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THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

USED IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS –

REFLECTIONS FROM TONGA

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the project management practices and examines the use of project management framework in development projects in Tonga. This study draws on the experience of Tongan public servants, project stakeholders and donor representatives to reveal the nature of project management practices. It argues that these project management practices must be informed by the cultural values and traditions of the social context. Through the use of two methodological approaches, *talanoa* and convergent interviews, data was gathered from project staff, civil servants and donor agency representatives in three countries, Tonga, Fiji and New Zealand.

The *kakala* framework was used as a binding mechanism for this study that facilitated a more dynamic and representative approach to research. It was used to view and interpret the research process through a Tongan cultural lens. Furthermore, it is used as a framework to provide culturally authentic nuances for understanding and conceptualizing the PLC framework from a Tongan perspective.

The findings show a fragmented understanding and application of project management practices in development projects. At the macro level, there are issues with synthesizing systems to coordinate projects. Moreover, structural differences in project management frameworks inhibited practices within the three main stages of the project cycle, namely, planning, implementation, and evaluation. At the micro level, there were project management practices absent in the specific project stages. Furthermore, it was found that the practices used failed to acknowledge the cultural traditions and ways of knowing of Tongan participants.

The contributions of this research and their implications apply to the areas of project management theory, development policy and research design. I argue that there is a need to shift the project management paradigm and have it be informed by the worldviews and ideologies of recipient countries. I suggest a merging of hard and soft project models – a middle ground that appreciates technical tools and frameworks and is adapted to fit the philosophical assumptions of the individuals enacting the project management practices.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to two influential people whose silent prayers and faithful hearts were the driving force behind this research:

The late Ana Siata Takapautolo

of Mo’ungaone, Kolomotu’a, Fasi moe afi, Nuku’alofa, Tongatapu

and

The late Alekisanita Uinoa-i-hakau Fiemano Sisifa

of Lofanga, Foa, Ha’apai
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“So then, we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith”

(Galatians 6:10)

Primarily, I acknowledge that this endeavour and journey of self-discovery was guided by our Saviour Lord Jesus Christ. Without his faithful spirit and unconditional love I would not have had the courage and determination to complete this research.

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Tu’a eiki ofa atu
ACRONYM

ADB – Asian Development Bank
AMD – Aid Management Division
AusAID – Australia Aid Program
CSB – Clinical Services Building
Dip PSM – Diploma in Public Sector Management
EDC – Economic Development Committee
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
GNI – Gross National Income
GOPP – Goal Oriented Project Planning
HDI – Human Development Index
HR – Human Resource
IMF – International Monetary Fund
JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency
LDC – less developed countries
Logframe – Logical framework
MDG – Millennium Development Goals
MFNP – Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MIRAB – Migration, Immigration, Aid and Bureaucracy
MOH – Ministry of Health
NGO – Non-Government Organizations
NSDP – National Strategic Development Plan
NSPF – National Strategic Planning Framework
NZAID – New Zealand Aid Program
OCED – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PACC – Project Aid Coordination Committee
PCM – Project Cycle Management
PDCA – Plan, Do, Check, and Action Framework
PFTAC – Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre
PIA – Project Implementation Assistance
PIAC – Project Implementation Assistance Consultants
PIC – Pacific Island Countries
PLC – Project Life Cycle
PM4NGO – Project Management for Non-Governmental Organizations
PMDEV – Project Management for Development
PMPro – Project Management for Development Professionals
PMU – Project Management Unit
PSC – Project Steering Committee
PUMD – Planning and Urban Management Division
SIDS – Small Island Developing State
SOE – State Owned Enterprise
TA – Technical Assistance
TAG – Technical Advisory Mission
TOP – Tongan pa’anga
TWB – Tonga Water Board
UIDP – Urban Integrated Development Projects
UN – United Nations
USAID – United States Agency for International Development

WAL – Waste Authority Limited

WHO – World Health Organization

ZOPP-Zielorientierte Projektplanung
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 2006, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) funded a development project that focused on improving the efficiency of management, construction and maintenance of infrastructure resources in Nuku’alofa, Tonga. The project cost approximately NZ$8.5 million, with a grant component of NZ$6.5 million. The project included three components: training and capacity building within the Ministry of Works; construction of buildings and roads; and technical support and project management. According to evaluation reports, the project failed to adequately achieve the intended objectives. There were a number of serious managerial issues that caused this project to fail, including a lack of adequate capacity and trained staff to service the project which contributed to their inability to engage in project work. Moreover, significant project management tasks such as planning and evaluation were poorly implemented which resulted in inferior project results.

Development projects have continued to fail in Tonga. In 2008, the management of aid funds in the Kingdom of Tonga came under public scrutiny. Local media and foreign news broadcasters publicized the budget discussions in regard to a NZ$147 million development loan signed with a large multilateral aid agency. This substantial development loan was originally intended for the reconstruction of the city centre in the capital Nuku’alofa after riots destroyed 80% of the commercial district in 2006. According to externally sponsored reports, only 40% of the loan was used for its original purpose (which included the enhancement of the Urban Wharf, Vuna Wharf and the reconstruction of the commercial district in Nuku’alofa) (Pulu, 2011). It was reported that NZ$12 million was spent on the renovations and improvements to the king’s residence, the Royal Palace. Another component of the budget discussions that received scrutiny was a sum of NZ$23 million that was reported as “other expenses” (Pulu, 2011).

Another aspect of development projects that has come under public scrutiny is the quality of technical advisors (TA) provided to support project staff. Questions regarding the technical capacity of engineers provided by, for example, Chinese aid agents were raised in relation to infrastructure plans submitted. In addition, the quality of foreign advisors and the services they provide has been questioned due to the lack of capacity they deliver (Dornan & Brant, 2014).

Given the lack of academic research on effectiveness of foreign assistance, Tonga’s aid
dependence, and the continuous failure of development projects, there is an urgent need for further exploration of the management of aid and its effectiveness in Tonga.

1.1 Research objective and questions

The events presented in the previous section are not isolated episodes. Development projects have continued to fail and a lack of empirical research into project management practices has been recognized in the development literature in general. Project management has been examined through various management lenses (Engwall, 2003). However, little traction has been achieved in establishing a sound theoretical base for project management theory. In general, the complexities of international development projects are not adequately considered in the literature. Intricate dimensions such as culture and civil servants’ conceptualization of project management tools are not recognized or understood. There is a lack of conceptual clarity and to some extent a lack of conscious awareness of the influence national culture has on project management practices. With this in mind, this study sheds light on the different ways that development projects are managed and coordinated in Tonga. Furthermore, different project management practices are examined and their influence on project outcomes is evaluated. Project management activities and practices usually follow the project life cycle (PLC) framework (Baum, 1978; Biggs & Smith, 2003; Landoni & Corti, 2011). Therefore, this study aims to examine the use of the PLC framework in development projects in Tonga.

The overarching research question is:

- How are development projects managed and coordinated in Tonga?

Given the lack of systematic and comprehensive assessment of the practical application of the PLC framework in development projects, and of the project management practices enacted within the PLC framework, this research question was developed into two further subquestions:

- What types of project management practices are used in the PLC model?
- How do these project management practices influence project outcomes?

I hold the view that project management practices influence or impact the overall project outcome. This positive correlation is based on extensive scholarship including research by Bryde (2003); Munns and Bjeirmi (1996), Cooke-Davies and Arzymanow (2003), and Mir and Pinnington (2014). These studies have established that there is a plausible causal relationship between project management practices and project outcomes and therefore
support the assumption set forward in this study. The gap that this research addresses is our limited understanding of the variations in project management practices used in development projects in Tonga. Furthermore, this study addresses the gap in understanding of how cultural frames of thinking influence the enactment of project management practices in development projects.

1.2 Significance and contributions of this research

As identified above, development projects have continued to fail in Tonga and there has been a lack of systematic exploration into why these projects are unsuccessful. Understanding the project management practices that influence project outcomes may significantly improve the effectiveness of development projects.

The contributions of this study are twofold. First, this study contributes to the project management field of knowledge. More specifically, it advances our understanding of management practices used to manage and coordinate development projects in Tonga. Second, this study contributes to development project management practices applied by recipient governments, in this case Tonga. Donor agencies and recipient governments have been under increasing pressure to be mutually accountable for poor results and to enhance transparency in relation to the outcomes of development projects. Therefore, the findings of this study will be of use to development practitioners operating in Tonga. Donor agencies such as New Zealand Aid Programme (NZAid) and Australian Aid may benefit from the results of this research as it identifies components that influence the adoption of project management frameworks such as the PLC framework. By understanding the project management practices and approaches that influence project outcomes, development actors may be able to design and employ more effective management practices.

This study may also be beneficial to the Government of Tonga in identifying the managerial practices that ultimately influence project outcomes. More specifically, government departments such as the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP), which coordinate foreign aid and foster policies that enhance and facilitate the effective delivery of development projects may benefit.

1.3 Motivations behind this study

Many factors have led me to study development projects in Tonga but my main motivations were to understand why projects are failing and to serve my community by contributing to
the existing knowledge and advocating for the legitimacy of the Tongan worldview in academia. Research, I believe, is about purposefully searching for knowledge or understanding the unknown in an attempt to shed light on areas of darkness. This has been the premise of my academic journey.

An influential catalyst for my interest in exploring the effectiveness of development projects was the anecdotes my father would share with us at the dinner table. He would share his experiences in managing agricultural programmes and projects in the Pacific region and highlight the lack of cultural consciousness in international consultants. It was somewhat paradoxical for me to hear of such knowledgeable and experienced Western men ignoring such obvious indigenous details of the context and people that they were attempting to help. These concerns triggered a sense of duty in me to convey the lack of consideration given to the Tongan worldview and the underlying assumptions that explain Tongans’ actions in development practices.

1.4 The research process

Mintzberg (2005) argues that the generation of new theories or “at least the significant adaptation of old ones” (Mintzberg, 2005, p. 7) is an inductive process through which new insights emerge. Mintzberg (2005) goes on to explain that in order to develop good theory the researcher must have the ability to “get close to the phenomenon as possible in digging out the inputs (data, stories and lots more), but then be able to step back to make something interesting out of them” (p. 7). When researchers are “too connected and [they] risk getting co-opted by the phenomenon . . . researchers to have be able to step back” (p. 7). These statements highlight a sense of duality in research approaches and provide validation for the use and alignment of both the kakala framework (see below) and the orthodox research paradigm.

Eminent Maori scholar Mason Durie (2005) also validates the process of shifting between the cultural consciousness of conducting and understanding research while upholding the standards of academic discipline. He notes that academics should be “straddling the divide between science and indigenous knowledge” (p. 144). Durie goes on to encourage researchers to mitigate and negotiate these tensions by acknowledging each value and belief system and also incorporating relevant, rigorous and interesting opportunities for creating new knowledge.
As a result of the intricate constructs that are dealt with in this study, a more dynamic and representative approach to research was required. A prominent Tongan research process introduced by Konai Helu-Thaman (Thaman, 1992) has been used as a central binding framework for this study. The *kakala* framework is used for two purposes. First, it is used to view and interpret the research process through a Tongan cultural lens and as an organizing structure for the thesis. As the *kakala* framework is a manifestation of the cultural values and practices, this framework is weaved into the research process. Second, this framework is used to interpret the traditional project management model, the PLC framework, as it provides a more authentic representation of the Tongan traditions, beliefs and values systems that are common to Tongan society. I argue that by embedding the *kakala* framework as a central pillar of cultural consciousness throughout this thesis, accurate, creditable and culturally robust results are generated.

The *tui kakala* is a traditional cultural practice that underpins the methodology and application of the research procedures. *Tui kakala* is a customary process of weaving fragrant flowers and leaves and, as a metaphor, it can be used to symbolise the production of knowledge in the Tongan context. The *kakala* framework, research based paradigm, offers a culturally conscious perspective that is both distinct from and relatable to the orthodox Western research perspectives. Perspective is an imperative and distinguishing element of this research. Studies conducted on development projects have been from the stance of the Tongan “outsider”. In order to provide a more authentic understanding of the processes and practices used within the government departments it was essential that cultural practices be integrated and embedded in the way that the research process was conducted.

The *kakala* framework is based on the culturally valuable process of creating a ceremonial garland (*kahoa kahala*). The traditional process of *tui kakala* (threading a ceremonial garland) encompasses four stages: *teu, toli, tui* and *luva*. This process resembles a cycle with a series of acts that are conducted to complete a finished task. Western ideologies of conducting academic research follow a somewhat structured linear process which includes problem identification (gap in knowledge or current understanding), review of significant and relevant literature in the field of knowledge, collection and analysis of data, discussion of findings, and finally contributions to the existing body of knowledge. The *kakala* framework is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

A data extraction technique used in various disciplinary fields and throughout the Pacific is
the *talanoa* method (Meo-Sewabu, 2014; Vaioleti, 2006). *Talanoa* is a technique that has informed various parts of the research process in this study such as the interpretation of research data. This Pacific research approach is strongly based on the interpretivist approach to knowledge creation which focuses primarily on understanding and accounting for the meaning of human experiences (Vaioleti, 2006). The *talanoa* technique allows for a more culturally appropriate and contextual interaction with Pacific Island participants in order to create more truthful knowledge (Vaioleti, 2006).

While Western research paradigms dominate development literature and rhetoric, they have been criticized for disempowering participants (Meo-Sewabu, 2014; Smith, 1999; Vaioleti, 2006; Wilson, 2001). Due to the delicate nature of the topics discussed, the *talanoa* method ensured a safe and culturally sensitive space for participants to share their experiences. *Talanoa* was therefore able to yield detailed responses from participants in regard to the managerial practices used in development projects.

1.5 **Scope**

This research focuses on the views of civil servants, project staff and donor agency representatives about development project practices in Tonga. I chose these participants for three reasons: first, these stakeholders revealed a wealth of experience and knowledge in regard to the managerial practices used in development projects. Second, they were involved in multiple levels of the projects and therefore revealed a variety of perspectives on the managerial practices and their effectiveness. Third, expanding the participant pool to include three stakeholder groups allows for data triangulation, or cross-verification from two or more sources. The thesis focuses on the project management practices used in development projects implemented in Tonga.

1.6 **Thesis structure**

This thesis is divided into 10 chapters. After this Introduction, Chapter 2 introduces the *kakala* framework which facilitated a more adaptive, dynamic and relevant process of creating new knowledge. Metaphors or *heliaki* are discussed as these literary instruments play a pivotal role in deconstructing the *kakala* framework and other Tongan traditional customs that inform project management practices. The orthodox Western research method is discussed and Easterby-Smith’s (2012) tree metaphor is used to describe the different stages of conducting the research. The scarcity of indigenous research approaches is also exposed in
Chapter 2 and this sets the stage for a discussion of the *kakala* framework as the research approach used to examine project management practices in this study.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on aid effectiveness and project management. The chapter starts with a review of the foreign aid and development literature and highlights the gap in knowledge that concerns the lack of understanding in regard to aid delivery mechanisms such as projects. Specifically, the review identifies the fragmented literature on project management practices used in development projects. The first half of the chapter focuses on aid effectiveness discourse, unpacks prominent constructs, and examines the critical arguments present in the literature. The second half examines project management practices and surveys the characteristics that differentiate traditional engineering/construction projects from development projects. Project management theory is analysed and project management practices examined. Lastly, the PLC framework is reviewed with each stage analytically examined in regard to the project management practices enacted.

