.4.4 Informal *pōtālanoa*⁴⁹ or talking in the night

Throughout my research work, I continued to *pōtālanoa* or engage in informal conversation with as many Tongan individuals, groups and churches as possible whenever I had the opportunity to talk to about my research topic. Though the information collected through these *pōtālanoa* was not integrated into the formal interviews, I found these were very useful in terms of enriching and reconfirming the information gained during the semi-structured interviews.

Owing to financial and time constraints, I could not travel to Tonga for this *pōtālanoa*. Instead, I often asked Tongans who were visiting New Zealand during my preparation period for an opportunity to have a *pōtālanoa*. Those that I selected to *pōtālanoa* with were from different walks of life in Tonga. There were reverend church ministers, government officials, students and family members with whom I managed to *pōtālanoa*.

4.4.5 Field visits

Over the eight-year period (2004–2012), I made four different trips to Tonga as part of my fieldwork, which was an on-going process of interviewing, re-interviewing, participant observations, case studies as well as *pōtālanoa*. I must mention that five of my 50 participants have moved to New Zealand for long-term residency since the project began. This has allowed me to *pōtālanoa* with them on a very regular basis to discuss findings, interpretations and seek for any new meanings to my data.

⁴⁹Kalavite (2010) defines *tālanoa* as being formal and informal. *Pōtālanoa* is very similar in nature to informal *tālanoa* but it is very much related to when the conversation is among people who know each other. *Pōtālanoa* is literally translated to mean 'talking in the night' or long talk, which also implies that time is of no constraint in this type of conversation. For example, when my extended family has a family reunion some of us would *pōtālanoa* from the early evening until late in the night. That is how long it could take a *pōtālanoa* to end.

In early 2007, I travelled to Tonga for two weeks as part of preparing for my fieldwork and establishing an advisory research committee for my research. During this visit, I managed to confirm with five Tongans their willingness to be part of my advisory committee. I also met some of the potential participants for my research and, at the same time, found out about the exact process for approving research in Tonga. I managed to get a lot done during this visit which, in a small island community, was very much determined by who you know. You relied on your network to get things done fast. In April 2012, I made another five-day trip to Tonga to attend and observe the funeral of one of my participants.

In December 2012, I made my final trip to talk with leaders of Tonga on their readiness for the modification of some of the current cultural and church practices. The people interviewed included senior government officials, church leaders and a senior staff member from the Palace Office. A highlight of this visit was accessing information on some of the cultural modifications introduced during the state funeral of His late Majesty King Tupou V. This was a milestone in achieving the purpose of this thesis, which is to modify some of the current cultural and church practices. This additional information is incorporated in the last chapter of the thesis, where I will give an update on Tongans' readiness for modification of some of their current cultural practices.

4.4.6 Participants

4.4.6.1 Sample size and characteristics

One of the key considerations in selecting the research participants was to ensure that they were willing to give a true account of their own experience and life stories rather than giving what they thought the researcher wanted to hear. Niumeitolu (2007) emphasised this point when selecting his research participants where he pointed out that, at times, he relied more on people he had a previous relationship with to give him a true account of their experiences. Taylor (2010) also acknowledged the same situation in his fieldwork in Tonga. He found that it was people who you knew that would give a true account of their own experiences. As a foreigner, he used Tongan people who were familiar with the local people to assist him in his field work. The Tongan culture of *faka'apa'apa* and *tauhi va* tend to discourage Tongans from telling the truth and they would rather give you what they think you want to hear (Helu, 1997; Niumeitolu, 2007; Moala, 2009; Taylor, 2010; Pulu, 2011; Tu'ipulotu-Afuha'amango, 2012).

It must be mentioned that Tonga is a small community and, given the fact that the research was confined only to the urban area of Tongatapu, this could cause bias in the data collected. In a small community like this it was not easy to find people suitable for interviewing who were totally unknown to me. My previous position in the Tongan government, the Reserve Bank of Tonga and in the community added to this difficulty. When I mentioned that the participants I selected were people I have known, I did not think this situation would, in anyway, influence the viewpoints or

the position of the participants. Rather, I felt more confident that these participants, being familiar with me, would feel safe to give an honest answer to the questions asked (Niumeitolu, 2007; Kalavite, 2010; Taylor, 2010).

The way the questions were designed also enabled the respondents to discuss their views without being constrained by the way the questions were asked. At the outset of every interview, I explained to the participant the importance of giving a true account of their experiences, beliefs and life stories which, I believe, they did when answering the questions asked. The diverse responses given by the 50 participants were evidence that there was no single view dominating this research. In particular, the youth participants gave responses that were quite different from those of the middle-aged and old participants. The diverse responses reassured me that the sample selected was not biased toward any particular viewpoint but represented the different views held by individual Tongans.

The total number of participants interviewed during this research was determined by a number of factors. According to Stage and Manning (2003), methodologically, there are two factors that help determine how many participant interviews are needed in a study: they are saturation and sufficiency. Seidman (1998) pointed out that "saturation is met when the same information is heard repeatedly throughout the interviews; the researcher is no longer learning anything new" (p. 48). Cohen et al. (2000) also pointed out that qualitative research is more likely to benefit from having small samples but with in-depth information available to the researcher on the participants' experiences, perspectives, and motivations.

I must admit that 50 participants was in no way a fair representation of the 103,000 Tongans living in Tonga. The rapidly changing political, social and economic environment of Tonga meant that it was not the ideal time for this research, as things could easily change. As the urban area of Tongatapu has a very small population, it was easy to know almost everyone that lived in the community. My sample selection was surrounded by these constraints and limitations, which need to be considered when drawing conclusions from the research findings.

Time and financial constraints were also key factors in deciding the number of participants to be interviewed. For example, due to time constraints, I arranged most of my participants and interviews from New Zealand before travelling to Tonga. I relied heavily on emails, phone conferencing and, sometimes, key people visiting New Zealand, to progress my fieldwork. As I explained above, I have learnt how to manage cultural, academic work, family and job obligations through this journey.

In terms of age and socio-economic background, I tried my best to select a participant group that represented different ages, socio-economic backgrounds and social classes in the Tongan community. Using the TDoS (2008) age grouping, I selected participants from three different age groups: young (18-29 years old), middle-aged (30-59) and old (60 and over). Thirty-seven participants were from the young and middle-aged groups and 13 participants were from the old age group. Using these different age groupings was made on the assumption that each age group represents a different generation in Tonga. Their experiences and perceptions differ from each other. This assumption was reflected well in the findings, where the young

participants were advocating for a modification in the current cultural practices, whereas the old participants were quite firm that the status quo should be maintained. The middle-aged participants saw both the negative and positive impacts and suggested changes in some aspects while retaining some aspects of the current practices.

I took every step necessary to ensure the 50 participants were representatives of all the possible different viewpoints, experiences, opinions and stories in Tongan society. The selection of people who have had overseas experience was done on the assumption that their perceptions would have changed after staying overseas and adjusting to those different socio-cultural environments. All these factors were taken into account when deciding on what the characteristics of the 50 participants should look like.

The interview process was conducted in three phases. In the first phase I interviewed 40 participants. When I reached the 40th participant there no further new information was discovered. Some of the information given had already been given before, and there was an increasing amount of recurrence in the answers given. I was confident that I had reached the point of saturation. However, there were some key findings emerging which needed further investigation. This necessitated a second interview phase focussing on ten young participants. The purpose was to clarify, confirm, and interrogate the responses given by younger participants, which were in sharp contrast to some of the responses given by the older participants. While I was able to understand, interpret and translate the responses of the older participants, I

was not confident enough to try and interpret the responses of the younger participants without digging deeper into their world.

At the end of the second phase it was clearly confirmed that all of the young participants opted for a modification of the current practices. This prompted the need for a third interview to see whether Tongan leaders were ready for this change or not. In the third phase I interviewed church and government leaders as well as representatives from the Palace Office. This was held at the end of 2012.

4.4.6.2 Interview process

When I arrived in Tonga in December 2008, the first thing I did was to visit all my potential participants and inform them of my arrival and to arrange a time when they would be available to be interviewed. It was culturally appropriate that I had the first consultation face-to-face rather than sending them a letter of invitation. By going to them, I was indicating to my participants that they were important, respected and valued in this research. I made an effort to hold all interviews at the participant's residence, as that also gave them the comfort of their own place to express their true feelings, perceptions and experiences.

Once I confirmed the date and time for the interview I then prepared myself for the actual interview. Part of organising myself for the interview was to make sure my audiotape recorder was fully charged and a copy of the Participation Information Sheet (Appendix 2) and the Participant's Consent Form (Appendix 3) were available. I put all my interview resources in a big hand-bag before I left for my interview.

On arrival, I would always find out the right entry to the house before I entered. I would always ask from outside '*ko e fe matapa teu hu atu ai?*' or 'which door should I use to come in?' You do not just enter through any door as that could be considered disrespectful. Before entering the house, I would take off my shoes and place them properly on the door step. The participant, who would normally be surrounded by his/her family, would direct you where to sit and you were obliged to take that seat. These are protocols that must be observed when entering a Tongan family's house. If you know the participant well, then the engagement would start with catching up on familiar subjects before delving into the actual research interview. This whole interview process, including the cultural protocols, could easily take you over one hour per interview.

For all the 50 interviews I conducted, I used an audiotape recorder as the prime source for collecting the information. I had two audiotapes so that if one broke down I still had a spare one. The recordings were supported by field notes which I made during the interview. In my field notes I made a lot of references to the mood, emotion and behaviour of the participants during the interview which was not captured in the recorded interviews. This tacit information was critical in providing the context for the actual interview. While on the field, a Tongan secondary teacher assisted me in conducting these interviews, which was approved by the University of Auckland as part of the ethical approval granted. She had to sign a Confidentiality Agreement Form before she could participate in the interview exercise. Refer to Appendix 4 for the Confidentiality Agreement Form.

The interview was conducted in Tongan so the transcription was done in Tongan before it was translated into English. This has been a long process but it was an excellent method as it gave me the opportunity to listen, re-listen and re-read most of the key participants' responses. I was starting to analyse and draw themes from the data as I translated it. As part of respecting the privacy of the 50 participants I have given them pseudonyms using the word *maka* or rock. I think of the 50 participants as being the rock or foundation of this research, for it was their life stories, experiences and knowledge that help answer the questions raised by this thesis. Refer to Appendix 5 for the Code for Pseudonyms.

4.4.6.3 Duration of the interviews

As I mentioned earlier, I interviewed 50 participants using a semi-structured approach in order to gain an in-depth knowledge of my participants' experiences, knowledge, perspectives and viewpoints. Even though I had the question guide ready, I did not use it a lot because participants told their stories quite openly, willingly and in great length and detail. Some of the interviews took more than one hour and in a few cases they continued for two hours. Most of the old participants were keen to tell their stories and were willing to have a second interview if deemed necessary.

4.4.6.4 Audio recording and transcription

Audio recording was the main method of capturing the 50 interviews conducted during this research. Every participant was briefed on this method of recording and confidentiality was stressed. This was also made explicit in the participant information sheet and the consent form.

I transcribed all of the 50 interviews word for word. I then translated 40 of the interviews into the English language, and the remaining ten interviews were contracted out for translation. I had to peer-review this part of the translation before it was integrated into the rest of the translation. Transcription did not include overlaps, length of pauses, grunts, length of crying, etc.

4.4.6.5 Reciprocity

Perese (2009) pointed out that within Pacific research methodology it was appropriate that the participants are given a gift. In this context, I considered it appropriate that the participants' time and knowledge be acknowledged by giving them something in return. This was also in line with the *Makafetoli'aki* model, which is based on *fetokoni'aki* or reciprocity.

The timing of this gifting has to be considered carefully so that it does not influence the outcome of the actual interview. I thought it would be appropriate that at the end of the interview I give something back to the participants as a small token of thanks. Instead of a monetary offering, which was not permitted under the University's ethical requirements, I would give them a small item such as a bag of flour, sugar, rice or fruits. This was not expected and, I believe, did not have any impact on the information given by my participants.⁵⁰⁵¹

⁵⁰ One noble requested that he be interviewed at his work place as he did not have time after work due to his own personal commitments. In this situation, I considered it inappropriate to gift him at their work place and, as such, I decided to take a basket of fruits to his home which he really appreciated. The other noble was given a basket of fruits which was similar to what I did for other participants and the other noble.

⁵¹ I'd like to clarify that participants were grateful when I offered the small token of thanks at the end of our interview. However, I assumed they did not expect to get this small gift as I did not mention it at the beginning of the interview. I have explained above the reason why I did not want to inform them at the beginning of the interview.

4.5 Data analysis and dissemination

The purpose of data analysis is to reduce the data into meaningful constructs, paradigms, ideas and theories that best represent the experiences and understandings of the participants (Stage & Manning, 2003). Burns (1997) added that the purpose of analysing the data is to find meaning in the data, and this is done by systematically arranging and presenting the information. It has to be organised so that comparisons, contrasts and insights can be made and demonstrated (p. 432).

In analysing qualitative data, Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggested the following sequence, which I have adapted for this analysis: (i) Organising the data; (ii) immersion in the data; (iii) Generating categories and themes; (iv) Coding the data; (v) Reflection and interpretations; and (vi) Writing the report (p. 156).

4.5.1 Organising the data

One of the most challenging parts of this thesis was trying to organise the data collected in a meaningful way. I started by arranging the data so that I could derive some preliminary answers to the three thesis questions.

I had the option to either organise the data manually or to utilise one of the software programmes that analyse qualitative data. After much consideration, I decided it would be more efficient to use one of the software programmes available in the market, NVivo Version 9, to organise my data. As I had not used this software program before, I had to attend an introductory course offered by the University of Auckland twice in order to be able to use the programme professionally. My decision

to use NVivo reduced the time spent on organising, categorising and finding themes in the data quite substantially.

4.5.2 Immersion in the data

I started to familiarise or immerse myself in my raw data while doing my fieldwork through listening to the audiotapes, reading my field notes and starting to transcribe some of the interviews. I was keen to do this while in the field, in case I needed to follow up or clarify any emerging themes or issues with the participants. Immersing myself in the raw data at an early stage allowed me the opportunity to start picking up key categories and themes, which prepared me well for organising and categorising the data. It also gave me the opportunity to pick up unexpected or deviant responses. For example, through an early immersion in the raw data I was able to pick up the stark contrast between young and old participants' responses. While old participants embraced the current cultural practices, the young participants were quite strong in proposing a modification. This triggered a need to have a further enquiry into this contrasting situation to understand why this was the case. As a result, a second-phase interview focused on young participants to find out more on their reasons, perspectives and experiences to help interpret their responses.

Transcribing the data was quite a lengthy process because I had to transcribe them in the Tongan language and then translate them into English. However, this was, again, an opportunity to immerse myself in the raw data and start to draw patterns, themes, categories and key ideas from the data. I found transcribing and translating my raw data very effective in gaining an in-depth understanding and engagement

with the data. Due to time constraints, I contracted out the English translation of ten interviews.⁵² I compiled a total of 250 pages of text from the interviews of 50 participants, which included both the Tongan and English translations.

4.5.3 Generating categories and themes

The next key question I faced in the process of analysing the data was to find ways in which I could systematically categorise and establish themes from the huge amount of data I collected from field interviews, field notes and the various sessions of *pōtālanoa* or talking into the night I'd held with many Tongans in Tonga and in New Zealand. Kvale (1996) argued that:

Many field research projects have slowed to a halt because a novice researcher becomes overwhelmed by the quantity of information that has been collected. A 1-hour interview can generate 20-25 pages of single spaced text. Analysis is less daunting, however, if the researcher maintains a disciplined transcription schedule (p. 169).

I also brought with me my own experiences, knowledge and perceptions on the subject, which helped in how I organised the data. The main reason for pursuing this thesis emerged from my own life experiences and a desire to find an alternative for Tongans on how they could practice their culture and their religion. I also had pre-existing ideas, perspectives, experiences and general knowledge of the topic under investigation. In a way, I had a preconceived idea of the categories into which I wanted to fit the emerging data. According to Jones (2007), "this list may expand or change over time but the start list allows a faster, but less emergent beginning" (p. 67).

⁵² I was able to find a secondary teacher who teaches the Tongan language in one of the secondary schools in South Auckland to translate these 10 interviews into the English language. Her familiarity with my research and of the Tongan culture was a key criteria in contracting out this work to her. She also suggested some interpretations and insights into the data which really helped in the crystallisation of some of my concepts.

Ultimately, my objective was to find answers to the key questions raised by this thesis, which are summarised in Table 4.1 overleaf.

My existing knowledge, experiences and the literature review suggested that current cultural practices had a negative impact on Tongans' economic performance. In analysing the data I took both a deductive and inductive approach toward discovering, determining and confirming common themes, patterns and categories in the data. I took a deductive approach because I brought with me some ideas, perspectives and existing knowledge which I was expecting to see in the raw data. At the same time, I was looking out for new ideas, perspectives and experiences which I expected to draw from the raw data.

From the literature review pursued in Chapter 3, it was reassuring to see that some of the emerging categories and themes were already identified in earlier research work on Tongan culture. The findings from the current research highlighted both the negative and the positive impacts of cultural and church practices on Tongans' economic performance.

The young participants focused on the negative impact and the need to modify current practices whereas the old participants focused on the positive impact and the need to maintain the current practices. Middle-aged participants also referred to the negative social impact such as the tension between parents-children and wife-husband relationships because of a lot of cultural and church obligations. This became a separate category on its own in the data analysis and one which I did not expect to be

a significant issue among Tongans. The data was organised to reflect the different viewpoints presented by the different age groups in this study.

Table 4.1 Summary of the key categories and themes

	Cultural factors that influence Tongan economic decisions	Economic Impact (Positive/Negative)	Should some of the current cultural practices be modified?
Young participants	wanting to help parents pressure from parents and extended family feelings and behaviours of shame, jealousy, gossip and envy	mostly negative	yes
Middle-aged participants	mix wanting to help parents pressure from parents and extended family cultural values of reciprocity, sharing, respect and maintaining good relationships loyalty to their faith and the church	both negative and positive	yes in some areas and retention of current practices in other areas
Old participants	cultural values of reciprocity, sharing, respect, maintaining good relationships with others and social stance in community loyalty to their faith and the church	mostly positive	no

4.5.4 Using the NVivo software package for data categorisation

The use of NVivo software greatly speeded up the analysis of my raw data as it allowed for a systematic and efficient categorisation of the data. As Jones (2007) pointed out:

... the use of software for the purpose of qualitative analysis can provide tangible benefit. Appropriate software can shorten analysis timeframes, can provide more thorough and rigorous coding and interpretation, and provide researchers with enhanced data management (p. 66).

I totally agreed with Jones's statement above. As I was working full-time, was a full-time mother and was studying, time was of essence in this thesis. I had to find

ways to minimise the time I needed for the transcription, translation and categorising of the data and the use of NVivo served this purpose quite successfully.

Based on the categories defined in Table 4.1, I set up categories in the NVivo program that reflected this categorisation. I then imported the data directly from the individual interview transcripts, which was stored in a word document, to the relevant categories in NVivo. It was easier to create new categories or move data from one category to another when using the NVivo programme. This would have been a daunting and lengthy process if I had to pursue it manually.

After the first round of categorisation, it was clear that participants' responses had to be further categorised into different age groups because of the stark difference in young and old participants' responses. This was easily facilitated in NVivo. I also had to create further subcategories to take care of some of the new ideas and responses emerging from the data. Establishing these subcategories was facilitated by the 'parent' and 'child' categorising feature in NVivo. This process continued until the data was fully categorised.

4.5.5 Reflections and interpretations

Patton (2001) argued that the "researcher should offer interpretations of the data through attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations and drawing conclusions" (p. 480). This was a very important part of my research. Because of the new area of cultural modification being studied, it was important to ensure my understanding and interpretation of the data was accurate. I took a lot of time reflecting on the data, even in the late hours of the night

when it was quiet or when I was travelling, which allowed me greater insight into the data.

I also held a lot of *pōtālanoa* or informal conversations with many other Tongans and some of my participants to ensure my interpretations of the data were right. Some of my participants eventually moved here to New Zealand so I had the opportunity to *pōtālanoa* with them on a very regular basis. I was particularly keen to talk to young Tongans, as I wanted to make sure my conclusions reflected their views as well.

It was important for me to take time to reflect on the data to ensure all the pieces were pulled together before I could start telling the stories. These stories will be told in my family, church, community and the wider Tongan community both in Tonga and overseas. I will be speaking at church services, host seminars with extended families, and key organisations in Tonga and New Zealand as part of telling stories on the findings from this research.

4.5.6 Writing the report

I believe the writing process started when I took my field notes, as I was starting to jot down some of the key ideas and themes emerging from the data. These ideas and the way they were to be presented in the thesis were critical in determining the way the thesis was to be presented. In a way, the thesis-writing went hand in hand with the collection and analysis of the data.

I started by developing an outline of the whole thesis and determining the content, length and sequence of the argument. I started drafting each chapter by doing free writing under the various headings. I continued this free writing while reviewing

and rearranging the material to a point where a first draft of each chapter was starting to emerge. Once I completed the first draft of a chapter I submitted it individually for review by my supervisor. The supervisor's comments were incorporated into the text to establish a second draft which the supervisor reviewed before I generated the final draft.

4.5.7 Data dissemination

I have started to tell a story to my sons, daughters, extended family members, Tongan community and church leaders, Tongan New Zealand born youth and to my academic community about the key findings from this research. It is really heartening to know that most of the people I have talked to, especially the youth, feel ready for a cultural modification.

It is my mission to ensure the findings from this research will be communicated to the wider Tongan community via the church, *fono*, youth groups, women's development groups, town officers and to those who are influencers in the Tongan community. At the same time, I intend to disseminate the findings at government, regional and international levels. It is important that the voices of the Tongan people, as represented by the 50 participants, are heard at all decision-making levels.

Part of completing this thesis was to make a separate trip to Tonga at the end of 2012 to inform leaders of the key findings from this research and, at the same time, find out their willingness to support this proposed modification.

This thesis is calling for a communal approach to this proposed modification. As Perese (2009) correctly pointed out, a greater emphasis should be placed in *kainga/fāмили* interventions rather than focusing on individuals. This is crucial since *kainga* and close social networks are identified as playing an important role in the development and maintenance of cultural behaviour and can also be effective catalysts and supports for behavioural change.