Chapter 4 situates this thesis in South Pacific development literature and practice. This chapter grounds my exploration of the unique cultural attributes that influence the project management practices used in Tonga. Notions such as the “Pacific Way” and the “Pacific Paradox” are discussed in an effort to explore the complexities that are intrinsic to Pacific island development. In addition, regional development agendas and aid effectiveness principles are presented. The chapter concludes by discussing aid activity in the region.

Chapter 5 locates the thesis both in the relevant literature and in the Tongan social, economic and cultural environment. This chapter discusses the social values that are necessary for understanding the development process in Tonga. Tongan social and governance structures are discussed and the cultural interpretation of the term ‘development’ is provided. The chapter also discusses Tonga’s economic performance and examines past national strategic frameworks and the Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy (MIRAB) economic model (Bertram, 1993). The chapter concludes by outlining the aid activity in Tonga and discussing the largest four donor agencies active in the country.

Chapter 6 outlines the rationale behind the research methodology and the techniques used to gather, analyse and interpret data. The chapter starts by explaining why a qualitative research approach was adopted as the main research methodology. The chapter then justifies the reasons behind adopting a multi-case study strategy for this study. The project selection criteria used are also discussed. The three data collection techniques used to ascertain data are
described: *talanoa faka’eke’eke*, convergent interviewing, and document evaluation, together with the reasoning for adopting these methods. Methodological elements such as participant selection and reflections from the field are also presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion in regard to the data analysis used to interpret data.

Chapter 7 describes the five projects selected for analysis. First, the chapter describes the institutional landscape and governance mechanisms used to manage development projects within government, grounding the projects and providing context. The following sections discuss the five selected projects using project management descriptors such as background, objectives, resource input, implementation, results and evaluation assessment.

Chapter 8 reports the research findings. This chapter is divided into two parts in order to explore the two overarching findings in more detail. The first part of the chapter reveals the lack of governance strategies (coordination mechanisms) at the political level which affects the project management practices enacted in projects. The second part exposes the different project management practices (or lack thereof) enacted in each of the PLC stages. Civil servants lacked project planning skills and failed to incorporate human resource (HR) practices to help mitigate the lack of planning competences. This chapter also reveals the significance of the relationships and networks of project workers in facilitating project management processes. Project team silos are identified as barriers to project management functionality. Lastly, the chapter discusses the two key findings in relation to the evaluation stage of the PLC, the lack of attention to sustainability of technical assistance (TA), and the need for more transparency and accountable reporting of project assessments.

Chapter 9 contextualizes and interprets the findings in terms of Tonga’s current social and political environment. The recent democratic reform has influenced the governance systems and managerial practices used in government departments. These changes are discussed in the first part of the chapter. Each finding presented in the previous chapter is discussed and interpreted, and the existing literature is engaged to enhance our understanding of the findings.

Finally, Chapter 10 shows how this study has addressed the research questions and contributes to our understanding of development projects. The chapter starts by briefly reiterating the key findings and then outlines the contributions this research makes to theory, research and practice.
CHAPTER 2: TONGAN WORLDVIEW AND RESEARCH APPROACH

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a backdrop for this study in light of the cultural intricacies of researching indigenous phenomena. The chapter examines the philosophical assumptions that underpin the Tongan worldview. The kakala framework used in this study is introduced here as a culturally sensitive research approach.

There are two main advantages of adopting the kakala framework to explore the phenomenon under study. First, I argue that the kakala framework facilitated a more adaptive, dynamic and relevant process of creating new knowledge. Second, the combination of culturally applicable models of understanding reality and Western paradigms of research provides a viable angle and perspective on the social processes and practices in which indigenous Tongan researchers like myself engage in. The kakala framework is a sense-making paradigm for understanding the cognitive processes behind the research decisions the investigator makes. Zhu, He, Law, and Farh (2015) support this reasoning and state “theoretical advancement of an indigenous construct refers to the research effort in developing contextualized research by studying a focal existing indigenous phenomenon and examining its role within an existing theoretical framework or in developing a new conceptual model” (p. 614). Therefore, the kakala framework provides a layer of cultural consciousness and enables an appropriate mechanism for discerning the embedded social practices in this study.

The second cultural dimension applied in this research is the talanoa method. Talanoa is a culturally appropriate methodology that is recognized for its sensitivity to Pacific contexts; it also enables meaningful engagement with research participants. Talanoa is a “dynamic interaction of story-telling, debating, reflecting” (Otunuku, 2011, p. 45) between researcher and participants. The talanoa methodology is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

As metaphors are used throughout this study to interpret concepts and processes, it is important to clarify why this type of language is helpful and a valid interpretation tool for this study. These justifications are presented in section 2.2. Section 2.3 provides a brief explanation of the orthodox conceptualization of the research process. Section 2.4 discusses indigenous research and the benefits of using native paradigms. Section 2.5 outlines the
philosophical assumptions that underpin the Tongan worldview. Finally, section 2.6 discusses the kakala framework as an organizing function and way of conceptualizing the research process from a Tongan perspective.

2.2 The use of the heiliaki/metaphors

The role of metaphors in organizational behaviour studies has received increasing attention over the last two decades. More recently, there has been a resurgent interest in the use of metaphors in organizational management research. Authors such as Latusek and Vlaar (2015) explore the opportunities in building a contemporary research approach that utilizes metaphors as a way of interpreting managerial language. Latusek and Vlaar define metaphor as “the outcome of a cognitive process in which the literal meaning of a phrase or word is applied to a new context in a figurative sense” (p. 213).

Poetry and metaphoric, interpretive narrations such as dance and art play a significant role in Tongan history. Heliaki (double or hidden meaning) is closely associated with the metaphor and is a linguistic instrument used to share stories, preserve history and genealogical records, reinforce village affiliations and retain rich cultural practices. Schaaf (2009) highlights the significance of metaphors in understanding Tongan knowledge: “how do we speak our awkward truths, so raw that they glimmer and glisten, so painful that we cannot carry them inside us silent? We do this through metaphor” (p. 5). Kaeppler (2002) offers further confirmation of the importance of heliaki in understanding Tongan knowledge: “the important aesthetic concept here is heliaki, indirectness (to say one thing but mean another), which requires special knowledge and skill to compose and understand. The composer manifests heliaki in metaphor and layered meaning, skirting a subject and approaching it repeatedly from different angles” (p. 497). The use of metaphor or heliaki provides a depth of description and fullness, which natural and direct descriptions cannot provide.

Heliaki is part of many Tongan art forms including oratory and poetry, and is used as a foundation for music composition. Heliaki is also used as a literary device when addressing members of the royal family (Filihia, 2005). In this sense, it is an honorific used to demonstrate the significance and symbolic nobility of the hou’eiki. For instance, the chiefly term for ‘death’ is pekia, which translates literally as ‘picked or plucked flower’. This illustrates the symbolism inherent in the use of heliaki in Tongan culture.
2.3 The orthodox research process

Research involves systematically seeking information from a range of sources to ultimately answer a question or solve a problem. There are many paradigms that are employed to describe the researcher’s way of perceiving the world around them and to define the methodological approaches used to investigate a phenomenon. Dominant research paradigms in project management studies, such as the positivist lens, are traditionally used to understand and frame research topics and further shape the way in which we approach the phenomena (Cooke-Davies, Cicmil, Crawford, & Richardson, 2007; Smyth & Morris, 2007). Using a positivist lens, authors such as Weathington, Cunningham, and Pittenger (2012) propose five core elements to conducting scientific research in the public sector: (1) hypothesize; (2) operationalize; (3) measure; (4) evaluate; (5) revise and report.

The initial stage of the research process is identifying the research problem and establishing key variables for analysis. Through this positivist approach to research, the hypothesizing phase further requires the researcher to propose a set of explanations about the phenomena based on limited evidence. Positivist approaches to research such as the one described by Weathington et al. (2012) are based on different thinking from that of Pacific people. More specifically, elements such as hypotheses are based on preconceived notions that give boundaries to the knowledge that researchers are seeking. This is another assumption that is unnatural to the Tongan conceptualization of knowledge.

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson (2012) appropriately used a tree metaphor to represent the research process that illustrates how researchers navigate through the course of scientific research and is depicted in figure 1. Each element of the tree symbolizes a component of the traditional research process. First, the roots represent the investigative customs within a stream of knowledge. These research traditions formulate the foundation of the discipline. Researchers build on this foundation of knowledge and research traditions to create new knowledge or extend the current understanding of the phenomena in question. The roots draw on the nutrients from the soil which are transported through the tree trunk to the branches, creating leaves and fruit. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) this is a valuable representation of the initial stages of the research process where the researcher draws on the ideas, understandings and perspectives of other studies and forms the basis of their research methods which is symbolized by the tree trunk.

The trunk of the tree represents the fundamental elements of a research project, the ontologies
epistemologies, and methodologies that provide the scope of knowledge. The exploded view of the trunk exposes four layers (Figure 1). The inner ring or core is the densest part (heartwood) and represents ontology – the researcher’s basic assumptions regarding reality. Ontology is an essential component at the core of investigative endeavours that guides and justifies the selection of data collection techniques and furthermore rationalizes the results drawn from the research. The ring surrounding this (second from the centre) embodies the epistemological standpoint of the researcher. This is a crucial layer that represents the researcher’s “assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 15).

Figure 1: Western metaphoric representation of the research process

The third ring from the centre represents the methodology or the research techniques that underpin the study. The outer ring of the tree trunk represents the methods and techniques that bound the researcher’s assumptions about reality and knowledge (epistemology and ontology). These significant elements at the core of the trunk influence the methods employed to ascertain research data. Therefore, Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) appropriately order the layering of these important research elements to position the assumptions at the core of the trunk that further guide and influences the methods adopted. The methods are the most visible part of the research, which is appropriately represented by the final layer of the tree.
trunk. This representation is supported by Guba and Lincoln (1994), who claim that the philosophical assumptions can implicitly and explicitly influence the way research is carried out, as well as determining the lens and methods used to analyse data.

Returning to Easterby-Smith et al.’s (2002) tree metaphor, as we ascend the trunk we reach the branches that hold the fruit and leaves. The branches represent the collection and analysis of research material. The branches of a tree capture energy from sunlight that leads to the growth of existing leaves or blossoming of new fruit. This is associated with the process of collecting data which stimulates new theories (new leaves and fruit) or provides empirical results to confirm existing knowledge (growth of leaves and fruit).

Thaman (1998) argues that by utilizing the *kakala* framework in conjunction with the Western research process a more compelling and robust approach to conducting indigenous research can be achieved. Huffer and Qalo (2004) provide validation and support for synthesizing research approaches. The authors argue that constructing a valid and rigorous body of thought that is reflective of the Pacific community requires researchers to let “the world in, on its own terms” (p. 89). Furthermore, the outcomes of Pacific research should contribute to solidifying and affirming that Pacific philosophy is a legitimate and valid worldview.

I argue here that there are considerable advantages in purposefully viewing and interpreting the research process from both a Western and Tongan framework in order to yield a more meaningful understanding of development projects executed in Tonga. Sociologists such as Bartunek and Louis (1996) recognize these benefits and argue that “an approach to inquiry that embraces only one perspective is potentially ethnocentric” (p. 14). Utilizing the *kakala* framework as a way of conceiving the research process can also be seen as a form of cultural triangulation, whereby the inferences made from the data and the research outcomes are culturally rigorous. In addition to this, the integrity of the indigenous community, in this case Tonga, is maintained, and the findings will adequately reflect Tongan cultural practices and norms.

Durie (2005) perceives challenges in “straddling the divide between science and indigenous knowledge” (p. 144) and concludes that the central dilemma for indigenous researchers is attempting to negotiate between affording value and belief system while at the same time incorporating relevant, rigorous and interesting opportunities for creating new knowledge. The *kakala* framework provides a culturally viable model that acknowledges the values and
customs that are embedded in co-creating and validating indigenous knowledge.

### 2.4 Indigenous research approaches

Indigenous paradigms remain widely unrecognized and misunderstood as rigorous research approaches. The debate regarding the legitimacy of indigenous research approaches has increased as native knowledge, and its distinctiveness, is challenged by a more globalized culture (Groenfeldt, 2003). Adding to the complexities of acknowledging and understanding indigenous research is the challenge of accurately defining what indigenous research is. Some authors have argued that indigenous research explores native topics that in themselves are ambiguous (Gegeo, 1998; Wilson, 2001). Others have insisted that indigenous research requires native contextual variables that are measured in predominant Western research frameworks. However, many scholars argue that Western paradigms are flawed and unable to develop indigenous theories (Kovach, Carriere, Barrett, Montgomery, & Gillies, 2013; Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003; Zavala, 2013).

A considerable amount of research has been published on indigenous research approaches in varying contexts. However, the term ‘indigenous’ has been inadequately defined, which has led to inconsistent understanding of the parameters that bind the concept. It is therefore necessary to clarify the central premise or definition for term ‘indigenous’. The United Nations (2008) has put forward a definition and asserts that the term embodies seven central principles. These include:

- Self-determination
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding nature resources
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities

Source: UN (2008c, p. 1)

Groenfeldt (2003) notes that “there is a strong element of context relativity in the concept of indigenous, just as there is in the concept of my ‘home’ locality, which depending on my context I may claim as my country, my state of birth, my state of current residence, my neighbourhood of birth/residence, etc.” (p. 919). Locality is an important factor to consider,
as I am a Tongan female based in a New Zealand academic institution. However, the contextual landscape of my study is situated in Tonga. The plural nature of this study has required seemingly paradoxical frames of thinking that have been difficult to negotiate at times.

I have had fruitful and sometimes fruitless discussions with other indigenous researchers in regard to developing our understanding and ways of articulating our unique epistemological viewpoints. We constantly ask ourselves: Are we shedding light on indigenous knowledge? Or are we creating new knowledge that has an indigenous perspective? These questions still linger despite the highly productive and glass-ceiling-breaking works of eminent scholars such as Konai Thaman and Timote Vaioleti. These researchers have established a foundation and understanding of the Tongan ways of knowing and doing that has nourished and enriched this study. However, they have limited their cultural frameworks and indigenous methods to constructing Tongan knowledge in the field of education. This study extends this culturally sensitive technique to explore project management practices in development projects.

Indigenous knowledge is a significant aspect of ethnographic studies. There is no universal definition of the term ‘indigenous knowledge’ as it denotes various forms of cultural traditions that include arts, science, religion and philosophies (Kurtz, 2013). Furthermore, indigenous knowledge is a complex aggregation of local knowledge that is a link between stakeholders’ lived reality and their environment (Akena, 2012). Indigenous knowledge has been “viewed by European culture as inferior, superstitious, and primitive” (Akena, 2012, p. 601). Due to derogatory preconceptions of native knowledge, indigenous research has often been concealed and ill-treated in mainstream academia.

Martin and Mirrabooopa (2003) define ‘indigenous research’ as “culturally safe and culturally respectful research that is comprised of three principles: resistance as an emancipatory imperative, political integrity in indigenous research and privileging indigenous voices in indigenist research” (p. 205). These principles do not seem to fit in the Tongan context as there are assumptions regarding colonization, which is not applicable to Tonga. The phrase “resistance as an emancipatory imperative” implies that the native context in question was historically colonized. Tonga is the only Pacific Island nation to have never been conquered by colonial powers, which contradicts the definition put forward by Martin and Mirrabooopa (2003).

Researchers such as Wilson (2001) and Meo-Sewabu (2014) propose that indigenous
research should go beyond presenting a native perspective and establish an indigenous research paradigm that is driven by the fundamentally different indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies. This proposal should be approached with caution, however, as the underlying assumptions about indigenous knowledge are not fully understood. Gegeo (1998) supports these assertions and claims that shifting focus from an indigenous perspective to developing a native research paradigm implies that indigenous epistemologies are fully understood and acknowledged. The fact that Pacific epistemological and ontological views are not recognized as legitimate ways of knowing justifies the lack of an established indigenous research paradigm. Kovach (2010) further argues that indigenous research needs to go beyond utilizing unique, contextualized methods to providing a balanced interplay between method and paradigm.

An account of an indigenous Fijian approach to research is presented by Meo-Sewabu (2014). The author argues that the concept of cultural discernment enables a viable research approach that ensures the inclusion of culturally ethical procedures. The study focuses on the ethical standards enforced by research institutions and the adversities these cause in indigenous research. Meo-Sewabu maintains that “what is ethical within the Fijian cultural context can only be understood by exploring Fijian epistemologies and worldviews” (p. 346). This point is also relevant to Tongan epistemological assumptions, which are discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.5 Philosophical considerations

It is widely acknowledged in academic circles that philosophical propositions are an integral dimension that guides academic research endeavours. Project management studies tend to provide insufficient methodological detail, a point is reinforced by Smyth and Morris (2007) who note that 90% of project management studies fail to explicitly state their philosophical positions and neglect to provide sufficient description of the methodological choices. Moreover, project management studies have often grounded their philosophical considerations in the positivist domain that values objectivity and hypothesized suppositions (Cooke-Davies et al., 2007; Smyth & Morris, 2007).

Crawford and Pollack (2004) encourage the adoption of an interpretivist approach to examine project management practices as this draws attention to the humanistic dimension of project management and accentuates the significance of social systems in project performance. This study is situated in the interpretivist realm, which considers the multiplicity of social beings
and their individual truths and accentuates the subjectivity of different realities (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2011). This research philosophy focuses on the interpretation of the meanings behind the enactment of project management practices. This approach views project management as a social practice that is informed by an individuals’ worldviews. Aspects such as ontological views and epistemological propositions are core elements that underpin the research paradigm and essentially provide insight into the worldview of the researcher. The concept of worldview is of particular significance in this study as it relates to the link between lived realities (cultural/spiritual, social, political and economic) and their influence on our cognition and behaviour. This is a mutually exclusive concept in that our perceptions of reality are in reference to the spheres of life in which we move. In essence, cultural assumptions guide principles of conduct and shape and inform an individual’s ideologies regarding physical and social reality. This idea is accentuated by Koltko-Rivera (2004), who states that “a worldview is a set of assumptions about physical and social reality that may have powerful effects on cognition and behaviour” (p. 3).

In the area of development practice, the concept of worldview is also critical as a number of different project stakeholders bring distinct philosophical assumptions and views of reality that determine their approaches to the development agenda. For instance, foreign consultants and advisors bring with them their own belief systems and values that influence their managerial approaches. Consultants are also in a position of authority and decision making is often centralized around them; civil servants are unable to question their actions and behaviours as their perceptions are viewed as entailing superior philosophical assumptions. As these assumptions are foreign to Tongan public servants, decisions made by advisors are often misinterpreted and lead to ineffective managerial practices. I therefore argue that there is a need to acknowledge and actively engage the Tongan worldview to capture the authenticity of this indigenous knowledge system and ways of knowing. The kakala framework is a research approach that captures the essence of the Tongan worldview and is a manifestation of the cultural values and customs that guide social behaviour. The intricate elements that shape the Tongan worldview are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

2.6 Tongan worldview

Academic researchers of Pacific Island descent have long struggled with the paradox of being taught Western methods of scientific research based on European epistemologies while suppressing their own unique research paradigms influenced by their distinguishing cultural
values. Furthermore, Western scholars have wrongly characterized islands in the Pacific region into one group, thereby failing to acknowledge the uniqueness and cultural intricacies each nation has as part of development processes. Scholars such as Huffer and Qalo (2004) highlight the significance of acknowledging individual Pacific Island cultural traditions as legitimate sources of knowledge that could contribute to our understanding of why development projects continue to fail in the region.

Over the past decade, there has been a surge of Pacific Island scholars attempting to establish and affirm legitimate Pacific philosophies and ways of knowing and doing. Pacific Island scholars from different disciplines have abandoned classical disciplinary approaches in an attempt to shed light on Pacific ways of doing and knowing. For instance, Pacific education scholars such as Konai Helu Thaman and Unaisi Nabobo have tackled the issue of educational epistemologies. These eminent academics have long argued that there is a unique Pacific way of learning that is based on a distinctive awareness and understanding of knowledge, wisdom and intelligence. An example of this distinctive conceptualization of knowledge is found in the way Tongans departmentalize types of knowledge and their understanding of the ownership of specified knowledge.

In understanding the way Tongan knowledge is created it is important to establish the distinct types of knowledge and their custodians. Thaman (1998) states there are two types of knowledge in Polynesia: collective knowledge and functional, highly specialized knowledge. The first type of knowledge is communal and necessary for daily life. The second, and most important, type is specialized and pundit knowledge that is often tapu (sacred) and referred to as koloa (treasure). This highly specialized, technical knowledge is cherished and treasured; it is often carried by certain kainga (clans or families) and kept by what Thaman (1998) refers to as tufunga (learned people). Tufunga are also the guardians of koloa and are often the carriers of this knowledge. This distinct conceptualization of knowledge is essential to our understanding of how public servants perceive project management responsibilities and enact these managerial practices in Tonga.

The Tongan social structure is acknowledged and embedded in traditional cultural practices. This is illustrated through the hierarchical communication system. There are culturally appropriate communication systems used when addressing or engaging in dialogue with each social class. As mentioned earlier, heilaki is used to address hou’eiki. For instance, a tu’a (commoner) will verbally address hou’eiki in an appropriate manner, which includes using
Moreover, hou ’eiki will not openly address a tu’a personally and will only address them through his/her matapule (talking chief). Tongan actions and lived realities are driven by five core values: faka’apa’apa (respect), lotoloto (humility), mamahi’i me’a (commitment, sacrifice), feveitokai’aki (reciprocity), and ‘ofa (love). These core values are the foundation for how relationships are created and maintained. Tongans are not generally defined as individuals but through the relationships (va) they have established and sustained (Johansson-Fua, 2007). Moreover, these five core values are the basis of Tongan proverbs, which underpin Tongan actions and behaviours.

2.7 The kakala framework

The kakala framework is a Tongan research approach that is used extensively to understand Pacific learning and education (Thaman, 1993, 2002). This approach is culturally inclusive and acknowledges indigenous knowledge systems and the elements that inform the Tongan worldview. It captures the authentic philosophical assumptions and highlights the cultural values of Tongan culture. I contend that this culturally inclusive framework can generate meaningful results that will ultimately help us better understand how development projects should be implemented in Tonga. I further assert that the kakala framework has the potential to generate more authentic and richer descriptions of organizational behaviour and managerial practices in the Tongan context. Kakala (fragrant plants) are used in the making of kahoa (garlands or necklaces), and Figure 2 graphically depicts the four significant components of the kakala framework: teu, toli, tui and luva.

A kahoa kakala (floral ceremonial garland) is a fragrant garland used in Tongan ceremonies to represent social status and familial ranking in the gathering. For instance, a father’s sister (fahu) is considered eiki or of higher rank in relation to his brothers. The fahu’s rank is illustrated during ceremonies by her wearing a kahoa kakala, cultural material valuables (koloa), and money. The intricate floral detail, material, beads and patterns of the kahoa kakala represent the rich tapestry of Tongan culture. Other Pacific Islands have similar threaded garlands that have their own cultural significance. For instance, Fijians prepare the salusalu for large occasions. The process of making a kahoa kakala is recorded in traditional Tongan myths and legends.
The kahoa kakala is prepared only by women who possess specific traditional knowledge of the significance of each stage in the creation of a kahoa kakala. Villagers create garlands using unique floral patterns that represent their lineage to the monarch. Kahoa kakala may also represent a village’s ability to cultivate flowers and reflect the community’s connection to the land and sea. For instance, the village of Lapaha, situated on the eastern coast of Tonga-tapu, is famous for its fragrant gardenias and the inhabitants’ creative way of weaving different forms of kahoa kakala. Lapaha is also known as Paki mo e toi, which means ‘picked with sap’ and refers to the many sweet-smelling flowers in the area. The techniques used by the women of Lapaha illustrate their genealogy and proximity to the ocean.
Certain *kahoa kakala* are designed specifically for royal family members and high-ranking nobles. For instance, the *faka'otuisia* (Figure 3) is a *kahoa kakala* bestowed only upon royalty. Given the rarity and significance of the flowers used to make the garland, the *faka'otuisia* is a symbol of chiefly or royal lineage. Another aspect that distinguishes the *faka’o tuisia* is the traditional, sacred knowledge required to create the garland. Certain elderly women who understand the customs and meanings behind the weaving patterns of the *faka’otuisia* are considered the only weavers able to create this garland.

Figure 3: Faka'otuisia, a chiefly *kahoa kakala*


MacIntyre (2008) details the hierarchical relationship between the types of flowers used to create different *kahoa* and establishes the cultural importance (in relation to social status) of each *kahoa*. Table 1 lists the different types of flower needed to create various *kahoa kakala* and their relative social status. The linkages reflect the social hierarchy and the way it is manifested in cultural customs. It also accentuates the relational nature of the customs and value systems that bind Tongan cultural practices. The *heilala* is a native flower and the fundamental floral ingredient for the most significant *kahoa kakala*. Customary protocols affirm that only persons of noble and chiefly blood are permitted to wear this prestigious *kahoa*. 
Table 1: The hierarchical relationship between type of kakala and kahoa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of kakala (flower)</th>
<th>Type of kahoa kakala</th>
<th>Cultural significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heilala</td>
<td>ve’eve’e heilala</td>
<td>Most significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heilala</td>
<td>Nusi heilala</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heilala</td>
<td>Nusi palataha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heilala</td>
<td>Pito’ingalau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falahola/fa</td>
<td>Kahoa papai fa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipi</td>
<td>Kahoa lala</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maile</td>
<td>Kahoa malie</td>
<td>Least significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from MacIntyre (2008, p 93).

2.7.1 Teu – prepare: Problem identification and literature review

The first stage of the kakala framework, teu, means to prepare or arrange details. The teu stage involves planning and mapping out design and weaving patterns that will be used to create the kahoa kakala and preparing weaving tools and materials. Previous studies such as that of Vaioleti (2006) have failed to acknowledge this stage of the kakala framework, despite it being an instrumental stage that contributes to the final product (kahoa) and the toli stage. Planning the construction of the garland involves intricate processes such as selecting floral arrangements, organizing weaving tools and designing weaving patterns appropriate for the occasion. Failing to prepare these significant details at this stage can lead to critical issues at the final stage of the process. The preparatory stage starts with establishing the purpose of the occasion, which determines the type of kahoa kakala that is prepared. The second aspect involves the preparation of materials, kakala extraction tools, and weaving utensils. These two processes must occur within the teu stage for the process of tui to be completed.

In comparison, the orthodox conceptualization of conducting research requires the researcher to theorize the research problem. This stage of the scientific research process involves arriving at, developing and further refining research questions. These questions serve several purposes which include providing focus and direction for the researcher. Once the problem and questions are established, foundational knowledge and a comprehensive understanding are required. Therefore, a review of the existing scholarship is necessary to establish a
fundamental understanding of the research problem. The processes of establishing the problem, determining research questions, and assessing and reviewing existing scholarship are considered the preparatory phases required to conduct appropriate empirical investigations. These steps are associated with the teu stage of the kakala framework as the tasks involved are preliminary and preparatory in nature.

The type of kahoa kakala prepared is dependent on many factors that include the occasion, the social standing of attendees (whether high-ranking chiefs or royalty are present), and the village the ceremony organizers belong too. It is important that these details are established so that the appropriate designs, patterns and types of flowers that are used are reflective of the attendee’s social standing and represent the ceremony holder’s village connections. This function of the teu stage parallels the practices of problem identification and reviewing the literature to define the current state of understanding in regard to the phenomena under investigation.

The teu stage also encompasses the act of preparing weaving tools and accessories. Creating a kahoa kakala involves special methodologies that require specific cultural knowledge (MacIntyre, 2008). A tool such as the heleplu (machete) is a utensil used to extract flowers and leaves. The helepelu should be clean and sharpened ready for the next stage in the ngahi (creating) of the kahoa kakala. The threading material (fibre used to attach leaves and flowers to make the garland) is often dried bark or thin strings of tapa cloth that are tough and sturdy. This aspect of the teu stage parallels the process of reviewing relevant literature. Metaphorically, the teu stage is associated with the exploration of academic literature in preparation for the literature review. Significant streams of knowledge are explored and classified to attain an understanding of what is known and unknown in a subject field.

The purpose of the literature review stage is to explore the existing body of knowledge and identify gaps in understanding and practice. The process of generating a literature review is often perceived to include three important elements: search, manage, and synthesize. A systematic search of relevant bodies of knowledge is first required to establish the current understanding, practices and theoretical underpinnings in the field of question. The literature review stage also involves managing content effectively to best represent the current and established knowledge on the phenomenon. Finally, the literature review phase involves synthesizing all threads of discourse to formulate a foundation of knowledge. Similarly, the teu stage involves the search for the appropriate kakala, planning patterns and organizing
materials to prepare the *kahoa kakala*.

The processes of searching, managing and synthesizing are important functions that inform the researcher’s understanding of the literature base and the process of preparing the materials for the *tui* stage. The *teu* stage involves preparatory tasks that include sharpening weaving tools and identifying native weaving patterns that would best represent the occasion. Therefore, *kahoa* weavers seek the most appropriate patterns that best represent the occasion and recipient. Both the literature review and *teu* stage have similar underlying assumptions in that both phases involve preparatory elements that require searching, managing and synthesizing knowledge.

### 2.7.2 Toli – collect: Methodology and findings

The *toli* stage involves selecting the flowers and leaves for the garland. Certain flowers have significant meanings and mythologies associated with their scent and floral makeup and different flowers are used for different cultural ceremonies. MacIntyre (2008) states that this stage is hierarchical and requires the person or group of people selecting and preparing the flowers to be of superior rank to the landowner of the location they collect the raw materials from, as Tongan social structure strongly influences ceremonial tasks. The term *toli* also signifies a sense of freedom to select flowers with no restrictions, which explains the need for the person creating the *kahoa kakala* to be of superior rank to the landowner. This point raises several significant dimensions of the research process. First, it symbolizes the need to gain access to research data. This has proven to be a difficult task for academic researchers, especially for ethnographic studies in cultures foreign to the researcher (Johl & Renganathan, 2013). Second, it demonstrates the significance of the researcher’s adherence to cultural protocols and conducting research in a culturally appropriate manner in the field.