4.6 Data quality

4.6.1 Triangulation

Duffy (1985) defined triangulation as the “use of multiple methods, theories, data and/or investigation in the study of a common phenomenon” (p. 130). She identified four types of triangulation: (i) theoretical triangulation; (ii) data triangulation; (iii) investigator triangulation; and (iv) methodological triangulation. Theoretical triangulation involves the use of several theoretical frameworks to analyse the same set of data. Data triangulation involves gathering data from a number of different data sources to shed light on a particular phenomenon. Investigator triangulation attempts to use a group of people in one study so that they could bring different views and interpretations and avoid bias in the research. Generic triangulation is the use of two or more methods to collect the data. It can use two forms: the qualitative and quantitative methods (Denzin, 1989; Duffy, 1985; Shank, 2002). I used methodological and data triangulations as part of ensuring that the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the data were achieved.

Shank (2002) defines triangulation as follows:

Triangulation is the process of converging on a particular finding by using different sorts of data and data-gathering strategies. Each set of data or strategy, on its own, might not be strong enough to support the finding. When these different “strands” are taken together, though, there is stronger evidence for the finding (p. 134).

My primary method of data collection was in-depth semi-structured interviewing of 50 participants. The initial interview was conducted with only 40 participants and then further investigation was pursued with a second round of interviews, involving ten additional young participants. This semi-structured interviewing was further triangulated by documentary research and participant observations. Furthermore, I organised two small case studies; one was the funeral of one of the old participants and the other was the wedding of one of the young participants. I also analysed church records, diaries and bank information to verify some of the information I gathered through the qualitative research. Taking a multi-method approach in this research has worked quite well in terms of verifying the accuracy of the data, which is also referred to as the process of triangulation. In addition, I used administrative data to verify some of the information gained during the interviews. Owing to the lack of recorded data on the subject under investigation, I felt it was certainly appropriate that triangulation was employed in ensuring the data collected was valid.

4.6.2 Limitations of Triangulation

It must be noted that using triangulation method has its own challenges and limitations. This method assumes that sets of data derived from different research

methods can be unambiguously compared and regarded as equivalent in terms of their capacity to address a research question. Such a view fails to take account of the different social circumstances associated with the administration of different research methods (Begley, 1996; Bryman, 2006; Denzin, 1970). In this research, I have used more than one qualitative research method, i.e. semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, case studies and participant observation. As Denzin (1970) pointed out, responses from participants can be influenced by the circumstances in which they are researched. For example, when donating to church *misinale*, there is a tendency for people to give more money if they are acknowledged publicly in front of the congregation. However, this amount could be lower if the donation was shielded in an envelope and handed directly to the church treasurer (Niumeitolu, 2007).

Secondly, this research has used quantitative data to try and verify information collected through qualitative research methodologies, and that has posed its own challenges and limitations as well (Bryman, 2006; Denzin, 1970). While participants were able to give an estimate of their contribution to church and cultural obligations, this could not be directly verified by quantitative data as there was no statistical information available on individual expenditures. This led to the use of household income and expenditure survey (HIES) data for Tonga (2009) to determine the average Tongan household's spending on cultural and church obligations. In this situation, the comparison is quite limited because the HIES provided data at an aggregated level whereas this research focused on individuals at a micro level. Moreover, the 50 participants surveyed in this research may have spending patterns that are totally

different from the Tongans who participated in the HIES. The HIES and this research were undertaken at different time periods. These were some of the limitations faced when trying to use triangulation to verify the data collected, and this must be taken into account when drawing conclusions from this research. As Morse (1991) pointed out, if not approached cautiously, the end result (of triangulation) may be to enhance the weakness of each method and invalidate the entire research project.

4.7 Conclusion

The research has taken a mixed method approach where the main research approach has been qualitative through intensive interviews, informal dialogues or *pōtālanoa* and participant observation. At the same time, a quantitative approach has also been used to quantify some of the qualitative data and to allow for some triangulation.

This thesis has also developed the *makafetoli'aki* research model, which is one of the key contributions this thesis has introduced to the current research on Pacific research methodologies. The principle of *makafetoli'aki* or reciprocity allows for an integration of western-based qualitative research methodologies with Pacific and Tongan research methodologies. It also reinforces the fact that the relationship between the researcher and participants is based on the principle of reciprocity. This methodology also allows the research to take a mixed method approach, where both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been used to analyse, quantify and triangulate some of the data.

The next chapter will report on the research findings, reflecting the views expressed by young, middle-aged and old participants based on the key questions raised in this thesis. While the old participants suggested a need to maintain the current practices, middle-aged and young participants advocated the need for a modification in the current practices by scaling them down. A *makafetoli'aki* modification approach is proposed as part of the conclusions drawn from the research findings.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the findings of my research work, which aimed to answer three key questions. They were as follows:

- (iv) What are the cultural values that significantly influence participants' economic decisions?
- (v) How have these cultural values and their practices impacted on participants' economic performance?
- (vi) How can some of these practices be modified so that Tongans can have more balanced cultural, social and economic lives?

This chapter is divided into eight main sections: (i) Introduction; (ii) Cultural factors influencing participants' economic behaviour; (iii) Economic impact; (iv) Social impact; (v) Proposal for a cultural modification; (vi) Challenges; (vii) *Makafetoli'aki* modification model; and (viii) Conclusion.

While the main focus of this research was on question (iii), it was important for me to delve into questions (i) and (ii) as part of grounding my argument that current practices of Tongan culture have an adverse impact on Tongans' economic performance and these need to be modified. It was an opportunity to revisit earlier research on the impact of Tongan cultural practices on Tongans' economic performance. These were discussed during the literature review (Bollard, 1974; Fisi'iahi, 2006; Prescott, 2009; Ritterbush, 1986; Sevele, 1973; Taylor, 2010).

Overall, the research revealed that Tongan cultural core values of *fetokoni'aki* or reciprocity, *fevahevahe'aki* or sharing, *faka'āpa'āpa* or respect, and *tauhi vā* or maintaining good relationships have a significant influence on Tongans' economic decisions. These

core values drive participants to commit a large share of their income, *koloa faka-Tonga* or mats and *tapas*, food and time toward fulfilling their cultural and church obligations. It also dictates the way they exchange some of their income, *koloa faka-Tonga* and food, especially during Tongan cultural ceremonies, such as weddings, birthdays and funerals.

Related to the above finding, the behaviour of *fakamā* or shame, *fesiosiofaki* or envy, *fakavahavaha'a* or competition and *ngutulau* or gossip, also influence how some of the participants behave. Similarly, some of the middle-aged and young participants responded that they are driven by undue expectations from their parents, extended family, church and the community to be involved in cultural and church obligations, despite their desire to stay out of such activities. These behaviours act as social sanctions which ensure everyone in the society adheres to the communal goals rather than their own individual goals (Hyden, 1983; Kalavite, 2010; Ritterbush, 1986).

The research findings also showed that church practices have a significant influence on participants' economic decisions. Their belief that God is the provider of everything they have leads many to direct a large amount of their income, *koloa faka-Tonga* and food toward church *misinale*, annual church conferences and the various other church activities taking place throughout the year.

In assessing the impact that culture and church practices have on participants' economic performance, different age groups had different views on the situation.⁵³

⁵³ For this thesis, I categorised the 50 participants into three main age groups: old participants were those aged 60 years and over; middle-aged participants were those aged 30-59 years; and young participants were those aged 18-29 years. This categorisation was adapted from the Department of Statistics, Tonga age grouping during the 2006 Census (TDoS, 2008).

The old participants emphasised the positive impact of the practices such as an informal welfare system and redistribution of wealth, and they recommended that the current practices should be maintained. The middle-aged and young participants emphasised both the positive and negative impacts such as the financial burdens placed on individual families. The young participants highlighted the negative impact. In a way, the views of the old participants represented the past, the middle-aged represented the current system, and the young participants indicated what future Tongans' cultural behaviour may look like.

Despite the different views they held on the economic impact of the current cultural practices, the 50 participants unanimously agreed that the Tongan cultural core values of *fetokoni'aki*, *fevahevahe'aki*, *faka'āpa'āpa* and *tauhi vā* should be maintained as they are what underpin the way Tongans live. It is how they are practiced that need to be changed. For example, middle-aged and young participants strongly recommended that some of the current practices of the Tongan culture during birthdays, weddings and funeral ceremonies should be scaled down.

5.2 Cultural factors influencing participants' economic behaviour

5.2.1 Fulfilling cultural obligations

The 50 participants identified fulfilling their cultural obligations as being one of the key factors influencing their economic decisions.

5.2.1.1 Old participants

The 13 old participants spent an average of 40 per cent⁵⁴ of their monetary income on fulfilling cultural obligations, such as contributions to birthdays, weddings and funerals in their extended families, community group or people from the same village. They also contributed *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and part of their time toward fulfilling these cultural obligations. Some of the core values that influenced old participants' decisions on how much they give toward cultural obligations included the culture of *fetokoni'aki*, *fevahevahe'aki*, *tauhi vā* or *faka'āpa'āpa*.

5.2.1.1.1 *Fetokoni'aki*

Nine of the 13 old participants reported that the main reason for fulfilling their cultural obligations was their culture of *fetokoni'aki* within the extended family, village and the various community groups of which they are a member. All of them believed that reciprocity is one of the key cultural cornerstones that hold the extended family, village and even Tongan society, therefore they must continue to practice it. By continuing to reciprocate, the ties within members of the extended family, village and even the wider community are strengthened. If the practice of this core value was removed, the extended family would start falling apart. One elderly participant made the following remark quite eloquently:

The practice of reciprocity is at the heart of every Tongan as they are born with it. It is not a culture that was recently introduced to the Tongan people but it

⁵⁴ One of the questions asked during the semi-structured interview was 'how much of your monetary income do you think you spend on cultural and church obligations a year?' This allowed the participant to give an estimate of how much they committed to cultural and church obligations as a share of the total money income they earn a year or of the money they received from their children in terms of the old participants. I then took the average of the estimate given by the thirteen participants to determine an average percentage of how much they give to cultural and church obligations. I have used the same method to calculate the percentage for the middle-aged and young participants.

was there as part of the original make-up of the Tongan people. Reciprocity is the root of the life of Tongans. Nothing is more important for a Tongan than to help each other. Non-Tongans find it weird that Tongans can easily give up their own wealth in order to help others ... This is what underpins the way Tongans live i.e. to help each other or reciprocate (*Maka 23*).

5.2.1.1.2 *Fevahevahe'aki*

Four of the 13 old participants mentioned *fevahevahe'aki* as one of the key reasons for fulfilling their cultural obligations. In their view, they did not expect anything in return from the recipients. They felt it was their obligation to help those who were less fortunate in their extended family or village. These participants helped out with things like clothes, school fees and food. One male participant shared how he looked after one of his sisters and her children whose husband had passed away. He was quite emotional as he made the following statement:

I live together with my sister who moved back when her husband died. I share everything that I have with my sister and her children and I do that to teach my children what to do in future. The bottom line of our culture is sharing. Sharing is what makes up our culture and this is driven by love. Without sharing or love, our culture and tradition will not survive (*Maka 21*).

Two elderly participants made the following statements:

Fevahevahe'aki is a way of life for me. Every time I can *fevahevahe'aki* what I have with someone else I feel so strong as if my energy has been renewed. The action of sharing brings joy to me. *Fevahevahe'aki* is like a treasure for me. Some Tongans even give their children to their sister or brothers and that is how much Tongans can share what they have (*Maka 23*).

When I get to think of our culture of sharing and its practices I believe it could be considered as a model of how we should live in our Tongan society. The culture of sharing is what holds our society together. Sharing allows those who are better off to share their wealth with those who are worse off. If we remove this culture of sharing then some people will be very rich and some will be very poor and there will be no mechanism available to allow for a redistribution of wealth between these people. If you give up sharing then it is like you are giving up the whole Tongan culture. It will just fall apart (*Maka 26*).

The old participants saw *fevahevahe'aki* and their practices as an essential element of the Tongan culture and you can't be a Tongan and not practice *fevahevahe'aki*.

5.2.1.1.3 *Tauhi vā*

Many of the old participants saw *tauhi vā* with others as their ultimate goal in fulfilling their cultural and church obligations. They believe *tauhi vā* is one of the cornerstones of the Tongan culture and this can only be maintained through fulfilling their obligation to others; members of their extended family, community leaders, nobility, royal family and others in the community.

Many of the old participants highlighted that a key part of their *tauhi vā* is *tauhi 'eiki* or maintaining their relationship with the nobles and the royal family. This includes taking the best yield of their plantation to the nobles or the royal family and contributing to various other village or extended families' obligations to the nobles, such as preparing a *pola* or table of cooked food during nobles' or a member of the royal family's birthdays or weddings. Old participants also highlighted how they also prepare for their respective noble's funeral if it happens. The following statements were made by some of the old participants:

You must be willing to fulfil your cultural obligations if you want to preserve your relationships with others. *Tauhi vā* must go hand in hand with *fetokoni'aki* and *fevahevahe'aki* and these are reflected in our willingness to fulfil our obligation. We saw our parents doing it and so we must do it. This way of life was there before Christianity was brought into Tonga. Again, I do not think any Tongan could maintain his relationship with others if he or she is not willing to fulfil his/her obligations. They must go together (*Maka* 23).

The strength of our culture is based on our relationships and how we take care of those relationships. Those relationships must be kept through fulfilling our various cultural obligations to our extended family, nobles, king and the wider community. It's very important that we look after our nobles and the royal family as that is what we have been doing as Tongans. That's how we can enhance those relationships and that is our social capital. It is like an investment where we keep those relationships strong and healthy by fulfilling our obligations (*Maka 25*).

5.2.1.1.4 Faka'āpa'āpa

Most of the old participants considered *faka'āpa'āpa* in terms of how they *tauhi vā* with others, especially with those that are superior to them such as the eldest child in the family, head of their extended family, chiefs or nobles in the village, members of the royal family, or anyone who holds a higher social status than them. In their view, fulfilling their cultural obligations to those superior to them symbolises their respect to those people. Two participants elaborated on the relationship between sisters and brothers, which is based on respecting each other, and how this is translated into certain cultural obligations between them. *Maka 19* and *Maka 22* said the following:

It is so obvious in our Tongan way of life how respect for certain members of the society is translated into certain responsibilities. For example, there is a very strong relationship between brothers and sisters based on respect. This respect is nourished through fulfilment of certain obligations between brothers and sisters. For example, during Christmas time, brothers are expected to take the first fruits from their garden to their sister as their way of showing their respect to their sisters. The sister in turn has to bring mats and *tapa* to the brothers as their way of showing their respect to their brothers (*Maka 19*).

The most important part of our culture is to know our place in the family. I am talking here about roles of brothers to sisters and vice versa ... To me I know that my sisters are to be treated with respect and they are the *fahu* of me and my children. They are given the best in all that we have and that is what should happen ... I know I have an obligation to them and I must fulfil those (*Maka 22*).

5.2.1.1.5 Status in the community and *tauhi'eiki* or maintaining relationships with nobles and members of the royal family

The old male participants indicated in their responses that they valued their status in the community quite highly and fulfilling their cultural obligations reinforces that privilege. The old participants saw *tauhi'eiki* as a critical part of ensuring that they maintain their status. For example, one elderly male participant said that he had been very sick for a while but he wanted his children to keep up with all his cultural obligations to his village noble to ensure no one took away his position in the community. Another participant discussed at length his cultural obligations, as a *matāpule* or talking chief, to the chief of his village as being part of reinforcing his position in the community. He made the following statement:

This is one of my passions to ensure I fulfil my cultural obligations as a *matāpule* to my chief. It was important for me to remind myself that once I was given the title I also had related obligations that I must fulfil. For example, I am expected to look after the noble of my village as part of my obligation. It is very important that I fulfil these obligations as part of ensuring I maintain my status in the community (*Maka 23*).

For the old participants the culture of *fetokoni'aki*, *fevahevahe'aki*, *faka'āpa'āpa*, *tauhi vā*, *tauhi'eiki* and maintaining their status in the community were significant in terms of fulfilling their cultural obligations. At the same time, they found a lot of self-satisfaction when fulfilling their obligations. As one elderly participant put it:

That is the desire of every Tongan to fulfil their obligations. Once you fulfil your obligation you feel so rewarded, stronger and happier that you totally forget about the cost of doing it. That is the kind of happiness you earn when you fulfil your obligation. Tongans don't think of fulfilling their obligation as a loss but rather they think of it as a blessing ... This is something that makes us Tongans so different; when we cannot fulfil our obligations we feel sad and sick. But when we are able to do them, oh what a joy! As a Tongan, I find great self-satisfaction in being able to fulfil my obligation whether it is to the church or my family (*Maka 24*).

5.2.1.2 Middle-aged participants

The 24 middle-aged participants spent an average of about 25 per cent of their income on cultural obligations. This was lower than what the old participants gave toward cultural obligations. Their cultural obligations included contributing to funerals, weddings and birthdays within the extended family, church, their own community group, and the village or town they lived in.

The reasons for middle-aged participants' commitments to various cultural obligations were mixed. Ten of the participants identified *fevahevahe'aki* as the main reason for their participation in various cultural activities. Eight participants identified *fevahevahe'aki*, *fetokoni'aki* and *faka'āpa'āpa* to their parents as the main reasons for fulfilling their cultural obligations. The remaining six participants pointed out that it was the pressures and expectations of their parents, church and their community that drew them into these activities. The other participant thought it was a mix of reasons which keep them involved in cultural activities. Other factors such as behaviours of *fakafalala* or dependency; *fakamā* or shame; and *fakavahavaha'a* or competition, also influenced middle-aged participants' decisions to fulfil their cultural obligations. There was also an element of wanting to maintain their stance in the community, which influenced some of them to continue participating in cultural activities.

5.2.1.2.1 *Fevahevahe'aki*

Ten of the participants identified *fevahevahe'aki* as the main reason for their participation in cultural activities. They felt it was their obligation to help those individuals and families who were less fortunate and did not have any regular income.

They did not expect anything in return from the recipients. For example, one middle-aged participant said that he felt it was his obligation to share his income with a family in his church who were struggling to meet their daily needs. The family's small income was too low to provide for the family's basic needs. He said:

When I hear people in my church not having food to eat I make sure I give part of my income to help them out. There was one family in my church that I always helped out because they didn't have much money to provide for their own needs. I prefer to give part of my income toward helping this family even if it means that our electricity or water was cut off (*Maka* 14).

5.2.1.2.2 *Fetokoni'aki and faka'āpa'āpa to their parents*

Eight of the middle-aged participants' *fetokoni'aki* was directed toward their parents. They thought it was very important that they looked after their parents and also helped fulfilled their obligations as part of reciprocating what their parents had done for them in the past. One middle-aged participant used the phrase '*he'ikai temau lava 'e mautilu 'o totongi homau mo'ua ki he'e mau matu'a'*, meaning 'we can't pay back our parents for what they have done for us in the past.'

Another middle-aged participant said:

To me what's most important is being able to look after my parents. I believe the Tongan culture values our relationship very much, such as looking after our parents, brothers looking after their sisters, and brothers and sisters looking after each other. I want to look after my parents because we [children] would not have achieved what we have today if it was not for our father (*Maka* 14).

Related to their *fetokoni'aki* with their parents was their willingness to *faka'āpa'āpa* to their parents. All of the middle-aged participants acknowledged that it was out of their *faka'āpa'āpa* to their parents that they wanted to continue fulfilling their cultural obligations within their extended family and community, otherwise they did not see the need to continue being involved in these activities. They saw these

obligations as belonging to their parents but they wanted to fulfil them out of their respect to their parents.

5.2.1.2.3 Expectations from parents, extended family and wider community

By contrast to the other middle-aged participants, six of them admitted that their only reason for fulfilling cultural obligations was because of pressures and expectations from their parents, the extended family and the community. They claimed that because they had a regular income their parents, the extended family and their own community expected a lot out of them. One middle-aged participant complained that her parents expected so much from her and yet her income could hardly cover her own family's basic needs. She said:

There is too much expectation on me from my parents and my extended family. Every time there is a birthday, wedding or funeral in our extended family my parents expect me to help them fulfil their obligations. However, I don't want to keep helping them fulfil their obligations. I would rather focus my energy and my income on my own children (*Maka 27*).

Another middle-aged participant explained how her husband's grandparents expected them to attend every cultural event in their extended family even if it was distant relatives. She made the following comment:

While my husband's grandparents are still alive we are expected to fulfil cultural obligations quite elaborately even if they are distant relatives. They want to make sure we still keep our relationship with distant relatives. Every time there is a funeral, wedding or birthday in the extended family the grandparents expect all of the grandchildren with income to contribute. This puts a lot of financial pressure on our immediate family (*Maka 6*).

5.2.1.2.4 Behaviour of fakafalala

Five of the middle-aged participants pointed out that many of their relatives were dependent on family members' reciprocity for almost everything they needed. In

conversing with some of the Tongans in Auckland, who send money to their relatives in Tonga, they complained that relatives in Tonga did not realise how difficult it was to make a living in New Zealand and how they had to sacrifice a lot in order to meet relatives' demands from Tonga. Sometimes they could not afford to pay their weekly rent or mortgage because they had to send money to Tonga. One middle-aged participant highlighted this behaviour of dependency:

There were a lot of people who are free riders [in our culture] ... There are those people who work hard and those who are lazy and are dependent on others for their income. Like for example, there is a lot of remittance sent to Tonga to support family members. These people do not realise how difficult it is to find a job overseas these days. This kind of dependency and free ride can cost families a lot (*Maka 2*).

5.2.1.2.5 Maintaining status in the community

Three middle-aged participants stated that they also enjoyed building and maintaining good status in the community. They did this by being involved in their own village, community or extended family's activities. For example, one of the participants was a treasurer in a community development group and another one was a secretary in her development group. These participants held good jobs in government and their respective communities looked to them to contribute in running their own activities. These participants expressed great satisfaction from involvement in these types of activities.

5.2.1.3 Young participants

The 13 young participants only spent an average of five per cent on cultural obligations, which they thought was too much for them. This amount was much lower than the middle-aged and old participants' commitments to cultural activities. Eight

young participants gave their reason for fulfilling cultural obligations as their way of *fetokoni'aki* and *faka'āpa'āpa* to their parents. On the other hand, five young participants gave their reason for fulfilling cultural obligations as being driven by pressures and expectations from parents, extended families and the wider community.

5.2.1.3.1 Fetokoni'aki and faka'āpa'āpa to their parents

Eight of the 13 young participants saw their contribution to any cultural obligations as part of reciprocating and respecting their parents rather than the extended family. None of them felt they had any obligations to their extended family, church or the wider community. All they wanted was to help their parents fulfil their obligations. One participant reported that sometimes he was quite reluctant to participate in some of his extended family's cultural activities, but out of his respect to his parents he still continued to help out with these activities. Once his parents died he would stop doing all these things as it cost him and his family a lot of money.

5.2.1.3.2 Expectations of parents, extended family and the community

Five young participants expressed frustrations over their parents' unrealistic expectations of them. These participants said that their parents put undue pressure on them to contribute to cultural activities such as birthdays, weddings and funerals. One young participant explained that sometimes she had to sacrifice meeting her own immediate family's basic needs because of undue expectations from her parents.