The application of this idea in research practice relates to the researcher’s behaviour and the way the researcher conducts him/herself when carrying out field research in Tonga. The researcher must be aware of the research participants’ social rank and be conscious of his/her own hierarchical standing. This awareness is crucial to understanding participants’ logic and frame of thinking (*uhinga*). Regardless of the researcher’s position in the Tongan social structure, the seeker of knowledge (researcher) must acknowledge some important cultural protocols of dress and manner. For instance, a female researcher must wear a long skirt and a traditional skirt called a *kiekie*. A male researcher must wear a *tupenu* (wrapped waist garment) and *taovala* (Tongan waist mat) over the top. This attire signifies that the researcher
is not only culturally sensitive but also respects the environment in which he/she has entered. These Tongan protocols, personal experiences and reflections from my field trips are discussed in further detail in Chapter 6. The toli phase parallels the Western processes of defining the methodological components, preparing research tools and finally presenting the findings. Scientific investigation requires a particular set of skills to investigate the phenomena in question in order to create or extend knowledge. This is closely associated with the importance of rigorous training, demonstrated through experience and qualifications, of the person gathering the raw materials (data).

2.7.3 Tui – thread: Analysis and discussion

Tui refers to the lalanga or threading and binding of flowers and leaves which make the final garland. Commenting on the tui stage, Thaman (1993) asserts that the “tui is the actual stringing or manufacture of the garland, often using a combination of different types of kakala” (p. 256). This stage requires the expertise of various parties, for instance a woman with specific skills in threading techniques will thread the flowers. Similarly, another elderly woman in the village who specializes in beading and weaving will be responsible for conducting these activities. This demonstrates the categorization of specialized indigenous knowledge or skills. This idea is crucial to interpreting the findings of this study and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. In addition, the time period during which the kahoa kakala is woven depends on the nature and complexity of the design (Vaioleti, 2006). The tui stage parallels the analysis of the data collected in Western research designs. Vaioleti (2006) notes the tui stage is an integral part of the creation of a kahoa kakala and involves synthesizing and weaving knowledge made available with the talanoa method.

Metaphorically, the tui stage is a vital phase of the research (analysis and discussion) where the investigator integrates and synthesizes the information gained in the toli stage. In the Western context, weaving is the act of interlacing threads of material (hard or soft) in a direction that forms a pattern. The act of lalanga in the Tongan context is a complex process and is a treasured art preserved from generation to generation. This gives importance to the knowledge held and the techniques practised by the weaver. Traditionally, the weaver will pass on her wisdom in technique and patterns to another female in the village that has gained her trust and the approval of female village elders. This shows the significance of traditional scared knowledge and the value of the bearer of such important knowledge. This is similar to the role of the researcher and the critical research skills she/he holds. The academy is an
esteemed institution that imparts membership through rigorous training and scrutiny. Academic researchers are perceived as the bearers of specialized knowledge and considered experts in their discipline.

The analysis stage requires technical expertise that the researcher must possess in order to evaluate, synthesize and present research data. Similarly, the tui stage in the kakala framework requires indigenous knowledge, which is a “cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations of cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment” (Battiste & Henderson, 2000, p. 42). Women who are involved in the tui kakala process have a special set of skills that allows them to connect stories and myths to certain patterns and kakala that provide the kahoa kakala’s significance. Again, this reiterates the idea of the categorization of knowledge and skill in that only certain woman can perform these indigenous weaving patterns.

2.7.4 Luva – offer: Conclusions – contribution of knowledge

The last stage of the kakala framework, luva, involves offering the final product (kakala) to the distinguished guests at the ceremony. The act of offering (lei) is the final act in the creation of a kahoa kakala. Many factors are taken into consideration when bestowing a kahoa kakala in the luva. As mentioned earlier, the social rankings of ceremony attendees determine the type of kahoa kakala they receive. Therefore, the social rank of distinguished guests must be identified beforehand so that the appropriate kahoa kakala is created and bestowed.

The act of offering in the Tongan cultural context is a manifestation of the principle of reciprocity, which involves a mutual cooperative exchange between parties. Luva is the stage where the hosts of the ceremony demonstrate their appreciation for the attendance of such highly esteemed guests. In return, the honorary guest represents the hosts linkages to nobility. In sum, the luva stage signifies an important Tongan cultural element: reciprocity.

The luva stage parallels the process of identifying the contributions to knowledge of a research study and the ways in which it has enhanced understanding of the phenomenon. Metaphorically, this stage is closely related to the offering of the final results and identification of the wider implications to the academic community and practitioners. In this case, the results of this study contribute to the project management field of knowledge and have further practical implications for government departments in Tonga and donor agencies.
that fund development projects in the small island nation.

Wilson (2001) argues that a component that differentiates indigenous research is its axiology or the value of the results for participant communities. As a Tongan researcher my sense of obligation to understand why projects are failing motivated me to conduct this research. I was motivated to contribute to the academic conversation in this area not only because the current understanding of project management practices used in development projects within a stratified society is fragmented; I was also determined to give Tongan public servants and project stakeholders a voice. Therefore, I associate the luva stage with the contributions my findings make to project management theory, development practice and ultimately Tongan stakeholders. Vaioleti (2006) encapsulates the significance of creating new knowledge and contributing to the academic conversation: “for the researcher and her or his institution, the kakala (the new knowledge) is expected to be passed on so that others can benefit from it” (p. 27).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has identified the general lack of attention given to indigenous paradigms in Western academic research. Positivist approaches have long dominated business research with little regard for the cognitive frameworks that shape the nature of reality of researchers. This has resulted in a call for a more culturally inclusive and authentic methods of conducting research and the legitimizing of indigenous knowledge by inventing new research paradigms to generate more dynamic and representative knowledge. A prominent Tongan research paradigm from the education discipline, the kakala framework, was adopted as an organizing model and more importantly as a tool to extract meaningful data. The kakala framework is systematically associated with each stage of the orthodox research process and is used as an organizing structure for this thesis.

This chapter specifically argues that a culturally appropriate approach to conducting Tongan research requires the adoption of a framework that encompasses the traditions and values that shape our understanding of the world. A prominent research paradigm from the field of education, the kakala framework therefore is adopted as an organizing structure for this research. The kakala framework is used as a tool to both extract and create more culturally authentic meanings. Its stages are names after those involved in creating a ceremonial garland, and it is used here as a research paradigm to investigate the managerial practices used in development projects in Tonga.
The following chapter reviews the literature on development practice and project management discourse and identifies the gap in theoretical knowledge which this thesis addresses. It evaluates the two threads of literature that are pertinent to this study, namely project management and development practice.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW – TEU

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the existing body of knowledge on aid effectiveness and project management and identify any gaps in understanding and practice. This literature review adopts an inductive approach to identifying the central gaps in knowledge and practice in order to focus the inquiry of this study. In line with the kakala framework, this stage of the research process involves various methods and tools for identifying weaving patterns (narratives) that best represent the final kahoa (contribution to knowledge). The teu stage of the kakala framework (described in Chapter 2) specifically involves establishing the resources available such as weaving tools (literature search) and gathering information regarding the intended recipient (manage information) and the festivities in which the kahoa will be offered (synthesize).

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of this study, two bodies of knowledge will be explored, namely aid effectiveness and project management. I argue that by systematically unpacking the multiple aid effectiveness discourses and further presenting various interpretations of project management approaches in development projects a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the current state of knowledge can be achieved. In doing so will also highlight the influence each component has on our understanding of the PLC framework.

Section 3.2 discusses the literature on foreign aid and development. In order to understand the complex discussion that have emerged in the aid effectiveness discourses, key dimensions such as development are discussed. Section 3.3 outlines critical arguments in aid effectiveness discourse. The section presents the analytical debate surrounding the chain of causality/aid fungibility, excessive aid reliance, and the role of institutions and policies in facilitating more effective development assistance. The multiple global agendas endorsing aid that is more effective, and their performance in improving the results of development assistance are reviewed in section 3.4. Development management literature is examined in section 3.5. Section 3.6 moves into less developed scholarly territory and examines projects as a mechanism for delivering development assistance. Project management theory is examined, and the characteristics that define a project are defined. The next section explores development projects and the distinguishing features that influence the project management approaches employed. Lastly, section 3.8 examines the PLC framework.
3.2 Foreign aid and development literature

Over the past two decades, researchers have paid increasing attention to the effectiveness of foreign aid on development (Bourguignon & Sundberg, 2007; Lessmann & Markwardt, 2012; Sjöstedt, 2013). However, the findings of these studies have been inconclusive in determining whether aid effectively leads to the economic and social progression of less developed countries (LDC) (Easterly, 2007). Aid recipient countries have become increasingly dependent on foreign aid and donor agencies have come under increasing pressure to demonstrate the significance of their contributions (Carvalho & White, 1996).

The origins of foreign aid or assistance date back to the 1950s when it played a major role in the efforts to reconstruct and address the impact of World War II in Europe (Huang & Tarp, 2012). Since its introduction, foreign aid has been used as a tool to promote modernization by focusing efforts on alleviating poverty through promoting economic growth in developing countries. Many critics claim that the introduction of foreign aid further advanced the colonization of developing states by Western countries (Hughes, 2003; Thaman, 2002). Authors such as Easterly (2006) dispute the positive effects of foreign aid and further assert that aid worsens the situation by enabling rent-seeking behaviour.

Numerous studies have examined the factors that make aid effective and strands of literature within the aid effectiveness field of knowledge have gradually evolved (Easterly & Pfutze, 2008; Mawdsley, Savage, & Kim, 2014). The academic literature on the performance of foreign aid is large and multifaceted. The established strands in the aid effectiveness literature include the political influences of aid (Kalyvitis & Vlachaki, 2012; Tingley, 2010; Unsworth, 2009); impact of conditional aid – stipulating commercial gains for donors (Mosley, Hudson, & Verschoor, 2004; Svensson, 2000); aid fragmentation (Kilby, 2011; Knack & Smets, 2013); and non-altruistic motivations of donor agencies (Blunt, Turner, & Hertz, 2011). One strand of the aid effectiveness literature that is underrepresented concerns the use of projects as an aid delivery instrument and the adoption of project management tools such as the PLC framework. The following section provides definitions of the foundational constructs that are useful for understanding the critical arguments in aid effectiveness discourse. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of this study, a number of relevant streams of knowledge were explored for this literature review. I argue that by drawing on these pertinent common threads of knowledge a more accurate knowledge base can be established in regard to the current understanding of aid effectiveness and project management practices.
3.2.1 Definitions of key terms

Foreign aid is often described as a transfer of funds from developed countries to LDCs and is used as a complex tool for industrialized countries to exert their power (Bourguignon & Sundberg, 2007; Lancaster, 1999; Monkm, 2012). Such aid has also been defined as a catalyst to establish a more sustainable way for poorer countries to develop (Hirschmann, 2003). Some scholars have been critical of the timeliness of humanitarian efforts and their role in natural disaster recovery (Apthorpe, 2012; Renzah, 2007). The generalizability of much of the published research on aid is problematic. The different interpretations of what foreign aid is have resulted in divergent conclusions about its effectiveness and usefulness. In order to understand the various discussions within the aid effectiveness discourse it is therefore essential that key constructs such as development assistance are outlined. The following subsections define key terms in order to provide a foundation for discussing the critical arguments in the aid effectiveness literature.

3.2.1.1 Humanitarian aid vs development assistance

LDCs have continued to perform poorly despite the surge in foreign assistance contributed by international donors since the 1950s (Blunt et al., 2011). There are two types of foreign aid: humanitarian aid and development assistance. Humanitarian aid relates to the funding (capital- or resource-based) intended to alleviate short-term pressure on local facilities caused by an unexpected disaster (Munslow & Brown, 1999). Rodon, Maria Serrano, and Giménez (2012) provide a more detailed description of humanitarian aid which includes “disaster prevention and preparedness; they provide shelter, food, water, and sanitation, health services and other items of assistance for the benefit of affected people and to facilitate the return to normal life” (p. 367). The literature on humanitarian aid highlights issues around the coordination and logistics of humanitarian assistance (Oloruntoba & Gray, 2006).

On the other hand, development assistance concerns the contributions of resources, technical assistance (TA) or advice by government states or international agencies designated to achieve economic development in poorer countries (Easterly, 2007). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2003) formally defines development assistance as having three main characteristics: (1) it comes from an official source, (2) it is administered with the promotion of economic and/or social development of the recipient country; and (3) it comprises grants and/or concessional loans that has at least a 25% grant component. Under this definition, development assistance concerns contributions that
directly promote and encourage societal and economic constructs such as standard of living and gross domestic product (GDP) (Easterly, 2007). In summary then, the assumption that underpins the provision of humanitarian aid is to help mitigate short-term pressures in countries that have experienced unexpected hardships, whereas development assistance is aimed at the long-term progress of LDCs.

3.2.1.2 Development

The Economic and Social Council is the central agency within the UN that is responsible for coordinating the economic and social mandates of the global institution. This council plays a significant role in defining the criteria by which LDCs are categorized and identified. Poverty indicators such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and the Human Development Index (HDI) are key indicators that determine a LDCs. The council defines LDCs as “low income countries suffering from severe structural impediments to sustainable development” (UN, 2012, p. 14).

Scholars such as Kosack (2003) and Monkam (2012) state that two of the principal objectives of aid to LDCs are to reduce poverty and sustain economic and social development. Economic productivity is one of the main drivers of reducing poverty in developing states (Kosack, 2003). GDP traditionally measures economic productivity and serves as an economic indicator of a country’s productivity (income and expenditure). Some studies have criticized the GDP unit of analysis as it does not provide an adequate measure of the distribution of wealth (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999; Kosack, 2003). According to Kosack (2003), “the heart of the problem with the per capita measure is that it is a measure of potential” (p. 2).

The term ‘development’ is subject to various interpretations and has been viewed through different theoretical lenses (Thomas, 2007). This has led to a degree of uncertainty around the terminology used in the aid effectiveness scholarship. In the economic field, academic authors equate the notion of development with the growth of GDP (Acemoglu, 2012; Shirley, 2008). However, as mentioned above, the GDP measure has been criticized as its use limits the scope and distribution of wealth (Kosack, 2003). Other authors conceptualize the notion of development in terms of the enhancement of standard of living and quality of life (Lele, 1991). Each of these interpretations inherits its own variables and measurements which further obscure the understanding of the effectiveness of foreign aid in terms of development. While scholars have disputed the most adequate variable(s) for measuring development, there
is a growing consensus that development implies the social and economic progression or advancement (through quality of life, access to public services, etc.) of a community or population (Carvalho & White, 1996; Ika & Hodgson, 2014).

3.2.1.3 Effectiveness vs efficiency

The distinction between the effectiveness and efficiency of development assistance in the aid effectiveness discourse needs to be clearly drawn. The discussion on aid effectiveness concerns questions of legitimacy and desirability of intervention (development-funded activities) intended to encourage development (Carvalho & White, 1996; Hirschmann, 2003). Crawford and Bryce (2003) offer a different perspective on the term. Using a performance management lens, they see effectiveness as concerned with the rationality or development worthiness/creditability of aid activity. Efficiency in development practice concerns the process of management and involves the inputs and outputs of a transformational process (Crawford & Bryce, 2003; Gulrajani, 2011). Effectiveness by contrast is externally driven and is generally demanded by stakeholders (Crawford & Bryce, 2003). Effectiveness is not easy to measure and takes longer to determine (Jugdev & Muller, 2005). In light of these views, there is a heavy emphasis on the delivery mechanism and its ability to effectively (outcome) and efficiently (input) result in aid benefits.

The term ‘accountability’ has also been associated with effectiveness. According to Crawford and Bryce (2003), accountability in the context of aid agencies refers to the means by which agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and recipient governments “report to a recognized authority, or authorities, and are held responsible for their actions” (Crawford & Bryce, 2003, p. 363). Accountability is the process of holding development actors such as recipient countries and donor agencies responsible for their actions (Wenar, 2006). Accountability is improved through increased transparency where donor agencies, NGOs, and recipient governments work collectively to be open, honest and reflexive about their practices. Transparency is regarded as a key feature of good governance and is essential for demonstrating accountability between the aid participants, recipient government, donor agency and citizens. Crawford and Bryce (2003) note that accountability results from increased transparency through documentation of project progress reports, plans and evaluations. Open access to information is therefore a determinant of accountability and demonstrates aid effectiveness.
Central to the discussion in development practice is the notion of sustainable development. The literature has long questioned the classical ideologies of economic development and the implications of the development process on the ecological system (Barkemeyer, Holt, Preuss, & Tsang, 2014). Sustainable development has emerged as a paradigm that addresses this concern and incorporates the environmental effects and social conditions of economic progression. The notion of sustainable development has been utilized in various settings and used by politicians as a marketing tactic in order to appeal to constituents (Rametsteiner, Pütlz, Alkan-Olsson, & Frederiksen, 2011). Due to the variety of ways the term has been used there is a disparity among academic authors as to its correct definition. Although a number of alternatives are present in the literature, the most cited definition was presented over nearly 30 years ago: “Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts” (Brundtland et al., 1987).

According to Huang and Tarp (2012) the aid discourse lacks systematic investigation into the effects of assistance on the sustainable development process. The authors evaluate the negative effects of foreign aid on the natural environment and state that “foreign aid programs give rise to unsustainable development in developing countries at an excessive pace, with worsened pollution and accelerated exploitation of the aid recipient country’s natural resources being examples in point” (Huang & Tarp, 2012, p. 19). Others have argued that foreign aid has enabled recipient countries to focus on more sustainable ways of developing (Niles & Lloyd, 2013; Stiglitz, 2002). Foreign aid is viewed by Svensson (2000) and others as a stimulus for growth that develops the capabilities of recipient countries to sustain their own development (Hirschmann, 2003; Huang & Tarp, 2012). Developing countries have been encouraged to resist managerialist donor-driven agendas and adopt their own approaches (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999). This argument has given rise to the acknowledgement of alternative methods of economic and social progress that give precedence and highlight the usefulness of indigenous knowledge in development discourse.

There is a growing interest in the advantages of indigenous knowledge systems as means to mitigate the negative ecological effects of development on the environment. Indigenous knowledge has contributed to the sustainable development paradigm in providing alternative ways of cultivating vegetation and providing culturally valuable systems for livestock.
management (Lertzman & Vredenburg, 2005). The inclusion of traditional systems helps to ensure the desired outcomes of development endeavours. Development is relatively more effective when it is responsive and inclusive of native communities and their cultural practices. The advantages of participatory approach to rural development has long been discussed in the literature and has most commonly highlighted the significance of traditional agricultural processes (Enns, Bersaglio, & Kepe, 2014; Kyamusugulwa, 2013). Importantly, the influences of Pacific cultural values, for example, on the conceptualization of sustainable development tend to be overlooked (Thaman, 2002). The Tongan values that inform the conceptualization of development in this thesis are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Biggs (2005) argues that this growing interest in indigenous knowledge has been accompanied by a superficial understanding of the underlying assumptions that guide native indigenous research. In addition, the vast majority of research focuses on providing empirical knowledge and attempting to demonstrate the practical application of indigenous environmental management systems. Significantly, little research focuses on the philosophical standpoints which guide these indigenous ecological practices. In other words, participatory approaches to sustainable development fail to recognize, acknowledge and understand that indigenous value systems are a fundamental aspect of native practices. Gegeo (1998) endorses these claims and further states that while native approaches to development involve the participation of indigenous communities, these approaches are still based on Western development paradigms: “The process of incorporating indigenous knowledge into rural development discourse and practices must also include how a group theorizes about creating new knowledge” (p. 290). Indigenous epistemologies and Tongan ways of theorizing were discussed in Chapter 2.

### 3.3 Critical arguments in the aid effectiveness discourse

The previous section described the pertinent concepts and established definitions for the key constructs in this study. This section outlines the critical arguments in the aid effectiveness discourse. There is a growing body of literature investigating aid effectiveness and it is not my intention here to provide an exhaustive examination of this extensive scholarship. Rather, the purpose of this section is to establish the wide-ranging scope of the arguments relating to aid effectiveness at the macro level and identify any knowledge gaps with regard to the managerial strategies used to deliver development assistance. This section also identifies key linkages between the key concepts in the general aid effectiveness discourse.
3.3.1 Causality chain and aid fungibility

When discussing aid effectiveness, it is important to address the complexity involved in determining the “causality chain” (Bourguignon & Sundberg, 2007). Most research attempting to determine the impact of aid fails to clearly identify this causality chain, due to the difficulty in attributing visible changes or outcomes to the intervention or development project. According to Bourguignon and Sundberg (2007), this complexity is due to the “noise along the links of the chain” (p. 316). It is also noted in the literature that dimensions such as economic policies and donor conditions influence the outcome of aid endeavours (Bourguignon & Sundberg, 2007; Cheng & Zhang, 2008; Radelet, 2006). Social impacts are difficult to measure and may generate non-linear causal effects that are difficult to attribute to one specific input or action. This is due to the subjective nature of social development constructs. Therefore, from a statistical, rational perspective there are technical issues involved in establishing short-term versus long-term development impacts.

Economic theorists Collier and Dollar (2004) and Byron (2012) argue that a prevailing issue with assessing the effectiveness of aid is the allocation of resources or “aid fungibility”. Aid fungibility refers to recipient governments diverting or reallocating aid funding from public expenditure budgets into other activities (Byron, 2012). While some critics claim that there is a lack of empirical evidence to demonstrate resource diversion due to the difficulty in monitoring how states allocate aid, other scholars such as Pack and Pack (1993) have utilized fungibility as a theoretical construct. For this reason fungibility has hindered our understanding of what constitutes the impact of aid activities (Dieleman, Graves, & Hanlon, 2013).

3.3.2 Aid dependence

Another fundamental issue in the aid effectiveness discourse is the excessive reliance of recipient governments on foreign aid (Hirschmann, 2003; Tingley, 2010). Aid dependence is detrimental to the long-term sustainability of development outcomes and has been defined as a “situation in which a country cannot perform many of the core functions of government, such as operations and maintenance, or the delivery of basic public services, without foreign aid funding and expertise” (Brautigam, 2000, p. 2). Developing states have become increasingly dependent on foreign assistance and this has led to tied aid in which donors prescribe conditions to restrict the use of aid (Godfrey et al., 2002). Development assistance is presumed to act as a catalyst that assists in building the essential capabilities of recipient
countries to drive and sustain their own development progress. However, historical evidence demonstrates an excessive reliance by developing states on foreign aid to fuel elite personal expenses that has perpetuated corruption (Monkam, 2012). Unethical use of aid and corruption have increased aid dependence and further deepened the disparity in power between industrialized and developing nations (Marquette, 2011). TA perpetuate the dependency issue when they are contracted to perform core governance functions and fail to build the capacity of the local stakeholders to perform their own development tasks (Godfrey et al., 2002).

3.3.3 Role of policies and institutions in the aid effectiveness discourse

Conventional perspectives on aid effectiveness maintain that countries that create well-formulated policies and effectively govern institutions are more effective (Djankov, Montalvo, & Reynal-Querol, 2009). The work of the institutional economists Ronald Coase and Douglass North has shaped practices and expanded our economic analytical frames by considering the informal and formal codes that contribute to order within the market and society (Heydemann, 2008). In particular, North (1989) utilized historical economic milestones in the US context to demonstrate institutional change over a defined period. Shirley (2008) evaluated the importance of institutions for facilitating economic and social development of a country. Institutions, he argues, influence the application of foreign aid (practicality) and therefore play a significant role in the way that aid is administered. Institutions are defined as “the written and unwritten rules, norms and constraints that humans devise to reduce uncertainty and control their environment” (p. 1). The premise of this definition is grounded in North (1991) conceptualization of institutions which has been the foundation of institutional economics for the past 20 years. The prevailing assumption in the institutional economics literature is that individuals have complete information and would make rational and logically bound policy decisions. However, these assumptions are restricting and fail to explain how individuals interpret reality and other aspects of cognition (Williamson, 2000).

New Institutional Economics (NIE), a neoclassical school of thought, emerged in an attempt to address these contradictions. NIE explores in more detail the informal constraints first introduced by North (1989) and proposes another form of institution in the form of informal institutions. Informal institutions imply that humans have limited mental capacity and deal with inadequate, flawed information. Based on the above inferences both formal and informal
institutions are required to facilitate “private and cooperative behavior” in aid recipient states (Shirley, 2008, p. 1).

Empirical results have confirmed the need for aid recipient states to have secure, well-established informal and formal institutions to facilitate effective aid (Collier & Dollar, 2004; Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012; Shirley, 2008). Despite the significance of institutions in recipient countries, little is understood about the institutions of donor agencies and their effects on aid effectiveness in recipient countries. Monkam (2012) argues that

If the objective is to maximize the effectiveness of aid, it would appear essential to enhance the design and objectives of aid resources at the source, i.e. at the stage where the funds originate with donors, before considering the causes tainting aid in the recipient countries. (Monkam, 2012, p. 400).

With regard to the policy reform debate, it is important to discuss the Washington Consensus, which entails a neoliberal approach to economic development (Marangos, 2012). The phrase, Washington Consensus describes the adoption of certain prescribed policies that facilitate economic development (Marangos, 2012). According to Williamson (1993), international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have the power to endorse three prescriptive policy reforms: (1) stabilize macro-economic conditions by adjusting inflation while reducing the fiscal deficits; (2) liberalize trade barriers; and (3) privatize and deregulate domestic markets (Gore, 2000). These prescriptive policy adjustments have however been criticized for their “one size fits all” approach to economic development. Rodrik (2006) claims that the Washington Consensus reforms are more favourable to and advantageous for Western countries. Others argue that it is ineffective in small developing states due to the lack of effective financial and capital institutions that would facilitate the policy adjustments (Onis & Senses, 2005). Moreover, factors such as corruption within administrations are not accounted for in the policies encouraged in the Washington Consensus (Onis & Senses, 2005).

3.3.4 Proliferation of donor agencies

The proliferation of development agencies operating within LDCs also problematizes the assessment of aid effectiveness. An excessive number of agencies that impose different management practices and coordination strategies of development activities complicates the assessment of aid. Acharya, de Lima, and Moore (2006) coined the term ‘donor proliferation’ to draw attention to the increasing number of development agencies operating in LDCs with
project design procedures and the various conditions attached to managing development projects and programmes. For instance, the Canadian International Agency requires recipient countries to use the following prescribed tools for project design: Logical Framework (discussed below), SWOT analysis, and cost/benefit analysis, while other development agencies require the use of simplistic design tools such as the problem tree (Landoni & Corti, 2011).

Knack and Rahman (2007) highlight the issue of donor proliferation by examining the number of development agencies operating in Vietnam. It was found that there were 25 bilateral (funding sourced from one state to another) and 19 multilateral agencies (funding sourced indirectly from pools of various international agencies) and approximately 350 international NGO agencies in Vietnam, accounting for 8,000 development projects. This excessive number of agencies resulted in duplication of efforts and government departments felt the administrative burden of differing monitoring requirements. However, the study further found no statistical correlation to confirm the relationship between project proliferation and bureaucratic quality (according to the bureaucratic quality index¹).

Along with the excessive number of donor agencies operating in recipient countries is the large number of small projects executed by these agencies (Easterly & Pフトze, 2008). There is growing concern in the international aid community about the proliferation of aid or what Rahman and Sawada (2012) refer to as “aid bombardment”. This is because aid proliferation has been shown to cause administrative burdens (Kilby, 2011; Roodman, 2006). These often lead to negative results and in some cases drains the capacity of recipient governments to deal with the high inflow of aid. The value of aid is compromised when the institutional capacity of recipient governments to conduct tasks such as procurement is limited. Roodman (2006) and de Renzio (2007) use the term ‘absorptive capacity’ to describe the micro/macro constraints that recipient institutions face when using aid resources to mitigate pressure. Rahman and Sawada (2012) support the use of this terminology and further assert that aid proliferation can increase the transaction cost and administrative expenses for the aid recipient. Adding to the complexity of aid proliferation are the different managerial approaches used by many development actors (e.g., recipient government, donor agency and contractors). This variation in management approaches causes conflict among development actors and further negatively influences the final outcome (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999).

¹ Bureaucratic quality index measures governance and quantifies the quality of institutions.
3.4 Global aid effectiveness agendas

Concerns about the effectiveness of foreign aid have led to the emergence of international frameworks such as the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the Accura Agenda for Action (2008) and, most recently, the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011). The OECD (2005/2008) has endorsed these significant frameworks in an effort to improve the impact of aid on development. These international guidelines encourage the adoption of specific principles in the hope of making foreign aid more effective in recipient countries. This section will briefly discuss these global agendas and the critical arguments that have emerged because of such guidelines.

3.4.1 Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs are considered imperative for setting the stage for global guidelines such as the Paris Declaration (Dabelstein & Patton, 2012) and are a set of eight common development priority objectives that UN member states have agreed to focus on:

- Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieving universal primary education
- Promoting gender equality and empowering women
- Reducing child mortality rates
- Improving maternal health
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensuring environmental sustainability and
- Developing a global partnership for development

Source: UN (2008b)

According to Dabelstein and Patton (2012), the MDG agenda was introduced at a critical point in time where there was a lack of global discussion about development priorities and progress towards alleviating poverty in LDCs. The authors also argue that the MDGs set strong foundations for countries to rally together and make concerted efforts towards development. However, the MDGs have also received a substantial amount of criticism for being unrealistic and more symbolic than objective and critical. Concerns have also been raised in regard to the influence of the MDGs on the development of LDCs and the fact that the goals are not commonly pursued as some objectives are more easily operationalized then
others. Irrespective of the perception of the effectiveness of MDGs, however, these goals popularized the global development agenda (Dabelstein & Patton, 2012).