All of the young participants openly discussed how these cultural obligations placed a lot of financial pressures on them and their own immediate families. They were quite adamant that cultural practices needed to be managed properly or scaled

down, otherwise many families would end up with a lot of debt, including their own families. One young participant expressed her frustration by saying “*oku hange kavenga ia ha tahi*” or cultural obligations are as big as the ocean. Another young participant used the phrase “*oku hange ‘a e kavenga ia ha mosimosi*” or obligations fall on us like rain.

5.2.1.3.3 Behaviours of *fesiosiofaki*, *fakavahava’a*, *fakamā* and *ngutulau*

All of the young female participants mentioned that part of the reasons for continuing to participate in cultural activities was the behaviours of *fakamā* and *ngutulau*. They knew that people would start *ngutulau* about them if they did not participate in cultural activities. That makes them *fakamā*. The behaviours of *fakamā* and *ngutulau* tend to put pressure on young participants to continue with some of cultural activities. This is like a social sanction which automatically influences young participants to adhere to the current cultural practices.

5.2.2 Fulfilling church obligations

Fulfilling church obligations was also a key factor in determining participants’ economic decisions, though the old participants placed higher priority on their church obligations than the middle-aged and young participants.

5.2.2.1 Old participants

All of the 13 old participants spent an average of 40 per cent of their monetary income on church obligations, very similar to the amount they spent on cultural obligations. Their two main church obligations were *misinale* and *ngaahi pola konifelenisi*. All of the 13 participants considered meeting their church obligations as

their way of acknowledging God's love for them and their children. They believed that their material gains, including the success of their children, were a reflection of God's love to them. They saw their contribution to church activities as their way of thanking God for his love to them. Even with what they gave they thought that was not enough. One old participant said, "What I give back to the church is only a minor fraction of God's love to me and my family." The following statement reflects how the old participants viewed their commitment to their church obligations:

Whatever we have we give them all to God through the church. We do not leave anything behind. We give to the church in a lot of ways such as giving money, food and whatever else we have. There is a lot of joy when we give to the church as that is where we get our blessing from. Whenever we ask God for help he always gives us the best of everything (*Maka 21*).

The old participants also found self-satisfaction in fulfilling their church obligations. As one old participant said:

Though we don't have much in our family it meant a lot to me when I could fulfil my obligation to the church, such as during the annual *misinale* and the annual church conference. On that day, it's like I am a millionaire and I always noticed that there is a lot of joy rather than thinking of our own financial situation. After I fulfil my church obligations I tend to forget about everything (*Maka 11*).

5.2.2.2 Middle-aged participants

The middle-aged participants spent an average of 25 per cent on church obligations, which was very similar to the amount they spent on cultural obligations. However, this amount is much lower compared to the amount given by old participants to church obligations. Some of the reasons for their involvement with the church were similar to the old participants. They wanted to acknowledge God's love to

them by giving back to the church or to needy families in their community. One participant made the following statement:

We help people knowing God will return or replace the amount we give out of love. God returns those expenses in a different way ... I give and I know it's a blessing for me to have that faith and that is an underpinning reason for my giving is my faith. I know God has first loved me and I have no doubt of the importance that I love other people, especially those in need (*Maka* 14).

Ten of the middle-aged participants also mentioned that they were helping out with their parents' obligations to their local church, such as preparing food for the church annual conference and donating toward their *misinale*.

5.2.2.3 Young participants

The 13 young participants gave the same reasons for fulfilling their church obligations as for fulfilling their cultural obligations. For example, it was their willingness to help and respect their parents that drove them to continue contributing to cultural and church obligations. For others, they claimed it was pressures and expectations from parents, extended families and the wider community that caused them to continue with the church activities. They were also influenced by the fact that they would be embarrassed or gossiped about if it were found out that they no longer made any church contributions.

The amount that the youth contributed to church obligations through their parents was quite minimal and it varied greatly among participants. One participant estimated that he gave only 5 per cent to church obligations. One young participant said he gave some money to his parents maybe once a year to help with their church *misinale*, but it was quite irregular and there was no set amount he had to give. Overall, it was very minimal compared to the middle-aged and old participants.

The above analysis shows how cultural and church practices significantly influence Tongans' economic decisions. The report clearly demonstrates how different age groups have contrasting views on current cultural and church practices. While the old participants want to maintain the status quo, the middle-aged and young participants are keen to see changes to some of the current practices. The responses given by the young participants reflect the tension and frustration most young Tongans are experiencing in trying to fulfil cultural and church obligations as driven by their culture and meeting the financial demands of a money-driven economy. The next section will report on the impact these cultural and church practices have on participants' economic performance.

5.3 Economic impact

The research revealed that Tongan cultural and church practices do have an impact on participants' economic performance, both positively and negatively.

5.3.1 Positive impact

The old participants only saw the positive impact of cultural and church practices. The middle-aged participants saw both the negative and positive impacts. The young participants only reported the negative impact.

5.3.1.1 Old and middle-aged participants

All of the old participants and 12 of the middle-aged participants reported on the positive impact of the current cultural and church practices as summarised below.

5.3.1.1.1 Reciprocity as a socio-economic security system

Twenty-five participants (13 old and 12 middle-aged participants) directly acknowledged how the practices of *fetokoni'aki* and *fevahevahe'aki* created a stable

security system within the extended family, village and the wider Tongan community. These participants highlighted how they benefitted from this system, especially during birthdays, weddings and funeral ceremonies. They viewed their practices of *fetokoni'aki* and *fevahevahe'aki* as investment in this security system.

One participant summed this up nicely:

I always try to attend birthdays, weddings and funerals and when you attend those ceremonies and take with you your donation that is your investment. Investment in the bank is a western idea. The Tongan definition of investment is when you invest in your extended families, community, church, friends and village. You know that they will reciprocate this when your turn comes (*Maka 40*).

One participant explained how his father died unexpectedly and how the system of reciprocity generated a lot of money, *koloa faka-Tonga* and food to help with his father's funeral. He emotionally said:

When I received a message from my island, *Nomuka*, that my father died I had nothing at all to pay for his funeral. To make it worse, this happened on a Sunday morning and I could not go to the bank to make a loan. However, I was quite moved with what I saw. From the moment I received the message to the time when I had to travel to *Nomuka* I already collected over three thousand *pa'anga*, a lot of *koloa faka-Tonga* and food which my extended family, colleagues and church members generously donated. I would never forget this situation and how I benefitted from the system of reciprocity during my father's funeral (*Maka 39*).

At one of the funerals I attended I was informed that the estimated cost of the funeral was 60,000 *pa'anga*.⁵⁵ Most of the expenditure was on *koloa faka-Tonga* and food. The bereaved family estimated that the children met about 70 per cent of the cost and the other 30 per cent were donations from members of the extended family, church,

⁵⁵ As one of my small case studies, the family allowed me to collect data during this funeral. The second daughter of the deceased participant was responsible for all the financial matters during the funeral. I was given permission to collect data during the funeral. The estimate given was a very conservative one because it was based on what was recorded and known to her.

village, friends and relatives. These donations were either in the form of money, *koloa faka-Tonga* or food. At one of the participant's wedding, I was informed that the total expenditure of the bride alone was estimated at around 50,000 *pa'anga*. Table 5.1 below shows the major expenditure and how it was financed. The table shows that about 10,000 *pa'anga* or 20 per cent of the cost was met by contributions from extended family, church members, friends and others. The immediate family of the bride met the other 80 per cent. These are examples of how the system of reciprocity works for many Tongans especially during birthdays, weddings, funerals and any other life milestones such as graduation from university or high school.

Table 5.1: Estimated cost of a participant's wedding⁵⁶ (TOP)

Items	Estimated Cost
Expenditure	
<i>Koloa faka-Tonga</i>	15,000
Food	15,000
Furniture and Bedding	7,500
Other	12,500
Total	50,000
Source of Finance	
Bride	15,000
Brothers	15,000
Parents	10,000
Extended family, church members & others	10,000
Total	50,000

⁵⁶I was given permission by the parents of the bride to collect data during this wedding as one of two small case studies. The information collected was based on a discussion with the parents, bride, members of the extended family and my own observation. I was allowed to collect data right through the wedding procedure from the *fakalēlea* to the *'ave 'o e 'api*. I was also given the opportunity to present the bride's *koloa faka-Tonga*.

5.3.1.1.2 Redistribution of wealth

The research confirmed that the culture of reciprocity and sharing tends to allow for a substantial redistribution of wealth among members of the extended family, church, village and the wider community. This wealth redistribution is channelled through the various cultural and church activities that take place throughout the year, such as birthdays, weddings, funerals, annual church donations, and conferences.

During these ceremonies there were people who donated money, food or *koloa faka-Tonga*. At the same time, there were people who, due to their cultural position in that particular ceremony, received money, *koloa faka-Tonga* and food. Recipients were usually the *fahu*, *faifekau* and the *hou'eiki* or the royal family if they were present. Most of the participants have either contributed to or benefitted from money, food and *koloa faka-Tonga* being exchanged during these ceremonies. The *fahu* of the ceremony and the reverend minister, for example, received the most *koloa faka-Tonga*, money and food during these ceremonies. In one of the funerals I attended, the *fahu* was presented with *koloa faka-Tonga*, money and food.⁵⁷ Table 5.2 overleaf shows these presentations. Other people received money, *koloa faka-Tonga* and food during these ceremonies, but usually it was the *fahu* and the *faifekau* that received the most.

The research revealed that the culture of *fevahevahe'aki* encouraged income redistribution from higher income earners to low income families. One participant, a Tongan businessman, directed a large part of his business's profit toward helping low

⁵⁷ This particular funeral was one of my two small case studies.

income families in the outer-islands. He explained that this was part of his cultural upbringing to help others. The research also disclosed that there was a major transfer of resources and wealth from the individual families to the church. In one church in Tonga, the members' annual *misinale* or annual collection was estimated at one million *pa'anga*⁵⁸ in one year. All of the fifty participants stated that they were making some contribution to the church, through direct cash donation, or through provision of food, or their time helping out with some of the church activities. One participant noted that one year her immediate family put 20,000 *pa'anga* toward their church annual *misinale* in remembrance of her father-in-law. Many local church buildings were funded by members' donations and fund raising.

The findings also showed that there is a strong redistribution of wealth from Tongans overseas to relatives in Tonga through remittance. Participants who had children overseas proudly alluded to how their children sent money on a very regular basis. For some of the old participants, remittance was their only source of income. One old participant estimated that on a monthly basis he received 500 *pa'anga* from his three children overseas. He used this money to pay for food, clothes and other needs of his family. He also received extra money for his *ngaahi pola konifelenisi* during the May church conference and his annual *misinale* in November of every year.

⁵⁸This figure was given by the Tokaikolo Christian Church, Tofoa, Tongatapu as the total amount of *misinale* they collected in one year, though this is much higher than the normal annual *misinale*. On average, the church would collect half a million *pa'anga* during their annual *misinale*.

**Table 5.2 Estimated cost of participant's funeral presentations
to the *fahu* and *faifekau* (TOP)⁵⁹**

Item	Cost
Presentation to the <i>fahu</i>	
<i>Ngatu launima pepa</i> or <i>tapa</i> lined with cloth (50ft.)	1,000
<i>Fala fihu uangokumi</i> or two layer white fine mat (20ft.)	1,000
<i>Fihu fatufa</i> or one layer white fine mat (40ft.)	1,000
<i>Feta'u palangi</i> or white material to cover the coffin	600
Monetary gift	1,000
<i>Kato teu</i> or ornamental basket	300
<i>Puaka toho</i> or large pig	1,000
<i>Ngatu ngatu</i> or <i>tapa</i> lined with <i>tapa</i> (10ft.)	500
Total	6,400
Presentation to the <i>faifekau</i>	
<i>Ngatu pepa</i> or <i>tapa</i> lined with cloth (50ft.)	1,000
<i>Fala uangokumi</i> or fine mat (20ft.)	800
<i>Kato teu</i> or ornamental basket	300
<i>Konga kie</i> or piece of white mat (4ft.)	100
Monetary gift	200
Total	2,400

5.3.1.1.3 Market opportunities for local production

Ten of the old participants and 12 of the middle-aged participants pointed out that these cultural and church ceremonies created a big market for traditional Tongan food such as yams, Tongan taro, kape, kava Tonga, sea food and pigs. *Puaka tunu* or roast piglet is the most important traditional Tongan dish and it is a must to have a *puaka tunu* in any *ngaahi pola* or Tongan feast. Participants pointed out that in a typical Tongan birthday or wedding ceremony the hosting family could buy up to 50 roast

⁵⁹ With the permission of the children of the deceased participant, I was able to collect this information during the funeral. I attended the funeral in Tonga which went on for two weeks but I was able to stay for only five days due to work and family commitments back in New Zealand. I collected the information through direct interviews with the eldest daughter, members of the extended family, the church minister who conducted the funeral and my own observation. This was my second small case study.

piglets, depending on the number of guests.⁶⁰ Large-size pigs were also required for cultural presentations during Tongan cultural ceremonies. The market price for a small size piglet is around 150 *pa'anga* and for the large size pig it is currently averaged at 1,000 *pa'anga*.⁶¹

In terms of *koloa faka-Tonga*, the high volume of cultural ceremonies both in Tonga and overseas has created a huge demand for *koloa faka-Tonga* throughout the year. This has created a big market for the production of *koloa faka-Tonga* especially in rural areas and the outer islands of Ha'apai, Vava'u and the Niuas. Numerous weaving and *tapa* making women's groups have been established throughout Tonga to cater for these demands.

The chairperson of one of the weaving groups in Vava'u confirmed that there were 12 women in her group, mainly mothers, who did weaving for a living. She estimated that in a year the group could produce up to 30,000 *pa'anga* worth of fine mats at an average of 2,500 *pa'anga* worth of fine mats per month.⁶² One member of the weaving group could earn up to 2,500 *pa'anga* per year. This is a very reasonable amount of income to meet the family's basic needs such as food, clothes, education, electricity and water supply in the islands and rural areas of Tonga. This was

⁶⁰Churches in Tonga have many birthday and wedding ceremonies held at their church hall. Through observation and talking to the staff at their respective offices this is the average amount of small piglets seen in these events. An average good small-size piglet in Tonga is estimated at 150 *pa'anga*. Therefore, for a feast with 30 piglets this would cost up to 4,500 *pa'anga*. In New Zealand a similar good small-size piglet is on average 200 dollars.

⁶¹ This is based on talking to some of the people who sell pigs in Nuku'alofa, Tonga and also from family members who have had cultural ceremonies during the period of this study.

⁶²I was privileged to work with one of the weaving groups in Vava'u for the production of my own fine mats. The chairperson informed me that her weaving group could produce one *fala paongo tolungokumi* and one *fala paongo uangokumi* a month. The *fala paongo tolungokumi* (30ft) is worth 1,500 *pa'anga*; *fala paongo uangokumi* (20ft) is worth 800 *pa'anga* and the *fala paongo tahanima* (15ft) is worth 600 *pa'anga*. The price offered by this group is the average market price in Tonga for these *koloa faka-Tonga*, which I have already provided in Chapter 3.

confirmed by one of the key informants who said that in 2010 and 2011 she bought over 10,000 *pa'anga* worth of fine mats from this group. She was planning on buying more fine mats in 2012 for her daughter's wedding in the late part of 2013.

The production of *tapa* cloth is also a big industry in Tonga given the huge demand for *tapa* from Tongans in Tonga and overseas. One *tapa* making group⁶³ had up to 30 members and in a year they could produce up to one 130 *ngatu launima*. These women kept only a few of these *ngatu launima* but sold most of them as a source of income. One *ngatu launima* could yield up to 1,500 *pa'anga* in the local market.⁶⁴ Making and selling fine mats and *tapa* has been a major source of income for many women in the rural areas. Local farmers and fishermen also make regular income through growing traditional root crops, farming piglets, and fishing to cater for the numerous cultural and church activities taking place throughout the year.

5.3.1.2 Middle-aged participants

Twelve of the middle-aged participants reported some of the positive impact of the current cultural and church practices, which have been reported above. However, 12 participants reported only the negative impact, which I will discuss in the next section.

5.3.1.3 Young participants

None of the 13 young participants mentioned that the current cultural and church practices had any direct positive impact on them. They either heard these

⁶³A *tapa* making group based in the village of *Tofoa* was able to share some of the information about their group with me. There were about 30 members in this group and they could produce up to twelve 50 ft *tapa* cloth or *launima* a month. This means that in a year the group could produce up to 130 *ngatu launima* a year.

⁶⁴Refer to the price list provided in Chapter 3.

benefits being discussed by their parents or by their extended family. Even if they were aware of the benefits, they were unsure how they exactly benefitted them. However, they readily reported on the negative impact of the practices in a similar way to those expressed by the 12 middle-aged participants, which I will discuss in the next section.

5.3.2 Negative impact

As I have explained above, twelve of the middle-aged participants and all of the young participants reported the negative impact of cultural and church practices on their economic performance. These included the undue financial pressure on individuals and families, a lower standard of living, the lack of any proper savings for future economic development, loss of business profit, food wastage during Tongan feasts, and time not being efficiently used. There was also over-reliance on the system of reciprocity by many people, thus placing a lot of expectation on others.

5.3.2.1 Old participants

None of the 13 old participants identified any negative impact of cultural and church practices on their economic performance. As I mentioned above, they only saw the benefits of the current practices.

5.3.2.2 Middle-aged and young participants

5.3.2.2.1 Undue financial burden

Twelve, or 50 per cent, of the middle-aged participants and all of the young participants pointed out that the amount of cultural commitments they had to fulfil far outweighed their income and, most of the time, they had to take a personal loan or find means of getting the money to finance these obligations. This put a lot of financial

burden on families and individuals, to the point that some of them had to forego their own basic needs just to fulfil their obligations. Two of the middle-aged participants said:

I estimated that over half of my salary goes toward fulfilling church and cultural obligations. I know this because all I do during the year is paying off debts made in order to finance various cultural obligations. There are just too many cultural obligations for me to afford. For example, if we have a funeral this week I will have to get something to take there and before that debt is paid off the next funeral comes and you have to find something for that. It is like a continuous event where you borrow all the time to finance cultural obligations (*Maka 16*).

My cultural obligations can sometimes exceed my spare income so I have to borrow from the bank to finance these various obligations. That is one thing about the bank's lending policy that they make it easy for us to borrow money to finance these types of activities (*Maka 10*).

One middle-aged participant admitted that she gave over 80 per cent of her income to her parents' church obligations (*Maka 32*). Another middle-aged participant explained a situation where she had to borrow 20,000 *pa'anga* to give during the annual *misinale* in remembrance of her late father-in-law (*Maka 20*).

Another middle-aged participant said:

A lot of times I just can't meet my family's own basic needs because of all the cultural obligations I am expected to help out with ... My family are living in the outer-island and all they do every year is to call me for their *misinale* and what I do is to borrow, borrow and borrow ... To me there is a lot of financial expectation on me and I have to sacrifice my family's need in order to meet all these obligations (*Maka 27*).

There were also participants who admitted that the church environment also encouraged this behaviour of spending more than you could afford, especially during the annual *misinale* or annual collection. They felt they were always under pressure to

put more into the church *misinale* every year, especially if you had a good income or ran a business. As one participant said:

Once the church knows of a member with good income or is running a business it will make sure this person has a special position in the church such as getting a front seat during *kai pola* or feasting. This creates an expectation or puts pressure on the individual to give more to the church which could also affect his/her business or job. Some individuals have gone as far as writing false cheques or stealing money from his/her work in order to meet these expectations and others have lost their business (*Maka 2*).

Many middle-aged participants admitted that sometimes they were behind paying some of their bills such as electricity, water and phone. This was due to their commitments to cultural and church obligations. One participant said:

My culture meant that when I get my pay I will try and fulfil my obligation first and anything left after that would be directed toward meeting my family's needs. It gets to a point where our water supply and electricity are both cut off but it is more important for me that my obligation is met first (*Maka 14*).

5.3.2.2.2 Lower standard of living

All of the middle-aged female participants expressed great concern about how they had to sacrifice some of their children's basic needs such as a proper school uniforms, school fees or a visit to the doctor just to fulfil some of their cultural obligations. A male participant observed how children had to leave school early and work to support the parents meeting their cultural and church obligations. He said:

Parents try and push their children to leave school early and find a job so that they could earn money to help meet the family's cultural obligations rather than improving their own family's living standard ... Our culture certainly impacted our children's education and family's living standard because we put too much emphasis on cultural obligations and very little on trying to improve our own family's living standard ... It is very important that we balance our cultural obligation with our own family's economic development. This is quite important at this point in time (*Maka 2*).

5.3.2.2.3 Lower profitability for Tongan-owned businesses

The research clearly showed that the profitability of Tongan-owned businesses was affected by an owner's cultural and church obligations. Five participants in this research were business owners and they all explained how they struggled trying to balance their cultural obligations and maintain the profitability of their business.

One of the business owners said:

I would say that half of the profit from my business goes to my various obligations to the church, community and my extended family ... Our culture is very strong and cultural obligations happen on a daily basis and we ended up touching the business money in order to pay for these obligations. It is very hard trying to make profit for my business when I have all these cultural obligations to fulfil (*Maka 9*).

Tongan culture also has an impact on businesses in terms of finding staff. The tendency is to employ relatives or people from the same village even if they do not have the right skills. One participant explained how his Tongan mother, who married a European man, used to bring her own relatives to work for their small business despite not having the right skills or experience:

My mom wanted to employ all her relatives so that they can earn a living through our family business. Her husband, a New Zealand man, finally gave in to my mom's request and started to train Tongans who were our relatives to work in this business. The business was like a training institute for the workers because many of them did not have the qualification or the experience but they were my mom's relatives and that is the main reason for their being employed (*Maka 4*).

These inexperienced workers get paid the minimum wage in Tonga, but it cost the business a lot of money to train them to be able to produce the output. This is a great loss to many Tongan businesses, and while this business is still running there was no expansion or further development from where it was 30 years ago.

5.3.2.2.4 Lack of savings or future financial planning

Heavy commitments to cultural and church obligations and reliance on the system of reciprocity meant that many participants had no proper savings or investments in the bank. Out of the 50 participants, only five people said they had any proper savings in the bank.⁶⁵ Some participants had savings but they were part of an extended family's *pa'anga faka-fāмили* or extended family pooled fund. Even participants with well-paid jobs admitted they did not have any savings at all. One of the most highly paid civil servants in Tonga said:

In the last two years I have worked as a consultant for the US Aid and my monthly salary averages at 9,000 US dollars or 16,000 *pa'anga*. Do you think I have any savings in the bank? None ... After I get paid I basically spend that money. Not that I spent it on doing up our house. I spend it on fulfilling my obligations and I don't have any savings. I believe the money I get is there to fulfil my obligations. Money is only a means to an end (*Maka* 25).

Lack of proper savings could sometimes lead to heavy reliance on a family's donations, especially when an unforeseen situation such as a funeral emerged, or borrowings. Lack of savings also led to a lack of opportunities for families to invest in higher education for their children, better housing conditions, better health care or expansion of their own businesses. Participants consumed all their income or profit from their business with very little left for any further or long term economic development.

⁶⁵Savings means money being put in the bank as saving or investment and is earning interest and would be drawn upon at a future date. This is different from money put in the bank for short term expenses.

5.3.2.2.5 Inefficient use of an individual's time

All of the female middle-aged participants expressed concern over the time spent on cultural and church obligations. As mentioned earlier, Tongan ceremonies are usually for days and weeks. These include attending birthdays, weddings, funerals, fund raising, church activities and many other communal activities. These participants reported how they sometimes did not have time to help their children with their homework, or even take them to their sports activities or more regular visits to the doctor because of all these cultural commitments.

Five of the middle-aged participants, with full-time jobs, highlighted the time taken off work to attend cultural and church obligations. They reminded me that a typical Tongan funeral could take up to two weeks for all the cultural and religious protocol to be completed. However, a funeral of a noble or a member of the royal family would take even longer. One participant, who is a senior government official, said:

While there is no written regulation within government about time away on cultural obligations there are times when you have no choice but to leave work because of various cultural obligations. For example, yesterday there was a wedding and I had no choice but to leave work to attend and that was after I had to take time off from work because of a funeral (*Maka 5*).

Inefficient use of time through lengthy cultural ceremonies and church activities needs to be managed by Tongans, especially as it impacts upon their children and even their paid job.

5.3.2.2.6 Wasteful use of resources

Five middle-aged female participants also alluded to the excessive amount of food prepared during cultural ceremonies. It is culturally appropriate to prepare a lot

of food during these ceremonies. However, participants were concerned with the amount of money they spent buying food and which was then wasted because people did not finish eating it. One middle-aged participant said:

I think that these Tongan celebrations of weddings, birthdays, etc. is all about spending and wasting money and food and nothing to help the couple or the birthday person. All you end up doing is spending a lot of money to prepare a lot of food to feed people and sometimes you ended up wasting a lot of these foods because people never finish them. This does not really helping the wedding couple, birthday person or the bereaved family (*Maka* 15).

A nurse participant reminded me that Tongan feasting aggravated the issue of the high level of diabetes, obesity and heart problems among Tongans. She informed me that the Ministry of Health has a special Tongan language program promoting eating healthily. This program is targeted toward Tongans because of the excessive amount of food available during church and cultural activities. Many participants were quite conscious of this situation and strongly recommended that the amount of food prepared for cultural ceremonies should be reduced greatly.

5.3.2.2.7 High price of koloa faka-Tonga

The high cultural value of the *koloa faka-Tonga* such as *tapa* and fine mats meant they yielded very high prices in the market. For example, a *fala nimangokumi* or 50 feet of fine mat could cost up to 5,000 *pa'anga*. This means that many Tongan families had to secure big personal loans in order to purchase fine mats and *tapa* as they are core parts of Tongan formal ceremonies. One ceremony could cost up to 25,000 *pa'anga* just on Tongan *tapa* and fine mats.⁶⁶ Many of the female participants admitted that *koloa*

⁶⁶In a conversation with one Tongan family who was to have their eldest daughter's birthday in August 2013, the parents estimated that they would need: 7.x.50ft *tapa* lined with cloth (7,000 *pa'anga*); 7.x.40ft one layer white fine mat (7,000 *pa'anga*); 1.x.100ft one layer white fine mat (3,500 *pa'anga*); 1.x.30ft double layer white fine mat (1,500 *pa'anga*); 7.x.15ft fine mat (4,500

faka-Tonga is quite expensive and when they had a ceremony in the family they normally had to take out a big loan to buy these *koloa faka-Tonga*. For example, one participant confirmed that she spent over 15,000 *pa'anga* buying *koloa faka-Tonga* for the funeral of her father.⁶⁷

In a personal communication she said:

According to the record we kept – from the 18th to the 28th of April, the expenditure was estimated as follows: food (11,330 *pa'anga*); *koloa faka-Tonga* (15,000 *pa'anga*) or more; and other items it was over the 10,000 *pa'anga* mark. However, funeral costs varied depending on the time of the funeral, place of the funeral, size of the community and the family of the deceased. Hope this will give you a slight idea to what dad's funeral cost (Personal communication from Rev. Lavingi Tupou on August 28, 2012).

The cultural value of *koloa faka-Tonga* means that their market price keeps rising quite rapidly to a very high level. As the examples above demonstrate, *koloa faka-Tonga* costs many families a lot of money, and often they have to take out a loan to buy these *koloa faka-Tonga*. The high market value and marketability of *koloa faka-Tonga* is evidenced in Tongan-owned finance companies using them as collateral for personal loans.

The research revealed that there was also a significant social impact, especially on relationships among immediate family members, such as wife and husband, parents and children and among those children which I feel needed to be reported here. Though this is not the focus of this thesis, I felt compelled to report on this finding as part of being accountable to the participants in this research.

pa'anga); 10.x.12ft fine mat (2,400 *pa'anga*); 10.x.4ft one layer fine mats (1,000 *pa'anga*). This family started preparing these *koloa faka-Tonga* in 2010.

⁶⁷ This was based on a personal communication with one of the middle-age participants confirming the amount of money spent on *koloa faka-Tonga*; food and other items during her father's funeral in Tonga.

5.4 Social impact

The research found out that in fulfilling their obligations some of the participants had tension in their relationships with their own immediate family members such as husband and wife, children and parents, or between brothers and sisters and their children.

5.4.1 Wife-husband relationship

Many female participants pointed out that deciding on how much should go into a cultural obligation could create big argument between husband and wife. They complained that a husband spent a lot of money on his cultural obligations and only very little on the wife's obligations. Other female participants admitted that they tried to fulfil their own obligations without their husbands' knowledge otherwise there would be big arguments over how much was given toward one's cultural obligation.

This tension could become more critical when one partner was a non-Tongan. One of the female participants, who married a non-Tongan male, talked about the numerous arguments she and her non-Tongan husband had over her commitments to her parents, extended family and the church that her parents belonged to. It reached the situation where she does not disclose her true salary to her husband and just keeps her salary in a separate bank account.

5.4.2 Parents-children relationship

As discussed earlier, many of the young and middle-aged participants complained about the pressure their parents placed on them to fulfil cultural and church obligations. They expressed their own frustration in having to let go some of

their own family's needs just to fulfil cultural and church obligations. A young participant expressed her great frustration:⁶⁸

We have just had our annual *misinale* and my father made it clear how much he expected me to contribute to his *misinale*. That should not be the case for me to try and meet my father's expectation while my own family suffers. I have children and they will soon be going back to school together with the other children I look after. It was ridiculous what my father expected me to do (*Maka 27*).

5.4.3 Relationships between brothers and sisters and their children

One of the most common problems identified by the participants was when they had to decide on their *fahu* during birthdays, weddings or funerals. Participants referred to situations where sisters and their children were not on talking terms because they disagreed on who should be the *fahu*. Traditionally, the *fahu* was the responsibility of the *mehikitanga* or father's eldest sister and her children. However, individual families have their own variation and sometimes they could bring the younger sister's children instead.

This section has highlighted some of the negative economic outcomes which are generated by some of the cultural and church practices. As stated above, the financial burden on individuals was identified as having the most significant impact on individual participants. This also has a direct impact on the ability of individuals and families to save for future economic development. Many participants are also entrenched in heavy borrowing to try and finance these obligations. The time and food used during these ceremonies was highlighted as sometimes being wasteful and

⁶⁸The participant raised her voice and was very emotional when she shared her frustration over the undue expectation her parents had of her. She raised her voice as we talked and I had to moderate the discussion by changing the subject of our conversation a few times or having to stop and have a cup of tea instead.

needing better management. There was also a social impact, which this study identified, such as tension between immediate family members in their relationships. The next section reports participants' proposals on how to make modifications to these cultural and church practices.

5.5 Proposal for cultural modification

All of the 37 middle-aged and young participants, or 74 per cent of all those that were interviewed, suggested that some of the current cultural and church practices need to be scaled down. They were particularly adamant about scaling down cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings, funerals and church *misinale*. Their main reason for calling to scale down these ceremonies was the financial burden placed on individuals and individual families. As one of the middle-aged participants said, "I would strongly suggest that we scale down the level of our cultural celebrations. Sometimes we do things beyond our means. This ends up in a lot of people borrowing money to be able to fulfil their cultural obligations" (*Maka* 5). The following section summarises the middle-aged and young participants' proposed modifications.

5.5.1 Proposed modification - what?

This section discusses the participants' views on what needs to be modified in the current cultural and church practices. All those participants who wanted to see change suggested scaling down wedding, funeral, birthday and church donations. In addition, some of the participants proposed that some of the cultural behaviour such as *fakavahava'a*, *fesiosiofaki*, *ngutulau* and *fakamā* should be discouraged and the behaviour of *fakapotopoto* or prudence encouraged.

5.5.1.1 Scaling down of the wedding ceremony⁶⁹

Middle-aged and young participants pointed out that while it was appropriate to continue Tongan wedding ceremonies, it was time that some of the stages, procedures or protocols be shortened or scaled down due to financial and time constraints. As explained in Chapter 3, a typical Tongan wedding requires almost a week to be completed,⁷⁰ involving eight major stages:⁷¹ *faitohi* or formal proposal; *fakalēlea* or pre-wedding evening get-together; *kātoanga mali* or formal wedding ceremony; *'ave 'o e mohenga* or taking of the bride's belongings to the groom's house; *'uluaki Sapate* or first Sunday service of the newly-wed couple; *fai 'o e 'api* or newly-wed couple's first night together; *'ave 'o e 'api* or taking the bed-sheet⁷² to the groom's mother as proof of the bride's virginity; and *tali 'o e 'api* or groom's mother acknowledging the bride's virginity by a further presentation of *koloa faka-Tonga* to the bride's family. The amount of money, *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and people's time spent on a Tongan wedding is quite substantial, especially when prices of *koloa faka-Tonga* and food have gone up quite rapidly over the years.

Most participants suggested that the first Sunday ceremony should be scaled down to the newly-wed couple attending the church service without having another feast. By doing this, the newly-wed couple and the two families would save a lot of

⁶⁹It must be noted that some of the current practices are very different from how it was done traditionally. For example, in a Tongan wedding ceremony the *'ave 'o e mohenga* has been elaborated on to include taking European furniture such as a lounge suite, dining table, washing machine and so forth. These items were not there in early Tongan society.

⁷⁰Refer to Chapter 3 for the details.

⁷¹As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the current practices of the Tongan culture refers to how it is done currently, which has changed over the years, especially during the post-Christian period and when Tonga became monetised. This situation has further changed through international trade and migration.

⁷²The newly-wed couple is expected to have their first intercourse on this night and the bed-sheet is expected to be stained with blood if the bride is a virgin.

money, food and time.⁷³ Participants also suggested that the cultural protocols such as the *faitohi*, *fakalēlea*, *fai 'o e 'api* and *'ave 'o e 'api* should be discontinued because they take up a lot of time and energy, but culturally these are not a significant part of a Tongan wedding ceremony. Overall, participants wanted to see the Tongan wedding ceremony continued, but scaled down by removing a number of the protocols, reducing the amount of *koloa faka-Tonga* presented, scaling down the amount of food prepared during the *ngaahi pola* and, ultimately, reducing the amount of money spent on cultural events.

In terms of food preparation, participants suggested that people should only prepare enough for the guests and not an excessive amount as it often ends up being wasted. In terms of the *koloa faka-Tonga* presentations,⁷⁴ participants suggested that these days many Tongans have further elaborated on the presentations of the *koloa faka-Tonga* so that in one wedding up to 20 *koloa faka-Tonga* can be presented.

Traditionally, the presentation of *koloa faka-Tonga* was to acknowledge key positions in the ceremony; the *fahu* or the father's sister, church minister as a representative of God; and the *hou'eiki* or chief in the extended family.

In terms of taking the bride's belongings to the groom's house, some of the female participants suggested that it was no longer necessary to do this as it places a

⁷³ In fact, many newly-wed couples have opted for only one day of celebration then leave for a proper honeymoon elsewhere.

⁷⁴ Typically, a presentation of a *koloa faka-Tonga* could include a 20ft fine mat or *fala uangokumi*; 50ft tapa or *launima*; 40ft one layer white fine mat or *fihi fatufu*; 10ft one layer white fine mat or *konga kie Tonga*; an ornamental basket or *katoteu* and a cake. Refer to Table 3.7 in Chapter 3 for the cost details. Twenty *koloa faka-Tonga* could cost the family up to 20,000 *pa'anga*.

lot of financial pressure on the bride and her family.⁷⁵ They suggested that the newly-wed couple should just save up and buy their own furniture after they are married, otherwise this protocol puts a lot of financial pressures on the bride's family. As one female participant said:

I always joke to my children that they should marry a European because I can't afford all the cultural obligations that go with a Tongan wedding ... The reason why I said that was because of all the responsibilities that mothers would have to bear in a Tongan wedding. There is a lot of *koloa faka-Tonga* needed for a Tongan wedding and those obligations are far too much for me to afford (*Maka 5*).

Overall, middle-aged and young participants were quite definite that the Tongan wedding ceremony should be scaled down in terms of the *koloa faka-Tonga* presented, food prepared as well as some of the protocols involved such as *fakalēlea*, *'ave 'o e 'api* and *'uluaki Sapate*. By making this modification the newly-wed couple could save some money for their own immediate needs and not be heavily indebted due to the elaborate wedding ceremonies. Similar proposals were made on scaling down birthday and funeral ceremonies.

5.5.1.2 Scaling down of the funeral ceremony

As explained in Chapter 3, a proper Tongan funeral ceremony has about eight key cultural protocols. It starts with the *failotu* or prayer service before the burial, *'ā pō* or wake, *pongipongi tapu* or final mourning ceremony after the burial, *feipulua* or giving of food to mourners after the burial, *feitu'ui* or presentation of food and *koloa faka-Tonga* after the burial, *maumau* or presentation of food to the *fahu* to symbolise the mourning

⁷⁵Refer to Chapter 3 for the details of the *'ave mohe'anga*. This could include buying furniture for a whole house which could cost up to 20,000 *pa'anga* and *koloa faka-Tonga* which could cost up to 10,000 *pa'anga*. This symbolises the bride's willingness to join her husband and his family.

is over, *fakamāvae* or final farewell between the deceased person and his/her wife/husband, and an additional three nights of mourning after the burial. The *fakamāvae* also involves exchange of a *puaka toho* or large-size pig and *koloa faka-Tonga*. The whole funeral procedure could take up to two weeks to be completed. Throughout this period, the bereaved family is expected to feed those who come to mourn and also for the *failotu*. One middle-aged participant estimated that her family spent about 9,000 *pa'anga* on food to feed people who came to mourn and to conduct evening prayers before the actual wake. One middle-aged participant suggested that mourners should just come and make their tribute, then return to their home and not stay around, as that put financial burden on the bereaved family. She said:

We need to consider how to change the way we conduct our funerals. For example, when we attend a funeral we should just go there for the wake and then return home instead of staying there for another three days. This is going to cost the family a lot of money and we are not helping them at all (*Maka 5*).

Participants suggested that in addition to reducing the amount of food prepared and the *koloa faka-Tonga* presented, some of the activities could be discontinued as they were not culturally essential. This could include the *feipulua*, *feitu'ui*, *pongipongi tapu* and *maumau*. Young participants complained that these activities were costing them a lot of money and yet meant nothing to them. They are often under pressure from their parents or their extended family to participate in these extra activities. They were often asked to give money toward these activities. They also alluded to the fact that so much of their time was taken up by these various activities.

Many participants also suggested that families and relatives should no longer bring any *koloa faka-Tonga* because the bereaved family is obliged to pay back those

items at the end. This placed additional pressure on the bereaved family to find or borrow more money to pay for these items. They might as well not bring anything at all. As one middle-aged participant said:

There are some Tongans who, when making a contribution to a funeral, expected to receive something in return, for what they contributed. It's like their aim is to get something in return rather than out of love and willingness to help. This puts pressure on the bereaved family to try and find *koloa faka-Tonga* and food to reciprocate those who brought food, *tapa*, money and mats to the funeral (*Maka 2*).

5.5.1.3 Scaling down of church obligations

On church donations, two church ministers suggested that it might be time to consider using the biblical guideline of the tithe⁷⁶ to determine how much members should donate to the church. The church also needs to prioritise its spending and manage its budget during the year so that it stays within the available budget. Some of the middle-aged and young participants said that it was the church which pushed for excessive contributions from the members, causing many members to borrow heavily during the *misinale* or annual collection. In their view, the church environment encouraged these behaviours and the modification should start with addressing this environment. Their comments included the following statements:

The church should be responsible for making this change in how we practice our culture because it is the church that has been responsible for driving these practices to the extreme. The church drives this culture to the extreme; therefore they should be responsible for bringing about this change (*Maka 29*).

I truly believe that the President of the church should inform the congregation that [*ngaahi pola*] or food preparation for the church conference should be scaled down. But this will go against some who believe that this will bring blessing to

⁷⁶This is the biblical guideline for how a Christian donates to the work of the church. They are required to give 10 per cent of their income to help with the running of the church.

the family. The church minister also benefits from these various church functions so it will be hard for him to put a stop to it (*Maka* 5).

Many female participants also suggested that they should be very selective with which church activities to attend as they needed to spend more time with their children in the evenings. They did not want to continue attending every church activity while neglecting their family, especially their children.

5.5.1.4 *Fakapotopoto* or being prudent

One behavioural change that was suggested by two participants was *fakapotopoto* or being prudent. They argued that Tongans were keen to share, reciprocate and sacrifice their own needs to help others, but they gave very little attention toward being *fakapotopoto* with what they had. The participant observed the amount of food wasted during *kai pola* which could easily be saved through being *fakapotopoto*. She emphasised that Tongans are now living in a monetary economy and they need to have enough money to meet their own needs.

5.5.2 Proposed modification – how?

Another key question addressed by this thesis is how to go about making these proposed modifications. The old participants did not discuss this because they did not see the need for any change. However, middle-aged and young participants proposed different and very interesting viewpoints which are summarised below. It must also be mentioned that they were well aware of the likelihood that some members of Tongan society would not welcome this proposed modification.

5.5.2.1 Communal approach

All of the middle-aged and young participants suggested that any proposal to modify some of the current cultural practices requires careful consideration. Firstly, they saw a need for this proposed modification to be introduced, accepted and applied at all levels of Tongan society, namely the royal family, nobility and the commoners. Tongans, at all levels of society, must be aware and understand why there is a need for modification. This could be done through awareness and education programmes delivered through the church, community groups and even through government agencies. They were also fully aware that certain members of Tongan society will not readily accept this proposal. They thought this change would be gradual but it needs to be done.

At the nuclear family level, one middle-aged participant and one young participant suggested that parents should involve and listen to their children's views when making decisions on cultural and church obligations. This is important because the children help finance these obligations. For example, children often finance birthdays, weddings and even funerals.

At the extended family level, the *'ulumotu'a* and the older members should allow younger members to participate in the decision-making process. Younger participants were quite keen to see themselves involved in this process because their views would help balance the older generation's views and ideas.

At the church level, many of the middle-aged and young participants pointed out that it was critical for the church and church ministers to endorse this proposed

change. The church is currently one of the most powerful institutions in Tongan society and so it should be instrumental in the change. The church minister holds a lot of *mana* in the Tongan culture. They could potentially be the strongest agent for change if they endorsed this proposed modification.

All the young participants strongly suggested that youth and youth groups should play a key role in this modification process. Church youth groups, university students, and young Tongans in influential roles should promote these changes from where they are. As the research revealed, young participants expressed frustration and confusion at having to live within two cultures. On one hand there was their traditional culture and the expectation that they fulfil their cultural and church obligations while, on the other hand, was the demand of a modern economy for proper savings, meeting financial obligations such as tax payments and just being financially prudent. These frustrations would fuel youth to be very strong advocates of this proposed modification.

Participants also pointed out that at the village level there should be *fono* or meetings of the adult male members of the community to discuss this proposal. Community groups such as village women's development groups and men's kava Tonga clubs should also be informed as they could play a large part in promoting these changes. These are two very influential groups in the local communities. Women and men in these groups could discuss and share with each other how they could modify their culture in their own local community.

Government agencies should also play a part in this proposed change. For example, the participants suggested that the Ministry of Education should consider integrating this proposed change into the Tongan language curriculum. It is important to educate school students, as they will be future leaders in the family, community, church and government. Participants emphasised the need for people to be educated on why modification was necessary and how they may benefit from it. They pointed out that this would help strengthen the essential core values underpinning the Tongan culture and yet allow it to be adapted to the current or modern lifestyle.

5.5.2.2 Education programme

Many participants strongly suggested educating the Tongan people as part of introducing these modifications. Given the significance of culture in the lives of Tongan people, it was important for the participants that people be educated on this change, highlighting how they would benefit from it. Again, this educational programme should be introduced at all levels: nuclear family, extended family, village, church, government and the wider Tongan society.

Overall, participants were fully aware that this proposed change would face a lot of challenges among the Tongan people and it was important to be well prepared with ways of addressing these challenges.

5.6 Challenges

Middle-aged and young participants readily identified some of the challenges likely to be faced with this proposal, which are summarised below.

5.6.1 Reluctance to change

Middle-aged and young participants identified that the royal family, nobles, chiefs, *'ulumotu'a* and the church will refuse to see changes made to the current cultural and church practices. As reflected in the old participants' responses, they are not willing to change the current cultural practices. These are the agencies or institutions that benefit most from the existing system and it would be very difficult for them to let go of those privileges, *mana* and wealth. Those who wanted to promote change would have to work with these people and get their endorsement before any modification could take place successfully.

5.6.2 Overuse of the culture of *tauhi vā* and *faka'āpa'āpa*

Participants mentioned that the culture of *tauhi vā* and *faka'āpa'āpa* could hinder many Tongans from making any change. Those people felt obliged to continue with the status quo in case they upset their relationships with their extended family, church, nobility and royal family. Change could also be interpreted as disrespect and lack of *tauhi vā*.