### 3.4.2 The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was established in 2005 and is the result of a conference involving multilateral and bilateral development agencies and state leaders concerning the effectiveness of foreign aid. No less than 150 recipient governments and donor agencies made a commitment to achieving aid effectiveness by focusing on five guiding principles: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual responsibility (OECD, 2005/2008). The ownership principle encourages recipient governments to set their own development strategies to reduce poverty and significantly enhance institutions. In regards to alignment, donor agencies are encouraged to coordinate assistance according to recipient countries’ development strategies and to use local systems to deliver foreign aid. Harmonization is associated with donor agencies coordinating and simplifying administrative procedures, and sharing information in order to prevent replication. The results principle refers to development actors committing to reciprocally monitoring and measuring results. Finally, mutual accountability involves donor agencies and recipient governments being accountable for development outcomes (Dabelstein & Patton, 2012).

### 3.4.3 Accra Agenda for Action

A follow-up conference was held in Ghana in 2008 to review the principles set in the Paris Declaration and to deepen the dialogue on aid effectiveness for development partners, which resulted in the Accra Agenda for Action (OECD, 2005/2008). This agenda outlines four key areas of weakness in the Paris Declaration: ownership, inclusive partnerships, delivering results, and capacity development. The Accra agenda hinges on three main themes to addresses the weaknesses stated above: countries determining their own development strategies (ownership), encouraging inclusive partnerships between development actors and delivering results that have measurable impact. The results of the agenda “were more disappointing in terms of making aid flows more predictable and reliable, encouraging donors to align with recipient country systems, and in enhancing mutual accountability” (Mawdsley et al., 2014, p. 29).
3.4.4 **Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**

The fourth and most recent international framework endorsed by the OECD is the Busan Partnership for Development Co-operation (2011). The principles promoted in this new declaration were developed from the predecessor agendas and include: ownership of development priorities by local administration; results-based interventions; inclusive development partnerships; and encouraging transparency and accountability in aid activities. Mawdsley et al. (2014) criticize these aid effectiveness guidelines, insisting that they are prescriptive principles that inadequately address the contextual attributes of specific developing countries. Moreover, assumptions are made about the quality of governance and institutional capacity within developing countries.

At the strategic/political level of engagement, these aid effectiveness principles are well understood and championed by political leaders. However, at the micro/implementation level the principles endorsed in these agendas lack practicality. At the grassroots level, implementers (whether they are project actors or donor representatives) require specific operational strategies to enact these principles. Another discrepancy regards the expectations of key development actors. More often than not, tensions and contradictions arise from a lack of understanding and differences in expectations regarding principles endorsed in the differing agendas. Disagreements in perception and understanding of principles between donor agencies, ministry CEOs and government employees can lead to pressure for accountability and transparency.

More critically, assumptions are made about the existing resources and knowledge bases of LDCs. This is evident in the case of the harmonization principle of the Paris Declaration, where it is assumed that recipient countries have established administrative procedures. These preconceived notions are restrictive as they fail to acknowledge the political makeup of a country, which plays a focal part in the allocation and administration of development assistance. Another major drawback includes the lack of specificity in the operationalized strategies implementing these principles. For instance, specific tactics for “harmonizing systems” are not provided and therefore practical application of this principle is restricted.

### 3.4.5 Power relations

In examining the various agendas for aid effectiveness and the endorsement of these principles by global institutions such as the World Bank, there is a need consider the role of power dynamics and the way it influences aid effectiveness. Authors such as Faust (2010)
argue that these principles are oversimplified and fail to acknowledge the political nature of development decisions. Power dynamics between recipient countries and donor agencies are manifested through trade agreement or denial (between recipient and donor country) and project conditionality (Svenssons, 2003). Moreover, Chambers (2005) argues that power exercised by development actors (recipient country and donor agency) plays a vital role in understanding the management of foreign aid and adds to the complexity of the debate regarding the effectiveness of development assistance.

Power is a complex and situational dimension that has long differentiated the strong from the weak. Postmodernist theorists such as Michel Foucault argue that the emergence of power in managerial practices is localized in the social and political arena (Burrell, 1988). As power was highly contextualized, it is often difficult to frame or measure as a general concept in relation to a board-based discipline, in this case project management. Therefore, little of the project management literature conceptualizes the notion of power and the effects this dynamic concept has on project outcomes.

### 3.5 Development management

“Modernization and industrialization, which were seen as a way forward for developing countries, required administration. At the same time, the large bureaucratic legacies of colonial administration began to be influenced by western management techniques and new versions of public administration emerged” (Abbott, Brown, & Wilson, 2007, p. 188). Development management is a derivative of the field of public administration that focuses on “managing processes and building the capacity necessary to achieve these improvements, including understanding and dealing with the array of constraints that impinge upon their achievement: political, institutional, social, cultural and environmental” (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2010, p. 103). Orthodox managerial practices emphasize processes “by which an occupational group claims to be the possessor of a distinctive and valuable sort of expertise, and uses this expertise as the basis for acquiring organizational and social power” (Clarke, Gewirtz, & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 8).

A distinct characteristic of the development management concept is the value proposition that emphasizes the value created for each stakeholder group. For instance, the beneficiaries’ value is the development outcome and the contractors’ value is the revenue stream for delivering the service. Although the value dimension is not as simplistic as the example given, it gives a picture of the vested interests of different stakeholders.
Ongoing discussions in the development management literature concern the theoretical boundaries that frame the concept. Arguments are concentrated around the application of orthodox management disciplines and whether these are appropriate to explain the process of social and economic transformation (Abouassi, 2010; Thomas, 2007). Scholars such as Brett (2003) and Thomas (2007) claim development requires the application of distinctive management principles. In particular, Thomas (2007) emphasizes the need for a specific style of management rather than a standardized application of management principles to a particular kind of activity or task. Therefore, the type of management adopted depends on one’s perspective of what constitutes development.

Thomas (2007) argues that development can be perceived through two lenses that essentially change the assumptions of development management. Development can be viewed as long-term process of change, and development management as the management of any task within the development context. Development can also be perceived as “management of deliberate efforts at progress on part of one of a number of agencies, the management of intervention in the process of social change in the context of conflicts of goals, values and interests” (Thomas, 1999, p. 9).

In contrast, Cooke (2004) argues that development management is an enhanced version of public administration, based on the premise that management and development belong to two different theoretical paradigms and assumptions. Management has historically taken the organization as the unit of analysis and context of practice, whereas development insists on taking the country as the basic unit of analysis (Cooke, 2004). A fundamental aspect of orthodox management is that it is practised within modernized and industrialized settings, which essentially contradicts the foundations of development as a transformational process. Therefore, Cooke (2004) proposes incorporating ‘administration’ in the term development management to tacitly imply the application of management principles within a progressive setting (development administration management).

Regardless of the varying interpretations of development management, numerous scholars agree on the dimensions which inform the practice of it (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999). Brinkerhoff and Coston (1999) claim that development management comprises four dimensions: value, process, tools, and the institutional composition or managerial approach of the donor agencies. These four interrelated factors represent the essential aspects of development management as a field of theory and practice.
The value dimension emphasizes stakeholder empowerment, self-determination and the proportionate distribution of development benefits (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2010). This dimension focuses on the empowerment of local stakeholders by consulting communities in the designing, implementation and evaluation of development activities. An underlying assumption that informs this dimension is the participatory approach (Abouassi, 2010). The interpretations and legitimate constructs that define participation are ambiguous, which alters the way in which it is exercised. Nevertheless, empirical studies support a strong causal relationship between the inclusion and engagement of local stakeholders in decision making within the development process (from conception, policy consultation to participative evaluation) (Cleaver, 1999; Hartungi, 2010). Therefore, the value dimension highlights the participatory approach to the application of management. Abouassi (2010) adds that the value dimension encompasses the political economy that influences how development is managed.

Development management is often funded and implemented by different donors agencies which have their own paradigms and agendas that guide their applications. The means of institutional composition refers to the differentiation in managerial frameworks used by donors to manage their development activities. Managerial frameworks in the development management literature refer to “concepts such as nested and interactive systems, organizational learning and adaptation, and political economy provide the elements for constructing the kind of frameworks” (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2010, p. 356). This reveals the broad and expansive management concepts nested in development management. However, as sub-discipline of management project management has received little acknowledgement as a tool for realizing economic and social development. More specifically, the enactment of project management practices in governmental institutions is not fully acknowledged and understood in the public administration literature. This study addresses this gap in knowledge and sheds light on the project management practices used to manage and coordinate projects in the public sector.

The process aspect of development management incorporates the value dimension in which development endeavours are undertaken in a participatory manner while accentuating the application of tools and techniques in the pursuit of achieving the intended objectives (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2010). This dimension operates on two levels: organizational and individual, which branches into empowerment and capacity building. At the organizational level development management is a process of interaction between policies (legislation that supports development initiative – programme/project), sectoral programmes
(detailing strategy for addressing development initiative) and the specific project (specific activities that addresses the development initiative) (Biggs & Smith, 2003; Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999). This study focuses on the project as a delivery mechanism at the organizational level and addresses the project management practices enacted to manage and coordinate activities.

The tools facet of development management emphasizes the application of tools and techniques in the pursuit of achieving the intended objectives. This dimension stresses the series of actions and tools applied to manage the transformational process – development (Brinkhoff & Brinkhoff, 2010). Tools are drawn from various disciplines including organization development, psychology, and political science. For instance, cost-benefit analysis draws on various fields of knowledge such as accounting, economics and project management (Ika, Diallo, & Thuillier, 2010). This dimension incorporates various other aspects of development management, drawing on different processes, values and institutional agendas. Less developed administrations lack the capacity to apply the appropriate tools and techniques to manage development activities (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999). In addition, the contradictory management systems and agendas of diverse donors further complicate the selection of applicable tools to manage development projects.

A great deal of development management literature has focused on value and the means to institutional agendas that emphasize the political nature of the field of knowledge (Abouassi, 2010; Brinkerhoff, 2008). Little attention is paid to the influence different tools (a combination of the process and tools dimensions of development management) have on development outcomes. The processes and tools dimensions are vital as they concern the specific management tools and procedures that essentially influence the development results.

3.6 Project management theory

The purpose of this section is to review the relevant literature on project management and highlight the distinguishing dimensions of international development project management. First, the section defines project characteristics in an attempt to highlight the differing managerial practices used in various project contexts. Second, the characteristics of international development projects are discussed. In this section, a systematic review of the competing perspectives on the different project management approaches in development projects is presented. Next, a review of the PLC framework literature is presented in an effort to understand the vital components that inform the project management practice enacted in
each stage of the managerial cycle.

“Project management is being viewed as the ‘new’ form of general management which enables organizations to integrate, plan, and control schedule-intensive and one-of-a-kind endeavours in order to improve overall organizational performance” (Pant & Baroudi, 2008, p. 124). International aid is a contemporary context in which project management practices are applied (Ika & Hodgson, 2014; Montes-Guerra, De-Miguel, Perez-Ezcurdia, Faustino, & Diez-Silva, 2015). Construction and engineering projects dominate the project management scholarship, with the aid industry underrepresented despite projects being one the most instrumental methods used by donor agencies to deliver aid (Crawford & Bryce, 2003; Muriithi & Crawford, 2003).

Research in the field of international development has mainly focused on the macro-level perspective of aid effectiveness, with a majority of studies associating the effectiveness of aid to the quality of the recipient country’s institutions (Monkam, 2012; Moss, Pettersson, & van de Walle, 2006). Little academic research has focused on the micro-level perspective, examining the use of aid delivery mechanisms such as projects and the use of project management tools such as the PLC framework and the enactment of practices in coordinating and managing development projects. Kim (2011) highlights the importance of management practices, and specifically project management practices, arguing that “for foreign aid to succeed, sound and effective management throughout the implementation (including aid procurement, disbursement, and delivery) is of key importance” (p. 261).

3.6.1 Characteristics of a project

The term ‘project’ has been subject to various interpretations and framed within different contexts (Engwall, 2003). Munns and Bjeirmi (1996) give a simplistic definition: “a project can be considered to be the achievement of a specific objective [or a number of objectives], which involves a series of activities and tasks which consume resources” (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996, p. 81). Their superficial treatment of elements such as resources fails to capture the significance of the time dimension that is intrinsically encapsulated in the temporal nature of a project.

The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK, 2013) highlights the temporality of projects and defines a project as “a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique project, service, or result” (p. 3). The temporal nature of a project means that it has a definite start and end. Furthermore, a project is developed to create a product or deliver a service and
therefore requires an objective to centralize efforts (Choo, 2014). This characteristic highlights the transformative nature of a project that includes the insertion of resources that result in an outcome. Finally, projects are bound by limited resources to achieve project objectives (Estévez-Fernández, 2012). Based on these assumptions there are three basic characteristics that define a project: (1) the achievement of set objectives; (2) planned activities that consume resources; (3) completion within set conditions (Muriithi & Crawford, 2003). There is a growing scholarly interest in projects as “temporary organizations” (Engwall, 2003). This perspective views projects through an organizational theory lens and perceives a project as an organized structure that attempts to deliver beneficial objectives on behalf of their parent organization (Hanisch & Wald, 2011).

Scholars such as Hodgson and Cicmil (2008) challenge the traditional view and the constructs that frame a project and argue that a more critical view of projects is required to develop a more theoretically sound project management foundation. However, the conventional view of projects still dominates, which assumes “rationality, university, objectivity, and value-free decision making, and the possibility of generating law like predictions in knowledge” (Hodgson & Cicmil, 2008, p. 145).

Traditionally, researchers investigating projects have subscribed to treating the project as a lonely phenomenon. In these cases, the project has been examined as a singular entity and assumed to operate independently from its context (Engwall, 2003). As a result, research on project management is generally descriptive and fails to incorporate context-specific management practices to address the environment in which it operates (Jack & Mantel, 2003). These project management studies are also been described as normative and descriptive. Shenhar (2001) supports these assertions, stating that “most research on the management of projects is relatively young and still suffers from a scanty theoretical basis and lack of concepts” (p. 394).

Project management is defined as the application of tools and techniques in an effort to control activities within the project cycle, from conception to completion, in order to achieve the intended objectives within resource and time constraints (Atkinson, 1999; Baccarini, 1999; Montes-Guerra et al., 2015). Project management knowledge is based on industry-driven theory which has emerged from the practical issues practitioners confront (Hanisch & Wald, 2011). Due to this, project management theory is normative and descriptive, and therefore has weak theoretical foundations (Engwall, 2003; Hanisch & Wald, 2012; Hodgson
& Cicmil, 2008). Reinforcing this point, Hanisch and Wald (2011) categorize project management as an academic discipline in the “Mode 2” knowledge production category which is stimulated by practical issues and therefore requires a variety of technical expertise from different fields. As a result of the normative nature of project management, the boundaries between fundamental and applied research are blurred (Hanisch & Wald, 2011).

3.6.2 Soft vs hard projects

Different types of projects require specific sets of management approaches and technical expertise (Crawford & Pollack, 2004; Landoni & Corti, 2011). The project management discourse distinguishes two types of projects: soft and hard. Crawford and Pollack (2004) identify a seven dimension criteria for determining hard and soft projects: objective clarity; objective tangibility; success measures; project permeability; number of alternative solutions; degree of participation and practitioner role; and stakeholder expectations.