5.6.3 Behaviour of *fesiosiofaki*, *fakavahavaha'a* and *ngutulau*

Participants pointed out that many Tongans had motives for practicing their culture that would be very difficult to change. For example, this study revealed that the behaviour of *fesiosiofaki* or envy, *fakavahavaha'a* or competition and *ngutulau* or gossip pushed many Tongans beyond their means just to make sure they outdid everyone else in their local community or their local church with their ceremony. This behaviour would not be easy to change. The church environment also encouraged this

behaviour, such as calling out the amount of money an individual family donated during the church *misinale* or annual collection (Niumeitolu, 2007).

5.7 *Makafetoli'aki* modification model

Based on the proposal put forward by the participants on what and how to pursue the proposed modification, I have developed what I call the *Makafetoli'aki* modification model, which is an extension of the *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework and the *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology. It is a culturally-based negotiation tool that could bring different generations together to discuss what is best for all Tongans. It is not about the old versus the young and the middle-aged, but it is about all Tongans, especially the future generation of Tonga. By negotiating the future path of Tonga based on consensus, I do hope that the event of 2006 will not repeat itself, but the aim is to implement a change that is gradual, peaceful and sensible. The underlining message is that Tongans need to help each other by making the necessary changes where and when possible. On the other hand, I want to reinforce the middle-aged and young participants' call for modification by reminding Tongans that the consequences of not being willing to change could cost them a lot of money, time and even their own relationships. For example, this study identified the tension between immediate family members due to heavy financial commitments driven by cultural and church obligations.

The different views presented in this chapter represent the past, present and the future cultural and church practices appropriate to those different social, cultural and economic contexts. The views of the old participants represent what worked in the

past, the middle-aged participants represent what works in the current context, and the young participants represent what might work in future. The model is suggesting that all parties, the old, middle-aged and the young generations should negotiate on how some of the practices of the Tongan culture could be modified to benefit not only the current but the future generations. The *Makafetoli'aki* modification model is ultimately aimed at improving socio-economic development in Tonga through modifying the current cultural practices so that Tongans can achieve more balanced social, cultural and economic lives.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter reflects the views, experiences and life stories of 50 Tongans about the economic impact of the current practices of Tongan culture. The impacts are both positive and negative. Inevitably, this study has also identified adverse social impacts, which I have also reported in this chapter. Cultural and church obligations could cost Tongan families well beyond their income, and they tend to borrow heavily to finance some of these obligations. Obligations are mainly to the extended family, church, village, nobles and royal family. The findings from this research do signal that cultural changes are inevitable. At the same time, the findings also warn against resistance to change.

The next chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the findings in the context of the Tongan cultural, social, economic and political environment. It will also address any challenge or resistance to change through the *Makafetoli'aki* modification model. The model reinforces the purpose of this proposed modification, which is to give

Tongans a more balanced social, cultural and economic life. There has to be *makafetoli'aki* or *fetokoni'aki* between past and present practices, and between young and old Tongans, to ensure that cultural and church practices are adapted to the modern economic and social environment. Failing to make this adaptation could result in the Tongan culture gradually vanishing in the long-run. The conceptualisation of *makafetoli'aki* at the theoretical, research and practical level is an original contribution of this thesis to the very limited body of knowledge available on cultural and church practices modification.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

The research findings, reported in Chapter 5, confirmed that the current cultural and church practices of Tongans do impact on their economic performance quite significantly. The impacts are both negative and positive (Bollard, 1974; Evans, 2001; Fisi'iahi, 2006; Morton, 1978; Ritterbush, 1986; Saffu, 2003; Sevele, 1973; Taylor, 2010). The findings also support the proposal to modify current cultural and church practices so that Tongans can attain a more balanced cultural, economic and financial life and, hence, a better socio-economic standard of living. Changing Tongans' economic behaviour would have to start by changing their cultural and church behaviours and practices. The study also revealed that certain sectors of Tongan society could object to this proposal, which I endeavour to address in the implementation phase. Finally, the research findings suggest that it is important that the implementation of this proposal is done in a way that will appeal to the Tongan people. The introduction of *Makafetoli'aki* modification model is an attempt to address this situation. This chapter endeavours to discuss the research findings in the context of Tonga's current political and economic environment.

6.1.2 The democratic reform in Tonga

It is important to note the current political and economic environment in Tonga as backdrop to this discussion. Tonga held its first election under its reformed electoral and constitutional arrangements on 25 November 2010. However, democracy in Tonga remains a work in progress, with an unpredictability that underlines the country's democratic youthfulness. Unlike many democracies, in Tonga there is no real

way of knowing who will hold power until the election. A lack of established parties and polling makes for uncertainty over candidates' chances. The expected multiple fields of candidates will also boost the unpredictability of the result, because candidates are elected under a first-past-the-post system. Some have called for a more radical change where the power of the state, nobility, royal family and the church should be separated (Pulu, 2014; Kennedy, 2012; Moala, 2012; Niumeitolu, 2007; Powles, 2012).

Kennedy (2012) pointed out that despite the democratic reform of 2010, very little has been done to modernise the land law of Tonga and to give commoners more power over land. She suggested that "Tonga can tame instability by amending the Constitution and Land Act to: a) reduce the nobles' power over land rights; b) allow for more commoners to at least occupy land, and c) institute policies that would improve the productivity of commoner lands" (p. 347). Powles (2012) pointed out that "when the new political regime is examined in its historical context, and in light of the advice provided by the Constitutional Electoral Commission (CEC), it can be seen that Tonga has again taken a peculiarly Tongan approach to democracy" (p. 4).

Moala (2012) made the point that Tonga has a long way to go in its political reform. He pointed out that since the new reform regime came into power, the Cabinet has been reshuffled twice. That is a sign 'the team' has yet to find the right combination, a disconcerting feature as the Government approaches the halfway mark of its term in office. What is more concerning is the apparent lack of vision or plans being communicated to the people of Tonga. Helu (1997) made a point that Tonga's

development suffered from heavy reliance on foreign consultants who tried to plan and lead Tonga's development while ignoring Pacific islanders who were well qualified and knowledgeable of the local circumstances to lead their own development. Pulu (2014) echoed the same issue seen in Tonga's current development agenda, suggesting that local bureaucrats should give Tongan academics a better opportunity to contribute to the Kingdom's own development. With a parliamentary election due to take place later in 2014, Tonga faces the next big test for its political stability following the landmark democratic reforms introduced in 2010.

6.1.3 The economic policy shift in Tonga

The government's economic policy is starting to shift from focusing on economic growth to adopting an inclusive sustainable growth policy. Government stated that its first objective is to achieve a "strong inclusive community by engaging districts/villages/communities in meeting their prioritised service needs and ensuring the equitable distribution of development benefits" (MoF, 2013, p. 13).

The Tongan Government acknowledged signs of poverty and hardship among low income Tongan families, and this is becoming one of the budget focus objectives. This policy shift included the introduction of a domestically funded social welfare benefit of \$65 per month for the elderly; direct assistance to those with disabilities; a loan product to stimulate income-generating activities by vulnerable individuals; ongoing training in business practices and financial literacy; and the provision for marketing activities for project loan recipients. The Japanese Government, ADB and US Aid jointly funded some of these initiatives (MoF, 2013, p. 14). The Government has

also extended budget support to NGOs who are implementing various projects in the community. The Government also provide leadership training and capacity-building for young female leaders on how to safeguard women against domestic violence. Government is also supporting various community and church initiatives aimed at healthy lifestyle through eating healthily and doing regular physical activity (MoF, 2013, p. 17).

NRBT (2012) continues to support the Tongan government in its priority of achieving sustainable development for all Tongans, especially those at low-income levels (NRBT, 2012; MoF, 2013). Government, NRBT, aid donors and international agencies working in Tonga admit that economic development requires more than just economic growth (MoF, 2013; World Bank, 2013). There is more to it, including social, cultural and political improvements.

As this is the first study of its kind to be held in Tonga which proposes modification to the current cultural and church practices, it is important to explore the key findings as situated in the Tongan society, rather than comparing these to those in other Pacific nations or the rest of the world. This chapter is divided into nine main sections: (i) Introduction; (ii) Economic impact is significant; (iii) Certain cultural behaviours and practices need to change; (iv) Certain church practices need to change; (v) Certain economic behaviours need to change; (vi) Implementation approach; (vii) Challenges; (viii) Limitations of this research; and (ix) Conclusion.

6.2 Economic impact is significant

Although the economic impact of fulfilling cultural and church obligations on individuals and families identified in Chapter 5 seems overwhelming, the true intensity of this is broadened when contextualised within the socio-economic, demographic and health realities of Tongan people in Tonga and overseas. Tonga has been identified as a dual economy, therefore the conflict between traditional and modern economic priorities will continue, but this study is an attempt to help alleviate this conflict.

6.2.1 Unsustainable financial burden on Tongan families

TDoS (2010) estimated the average annual household income for Tonga at 22,000 *pa'anga* (pp. 43-45). As discussed in Chapter 5, one Tongan family could donate up to 20,000 *pa'anga* to the church in one *misinale* or up to 50,000 *pa'anga* to one traditional funeral ceremony. James (2002) gave a detailed account of the cost of a funeral in Tonga:

Funeral expenses are routinely among the heaviest financial burdens Tongans bear ... In all, the estimated cost to family members of this quiet unannounced commoner funeral was in the vicinity of 53,000 [*pa'anga*]. This is, however, only what was outlaid. I did not estimate accurately the cash equivalent of the *koloa* that was brought in the 24 *holo* or presentation by women (either blood relatives or affines) on the night of the '*āpō*, which was likely to have been worth around 20,000 [*pa'anga*] (pp. 237-238).

The above account suggests that the overall cost of this funeral was around 73,000 *pa'anga*, and this could be much higher in today's prices. James also noted that this was a funeral of just a Tongan commoner, implying that the cost could be much higher if the funeral was of a chief, noble or member of the royal family. A Tongan

traditional wedding could cost the bride's family up to 50,000 *pa'anga*.⁷⁷ Birthday celebrations could have the same cost.

Given the low average household income in Tonga, many families rely heavily on borrowings and remittances to finance these obligations. Many Tongans keep on borrowing to the point where they can no longer service their loans. Fisi'iahi (2006) reported how local commercial banks and financial companies in Tonga have used the local newspaper to publish photos of their clients who have failed to pay their loans according to the contract. One financial company, for example, provided a brief description of the purpose of the loans, and most of these default loans were taken out to meet cultural and church obligations (p. 32).

Commercial banks' lending data as collected by the Reserve Bank of Tonga⁷⁸ revealed that about 50 per cent of personal loans were to finance cultural and church obligations. It is very common for one person to borrow a large sum of money for a funeral, wedding, birthday or the church annual *misinale*. In Tonga, there was no funeral insurance policy available until recently, so most people would rely on borrowing, remittance from family members overseas and donations from community and church members to finance the cost. In a recent funeral of one of the participants in this study, the daughter estimated the cost of the funeral at 60,000 *pa'anga*. She reported that her brother and younger sister had to borrow 20,000 *pa'anga* to cover

⁷⁷This amount was given to me during a personal communication with one of the participants who got married in 2009. The father of the participant kept an account of all of the major costs he and his immediate family incurred during the three day wedding ceremony, such as the *ngaahi pola* and *koloa faka-Tonga*.

⁷⁸As the Director of the Research Department, Reserve Bank of Tonga from 1992-2000, I was responsible for collecting and compiling all the lending data from the commercial and development banks in Tonga. Personal loans formed a major part of the bank loans, and in discussing with the domestic banks the reasons behind them they explained that a large part of it was for cultural and church obligations. Personal loans tend to peak during the month of May because of the annual conference, November and December because of all the church obligations such as the annual collection or *misinale* in November, and the Christmas and New Year festivities.

some of the cost. Donations from extended family members, church members and the wider community accounted for about 15,000 *pa'anga*. Remittance from relatives overseas was estimated at around 5,000 *pa'anga* and the *koloa faka-Tonga* was estimated at around 20,000 *pa'anga*, which the daughters had been buying over the last five years.

The prices of *koloa faka-Tonga* and food are already very high in Tonga and this could be pushed up further if the inflation rate picks up again.⁷⁹ High levels of indebtedness coupled with low levels of income and the high price of *koloa faka-Tonga* could put many Tongan families into further financial hardship. Taylor (2010) revealed that significant contributions to church and cultural obligations have contributed to increasing hardship among many Tongan families (p. 25). This thesis is calling for Tongan people to make a careful decision on how to allocate their income between their social obligations and their own family financial needs, as this situation could have wider implications in terms of facing long-term financial instability and, eventually, a lower standard of living. Unless Tongans are willing to modify the way they currently practice their culture, the financial, economic and social implications could worsen, especially with the current unfavourable economic conditions.

6.2.2 Financial burden on Tongan families overseas

This study revealed that many of the old participants relied heavily on their children overseas to support them with their cultural and church obligations. It is a common phrase among Tongans '*sai ko e 'oku ke tu'umalie he 'oku tokolahi ho'o fanau 'i muli'*' or "you [the parents] are rich because many of your children are overseas." Many

⁷⁹ Current inflation rate in Tonga is 1 per cent. (MoF, 2012)

Tongans associate a family's income with the number of children working or living overseas. There is a common assumption among many Tongans that once you live overseas you have more money than those living in Tonga.

However, Tongans overseas are facing a tougher financial situation. In New Zealand, for example, the Tongan adult population received a median gross annual income of 17,500 New Zealand dollars or an average of 337 dollars per week in 2006. This is equivalent to an average Tongan household annual income of 35,000 dollars or 674 dollars per week.⁸⁰ A typical Tongan household pays an average of 250 dollars a week on rent (Statistics New Zealand [SNZ], 2006, p. 24). This is before adding food (150 dollars), transportation, electricity and telephone bills (100 dollars), clothing and children's health and educational needs (100 dollars). In addition, families have cultural and church obligations, including sending money to families in Tonga,⁸¹ which they must fulfil (80 dollars).⁸²

Overall, a typical Tongan household's weekly income in New Zealand would be 674 dollars against an average weekly financial outlay of about 680 dollars. Tongans tend to revert to finance companies to finance this deficit which, in the long-run, is unsustainable. In talking to one of the Tongan finance companies in Auckland, the owner informed me that many Tongans borrowed heavily to finance church and

⁸⁰ This is adapted from a SNZ calculation of a Tongan adult average median income of 17,500 dollars and assuming that, on average, each household has two income earners, a typical Tongan household could earn up to 35,000 dollars per year or 674 dollars per week. Usually a typical Tongan household in New Zealand is more than just a nuclear family. It usually has an aunt, uncle, nephew, niece or even grandparents staying in the same house (SNZ, 2006, p. 24).

⁸¹ Gibson, McKenzie & Rohorua (2005) estimated that Tongan households in New Zealand remit an annual average of 2,200 dollars to Tonga or an average of 43 dollars per week.

⁸² Prescott (2009) and Ka'ili (2008) confirmed that Tongans continued to practice their culture and religious activities quite strongly where they settled overseas. In some cases, cultural and church obligations are much higher overseas than in Tonga which Ka'ili (2008) claimed is due to the higher level of resources available to Tongans in terms of money, *koloa faka-Tonga* and food. The high level of remittances to Tonga implies that Tongans overseas are also responsible for financing their relatives' cultural and church obligations in Tonga. However, these also create financial debts for Tongan families overseas. It is important that cultural and church obligations are scaled down given the financial situations of many Tongan families overseas.

cultural obligations, which also included money remitted to families in Tonga.⁸³ Some of these people, unfortunately, ended up not being able to pay their loan due to financial over-commitment.

6.2.3 Impact on individual families' living standards

The heavy commitments toward church and cultural obligations also have an impact on the individual family's living standards. The middle-aged participants estimated that they directed 40 per cent of their income toward church and cultural obligations. Many middle-aged female participants mourned over their inability to buy their children proper shoes, school uniforms or even just a nice meal because of heavy commitments to cultural obligations. Taylor (2010) reported the following findings from his own research:

Tongans make very significant contributions to their churches in goods, labour and time but increasingly in cash ... Though financial obligations vary between different denominations, young people agreed it was not uncommon for children to go hungry or have to forego attending school because large amounts of family money was spent on donations. Interviewees noted that church obligations sometime require families to take significant loans (p. 25).

From the above account, it is obvious that many Tongans are prepared to fulfil their social obligations at the expense of their own immediate families' basic needs, especially their children's health and education needs. This study shows that many Tongan elderly people rely heavily on children and grandchildren to look after them. While many middle-aged and young participants accepted the responsibility to look

⁸³Lelei Finance is one of the Tongan-owned finance companies in Auckland whose lending activities are mainly for cultural and church obligations among Tongans. In a personal communication with the management, they explained that security or collateral for these loans is *koloa faka-Tonga*.

after their parents, they also admitted that this puts financial and physical pressures on them. One participant expressed her frustration in the following statement:

I finally had to speak to him [my father] and tell him he's done enough to me for I am tired from working. I start at 6am and do not finish until 7pm. When I come back in the evening my children are all waiting for me and especially when my husband is not here. I need some rest. The doctor told me that I need a break. I've told my dad that I hope he had that understanding. I can't provide everything for him both financially and physically (*Maka* 13).

The above situation is not uncommon among Tongan families where elderly parents are living and expect to be looked after by their children. In 2012 the government of Tonga introduced a pension scheme for elderly people, where every Tongan aged 75 and above gets a monthly living allowance of sixty-five *pa'anga*. Prior to that, there was no government policy to support elderly people and the responsibilities were left entirely with the children (MoF, 2013).

The above discussion demonstrates how commitments to cultural and church obligations do impact on individual families' standard of living, resulting in a lack of proper housing, food, clothing, education and use of health services. Some informants have also mentioned how many Tongan families have pushed their grown up children to leave school and work so they could help fulfil their cultural and church obligations.

Participants also reported that the amount of time taken up by cultural and church obligations had an impact on parents' time with their children. Ka'ili (2008) accounted for how Tongans in Hawaii struggle to balance fulfilling their cultural and church obligations and their full-time job. Ka'ili estimated that the time it takes for a Tongan to participate in a funeral from start to end could take at least a week. It is very common to hear Tongans in New Zealand and the United States saying how they have

to lie to their supervisors as to why they have to take so much leave from work, but it is very much to fulfil all their church and cultural obligations. One informant said “my boss just could not understand why I had to take so much leave but of course it’s for all my church and cultural obligations”. This situation, if not carefully managed, could directly impact on an individual’s performance and could, ultimately, result in them losing their paid job.

6.2.4 Tension in family members’ relationships

This research revealed that tension in family members’ relationships is not uncommon among Tongan families, especially during cultural ceremonies. James (2002) confirmed this situation in her study of Tongan culture where she said:

Over the last two decades, I have attended perhaps 15 Tongan funerals and I have never yet seen one during which there has not been a fight of some sort. In two cases, it came to fisticuffs, hair-pulling and slapping among women who disagreed about the choice of the *fahu* ... and the redistribution of wealth after the burial. It is difficult to imagine a Tongan funeral without some kind of dissension about the way people carried out their traditional function (p. 224).

The above situation continues to happen among Tongan families in Tonga and overseas. As shown in this study, some families end up not talking to each other because they disagree on who should be the *fahu* or who should get what in the distribution of wealth after the burial.

The tension highlighted above reinforces my point that there is a need to modify some of the current cultural and church practices so that Tongans can attain a more balanced economic, social, cultural and spiritual life. This thesis argues, as in North’s Institutional Path Dependency Theory, that in order to change the economic performance of a society one has to start with the institutions that prevail in that

society. Changes in these institutions, hence the concept of institutional change, will determine the future economic performance or path of that society. In the context of Tonga, this thesis is arguing for a change in the current cultural and church practices as pre-conditions to changing Tongans' economic behaviours.

6.3 Certain cultural behaviours and practices need to change

The use of North's theory has proved to be a very powerful tool in identifying factors which influence Tongans' economic performance. The research revealed that Tongan culture and the church are two informal institutions having significant influence on Tongans' economic behaviour (North, 1990). Therefore, a precondition for change in the economic behaviours and performance of Tongans is an adaptation in cultural and church practices. This is an example of how institutions and institutional change can influence the economic behaviour, performance and economic path of a society – two tenets underpinning North's theory. In making this assertion, this thesis disputes an earlier argument by Bollard (1974) that to change the economic behaviours of Tongans, the economy needs to be monetised.

The proposed changes are in the following sequence: (i) change some of the cultural behaviours; and (ii) change some of the cultural practices. By changing these behaviours and practices Tongans could also change their economic behaviour.

6.3.1 Change some of the cultural behaviours

6.3.1.1 Encourage the behaviour of *fakapotopoto* or prudence

The research revealed that there is an over-emphasis on the practices of *fevahevahe'aki*, *fetokoni'aki*, *tauhi vā*, *faka'apa'apa* and very little on *fakapotopoto* or being

prudent. These core cultural values, if not balanced against being *fakapotopoto*, could drive many Tongans to give generously to church and communal activities but end up with a lot of debt. Tu'itahi (2009) discusses *fakapotopoto* as behaviours of being wise, knowledgeable and skilful, which are well known to Tongans but are being under-utilised. He implied that Tongans should be more *fakapotopoto* with the way they handle their money, *koloa faka-Tonga*, time and food (p. 61). Hailey (1987) further highlighted this behaviour by referring to cultural ceremonies in the South Pacific as wasteful use of resources and time. Some of the participants reinforced this point by making the following statements:

I want to emphasise that it is very important for Tongans to be more *fakapotopoto* or prudent with the way they conduct their church and cultural obligations. A lot of times we overdo our giving ... It is important that we only give enough because we are living in a western-driven economy and that requires we give only enough to cultural and church ceremonies so that we could also be financially comfortable (*Maka 34*).

There is so much food wasted in most of our cultural ceremonies, such as birthdays, weddings and funerals. The excessive amount of food prepared for these events ends up being off and is thrown away. That is because of its mass production (*Maka 37*).

Ka'ili (2008) highlighted how *tauhi vā* could adversely impact on an individual's own financial and educational development. Ritterbush (1986) and Fisi'iahi (2006) claimed the same situation in Tonga, where the profitability of Tongan businesses was adversely impacted by wasteful uses of money and food during cultural and church obligations.

6.3.1.2 Encourage better communication within the nuclear and extended family units

This research revealed that within the nuclear and extended family units there is very little opportunity for the middle-aged and young participants to participate in the decision-making process. The culture of *faka'apa'apa* tends to reinforce a top-down decision-making process, where the parents and the *'ulumotu'a* or head of the extended family makes the decision then passes it on for the younger members of the family to implement.

The study also revealed that there is lack of communication between wife and husband, children and parents and even among sisters and brothers, especially when it comes to discussing matters related to cultural and church obligations. I believe these behaviours are driven by the culture of *faka'apa'apa* and *tauhi vā*.

6.3.1.3 Discourage the behaviours of *fakavahava'a*, *fakamā* and *ngutulau*

This research has identified that the behaviours of *fesiosiofaki*, *fiehā*, *fakamā* and *ngutulau* tend to drive many Tongans to over-spend on cultural and church obligations. This is at the expense of their family's own needs such as paying rent, children's school fees and even proper meals. Tongans should be able to draw the balance between pleasing others and looking after their own families. This should enable Tongans to easily scale down their cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings and funerals, as well as church activities such as *misinale* and the *ngaahi pola konifelenisi*. As one middle-aged participant said:

Sometimes you wanted to pull out but it's really *fakamā* or shame to do that. People will start *ngutulau* or gossip that you don't have money that's why you want to pull out. There are also some who like this special treatment because they are *fiehā* or show-off. However, if you are not careful then a lot of times

you will end up pocketing money from your work to meet these extra obligations (*Maka* 27).

James (1998, 2002) pointed out that in Tongan villages any family that had a good income or owned a shop would be given a prestigious role such as chairperson or treasurer of a local community group or a local church. These families are pushed to fulfil higher obligations such as giving money to support the community group or the church, even if it meant they had to forego their own family's needs or their businesses' own profits, because of fear that they would be gossiped about or feel shame if they did not perform their obligation. Ritterbush (1986) identified similar behaviour among some of the Tongan business owners, which caused a number of Tongan-owned businesses to close down.

The Tongan proverb "*tangi ke vikia ka e 'au e kainga*", seeking praise impoverishes one's kin, implies that many Tongans are spending their resources on communal ceremonies because they are *fiehā* or wanting to seek praise while neglecting their responsibilities to their own family. Ka'ili (2008) quoted one Tongan in Hawaii as saying:

I know people who give 700 [US dollars] to a fund-raising event at the Lahaina Civic Centre [community centre] and are unable to pay their rent the following week. When someone is feel [sic] warmth [which is driven by *fiehā* or seeking praise] they give all their money and they have no money to pay their rent ... (p. 211).

The above quote reminded me how the behaviour of *fiehā* drives many Tongans to give so much during cultural ceremonies they end up not being able to meet their own family's basic needs.

Overall, the communal focus of Tongan society tends to drive Tongan people to behave according to what others think, and not what they think is best for them and their own family. The behaviours of *fakavahavaha'a*, *fiēhā*, *fakamā* and *ngutulau* are still very strong among many Tongans and need to be discouraged.

6.3.1.4 Balance between fulfilling communal and individual priorities

This research has identified that there is far too much emphasis on communal obligations and very little on individuals' and businesses' own financial needs. This thesis is calling for individual Tongans and Tongan business owners to take a more balanced approach in meeting communal obligations versus their own families' basic needs and their businesses' financial needs. As one of the middle-aged participants said, "our culture tends to force us to place higher priority on the expectation of the community at the expense of our own individual families' needs" (*Maka 2*). Saffu (2003) and Fairbairn (2006) pointed out that the success of a Pacific island business is its ability to balance competing interests of extended family and the business.

Etzioni's (1988) concept of moral economy defined by the 'We' and the 'I' speaks clearly of this balancing act, where individuals should be able to balance between helping others and helping themselves. This thesis supports both Saffu's and Etzioni's views that Tongans should aim at achieving a more balanced approach toward fulfilling their communal obligations and meeting their individual needs. Once Tongan cultural behaviours change, it will be much easier to change their cultural practices.

6.3.2 Changes to some of the current cultural practices

6.3.2.1 Scale down birthday, wedding and funeral ceremonies

As discussed in Chapter 5, the middle-aged and young participants agreed that there was a need to scale down cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings and funerals. The following statements were made by some a middle-aged participant and a young participant:

I believe we have gone overboard with our cultural ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and birthdays. It is important that these practices be changed [reduced] for that is normal for cultural practices to change within a particular culture or ethnicity. Tongan cultures will change (*Maka* 35).

There are a lot of cultural celebrations, such as birthdays, which are initiated just to show off how much *koloa faka-Tonga* the family has. Tongans attached higher status to those who have large amounts of *koloa faka-Tonga*. These celebrations cost so much money and the family ended up having to pay a lot of debt over a long period of time. These celebrations are for one day but the debt repayment is over a much longer period. This affected the children education and the family's own economic condition because there is an overspending during these celebrations (*Maka* 2).

6.4 Certain church practices need to change

Three of the six church ministers that were interviewed suggested that the church should adopt the principle of tithing as a guideline for *misinale*.⁸⁴ Currently, the amount of money some families donate during the annual *misinale* is very significant relative to their income.⁸⁵ Finau (1994) and Niumeitolu (2007) strongly advocated that church members' donations should be in balance with families' means. Church

⁸⁴Tithing principle requires that individuals to donate 10 per cent of their income to the church to support God's works through the church.

⁸⁵For example, in an interview with some of the *Tokaikolo* Christian Church members it was revealed that many members donated up to 25 per cent of their total income on one *misinale* or collection. This is on top of other church obligations which could add up to an overall total of 15,000 *pa'anga* or 37 per cent of their annual income going to church activities.

members should have the freedom to choose how much they give, rather than being forced by the church to give more than they can afford.

This research found that many middle-aged and young participants identified the churches' practices and obligations as adding further pressure on an individual family's own financial position. One major church event, the *misinale* or annual collection, demonstrates how the church environment directly encourages people to put money into the church.⁸⁶ During the annual collection, the church will nominate a *sea* or chairperson for the day, who would normally be from the royal family or nobility, or be a commoner who the church believes to have a lot of money.⁸⁷ The event will start with the chairperson being seated at the front, and the church treasurer and an assistant sitting at another front table, ready to collect the money. The minister will then call out the names of every family in the church, including the chairperson's family, to come forward and present their collection. The minister will announce how much each family gives in front of the whole church, immediately after the treasurer has counted the money. While, in principle, the main reason for families' giving is to honour God's love for them, the behaviours of envy, jealousy, gossip and showing-off also influence people's decisions on how much they should give because of the way the event is set up (Niumeitolu 2007, p. 236).

I believe the church should take a more proactive role in teaching the Tongan people to be *fakapotopoto* in the use of their limited resources. This includes how much

⁸⁶Refer to Niumeitolu (2007) for an elaborate discussion of this event in a Free Wesleyan Church environment (pp. 235-237).

⁸⁷This is the practice in most of the major Tongan churches, such as the *Siasi Uesiliana Tau'ataina 'o Tonga*, *Siasi Tonga*, *Siasi Tonga Tau'ataina*, *Siasi Katolika*, *Siasi Tokaikolo* and *Penitekosi*. Niumeitolu (2007) explained this practice in detail for the *Siasi Uesiliana Tau'ataina 'o Tonga*, which is the largest denomination in Tonga.

individual families give to church obligations. At the same time, the church should also be very prudent with how it handles its financial matters. It is very common among Tongan churches for members to complain about how church leaders misuse church money.⁸⁸

6.5 Certain economic behaviours need to change

6.5.1 Encourage prudent financial management

This study has shown that many of the participants spend a substantial amount of their income on cultural and church obligations. As part of changing the economic behaviour of Tongans it is important that they are trained and encouraged to exercise prudent financial management. Lack of financial management and overspending has led to a large number of Tongans to create a lot of debt for themselves and their children. There are also people who fail to keep up with their major payments such as mortgage, electricity, phone, water, rates and taxation payments due to lack of proper financial management. This study has shown that one of the key challenges faced by Tongan business owners is their inability to manage their business finance as separate from their own personal finance. As one of the participants said:

What is most important for me is to accept that the profit from the business is not mine it belongs to the business. That is one reason why I don't go to the Tongan men kava clubs. If I do, then I know I will start using the business's profit to finance those types of activities (*Maka* 9).

Ritterbush (1986) and Fisi'iahi (2006) identified lack of proper budgeting as one of the key factors for failures of many Tongan businesses. One of Saffu's (2003) key

⁸⁸In 2012, one Tongan church had its President removed by a court decision due to misuse of the church money. At the end of 2012, another Tongan church had its members complaining about their church President's misuse of the church money. Some of the key members of this church took the President to court for this reason.

recommendations for improving business operation in the Pacific region, including Tonga, is to adopt training programmes on proper budgeting.

6.5.2 Encourage proper budgeting and prioritisation of spending

The study has shown that Tongans tend to over-spend their income due to a lack or absence of proper budgeting. It is very important for Tongans to prioritise their spending, so that they are able to meet all their financial commitments before committing to any cultural obligations. Individual families should also realise the importance of providing for their family's basic needs such as food, clothing, education, health and shelter. Individual business owners should also be able to prioritise spending, especially on cultural and church obligations, so that the profit of the business is sustainable.

Individual families should be able to know how much they can really afford to give toward cultural and church obligations. Some of the church leaders have suggested giving only 10 per cent, or a tithe, to the church. I believe the same principle should be applied in terms of how much families spend on cultural and communal obligations. This will take time to become a behaviour or culture but it is important to have it started.

6.5.3 Encourage individual savings for future consumption

The study revealed that participants are heavily focused on current consumption with very little plan or savings for future consumption. Of the 50 participants that were interviewed, only five people had any proper savings in the bank. As one old participant admitted, all her salary went toward fulfilling various

family obligations and none was saved in the bank. Or as one middle-aged participant said, “Tongan’s investment is through fulfilling their obligation.” For many Tongans their saving is communally based where they contribute to an event in the expectation that it will be reciprocated.

However, the lack of individual savings and high indebtedness of the current generation also implies that future generations will be partly responsible for paying off some of these debts. Some families even push their children to leave school early so that they could work and help fulfil cultural and church obligations or just pay existing debts.⁸⁹ It’s common to hear Tongan parents saying “*sai ke fai mo ‘osi e ako ka e omai ‘o ngaue ke tokoni hono fua e ngaahi kavenga*” or ‘we can’t wait for them [our children] to complete their study so that they could help fulfil our [parents’] obligations.’ These are Tongan parents who wish for their children to complete their education so they can start working and help fulfil their [parents] obligations, rather than looking after themselves [children] and making plans for their future.

It is important that at the individual family level the parents educate their children on the importance of savings. The study has shown that participants focus on current consumption and very little, if any, on savings for future consumption. Though middle-aged and young participants wanted to save money in the bank they admitted that, due to heavy commitments to cultural and church obligations, they are unable to save. It is important that Tongans are educated on the importance of savings

⁸⁹It is very common among many Tongan families to ask their children to start working so that they can help their parents with the family needs as well as church and cultural obligations. In speaking with a number of families in Tonga who have children working immediately after secondary school education they admitted that they needed their children’s help to meet their own financial commitments and with their cultural and church obligations.

for future consumption. That way, they are able to save for their children's education, better housing and even better physical health conditions. It is a good economic practice. One middle-aged participant said:

Now that we are moving to a tough economic situation, it is important that we fulfil our obligations and at the same time save some money for a rainy day. It is important for my family to start saving ... I think if you are honest with yourself you would save your money for your own family expenses. When you look at your own family, you wanted to save the money so that you can spend it on something more useful for the family (*Maka 15*).

6.5.4 Encourage Tongan-owned businesses to make capital investment

The Tongan business owners that were interviewed reported that a large part of their business profits were directed toward financing cultural and church obligations in addition to meeting the family's own basic needs. One of them said:

I would say that half of my profit goes to my various obligations to the church, community and my extended family. The most important thing to me is my obligation to the church and my family. My business is there to look after my family and to help fulfil my obligation to the church (*Maka 9*).

This was confirmed by other studies such as Fisi'iahi (2006), who claimed that Tongan-owned businesses lack any further capital investment due an undue amount of the profit being diverted to church and cultural obligations. Prescott (2009) revealed:

There is a tendency [for Tongan businesses in New Zealand] to give priority to commitments relating to the community and church over those of the family and the business. Many ... associated the failure of many Tongan businesses with an inability to manage this conflict (p. 295).

The same situation was found in other Pacific islands. East-West Centre (1987) revealed that a survey of 700 South Pacific island entrepreneurs found that economic motives were rarely paramount because business objectives were often secondary to

personal or social obligations. Reddy (1991) found the same situation in most Pacific islands:

Another important finding of South Pacific Island cultures in general which has a significant impact on management and business organisations is the way people handle their financial resources in the indigenous cultures ... they either spend all their income or overspend and go into debt. This is largely the outcome of communal living in traditional societies where there are perennial demands and obligations to meet from income. Because of such demands and obligations, most indigenous people have little if any income left for capital accumulation and investment (p. 275).

The lack of any reasonable capital investment among Tongan-owned businesses was identified as one of the key weaknesses among these businesses. This tension will continue unless something is done about it. This thesis is calling for Tongan business owners to start making changes to the way they handle their business. They should be able to set aside part of the profit for the business's own capital development. Their cultural and church commitments should be separated and treated as part of their own personal expenditure. This is good business practice and there is no reason to stop it from being practiced.

6.5.5 Encourage proper time management

One of the significant impacts that cultural practices had on participants was the lengthy amount of time being spent on cultural and church activities. Many of the female participants complained that they were unable to look after their children properly, help them out with their homework or even cook proper meals for their families due to over-commitments to cultural and church obligations. In the church for example, there is always an activity in the evenings and it puts pressure on individuals to attend these activities. This thesis is strongly advocating that Tongans should

manage their time properly so that they do not take an undue level of leave from their paid job or neglect their children and their own individual needs.

6.5.6 Encourage proper financial planning

Participants in this study talked a lot about planning for cultural and church ceremonies but they hardly mentioned any financial planning on how to finance these ceremonies. There is very little consideration of the financial implications of these commitments. It is important that Tongan people learn financial planning skills and start applying them in their own family situation. The Government and some of the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in Tonga work collaboratively to educate Tongans on good financial management such as budgeting.

6.6 Implementation approach

6.6.1 *Makafetoli'aki* modification model

This thesis suggests taking a communal approach toward making this proposed change happen where everyone is expected to *fetokoni'aki*, hence the *Makafetoli'aki* modification framework. This means that everyone in the Tongan social hierarchy needs to see this proposal as a way of helping them live a better economic, social and cultural life in the long run. The king and the royal family, nobles, chiefs, churches and church leaders, community groups and community leaders, extended families and their leaders, youth and youth leaders as well as the nuclear families and individual Tongans all have a part to play. As Perese (2009) recommended that in a collectively based society, like Samoa, guidelines to alleviate problematic gambling among Samoans should be on a collective basis and should uphold the principles of

reciprocity, respect and love (p. 243). The same principle could be applied in this thesis. Tonga is a communally based society therefore the proposal for change should be communally driven.

6.6.2 The role of the King and the royal family

In fact, the Royal family has shown keen interest to make modifications to the way cultural ceremonies are conducted during national events. The state funeral of the late King George Tupou V demonstrated some of the cultural modifications that the Royal family were willing to introduce. These included the reduction of the national mourning period from 365 days to only 100 days; reducing the length of the state funeral process from two weeks to only two days; and a clear direction to government ministers that government agencies were not expected to present any *koloa faka-Tonga* or food to the Royal family during the funeral (Personal communication with a senior official of the Palace Office, Nuku'alofa, December 2012).

The willingness of the royal family, led by King Tupou VI, to progress the political reform as well as introducing cultural modification in their own household marked a new era in the history of Tonga. The Royal family endorsed that change is a necessary condition to maintaining political, economic and social harmony in the Kingdom. As Moala (2011) pointed out, "King Tupou VI may well play the leading role in guiding the kingdom along the path to its future."

6.6.3 The role of the church and church leaders

Despite resistance to change from some Tongan churches and church leaders, a number of churches and church leaders have already introduced changes in their own

churches and communities in Tonga and overseas. The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (FWCT), being the official church of Tonga, has committed to further strengthen its financial reporting system. A newly established Tongan congregation was started in 2013 by members who broke away from the mother church because of a lack of transparency and accountability in the church. The outgoing members claimed that management of the church fund was done by only one person with members being left in the dark. The new congregation, *Mouifo'ou 'Ia Kalaisi*, advocated the use of tithing to fund the operation of the church and do away with collecting money and *koloa faka-Tonga*, a proposal that the members readily welcomed (Personal communication with the spiritual leader of Mouifo'ou 'Ia Kalaisi Fellowship, Auckland, May 2014.)

The Church of Tonga has introduced a youth program into the church where youth are encouraged to take a leading role in the church programs and activities and to suggest change where they see fit. This move was hardly ever seen in the church before, as it was only the elders who made decisions about the running of the church (Personal communication with the Chief Nursing Officer of Tonga on the Ministry of Health's healthy eating initiatives, 19 April, 2014.)

The Free Church of Tonga has, over the years, advocated for smaller and healthier *pola konifelenisi* or annual church conference feasts. The head of the church led this initiative and it empowered the whole congregation to move forward very rapidly with this modification. Recently, the church has introduced the use of a *poulu me'akai* or food bowl during the church conference instead of making a *pola konifelenisi* or annual church conference feast, which is very expensive and with a lot of food being

wasted. Niumeitolu (2007) and Moala (2012) challenged church leaders that their prime purpose is to serve God and the people but not to be served by the people. They both argued that church ministers hold so much power in the church that they likened them to the nobility or the Royal family of Tonga.

6.6.4 The role of the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) are involved at local, national and international levels in the health, education, environment and gender developmental sectors in Tonga. Some of the key CSOs operating in Tonga include the Tonga National Youth Congress (TNYC), Tonga Health Promotion Foundation (THPF) and National Council for Women (NCW).

TNYC is a growing youth organisation that provides training opportunities on how to grow and manage a small business. Through a range of projects it seeks opportunities to encourage and empower young people's talents and creativity. These are examples of existing programs in Tonga that are targeted at giving young Tongans the opportunity to improve their own lives through change.

THPF was established in 2007 with the aim of providing financial assistance to churches, NGOs and local community groups to support activities, facilities, projects or research programs related to the promotion of good health, safety and the prevention and early detection of diseases. The Foundation targeted women's groups as they are very influential in the health of their own families.

The Civil Society Forum of Tonga is committed to creating a conducive environment for all CSOs' development through open dialogue, equal participation,

partnership, collective decision-making and consensus building. These organisations operate at community levels and provide opportunities directly to the people for capacity building and leadership development (Commonwealth Network, 2012).

6.6.5 Better communication between different layers in the Tongan social hierarchy

The findings also suggested that there is lack of open and bottom-up communication within the Tongan hierarchical system. In a Tongan setting, the culture of *tauhi vā* and *faka'apa'apa* tend to exclude people with lower status from any formal discussion. For example, when parents and children discuss any issue usually it is only the parents who talk and make the decisions. In the extended family setting, often it is only the *'ulumotu'a* who talk and other members just listen. Those with higher status tend to make the decisions, and those decisions are made without being challenged.

One middle-aged participant made the following statement:

There is also lack of communication within the families about the culture and its impact on individual families. It is important that dialogue takes place within the families and the community about our culture and how we can modify it to suit our current economic situation ... Those who make decisions in our Tongan communities such as the *'ulumotu'a* or head of the family do not realise the need for change. They are quite conservative and all they want to know is that the obligations are fulfilled. They do not worry about how the individual economic position is affected. It is important that there is dialogue and discussion between the older and the younger generation so that they gain consistent understanding of what happens (*Maka 2*).

The above statement reinforces the fact that bottom-up communication is quite critical and those with higher status should listen to those below them – such as parents and their children; older and younger generations; royal family and nobility and the commoners; church leaders and church members. This thesis is appealing to

Tongan leaders that the voices of those with lower status, especially youth, should be heard. This is the essence of *makafetoli'aki* where everyone is treated equally and is expected to help in making any change move smoothly.

6.6.6 Long-term educational programme

An educational program should be put in place for Tongans to understand the relevance of this proposed modification for them. It should target both individual families and businesses. Saffu (2003) strongly suggested that there should be training offered to both business owners and influential members of the clan or community on how to manage a business within a culturally dominant economy such as the Pacific.

He made the following statement:

Trainings should focus not only on the entrepreneur, but it should also incorporate the clan. Influential members of the clan should be encouraged to attend the training sessions. One-size fits-all training should ... emphasise how Pacific island entrepreneurs can accept and work within the existing social values and community obligations and at the same time realise the goals of the business (p. 68).

I quite agree with Saffu that there should be an opportunity to provide training to people like members of the royal family, nobility, chiefs, church leaders, community and extended family leaders, parents, youth, and any individual Tongans who are interested in this campaign.

The proposed change is going to be gradual and educating the people will be a big part of this process. By doing this, I believe the risk of having conflict or tension between those who want change and those who do not want to see change will be eliminated. There are challenges highlighted in this research, and it is critical to note them and find ways of addressing them.

6.7 Challenges

One of the key challenges perceived in this thesis is possible resistance from the King and members of the royal family, nobility, church and the old generation, as they benefit from the current practice quite significantly. This study was particularly concerned with the royal family and the church, as they were identified as being the two most significant institutions in the Tongan society. As part of addressing this challenge I made a special trip to Tonga at the end of 2012 to hold face-to-face *tālanoa* with Tongan leaders on their readiness for this proposed modification. It was very encouraging to note that the royal family was ready to make changes to some of the current cultural practices, as proved by some of the significant modifications made during the state funeral of the late King Tupou V. On the other hand, the church leaders who were interviewed indicated that any change to church practices will be very difficult, but it could be done. The research confirmed that the older generation would not be keen to see any change being made to the current practices.

I am fully aware of this challenge and have adopted the *Makafetoli'aki* modification model as an approach toward making this change. The process is expected to be gradual and will be based on consensus among different levels of Tongan society; the King and the royal family, church and church leaders; extended and nuclear families and their leaders; youth; and all Tongans.

6.8 Limitations of this research

Firstly, I acknowledge that the size of the sample selected for this research is small when compared to the size of the Tongan population. This was largely

constrained by time and the financial resources available to me to conduct this research. The participants were from the urban area of Tongatapu. The rural areas of Tongatapu and the outer-islands of Tonga were not covered by this research.

Secondly, the research also focused on Tongans in Tonga and excluded Tongans overseas. While financial and time constraints were a major factor in this decision I also took into account that Tongans overseas operated in a different cultural context. It is one of the recommendations in this thesis that a future research be conducted on Tongans overseas.

Thirdly, the lack of official and publicly available data on Tongans' expenditure on cultural and church-related activities made analysis and comparison rather difficult. The Household and Income Survey for Tonga has been a very useful indicator of the level of cultural and church-related expenditure by Tongan households (TDoS, 2010). The survey, however, does not provide details on expenditure by age group, which was quite essential for this study. There was also limited monetary data to identify cultural and church-related loans that could be used to triangulate the level of cultural and church-related borrowings of individual Tongans. I relied heavily on church documents, participation through observation and small case studies to acquire some of this data.