In regards to the clarity of project objectives, hard projects have clearly defined objectives with tangible measures. On the other hand, soft projects have unclear, ambiguous objectives with less tangible measures (Crawford, Costello, Pollack, & Bentley, 2003). The objectives of development projects vary as some projects will be hard with well-structured and measurable objectives, such as a construction of a water well. Other development projects are soft and aim to improve the more intangible aspects of a community, such as quality of life.

Project permeability relates to the influence of external (environmental) and internal (organizational size/structure/personnel) factors on project goals, methods and outcomes. With regard to development projects, “Soft methods would be useful, focusing on learning and exploration, allowing deliverables to be tailored to the local environment and emergent knowledge concerning risks and benefits exploited” (Crawford & Pollack, 2004, p. 648). Hard methods or systems are more suitable to stable environments with formalized bureaucratic systems in place.

The number of alternative solutions available to resolve project issues is also a feature which distinguishes hard and soft projects. According to Crawford and Pollack (2004), hard projects concentrate on managing activities in an attempt to improve efficiency. Therefore, more technically feasible and efficient solutions are sought after in hard projects, whereas soft projects emphasize learning and the exploration of extrinsic characteristics such as culture. For development projects, the exploration of solutions is dependent on the overarching objective of the project.
The degree of participation of stakeholders in project activities is another factor that distinguishes hard and soft projects (Crawford & Pollack, 2004). Development projects involve a number of different stakeholders with varying interests and agendas. Therefore prioritizing stakeholders is a speculative task as different stakeholders have varying political and commercial agendas, which necessitates critical assessment by an independent party. Empirical findings have proved stakeholder participation in development projects ultimately improves project performance (Finsterbusch & Van Wicklin, 1987; Mbengue & Sané, 2013; Morrison, 2010).

Yung (2014) applied two theoretical perspectives to understand the underlying assumptions of hard and soft project management: the task and organizational perspectives. The task perspective is associated with hard project management which focuses on the planning and controlling functions in the project. Through the task lens, the project is separated into three stages: development, implementation and termination. Authors such as Packendorff (1995) and Kosekela and Howell (2002) have been critical of the task theoretical lens as it is a fairly common, orthodox perspective of project management and unsuccessfully accounts for project failures; nor does it determine project success. Consequently, this theoretical view is increasingly recognized as an incomplete and flawed perspective in project management.

The organizational perspective of project management is associated with soft projects. During the 1960s, elements of the organizational structure perspective included task allocation, human resource management and leadership (Yung, 2014). Progressing forward to the late 1980s, the focus of the organizational perspective shifted to project risk and the influence of external factors such as economic and political stability on project management activities (Cicmil, Williams, Thomas, & Hodgson, 2006; Yung, 2014). Over the past two decades, this outlook has deviated to become a more integrated, multidisciplinary perspective of project management. This shift in theoretical focus is supported by Golini and Landoni (2014) who claim that such multiplicity extends practice and provides a more critical theoretical base. However, these authors fail to provide a valid strategy to address the multidisciplinary nature of development projects. Moreover, few empirical findings substantiate the need to assimilate soft and hard perspectives to establish a compelling project management theory. This study contributes to this conversation by advocating that the project management paradigm should include soft elements such as cultural customs and human resource management (HRM) practices.
3.6.3 Project management success vs project success

It is not the intention of this study to define project success or establish a predisposed list of success factors. The purpose of this research is to examine the project management practices employed to manage development projects. With this aim in mind, it is important to distinguish between project management success and project success in order to establish a frame of reference.

Defining project success has been described as a problematic task as success maybe dependent on individual perceptions and therefore involve a high degree of subjectivity (Ika et al., 2010). Project performance measures in traditional project management fields such as construction and engineering focus on a simplistic formula utilizing time, scope (quality) and budget as their points of reference (Atkinson, 1999). However, a project which is delivered within the specified timeframe, within budget constraints and to a high quality may still have not achieved the project objectives outlined at the start (Mir & Pinnington, 2014). This has led scholars such as Munns and Bjeirmi (1996), Ashan and Gunawan (2010) and Mir and Pinnington (2014) to make distinctions between project success and project management success.

Project management success is assessed in accordance with conventional project management constructs (based on the engineering and construction industries) which include time, scope and budget. These three components are often referred to as the “Iron Triangle” and are well established as project management success criteria (Atkinson, Crawford, & Ward, 2006). Project performance is a well-established stream of research in project management scholarship (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996). The performance measurement criteria for projects depend on the nature of the project (Toor & Ogunlana, 2010). Performance measures in traditional project management fields such as construction and engineering focus on measuring the scope (quality) of the project, timeliness and adherence to budget constraints (Ika et al., 2010; Jugdev & Muller, 2005). Hodgson and Cicmil (2008) are highly critically of these project success factors as they fail to account for the varying complexities involved in managing projects. Aspects such as the political economy and the social interactions of project actors (recipient government, donor agencies, contractors and community beneficiaries) are not considered in the criteria, and these elements play a significant role in determining the project management practices imposed.

A number of scholarly articles have focused on determining the criteria for success for
different project stakeholders (Isham, Narayan, & Pritchett, 1995; Lim & Mohamed, 1999; Mok, Shen, & Yang, 2015; Toor & Ogunlana, 2010). Different project stakeholders hold varying interests in project outcomes and impact and therefore view the success of these activities in very different ways. Lim and Mohamed (1999) propose two possible viewpoints of success for large engineering or construction projects: macro and micro perspectives. The macro viewpoint concerns general stakeholders that question whether the overall conceptualization of the project was achieved. These general stakeholders are likened to parties such as end users; in the case of engineering and construction projects this would account for product stores (retail spaces), service locations, customers of these products and services, and other groups of individuals who would utilize the final constructed site. The micro perspective of success involves achieving the “Iron Triangle” (Jugdev & Muller, 2005). This viewpoint concerns individuals or parties involved in the project management process, for instance consultants, contractors and project actors. Success for these stakeholders is determined by project management success components or the three elements of the Iron Triangle: scope, timeliness and within budgetary constraints (Lim & Mohamed, 1999).

A critical success factor is a characteristic necessary for a project to achieve its purpose. Scholars examining critical success factors claim that understanding the prevalent attributes that contribute to the success of projects will ultimately enhance the ability for project actors to execute more projects that are successful. In a milestone article, Pinto and Slevin (1987) detail a process used to determine success factors that can be used to forecast the successful execution of projects. As a result of the study, 10 success factors were identified and developed into an interdependent framework that project managers could utilize. These success factors include clearly defined project goals, top management support, feedback capabilities and adequate communication channels.

Similarly, Pinto and Mantel (1990) examined 97 engineering projects and identified factors that influence the success or failure of these types of projects. These authors recognize that the subjectivity of success hinders the understanding and development of critical success factors. The understanding of critical success factors up until this point was limited in that the attributes described were based on generic projects in the engineering and construction fields. Furthermore, projects were often examined as isolated entities with no regard given to the external characteristics that influence the implementation of projects. For instance, the governance of the parent organization plays a significant role in financial funding, staffing
and project procurement.

Pinto and Mantel (1990) extended Pinto and Slevin (1987) 10 success factors, and argue that project success must be measured through three different lenses. Pinto and Mantel (1990) argue that projects benchmarks for assessing project success is through: (1) internal efficiency of the implementation process; (2) the perceived value of the project; and (3) client satisfaction. Moreover, Pinto and Mantel (1990) recognize that the subjectivity of the term success means that success then needs to be reviewed and measured by various stakeholders, including the client. The quality of the project and the efficiency of the implementation must also be examined in order to gain a more holistic perspective of the project’s success. These two seminal works established our core understanding of project performance and ways of theorizing about project success.

Wang and Huang (2006) investigated stakeholder perceptions of project success. The study found that stakeholders in Chinese construction projects determined success differently to what is established in the project management literature. Wang and Huang (2006) found that Chinese project stakeholders placed significant importance on relationships (guanxi) as a core component for measuring project success rather than the traditional criteria for assessing project success. Guanxi is the Chinese cultural system of social networks and influential relationships in the business context (Dongdong & Pretorius, 2014). These types of cultural norms and practices are not considered in traditional, normative project success criteria. The next section discusses the development project management scholarship and explores the relevant literature to identify gaps in knowledge.

### 3.7 Development project management

With the introduction of international guidelines such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, aid delivery and management has changed significantly over the past two decades (Conlin & Stirrat, 2008). There are various modes of delivering development assistance including development programmes, TA, and providing budget support to recipient governments. Across these alternative methodologies the literature identifies projects as the most prevalent mechanism for administering development assistance (Ashan & Gunawan, 2010; Ika, 2012).

Development projects are the most common instrument used by development agencies to deliver development assistance (Ashan & Gunawan, 2010; Hermano, López-Paredes, Martín-
Cruz, & Pajares, 2013). Development projects have continued to perform poorly, resulting in stakeholders demanding more sophisticated project management systems to manage and coordinate project activities. In 1996, Carvalho and White (1996) examined 67 development projects and found that only three were completed. In a similar study the Independent Evaluation Group, an appraisal unit within the World Bank, reported that 39% of World Bank development projects were unsuccessful in 2010 (Chauvet, Collier, & Duponchel, 2010). More recently, Golini, Kalchschmidt, and Landoni (2014) found that projects carried out by NGOs have equally disappointing failure rates, with project performance often considered inadequate. Youker (1999) and Golini et al. (2014) associate the failure of these particular types of projects with the poor quality – or lack – of managerial and organizational practices used to manage development projects.

Development projects are a distinctive type of project that is not well represented in the project management literature (Biggs & Smith, 2003; Ika & Hodgson, 2014). The majority of the project management literature is based on the engineering and construction industries. A vast amount of scholarly research has focused on the various dimensions of traditional engineering and construction projects (Emuze & Smallwood, 2013; Koppenjan, Veeneman, van der Voort, ten Heuvelhof, & Leijten, 2011; Puddicombe, 2013). However, as we saw above, project management still lacks a developed theoretical base compared to more established management fields such as strategic management (Hanisch & Wald, 2011). Moreover, project management has been described as normative and descriptive which adds to the inadequacy of project management literature. Soderlund (2004) stresses the lack of empirical evidence in the field, which further hinders the development of project management scholarship. Furthermore, Shenhar and Dvir (1996) examined the theoretical issues of project management and reported the need for more context-specific management practices to shift the traditional project management paradigm away from standard practice.

3.7.1 Characteristics of development projects

Various characteristics distinguish development projects from operational/engineering projects. Prasad, Tata, Herlache, and McCarthy (2013) distinguish development projects from conventional projects by using five categories: project characteristics, external environment, internal project elements, project management process and outcomes. Two aspects reappear frequently in the literature: project characteristics and project management processes. Project characteristics includes project attributes such as project size, precision of objectives and
access to resources. Project features such as project size have often been determined in project management literature by the financial support allocated or by the number of staff employed (Kilby, 2011). It is important that clear, measurable and precise objectives are established in order to centralize efforts towards achieving project goals (Prasad et al., 2013).

Development projects have been defined as scheduled activities established to achieve one or more objectives that address the development aspirations of a LDC (Ashan & Gunawan, 2010). Development projects are a special type of project that inherently possesses complex characteristics (Landoni & Corti, 2011). Unlike traditional projects based in local settings, development projects are based in foreign dynamic environments where project components are required to adapt and respond to change (Ika, 2012). For instance, differing political systems can affect the planning and implementation of project activities (Ika et al., 2010).

Development projects also differ from standard projects as they involve complex intangible objectives that are difficult to measure (Diallo & Thuillier, 2004; Muriithi & Crawford, 2003). Standard projects set in traditional project management fields such as engineering tend to have more concrete objectives with measurable outcomes. According to Ika (2012), development projects “are bound by a common goal of contributing to economic growth or poverty” (p. 29) which is intangible and therefore difficult to measure. Moreover, these intricate projects involve various stakeholders (e.g., donor agencies, project managers, community members, government officials) who have different perspectives and cultural values which adds to their complexity (Landoni & Corti, 2011). This also complicates the evaluation of development projects as different stakeholders have differing perspectives as to what constitutes the achievement of project objectives.

In addition, Pilbeam (2013) argues that traditional projects have a shared understanding of a common organizational context that is assumed in the project management literature and that “the absence of this shared understanding of organizational context in this particular class of short-term projects removes one of the common means of coordinating projects” (p. 190). Staffing has also been recognized as an area of complexity within development projects, as individuals with little project management training and no specific procurement skills are employed. As a result of these unique project components, development projects require distinct management systems and performance measures to manage complex project activities (Landoni & Corti, 2011; Thomas, 1996). Another major aspect that distinguishes traditional projects from development projects is the numerous stakeholders involved and
their different levels of engagement. Table 2 lists the different stakeholders involved in projects and their respective levels of engagement. There are three levels of engagement in development projects and there are complexities involved in stakeholders’ participation. This table demonstrates the complexities involved in managing stakeholders’ different perceptions and further coordinating their participation in a way that is conducive to the project’s success.

Table 2: Project stakeholder levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Nature of problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>Central government</td>
<td>Policy environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National research organizations</td>
<td>Legal provisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>State of the national economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International NGOs</td>
<td>International relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National NGOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional unions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service providers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private sectors (manufacturing, wholesalers, distributors, retailers)</td>
<td>Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure (transport, communications, markets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Services (credit, extension, training, education, health)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Regional government</td>
<td>Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service providers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private sectors (manufacturing, wholesalers, distributors, retailers)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professional organizations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals (women, men, children)</td>
<td>Productive, household and community work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>Access and control over resources and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communities</td>
<td>Decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community-based organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Golini and Landoni (2014, p. 125).

3.7.2 Development project context

A distinguishing characteristic of development projects is the context in which they are implemented. However, the term ‘context’ is loaded and Bamberger (2008) encourage scholars to move beyond contextualization and utilize context theories (theoretical views developed to address the complexities of context) to narrow the micro/macro gap in management research.

Context in the field of project management refers to the extraneous characteristics that the organization has no or little control over (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993). Bryson and Bromiley
(1993) examined how the context of major projects influences the process of project planning and implementation. The authors list 10 previously established contextual variables that include the external afflicted groups, the technological sophistication available, and the stability of the general political and economic environment. However, these variables inadequately address the complexities of the variability in development project contexts. In general, development projects are implemented in contexts that are characterized by institutional inferiority and weak political and economic mechanisms which influences the project management practices employed (Ika & Hodgson, 2014). As noted at the start of this chapter, a key issue in developing countries is the lack of institutional support and technical capacity within government departments to provide legitimate project management expertise. In addition to these political complexities, the different cultural assumptions that inform project management practices need to be considered.

3.7.3 Development project guidelines

The common tools and frameworks used to govern development project activities are discussed in this section. These tools and frameworks are contextualized and designed to address the development priorities. Development projects are delivered by donor agencies through various funding arrangements such as TA and collaborations (e.g., bilateral agreements or through NGO contracts) (Hermano et al., 2013). Ika et al. (2010) survey a range of tools used in the development project management industry. Project tools such as the Logical Framework (Logframe), cost-benefit analysis and SWOT evaluations are all described as pivotal frameworks for planning development activities.