Finally, I feel I still need to make further consultations as part of introducing the modifications proposed in this thesis. In particular, the churches and church leaders of Tonga need to be well informed and agree to this change, as they have been identified as being one of the strongest and most influential institutions in the Tongan society. In

a final visit to Tonga at the end of 2012, it was obvious from talking to church leaders that change will be very difficult. Their response was quite different from the royal family, who were ready to make changes to their current cultural practices (Personal communication with a senior official at the Palace Office in December 2012). I would like to remedy this situation by making further consultations with the wider Tongan community in Tonga and overseas once this thesis is approved. I want to conduct a series of seminars and *tālanoa* to ensure Tongans understand what is in it for them.

6.9 Conclusion

This study has confirmed that culture and the church significantly influence the way Tongans behave economically. Therefore, in order to change the way Tongans behave economically one would need to change Tongans' cultural behaviour and practices as a precondition to changing Tongans' economic behaviour. The research findings support North's theory that institution and institutional change are what underpin the economic performance and economic path of a society. However, the findings dispute an earlier finding that Tongans' economic behaviour would change once the Tongan economy was monetised (Bollard, 1974).

The research findings confirm the need for a change in some of the current church and cultural practices, which is not expected to proceed smoothly. *Fetokoni'aki*, *fevahevahe'aki*, *faka'apa'apa* and *tauhi vā* are an essential part of the Tongan culture and they should be upheld. However, it is their practices, especially during cultural and church ceremonies, that need to change. This includes big birthday, wedding and funeral ceremonies. The research also recognises that this proposed change will be

challenged by some members of Tongan society, especially those who benefit from the current system. Therefore, one has to be very careful in designing an implementation plan, hence the introduction of the *Makafetoli'aki* modification model. The approach has to be culturally appropriate.

The final chapter, Conclusion, will be to reiterate the aim of this thesis and the extent to which the research has addressed the thesis questions. It will also highlight the key findings and contributions of this thesis, as well as areas for future research. In closing, the final chapter will touch on the tempo for change in Tonga, especially among the leaders of Tonga. Highlights of some of the changes already introduced in Tonga are changes made to the cultural protocol of a King's funeral during the funeral of the late King Tupou V. For example, the incoming King declared that the mourning period for the country would be reduced from one year to only 100 days.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study has been to find ways in which the current practices of Tongan culture can be modified so that any adverse impact on Tongans' economic performance is alleviated. Ultimately, this thesis is aimed at contributing to Tonga's socio-economic development through improving Tongans' economic performance at the micro-level. In pursuing this research, three key thesis questions have been raised:

- (i) What are the cultural values that significantly influence participants' economic decisions?
- (ii) How have these cultural values and their practices impacted on participants' economic performance?
- (iii) How can some of these practices be modified so that Tongans can have more balanced cultural, social and economic lives?

This chapter is divided into seven main sections: (i) Introduction; (ii) Summary of the findings; (iii) Contribution of this thesis; (iv) Readiness for change in Tonga; (v) Implementation plan; (vi) Direction for future research; and (vii) Final remarks.

7.2 Summary of the findings

Firstly, the research revealed that the economic behaviour of Tongans is significantly influenced by the practices of the culture of reciprocity, sharing, maintaining good relationships with others, and respect. These cultural core values are further reinforced by the strong presence of Christianity and the practices of the church. The research also found that there were negative behaviours being practiced by Tongans such as gossip, envy or jealousy, showing off and feelings of shame. The money, *koloa faka-Tonga*, food and time spent on cultural ceremonies such as birthdays,

weddings and funeral ceremonies, annual church donations and food preparation for annual conferences put financial pressure on individual families. These need to be scaled down.

The research also found that the impact of cultural and church practices on Tongans' economic performance was both negative and positive. Cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings, funerals and church activities such as annual donations and preparation of feasts for annual conferences placed significant financial burden on individual Tongans. This is the main reason why half of the middle-aged and all of the young participants called for a modification in the current practices by scaling down some of the cultural and church ceremonies.

One of the most remarkable findings of this research was that different age groups presented different views – namely, the old, middle-aged and young age groups. While the old participants preferred to maintain the current practice, the middle-aged and young participants preferred to see some of these practices changed. In my view, this is a representation of the different generations and their different views, beliefs, values and practices.

The position of the youth in this study is quite significant as it indicates cultural change through generational change. Further, the old participants could be seen as a source of challenge to this proposed change. The royal family and the church were identified as two very strong institutions in shaping Tongan society and, indirectly, the way people behave. They will play a key role in either driving or delaying this change, depending on their own decisions.

Despite calling for a change in some of the practices, the 50 participants maintained that the Tongan cultural core values of reciprocity, sharing, maintaining relationships and respect are important and they should be upheld. They also value some of their practices, such as helping families who are poor with accommodation, clothes, food and money. Changes suggested are more about scaling down cultural ceremonies such as birthdays, weddings and funerals, as well as church activities such as *misinale* and food preparation. These practices also tend to generate negative behaviours such as jealousy, envy, gossip, showing-off and feelings of shame.

7.3 Contribution of this thesis

This thesis has provided an original body of knowledge on how the current practices of Tongan culture and of the church impact upon Tongans' economic performance. More importantly, it provides a road map on how some of the current cultural and church practices could be modified so that any adverse economic impact can be alleviated. Furthermore, this thesis has established three concepts: (i) *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework; (ii) *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology; and (iii) *Makafetoli'aki* modification model – which are also a major contribution of this thesis at the theoretical, research and application levels.

7.3.1 *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework

This framework is a further enhancement of North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory. The Institutional Path Dependency Theory argued that economic rationality should be contextualised within the social, cultural and political configuration of a particular society, as opposed to neoclassical economic theory which

argued that an individual's rationality is based on a purely economic drive to maximise wealth. The *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework endorses North's theory but it adapts this western-based theory to the Tongan social, cultural and spiritual environment. This adaptation has generated a theoretical framework that fully understands the complexity and significance of the culture in the lives of Tongan people.

The *Makafetoli'aki* theoretical framework has further strengthened North's central theoretical argument that economic change will be driven by institutional change, both formal and informal. Tongan culture is an informal institution, and this study demonstrates that in order to change Tongans' economic behaviour there has to be change in their cultural behaviour and practice.

7.3.2 *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology

The sensitivity of the topic under investigation required that the research approach be credible and trustworthy while, at the same time, culturally sensitive. For this purpose, the concept of *Makafetoli'aki* was used to reinforce my position that the aim of this thesis is to help Tongan people practice their culture in a financially prudent manner.

The Tongan culture of *faka'apa'apa* and *tauhi vā* rooted in a highly stratified society could become an obstacle to this proposal. I believe that is why no earlier study has been done on this subject, because it could be seen as disrespecting the Tongan culture.

As Taylor (2010) reiterated:

...Tonga's hierarchical culture is central to the existing political system that is unaccountable in its restriction of people's freedom and the traditional importance of respect has been regularly used to defend the status quo... This leads to the paradoxical situation where culture and tradition are both barriers and fundamental to sustainable social progress (p. 31).

I have used the concept of *makafetoli'aki* to overcome this cultural barrier and to negotiate that *faka'apa'apa* or respect and *tauhi vā* or maintaining relationships should be balanced against reciprocity. In this case, I needed my participants to tell the truth so that the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made were accurate.

Makafetoli'aki research methodology encouraged my participants to tell the truth on the understanding that they were helping me to find a way forward that would help them manage their financial and cultural practices better.

The *Makafetoli'aki* research methodology also contextualised western-driven qualitative research methodology within the Tongan cultural, social and spiritual environment. It must be noted that this framework does not dictate a particular way in which research should be done, but it acknowledges that different societies have different local conditions and these should be taken into account. It is very much in line with North's Institutional Path Dependency Theory, which argued for the importance of contextualising or adapting theory to local circumstances. This study takes it further by saying that the theoretical framework, research methodology and proposed modification matrix should all be contextualised within the local conditions.

7.3.3 *Makafetoli'aki* modification framework

The *Makafetoli'aki* modification framework has been developed to address the question of how this proposed modification should be pursued. As in the theoretical

and research methodology, this framework is based on the principle of reciprocity where, in this particular context, change is to be done through consensus with the ultimate objective of helping improve Tongans' economic performance.

This research has also expanded on North's theory, clearly identifying who would be responsible for introducing these proposed changes and who would be likely to become barriers to this proposed change. The situation of the young participants in this research and in Tongan society indicates that they could potentially be the most powerful agents in bringing about this proposed modification. The 2006 riot in Tonga, for example, was driven by young Tongans. This is their way of expressing their frustration and confusion in trying to interface between modernity and traditional culture, and their solution as indicated by this study is to call for a change. The old participants, on the other hand, indicate that they would not easily accept these proposed changes.

Finally, this framework also hammers home a key theme in this study: that change need to be done on a gradual basis and through a consensus process. It needs a communal approach, where everyone in Tongan society is expected to be part of it. I am well aware of the 2006 riot and it is the intention to avoid any repeat.

7.4 Readiness for change in Tonga

7.4.1 King and the royal family

One of the most remarkable modifications recorded in recent years was the change in the cultural protocol during the state funeral of the late King Tupou V. Normally, when a Tongan King dies, the country mourns for one whole year, meaning

there are certain restrictions on the type of businesses that can be operated, especially in the entertainment industry, such as night club music and dancing not being allowed. However, during the funeral of the late King Tupou V, the following changes were introduced by the King Tupou VI:⁹⁰

- i. The mourning period for the country was reduced from one year or 365 days to only 100 days
- ii. The length of the official state funeral was reduced from an average of two weeks to only two days
- iii. The King's kava ceremony was reduced from a whole day event to only two hours
- iv. The amount of *koloa faka-Tonga*, money and food that nobles had to present to the King was also reduced

The above changes are significant milestones in this thesis, as they give a strong signal that the royal family is ready to make changes to the current practices in the Tongan culture, and they are willing to take the lead.

7.4.2 Church and church leaders

In a final visit to Tonga at the end of 2012 as part of completing this thesis I interviewed some of the church leaders to understand the churches' and church leaders' readiness for change. It was obvious from these interviews that the churches were less prepared for this change than the royal family or individual Tongan families. As an institution, the church could become a catalyst or an impediment to this proposed modification given its very powerful place in Tongan society. The research

⁹⁰ This information was gathered during an interview with one of the senior officials at the Palace Office of Tonga in December 2012.

findings concluded that churches and church leaders benefitted from the current system, and that could be one of the reasons for their unwillingness to change these practices. It is important, as part of implementing the findings from this research, to work with the churches toward modifying some of their current practices such as reducing the amount of food prepared during the *ngaahi pola konifelenisi* or preparation of the feast for the church conference. The churches' youth groups could be one avenue for introducing these changes.

7.4.3 Extended and nuclear families

Evidence in Tonga suggested that many Tongan families are already making modifications to their own cultural and church ceremonies. Five participants referred to how their own funeral protocols have been modified by moving away from 'a *pō* or wake during the night time to 'a 'ahō or wake during day time. Having the wake during the day significantly reduces the amount of money, food and time spent on preparing and feeding the mourners. For example, in an 'a 'ahō the wake will last for a maximum of five hours, whereas in an 'a *pō*, the wake will last almost 12 hours. This was the case with the funeral of one of the old male participants in this research, which I attended in April of 2012. The family decided to have his wake during the day and that saved them a lot of money and time in buying and preparing food for the mourners.

The research also revealed that some families have modified their own funeral protocols by asking families, relatives, friends and any member of the community that wishes to donate to the funeral to do so in cash and not *koloa faka-Tonga* or food. The

main reason is to avoid having to exchange all the *koloa faka-Tonga* and food at the end of the funeral. Some families revealed that it cost more to exchange these *koloa faka-Tonga* and food than the actual amount received. I have observed many funerals in Tonga and New Zealand that have practiced this modification.

In a recent funeral, in some of the participants' extended family, the deceased requested before she died that there be no *feitu'ui* or *maumau* after her funeral. Her reason for doing that was to avoid placing any unnecessary financial burden on her children. The extended family agreed to implement the deceased's proposal, which saved many of them a lot of money in food and *koloa faka-Tonga*. The cost of one *feitu'ui* could average between 1,000 and 5,000 *pa'anga*. It was quite interesting that in talking to some members of this extended family, they admitted that they really appreciated this modification as it saved them a lot of money. Many members of the extended family are already willing to adopt this change in future funerals.

For Tongan traditional wedding ceremonies, many newly-wed Tongan couples have opted to have only a one-day wedding ceremony, after which they leave for their honeymoon. That way, they avoid having the *'uluaki Sapate* or the first Sunday service ceremony of the newly-wed couple where they attend the morning church service followed by another *fakaafe* or Tongan feast attended by extended family members, church members and friends of the bride and groom. By reducing the wedding ceremony to a one-day event, a substantial saving can be made in food preparation, *koloa faka-Tonga* and time. The savings are made both by the newly-wed couple and the

extended family because they all are expected to contribute to the event. Many Tongan families have welcomed this modification.

7.5 Implementation plan

Part of making sure the findings from this research are disseminated will be to find opportunities within the extended families, church, community groups and even key government agencies to make presentations. For example, the Tongan Research Association (TRA) hosted its annual conference in Auckland in 2013 and I was invited to make a presentation at that forum. I have also made enquiries to about presenting my paper to key donors and international agencies operating in Tonga. Ultimately, I am keen to make sure the findings from this research are communicated to the grass root Tongans, hoping it will help them in some ways ease their financial burden through modifying their own cultural and church practices.

7.6 Direction for future research

The current research focused on Tongans living in Tonga but, through this study, I realised this situation is equally strong among Tongan communities overseas, such as New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii and the United States. Recent studies (Ka'ili, 2008; Prescott, 2009) revealed that the practices of Tongan culture continue quite strongly in foreign countries where Tongan communities have been well established. It was notable from conversing with many Tongans living in New Zealand, Australia and America that they are also faced with the same dilemma of balancing their cultural and church obligations with their family's financial needs. Many of them were keen to modify but, like some of the participants in this study, they were reluctant due to

pressure from their own community and the church. One incentive for Tongans to consider changing their practices is to think of the financial consequences if they do not modify their current practices, such as facing an unsustainable level of debt.

A follow-up study could focus on developing a long-term training programme on the implementation of this proposed change. This programme could be introduced to all levels of Tongan society: individual Tongans, nuclear families, extended families, church and community groups, the royal family and nobles and the Tongan Government.

7.7 Final remarks

I want to conclude this thesis by saying "*ko 'etau nofo ni ko e makafetoli'aki*" or "the way we live is through reciprocity or we take turns in helping each other." The ultimate objective of this thesis is to help Tongans improve their economic performance through modifying the way they currently practice some of the Tongan culture as well as some of the practices in the church. I am asking the old, middle-aged and young Tongans, as represented by the 50 participants in this study, to help progress this change. A humble invitation is extended to the royal family, church and church leaders, extended and nuclear families, community leaders and individual Tongans to understand the importance of this proposal and be willing to lead these changes from where they are.

As Tongans we all need to work together and help each other to make this change happen, as it is a necessary pre-condition to improving Tongans' economic behaviour and performance. This thesis and its findings is an original body of knowledge which I would like to present to the people of Tonga with the hope it will give them an option on how to improve their cultural, social and economic lives through modifying some of the current cultural and church practices. For as we say in Tongan, "*ko 'etau nofo ni ko e makafetoli'aki*".

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GLOSSARY

Tongan Words

A

anga faka-Tonga
'api
'āpō
'ave 'o e mohenga

Tongan culture or Tongan way of life
 home
 funeral wake
 taking of the bride's belongings to the groom's house

F

fahu

usually the father's eldest sister or her children who are especially chosen at funerals, weddings, and birthdays to receive the best *koloa faka-Tonga* and food; the *fahu* sits at a special and highest place during the ceremony

faifekau

church minister

faikava-Tonga

Tongan *kava* ceremony

faitohi

formal proposal by the bridegroom to the bride's parents to marry their daughter

failotu

to conduct prayer service or leader of a prayer meeting

fakaafe

Tongan feast

fakaafe faka'osita'u

preparation of a Tongan feast for end of year church service

fakaafe kilisimasi

preparation of a Tongan feast for Christmas church service

fakaafe uikelotu

preparation of a Tongan feast for the New Year Prayer Week

faka'apa'apa

respect

fakafalala

dependence

fakalēlea

pre-wedding evening get together of the bride's and groom's extended family

faka kuata

quarterly church meeting

fakamā

shame

fakamanatu

remembrance

fakamāvae

final farewell ceremony between the deceased person's family and his/her wife/husband

faka-Mē

children's White Sunday

fakangalingali

wanting to please others

faka'osita'u

end of year church service

fakapotopoto

prudence

faka-Sepitema

women's September Sunday

fakavahavaha'a

competition

fāmili

family

<i>fātongia</i>	obligation
<i>fa'ē huki</i>	a member of the maternal relatives, usually one of mother's brothers, who accompany and serve the bride, groom or the birthday person during the wedding or birthday ceremony. <i>Fa'ē huki</i> literally means a mother-to-sit-on; which means the groom, bride and birthday person can sit on their lap during the ceremony.
<i>feipulua</i>	giving of food to mourners after the burial
<i>feitu'ui</i>	presentation of food, money and <i>koloa faka-Tonga</i> to the <i>fahu</i> and the immediate family immediately after the burial
<i>fevahevahe'aki</i>	sharing
<i>fetokoni'aki</i>	reciprocity
<i>fesiosiofaki</i>	envy
<i>fe'ofa'ofani</i>	to be fond of
<i>fe'ofa'aki</i>	to be kind to one another
<i>fiehā</i>	show off
<i>foaki</i>	giving
<i>fono</i>	meeting of the adult male members of the communities
<i>fonua</i>	nation
<i>fua fatongia/fatongia</i>	responsibility to fulfil an obligation to members of the family, church or the nation

H

<i>ha'a me'avale</i>	commoners
<i>hou'eiki</i>	chiefs

I

<i>'ilo</i>	eating for the nobles
-------------	-----------------------

K

<i>kai</i>	eating for the commoners
<i>kainga</i>	clan or tribe which consists of the distant relatives
<i>kātoanga</i>	ceremony
<i>kātoanga mali</i>	wedding ceremony
<i>kātoanga fai'aho</i>	birthday ceremony
<i>kato teu</i>	ornamental basket
<i>kilisimasi</i>	Christmas
<i>koloa faka-Tonga</i>	Tongan valuables such as <i>tapa</i> and mats
<i>konifelenisi</i>	conference
<i>konifelenisi fakata'u</i>	annual church conference
<i>kulupu toungeāue</i>	cooperative group

L

launima
liongi

50 foot tapa cloth
individuals who hold the lowest position in a funeral and they have no rights whatsoever during the event. They are supposed to make and serve the food during the mourning period.

M

maka
maumau

makafetoli'aki

matāpule
misinale
mo'ui fakatokolahi
mehikitanga

rock or stone
literally means to break. In the context of a funeral it is the presentation of food and other items to the *fahu* to symbolise that mourning is over
literally mean chipping each other's rocks or, metaphorically, to take turns in helping each other, reciprocity or *fetokoni'aki*.
talking chief
annual church donation
communalism
father's sister(s)

N

nima ma'u
nofo'akime'a
nōpele
nofo 'a kainga

selfish or not wanting to give
mourners coming together to mourn
noble
kinship ties

Ng

ngaahi pola
ngaahi tukufakaholo
ngaahi pola konifelenisi
ngali vale
ngatu
ngāue
ngutulau

preparation of Tongan feast
traditions and customs
to make a Tongan feast for church conference
shame
tapa cloth
work
gossip

O

'ofa

love

P

pa'anga
pola
pongipongi tapu
pōtālanoa
puaka toho

Tongan currency
table of cooked food
final mourning ceremony after a burial
informal talk into the night or long informal talk
large-size pig

puaka tunu
putu

roast pig
funeral

S

Sapate Fa'e
Sapate faka-Me
Sapate Tamai
siasi
siokita

Mothers' Sunday
Children White Sunday
Fathers' Sunday
church
selfish

T

tālanoa
tanu
tauhi 'eiki
tauhi vā
taumafa
ta'e 'ofa
tekiteki

tōungāue
toulālānga
toulanganga
toutai
toutu'u
tou
tu'a
tui faka-Kalisitiane

dialogue
burial
maintaining relationships with nobles and royal family
maintain good relationships
eating for the King and members of royal family
no love
money being put on the dancer to be gifted to someone
special in a ceremony
working together collaboratively
to work together in mat-weaving
to work together in tapa-cloth-making
fishing
to work together in farming
to take turns
commoner
Christian faith

U

'ulumotu'a
uike lotu
'uluaki Sapate

head of the extended family
New Year Prayer Week
first Sunday service ceremony of the newly-wed couple

Tongan Phrases and Proverbs

Fakatu'utu'unga 'o e sosaieti Tonga
Social structure

He'ikai temau lava 'e mautolu 'o totongi homau mo'ua ki he'e mau matu'a
We can't pay back our parents for what they have done for us in the past

Kau ma'olunga 'o Tonga
Burgeoning "middle class" of commoners who have gained a certain amount of wealth and prestige through education and employment

Kehe pe ke lava 'a e fatongia he te tau fe'ao pe kitautolu mo e masiva ki he mate
Let us fulfil our obligations [and not worry about being rich] because we will always be poor until we die

Ko 'etau nofo ni ko e maka fetoli'aki
We live based on the principle of reciprocity or through helping each other

Ko e me'a fakavale he anga ka ko e masiva
It makes you feel like a fool when you are poor and cannot fulfil your obligations

Ngaahi tefito'i 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga
Tongan core values

Pikipiki hama ka e vaevae manava
Let us hold our canoe together while we share the food left on board

Sai ke fai mo 'osi e ako ka e omai 'o ngaue ke tokoni hono fua e ngaahi kavenga
We can't wait for them [our children] to complete their study so that they could help fulfil our [parents'] obligations

Sai ko e 'oku ke tu'umalie he 'oku tokolahi ho'o fanau 'i muli
You [the parents] are rich because many of your children are overseas

Siakale 'o e nofo 'a kainga
Kinship circle

Si'i pe ka e ha
It does not matter if what we take is small as long as we show up

Si'isi'i femolimoli'i
Though it is small let us share it

Tangi ke vikia ka e 'au e kainga
Seeking praise impoverishes one's kin

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Application for approval of research in Tonga



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

Courier to Human Sciences Building
Level 9, 10 Symonds St.
Auckland, New Zealand

Centre for Development Studies

Private Bag 92019
Auckland
New Zealand
Telephone 64 9 373 7599 ext. 85338 / 88535
Facsimile 64 9 373 7441
Internal Facsimile 85441
Email: devstudies@auckland.ac.nz
Website: www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/dev

11th January 2008

Chief Secretary and Secretary to Cabinet
Prime Minister's Office
Nuku'alofa
TONGA

Dear Madam

I am a doctorate student at the University of Auckland and am now in my second year doing a Doctorate Degree on Development Studies. I am planning to be in Tonga from December 2008 until January 2009 to conduct a field research as part of my Doctorate Program at the University of Auckland. There will be subsequent visits to this main visit in order to collect any further information required for the completion of this research. Therefore, this letter is to seek the Government's formal approval that I conduct my research in Tonga.

My research thesis is entitled "The impact of culture on economic performances of Tongans." The interview will be carried out by me and two interviewers, who will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement before interviewing participants. All data will be stored only for the duration of this project. This will be stored in a locked cabinet at my residence for the duration of my study, after which time I will be responsible for destroying all information. While in Tonga, all data will be stored at a

locked cabinet at my residence on Hala Hihifo, Nuku'alofa, Tonga. In New Zealand this will be stored at a locked cabinet at my residence at 2 Dreifuss Place, Mangere East, Auckland. In case you need to contact myself or my Supervisor, please find below our the contact details.

Researcher: Mrs. 'Ofa Afuha'amango Ketu'u
2 Dreifuss Place
Mangere East
Auckland, New Zealand 1701
Telephone: 64 9 270 3436 (H) or 64 9 920 9138 (W)
Email address: ketuu@xtra.co.nz

Supervisor/Head of Department:
Professor Ken Jackson
Centre for Development Studies
Human Science Building
Level 8, 10 Symonds Street
Telephone 64 9 373 7599
Internal Facsimile 85441
Email: k.jackson@auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

For ethical concerns please contact: The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Room 005, Alfred Nathan House, 24 Princes Street. Tel: 64-9-3737599 ext. 87830.

I truly look forward for your favourable consideration of this application.

Respectfully

Mrs 'Ofa Ketu'u

Appendix 2: Participation Information Sheet



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Email: devstudies@auckland.ac.nz

Website: www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/dev

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (PIS)

Project Title: The Impact of Culture on the Economic Performance of a Tongan

Researcher: Mrs. 'Ofa Afuha'amango Ketu'u

2 Dreifuss Place

Mangere East

Auckland, New Zealand 1701

Telephone: 64 9 270 3436 (H) or 64 9 920 9138 (W)

Email address: ketuu@xtra.co.nz

Supervisor/Head of Department:

Professor Ken Jackson

Centre for Development Studies

Human Science Building

Level 8, 10 Symonds Street

Telephone 64 9 373 7599

Internal Facsimile 85441

Email: k.jackson@auckland.ac.nz

The University of Auckland

Private Bag 92019

Auckland, New Zealand

This is to invite you to participate in research I will be undertaking as part of my doctorate program at the University of Auckland. This research will take place from December 2008 to January 2009 in Tongatapu Island, Tonga. The intention of this research is to assist the researcher in analysing the impact of Tongan cultures on the economic performance of a Tongan:

- whether there is any relationship between cultures and the economic performances of a Tongan.
- whether this relationship is positive or negative; and the
- ways forward toward improving this relationship.

The interview will be carried out by me and two interviewers. They are Miss Lisita Paongo the Deputy Principal for Lavengamalie College and Mrs. Fataki Finau of Fasi. They are both required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement before interviewing participants. There is no obligation for you to be part of this research. This interview will take no more than one hour and it will be conducted at a place suitable to the participants.

A tape recording of this interview will be optional, and even if you agree to being taped, you may choose for the recorder to be switched off at any stage. You will not be required to edit the transcript of the recordings but you will be offered a copy of the tape after it is transcribed. 'Ofa A. Ketu'u will be responsible for transcribing the tape and all information published from the findings will be done in such a way that does not identify you as an individual. You will be free to withdraw from the research project at any time, and may withdraw part or all of your interview material within one month following the interview, after which time you will not be able to withdraw it.

All data will be stored only for the duration of this project. This will be stored in a locked cabinet at my residence for the duration of my study, after which time I will be responsible for destroying all information. While in Tonga, all data will be stored at a locked cabinet at my residence on Hala Hihifo, Nuku'alofa, Tonga. In New Zealand this will be stored at a locked cabinet at my residence at 2 Dreifuss Place, Mangere East, Auckland. If you are willing to be a participant in this doctoral research project would you please sign the attached Consent Form and return it to me.

For ethical concerns contact: The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Room 005, Alfred Nathan House, 24 Princes Street. Tel: 64-9-3737599 ext. 87830.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPATION ETHIC COMMITTEE ON 20th February 2008 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2007/281.

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

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Internal Facsimile 85441

Email: devstudies@auckland.ac.nz

Website: www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/dev

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (CF)

I,, am willing to be a participant in the research undertaken by the researcher, 'Ofa A. Ketu'u on a project titled "The impact of cultures on the economic performance of a Tongan". Participation will involve two stages: (i) first visit is to confirm participation and a time for the interview; and (ii) second visit is to conduct the interview. There is no obligation for me to be part of this research. I agree/do not agree for the researcher to use audio tape during this interview. Even if I agree to being taped, I may choose for the recorder to be switched off at any stage. I will not be required to edit the transcript of the recordings but I will be offered a copy of the tape after it is transcribed upon request.

I am free to withdraw from the research project at any time, and may withdraw part or all of my interview material within one month following the interview, after which time I will not be able to withdraw it. I agree for the interviewer to interview me on the condition that he/she has signed a Confidentiality Agreement.

This Consent Form will be kept for a period of six years by the Supervisor in a locked cabinet at the University premises.

Signed:..... Name:.....
Date:.....

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPATION
ETHIC COMMITTEE ON 20th February 2008 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER
2007/281.

Appendix 4: Confidentiality Agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT regulates the disclosure of information by

PARTICIPANT to INTERVIEWER as of _____ (Effective Date)

1. Definition of Confidential Information

As used in this Agreement, "Confidential Information" shall mean any and all information provided by the participants, either in writing or verbally, to the interviewer for the purpose of this research. This will include but is not limited to (a) completed questionnaire form, (b) information from the interview both written and recorded, and (c) any other information provided by the participant to the research assistant for the purpose of this survey.

2. Handling of Confidential Information

Interviewers agree that at all times they will hold in strict confidence and not disclose to any third party Confidential Information of the participants. They are not to give this confidential information to anyone but the researcher, Mrs. 'Ofa Ketu'u, for the purpose of this project.

Signed:

Interviewer :.....

Date:.....

Appendix 5: Code for Pseudonyms

Maka 1	= participant 1	Maka 26	= participant 1
Maka 2	= participant 2	Maka 27	= participant 27
Maka 3	= participant 3	Maka 28	= participant 28
Maka 4	= participant 4	Maka 29	= participant 29
Maka 5	= participant 5	Maka 30	= participant 30
Maka 6	= participant 6	Maka 31	= participant 31
Maka 7	= participant 7	Maka 32	= participant 32
Maka 8	= participant 8	Maka 33	= participant 33
Maka 9	= Participant 9	Maka 34	= participant 34
Maka 10	= participant 10	Maka 35	= participant 35
Maka 11	= participant 11	Maka 36	= participant 36
Maka 12	= participant 12	Maka 37	= participant 37
Maka 13	= Participant 13	Maka 38	= participant 38
Maka 14	= participant 14	Maka 39	= participant 39
Maka 15	= participant 15	Maka 40	= participant 40
Maka 16	= participant 16	Maka 41	= participant 41
Maka 17	= Participant 17	Maka 42	= participant 42
Maka 18	= participant 18	Maka 43	= participant 43
Maka 19	= participant 19	Maka 44	= participant 44
Maka 20	= participant 20	Maka 45	= participant 45
Maka 21	= Participant 21	Maka 46	= participant 46
Maka 22	= participant 22	Maka 47	= participant 47
Maka 23	= participant 23	Maka 48	= participant 48
Maka 24	= participant 24	Maka 49	= participant 49
Maka 25	= Participant 25	Maka 50	= participant 50

Appendix 6: Profile of the Participants

Pseudonym name	Age range	Sex	Level of income ⁹¹	Any savings in the bank?	Estimated share (%) of income spent on cultural and church obligations	Main reason for fulfilling cultural/church obligations
Maka 1	60+	M	high	very little	40-50	reciprocity; maintaining good relationships; maintaining stance in the community and honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 2	30-59	M	medium	very little	10-20	mainly due to influence from parents; otherwise no real appreciation of the current practices
Maka 3	30-59	M	medium	none	20-30	reciprocity; sharing; obligations to help other members of the extended family/community
Maka 4	30-59	M	medium	just enough to keep the business going	20-30	maintaining good relationships with others; help other members of extended family; to honour God for his love
Maka 5	30-59	F	medium	none	30-40	mainly pressure from husband's extended family
Maka 6	30-59	F	medium	none	70-80	mainly pressure from extended family
Maka 7	30-59	F	medium	none	50-60	reciprocity; sharing and honour God for his love
Maka 8	30-59	M	high	none	50-60	reciprocity; sharing and honour God for his love
Maka 9	60+	M	medium	very little just to keep the business going	30-40	reciprocity; maintaining good relationships; maintaining stance in the community; honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 10	30-59	F	high	none	40-50	reciprocity; sharing and honour God for his love
Maka 11	60+	M	supported by children	none	60-70	honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 12	30-59	F	medium	none	40-50	reciprocity; sharing and honour God for his love
Maka 13	30-59	F	medium	none	40 - 50	mainly pressure from parents; reciprocity and honour God for his love
Maka 14	30-59	M	medium	none	40-50	Sharing; honour God for his love and faith
Maka 15	30-59	F	medium	none	40-50	reciprocity; sharing and honour God for his love
Maka 16	30-59	M	medium	none	40-50	reciprocity; honour God for his love but also pressure from parents

⁹¹ High income refers to those earning 40,000 *pa'anga* or more annually; medium income refers to those earning between 20,000 *pa'anga* and 40,000 *pa'anga*; and low income refers to those earning less than 20,000 *pa'anga* a year. (TDoS 2010)

Maka 17	18-29	M	medium	none	0- 10	due to too much pressures/expectations from parents
Maka 18	30-59	F	medium	none	40 - 50	sometimes due to pressure from parents and extended family
Maka 19	60+	M	low	none	50 - 60	honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 20	30-59	F	medium	none	40-50	maintain good relationships with others; help other members of extended family and community
Maka 21	60+	M	low	none	50-60	reciprocity; maintaining good relationships with others and honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 22	60+	F	low	none	50-60	reciprocity; sharing; maintaining good relationships with others and honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 23	60+	M	low	none	60-70	maintaining good relationships with nobles and royal family; maintain stance in the community; reciprocity and and honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 24	60+	F	low	none	60-70	reciprocity; maintaining good relationships with others; self satisfaction and honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 25	60+	F	high	none	60-70	reciprocity; maintaining good relationships with others; honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 26	30-59	M	high	yes	60-70	mainly reciprocity and sharing and honour God for his love
Maka 27	30-59	F	low	none	10-20	mainly due to expectations and pressures from parents and extended family
Maka 28	18-29	F	medium	yes	40-50	mainly due to expectations and pressures from parents and extended family
Maka 29	18-29	F	low	none	60-70	pressure from parents to contribute toward church/cultural obligations
Maka 30	30-59	F	low	none	60-70	mainly church
Maka 31	30-59	M	low	none	60-70	mainly to honour God for his love
Maka 32	30-59	F	low	none	60-70	mainly to honour God for his love
Maka 33	30-59	M	high	very little	50 - 70	stance in the community; reciprocity; sharing; willing to help others
Maka 34	30-59	F	medium	none	20-30	stance in the community; reciprocity; sharing; willing to help others
Maka 35	30-59	M	medium	none	20-30	sharing but sometimes due to pressure from extended family
Maka 36	30-59	M	high	none	50-70	sharing but sometimes due to pressure from extended family
Maka 37	60+	F	medium	none	10-20	reciprocity; maintaining stance in the community; honour God for his love to me

						and my family
Maka 38	60+	M	high	none	50-60	reciprocity; maintaining stance in the community; honour God for his love to me and my family
Maka 39	60+	M	low	none	70-80	maintain to honour God for his love to me and my family and reciprocity
Maka 40	60+	F	low	none		reciprocity; maintaining good relationships with others and investment on social relationship
Maka 41	18-29	F	low	none	0-10	help parents meet their obligations
Maka 42	18-29	F	low	none	10-20	help parents meet their obligations
Maka 43	18-29	F	low	none	10-20	help parents meet their obligations
Maka 44	18-29	M	low	none	10-20	due to pressure from everyone: church, parents and extended family
Maka 45	18-29	F	medium	none	20-30	help parents to support church/culture but sometimes not sure why I am doing it
Maka 46	18-29	M	medium	none	30-40	sharing/maintaining good relationships with extended family members
Maka 47	18-29	F	medium	none	not sure	help parents as part of reciprocating their love to me
Maka 48	18-29	F	medium	none	0-5	sometimes due to pressure from parents
Maka 49	18-29	F	medium	very little	0-5	help parents as part of reciprocating their love to me
Maka 50	18-29	F	medium	very little	0-10	help parents as part of reciprocating their love to me

Appendix 7: Interview Guiding Questions
(First Round Interview)

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THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
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11/12/2008

Participant's Profile:

Name:
Age:
Gender:
No of children (if married):
Church:
Estimate Annual Income:
Source of income:
Level of Savings:

Part 1: What are the key cultural factors that drive Tongans' economic behaviour? Ko e ha nai 'a e ngaahi konga mahu'inga 'o e 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga 'oku ne uesia 'a e mo'ui faka-'ekonomika 'a e Tonga?

1. What is your understanding of the Tongan culture?
Koe ha nai 'a e mahino kia tekoe 'a e 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga?

2. What are the core values and principles that underpin the Tongan culture?
Ko e ha nai 'ae ngaahi tefito'i 'ulungaanga 'oku makatu'unga ai 'a e 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga?
3. Is Christian faith/religion part of the Tongan culture today?
'Oku pehe 'e he tokolahi kuo hoko 'a e lotu faka-kalisitiane koe konga ia hotau 'ulungaanga faka-fonua. Ko e mo'oni nai 'eni?
4. What do you think are the core cultural values and principles influencing Tongans' economic behaviours?
Koe ha nai 'a e ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga 'oku ne uesia lahi taha 'a e mo'ui faka-'ekonomika 'a e Tonga?

Part 2: Culture and its impact on individuals' economic performance.

Ko hotau 'ulungaanga fakafonua mo 'ene uesia 'a e mo'ui faka'ekonomika fakafonua'ituitui.

5. Is Tongan culture an impediment to the economic performance of Tongans?
'Oku mo'oni nai 'a e lave koia 'oku pehe "'Oku hoko hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga ko e fakamasiva faka-'ekonomika kia tekita'utolu Tonga?
6. Do you sometimes contribute to cultural or church obligations?
'Oku 'iai nai ha taimi 'oku ke fakamole ai ki he ngaahi kavenga faka-famili, fakafonua mo e ngaahi kavenga faka-lotu?
7. How much on average do you normally contribute to cultural or church obligations in a year? How much do you save in the bank?
Ko e fiha nai 'oku ke fakamole ki he ngaahi kavenga faka-famili, faka-fonua mo e faka-siasi he ta'u?
8. Which obligation do you spend your money on most? Is it church or cultural obligation?
Ko e ha nai 'a e ngaahi fatongia 'oku lahi taha ho'o fakamole ai? Ko e ngaahi kavenga faka-siasi pe ko e ngaahi kavenga faka-famili mo e faka-fonua?
9. What are the main reasons for your contributing to these cultural or church obligations?
Ko e ha nai 'a e ngaahi 'uhinga mahu'inga 'oku ke fie foaki ai ki he ngaahi kavenga faka-famili, faka-fonua mo e faka-siasi?

10. Do you think you are financially worse off because of all these church and cultural obligations?
'Oku ke pehe nai 'oku maumau ho'o pa'anga hono foaki ki he ngaahi fatongia ko'eni?
11. What are some of the economic and non-economic impacts these financial commitments, toward cultural and church obligations, have on you and your family?
Ko e ha nai 'a e ngaahi tafa'aki faka-'ekonomika mo faka-sosiale 'oku uesia ai ko e mo ho ki'i famili tupu mei ho'o tauhi ho ngaahi fatongia faka-lotu, faka-famili mo faka-fonua?
12. Do you see any benefit for you and your family through making these cultural and church contributions?
Ko e ha nai ha fa'ahinga lelei 'oku ke pehe teke ma'u mei he fua e ngaahi fatongia faka-famili, faka-fonua mo e faka-siasi?
13. Do you sometimes benefit from other people through the practice of sharing and reciprocity, which are core parts of the Tongan culture?
'Oku 'iai nai ha taimi 'oku ke fa'a 'inasi ai ha ngaahi 'ofa 'oku fakahoko mai kia ko e 'o makatu'unga 'i hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga ko ia ko e fetokoni'aki mo e fevahevahe'aki?
14. When is it that you benefit most from the culture of sharing and reciprocity? Is it only during cultural events such as birthdays, funerals or wedding or is it more regularly than that?
Ko e ha nai 'a e taimi 'oku ke 'inasi ai ha ngaahi tokoni mo ha ngaahi 'ofa fakafou mai 'i hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga ko ia ko e fetokoni'aki mo e fevahevahe'aki?

Part 3: Is there a need for a modification in the current cultural and church practices among Tongans?

'Oku totonu nai ke ha liliu he ngaahi founa hono fakahoko 'a hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga he taimi ni?

15. Given the current tight economic and financial situation in Tonga and overseas, do you think it is time to modify some of current practices of our Tongan culture?
'Oku ke pehe kuo taimi nai ke liliu 'ae founa 'etau fakahoko hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga koe'uhi he 'oku to lalo 'a e tu'unga fakapa'anga mo faka'ekonomika he ngaahi 'aho ni?
16. If you agree to modify some of the current practices of the Tongan culture can you explain what needs to be modified?
Kapau leva 'oku ke tui kuo taimi ke fai ha liliu 'ae founa fakahoko hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga koe ha nai 'a e ngaahi me'a 'oku totonu ke liliu?

17. How do you think we should go about making these changes?

'Oku ke pehe 'e anga fefe nai hono fakahoko 'a e ngaahi liliu ko'eni?

18. What do you think would be the biggest challenge or obstacles faced if we are to make these changes to the way we currently practice our Tongan culture?

Ko e ha nai 'a e fa'ahinga fe'atungia lahi taha tetau fehangahangai mo ia kapau tetau lotu ke fakahoko ha liliu ki he founga fakahoko hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga?

19. Who do you think would be most appropriate/powerful in the Tongan society in ensuring these proposed modifications are implemented? The church, government, nobles and the royal family or the individual Tongans?

Ko hai nai 'oku ke pehe 'oku totonu ke ne fakahoko 'a e ngaahi liliu ko'eni? Ko e siasi, pule'anga, kau nopele mo e fale 'oe Tu'i pe ko e kakai Tonga pe?

20. Is there any final comment you want to add toward this interview?

'Oku 'iai nai ha toe me'a kehe 'oku ke lotu ke tanaki mai ki he 'initaviu kuo ta fakahoko?

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ETHIC COMMITTEE ON 20th February 2008 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER
2007/281.

Appendix 8: Interview Guiding Questions
(Second Round Interview)

Objective: To seek youth's viewpoint on how the current Tongan cultural and church practices could be modified.

1. Given the current tight economic and financial situation in Tonga and overseas, do you think it is time to modify some of current practices of our Tongan culture?
'Oku ke pehe kuo taimi nai ke liliu 'ae founga 'etau fakahoko hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga koe'uhi he 'oku to lalo 'a e tu'unga fakapa'anga mo faka'ekonomika he ngaahi 'ahoni?
2. If you agree to modify some of the current practices of the Tongan culture can you explain what needs to be modified?
Kapau leva 'oku ke tui kuo taimi ke fai ha liliu 'ae founga fakahoko hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga koe ha nai 'a e ngaahi me'a 'oku totonu ke liliu?
3. How do you think we should go about making these changes?
'Oku ke pehe 'e anga fefe nai hono fakahoko 'a e ngaahi liliu ko'eni?
4. What do you think would be the biggest challenge or obstacles faced if we are to make these changes to the way we currently practice our Tongan culture?
Ko e ha nai 'a e fa'ahinga fe'atungia lahi taha tetau fehangaangai mo ia kapau tetau loto ke fakahoko ha liliu ki he founga fakahoko hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga?
5. Who do you think would be most appropriate/powerful in the Tongan society in ensuring these proposed modifications are implemented? The church, government, nobles and the royal family or the individual Tongans?
Ko hai nai 'oku ke pehe 'oku totonu ke ne fakahoko 'a e ngaahi liliu ko'eni? Ko e siasi, pule'anga, kau nopele mo e fale 'oe Tu'i pe ko e kakai Tonga pe?
6. Is there any final comment you want to add toward this interview?
'Oku 'iai nai ha toe me'a kehe 'oku ke loto ke tanaki mai ki he 'initaviu kuo ta fakahoko?

Appendix 9: Interview Guiding Questions
(Third Round Interview)

Objective: To find out whether Tongan leaders are ready for this proposed modification.

1. Given the current tight economic and financial situation in Tonga and overseas, do you think it is time to modify some of current practices of our Tongan culture?
'Oku ke pehe kuo taimi nai ke liliu 'ae founa 'etau fakahoko hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga koe'uhi he 'oku to lalo 'a e tu'unga fakapa'anga mo faka'ekonomika he ngaahi 'ahoni?
2. If you agree to modify some of the current practices of the Tongan culture can you explain what needs to be modified?
Kapau leva 'oku ke tui kuo taimi ke fai ha liliu 'ae founa fakahoko hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga koe ha nai 'a e ngaahi me'a 'oku totonu ke liliu?
3. How do you think we should go about making these modifications?
'Oku ke pehe 'e anga fefe nai hono fakahoko 'a e ngaahi liliu ko'eni?
4. What do you think would be the biggest challenge or obstacles faced if we are to make these changes to the way we currently practice our Tongan culture?
Ko e ha nai 'a e fa'ahinga fe'atungia lahi taha tetau fehangahangai mo ia kapau tetau loto ke fakahoko ha liliu ki he founa fakahoko hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga?
5. Would you be willing to lead this proposed modification in your own social class/church/community/extended family?
Ko hai nai 'oku ke pehe 'oku totonu ke ne fakahoko 'a e ngaahi liliu ko'eni? Ko e siasi, pule'anga, kau nopele mo e fale 'oe Tu'i pe ko e kakai Tonga pe?
6. Is there any final comment you want to add toward this interview?
'Oku 'iai nai ha toe me'a kehe 'oku ke loto ke tanaki mai ki he 'initaviu kuo ta fakahoko?