In order to address the peculiarities of development projects, two sets of project management guidelines were developed by Project Management for Non-Governmental Organizations (PM4NGO) to manage the complexities of these types of projects: Project Management for Development Professionals (PMDPro) and Project Management for Development (PMDEV). These project management standards were established based on two key assumptions. First, it is presumed that regardless of the environment or sector in which the project is implemented, project managers have an ability to learn from each other. Second, it is assumed that project managers face fundamentally similar challenges (Hermano et al., 2013). Based on these predetermined expectations, PM4NGO offer these guidelines as standard practice for project managers of development projects.

Although there has been little empirical research into the effectiveness of these codes of
conduct, practitioners have endorsed the principles as reputable and well-established in the development field. According to Hermano et al. (2013), a significant benefit of the PMDPro guidelines is their ability to transfer knowledge to various project actors and agencies. The main limitation is that there is a lack of differentiation between the two sets of guidelines. The guidelines also lack collaborative measures that would allow community beneficiaries to engage in project activities. Golini and Landoni (2014) affirm these discrepancies within PMDPro and argue that project management practices development in business environments would be beneficial for addressing the disparities of development projects and provide useful insights for coordinating activities.

Landoni and Corti (2011) agree the PMDPro guidelines have limitations and state that standard/traditional frameworks such as the PLC models are more widely used. More recently, authors such as Ika and Hodgson (2014) have utilized a critical perspective to shed light on how development project management could potentially provide insight into project management in the engineering field. A limitation that is scarcely discussed in development project management literature is that both the project management and aid effectiveness fields of knowledge are dominated by assumptions that include an “embedded faith in instrumental rationality, objectivity, reductionism and expectations of universal validity” (Ika & Hodgson, 2014, p. 1182).

In an attempt to make sense of these preconceived notions Ika and Hodgson (2014) present four critical social theories that may shape the expansion of the development project management scholarship. The authors chronologically detail the theoretical lenses as the post-development, Habermasian, Foucauldian, and neo-Marxist lenses. The post-development theoretical lens is critical of project management methodology and dismisses the use of ‘projects’. The Habermasian perspective highlights the influence of power relations within the context of the project and critically examines how power influences project management approaches. The Foucauldian view examines power on a broader level – country and global. This perspective draws critical attention to power dynamics between rich and poor countries (donor and recipient) and local governance systems. These differing theoretical lenses demonstrate the wide range of theoretical premises that have been used to examine project management approaches. The authors further suggest the critical perspectives movement as a way of developing our understanding of project management tools. These studies demonstrate the institutionalization of project tools and the endorsement of best practices through global project guidelines.
3.8 Project life cycle management framework

This chapter has thus far analysed the development assistance context and defined the intrinsic development project characteristics. This section outlines a prominent project management paradigm that has traditionally been used to organize and regulate development project activities, the PLC framework. Each stage of the framework has received a vast about of academic attention, and all have become established streams of knowledge. Ika and Hodgson (2014) have recently provided a systematic review of the most dominant underlying assumptions in the PLC literature.

Despite its long operational and extensive use in development projects, little consideration has been given to the organizing function of the PLC model. A majority of studies explore the varying uses and applications of the PLC framework (Biggs & Smith, 2003; Khang & Moe, 2008; Landoni & Corti, 2011) without focusing on the organizing function, which relates to the model’s capacity as a tool to arrange and coordinate activities. Originally, the structure was formulated to provide a structural template for World Bank projects, but Baum (1978) argues that “no two projects are alike” and each requires a tailored approach. However, recipient governments and donor agencies have consistently endorsed the framework as a common series of stages that all projects must go through (Landoni & Corti, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, a prominent management paradigm utilized to organize and manage development activities is the PLC (Golini & Landoni, 2014; Khang & Moe, 2008; Patanakul, Iewwongcharoen, & Milosevic, 2010). In a landmark publication, Baum (1978) documented the use of the PLC within the World Bank. It also recounted the evolution of World Bank’s development orientation that resulted in the creation of the PLC framework. A number of prominent project management scholars have cited Baum’s (1978) work as one that progressed our understanding of PLC and the intricacies and complexities involved in managing and coordinating such activities (Biggs & Smith, 2003; Johnson, 1984; Landoni & Corti, 2011; Youker, 2003).

The PLC framework organizes, coordinates and conceptualizes project activities intended to achieve project objectives in a sequential manner (Biggs & Smith, 2003). It provides a progressive link between activities, offering a holistic view of all project components. This aspect of the PLC also gives project actors well-defined structure and direction for ongoing operations and enables better management control throughout the entire life cycle (Landoni &
Corti, 2011). However, Biggs and Smith (2003) remain proponents of the PLC model and insist on the framework providing a structured approach that allows for responsive managerial decisions to guide activities (Biggs & Smith, 2003). Furthermore, other studies have criticized PLC tools and best practices such as the Logframe for its inability to address beneficiaries needs (Couillard, Garon, & Riznic, 2009).

Over the years, the PLC phases have been slightly altered to fit donor and recipient systems and revised in accordance with the development of new project activities (Muriithi & Crawford, 2003). In addition, donors have adopted and implemented different versions of the PLC. Landoni and Corti (2011) examined the use of the PLC model by five large donor agencies (Australian Agency for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, European Commission, Japan International Cooperation Agency, and US Agency for International Development) and found that donors place importance on different phases of the PLC. However, the development project literature generally holds that the PLC is distinguished by three distinct activities: planning, implementation and evaluation (Landoni & Corti, 2011; Thamhain, 2013).

Biggs and Smith (2003) describe more specific stages that include six distinctive phases: programming, identification, design, support, implementation and evaluation (see Figure 4). Biggs and Smith’s (2003) description of the PLC framework is well rounded and encapsulates a more holistic explanation as it acknowledges the process of conceptualizing planning activities. This is seen in the expansion of the planning phase to include programming, which Ika (2012) states enables consistency in objectives and lessens the probability of duplication.

The programming phase involves development actors (recipient government department/ministries and donor agencies who have pledged assistance) collectively establishing a development strategy. The overall development strategy will accompany a general framework of development objectives that will be implemented through a range of programmes and subsequent projects. The second stage involves the identification of issues or vulnerabilities experienced by the beneficiaries. A key component of this stage is the consultation with stakeholders. The identified issue/vulnerability must clearly link to the general framework of objectives agreed upon in the previous phase (programming phase).
Figure 4: The 6-phase project framework

Source: Adapted from Biggs & Smith (2003, p. 1744).

The design phase comprises project ideas developed into an operational plan (Ika & Saint-Macary, 2012). The plan is assessed against the feasibility criteria that will test the practicality and whether factors such as gender awareness, sustainability of results and environmental impact are taken into consideration. The fourth phase comprises government departments bidding for assistance. According to Biggs and Smith (2003), this stage involves a lot of dialogue and substantial negotiations between recipient and donors on the specifications and conditions of assistance. Once project stakeholders have agreed on the type of support given (political, financial, technical, etc.) the planned activities are carried out in the implementation stage. A key component of this stage is the process of monitoring the progress of activities towards achieving objectives. Due to the cyclical nature of the PLC model, “lesson learning” is a central notion as it enables periodic adjustments throughout the cycle (Biggs & Smith, 2003).

Although there is merit in differentiating between the four planning phases described above, this study focuses on the three main PLC phases: planning, implementation and evaluation as they are the phases that dominate project management literature (Ika et al., 2010; Landoni & Corti, 2011; Thamhain, 2013). Project managers use generic project management practices to approach these planning tasks which justifies the merge of these phases (Ika et al., 2010).
Therefore, this study focuses on the project management practices in the three PLC phrases depicted in figure 5.

Different managerial approaches are required for different types of projects and therefore it is assumed that a distinct type of approach to managing and coordinating activities within each phase is necessary. Zwikael and Ahn (2011) support this idea and argue that by concentrating on specific stages more salient and empirically sound theories are developed. However, project stages are cyclical and activities evolve, which influences the project outcome. This means that there is a cascade effect whereby the project management practices used in the previous stage influence the activities and approaches used in the next stage (Soderlund, 2004). For this reason, the project management practices in each stage of the PLC framework are discussed in the following subsections.

3.8.1 The planning stage

The design and planning stage is a pivotal phase and is a significant element that contributes to project success (Ika & Saint-Macary, 2012). However, various authors have criticized the link between planning activities and the success of projects, because the definition of project success is ambiguous (Dvir & Lechler, 2004). Authors such as Dvir and Lechler (2004) suggest that rigid plans established early in the project are ineffective and do not influence its success as much as continuous monitoring and restructuring of project components. In regards to development projects, objectives are intangible and lack measurable variables, which complicates the process of measuring success. Therefore, the causal relationship
between the project planning phase and the success of development projects is inconclusive. Nevertheless, the planning stage significantly influences the implementation of other project activities.

Project planning has been defined as “the establishment of a set of directions provided in sufficient detail to inform the project team of exactly what must be done, when it must be done, and what resources to use to produce the expected results of the project successfully” (Zwikael & Ahn, 2011, p. 26). Project managers recognize the significance of the planning stage and invest a huge amount of time, effort and resources into ensuring that planning activities are adequately executed (Zwikael & Ahn, 2011). A number empirical studies have argued that an effective plan is associated with lowering the risk of early termination and in some cases can lead to the project management success (Atkinson, 1999; Bryson & Bromiley, 1993; Zwikael & Ahn, 2011; Zwikael, Pathak, Singh, & Ahmed, 2014). It is important to note here that evidence regarding this correlation is only relevant to project management success and is not associated with achieving the overall project objectives.

In the 1960s a consultancy company, Practical Concepts, developed the Logframe as a tool to assist with planning development activities for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Dearden & Kowalski, 2003). The standard components of a Logframe are organized into a four-by-four matrix (see Table 3), with the columns titled project description (narrative summary), verifiable indicators, means of verification and assumptions. The rows consist of the project goal, purpose, outputs and inputs. The columns outline and summarize why the project should be undertaken by listing the means of verification and additional sources to verify these factors. The original purpose of the Logframe tool was to assist evaluators in assessing development projects.

Over the years, the framework has been redeveloped to integrate a stakeholder analysis in line with participatory considerations. Moreover, sophisticated systems and software have been developed to facilitate these considerations (Dearden & Kowalski, 2003). A number of international development agencies such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) have recognized that these Logframe advancements facilitate planning, design capabilities, and enable more collaborative planning.
Table 3: Logical framework matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Project description</th>
<th>Performance indicators</th>
<th>Means of verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal/Impact</strong></td>
<td>Development impact on national or sector-based level.</td>
<td>Well-defined units of measurement with details including: quantity, quality and timing of expected results.</td>
<td>Sources of information on how performance indicators will be collected (methodology).</td>
<td>Assumptions made about conditions that could affect the progress or success of the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose/Outcome</strong></td>
<td>What the project is expected to achieve. Clearly linked to the overall national development priorities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives or intermediate results</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work programme</strong></td>
<td>Tasks to be undertaken as part of the planned delivery of the activity to achieve the required outputs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Landoni & Corti (2011, p. 46).

Global aid agencies such as the WorldBank (1996) have long been advocates of the Logframe, claiming “use of project design tools such as the Logframe results in systematic selection of indicators for monitoring project performance. The process of selecting indicators for monitoring is a test of the soundness of project objectives and can lead to improvements in project design” (WorldBank, 1996, p. 2). Other agencies have highlighted the fact that the Logframe incorporates the views of different stakeholders involved in the immediate project activities and results in implementers taking more ownership of project operations (Lewis,
Welsh, Dehler, & Green, 2002).

However, the Logframe has been adopted in different PLC stages and has changed the overall execution of the evaluation tool. Landoni and Corti (2011) identified that there are significant differences in the way the Logframe is adopted in contrasting PLC stages by large donor agencies. JICA and AusAID, for example, both adopt the Logframe in the planning phrase as an essential knowledge management tool, managing, summarizing and communicating pivotal project information. Other donor agencies have adopted the Logframe in the implementation stage to benchmark, monitor activities, and make adjustments accordingly.

The Logframe has become such a significant planning instrument that it is now a prerequisite for large donor agencies such as the World Bank (Crawford & Bryce, 2003). The reason for this is that the Logframe encompasses essential project components and provides an integrated framework linking objectives, indicators and underlying assumptions. As a project design tool, one of the main objectives of the Logframe is to provide a common vision and understanding of the project for project actors such as the recipient government, donor agencies and project manager (Couillard, Garon, & Riznic, 2009).

As mentioned above, since its inception the Logframe has been redeveloped into alternative design tools that incorporate a variety of components and techniques. Jones et al. (2009) altered the conceptual framework to incorporate the participatory approach, introducing a model which combined community stakeholders with development practitioners in designing project activities. The rationale for this approach is that the perspectives of community members (beneficiaries) and local government stakeholders provide a collaborative vision for managing and coordinating project activities. In addition, Jones et al. (2009) list the advantages of incorporating participatory modelling into the Logframe, which include reducing conflict, increasing common understanding of issues and improving legitimacy.

The Logframe is often preferred as a design tool for its ability to encourage project designers to focus on imperative components such as linking essential indicators to objectives (Aune, 2000). However, other scholars have been critical of the framework, claiming it lacks depth and is overly conceptualized and impractical (Crawford, Perryman, & Petocz, 2004; Gasper, 2000b). Crawford and Bryce (2003) note that the absence of a time dimension hinders the effectiveness of the Logframe as development projects are bound by time constraints. Hermano and Martín-Cruz (2013) echo this sentiment and insist that a credible design tool should enable users to discern the timeliness of activities in order to make adequate resource
arrangements. Furthermore, the Logframe fails to assimilate contextual conditions such as the political and economic climate into designing project activities. Another prominent criticism relates to the fact that the framework concentrates on the implementation of activities rather than providing equal attention to the final conclusion and evaluation of the project.

Gasper (2000a) identifies three major disparities with the Logframe: logic-less frame, lock frame and lack frame. Due to large donor agencies demanding that the Logframe be presented before funding is committed, recipient governments continue to poorly construct the matrix and at times it is done purely for administrative purposes (Gasper, 2000a). The pre-existing Logframe design is used with a lack of environmental consideration that undermines the rationale behind the design tool. Gasper (2000a) claims that this type of use of the Logframe lacks logical thought, hence the logic-less frame. Secondly, Gasper argues that the planning tool tends to be stagnant and fixed, and calls this lock frame. These two aspects contradict the “lesson learning” notion embedded in the PLC framework in which the Logframe operates. Scholars such as Landoni and Corti (2011) and Hermano et al. (2013) propose the application of project management standards such as the PMBOK could improve the limitations of the Logframe and improve project performance. However, these claims are unsubstantiated and require further validation.

3.8.2 The implementation stage

The implementation stage relates to the core activities executed to achieve the established objectives detailed within the planning stage. Youker (2003) notes that approaches to the implementation phase must involve different managerial approaches from the standard procedures. This is due to the costliness and time-consuming nature of activities executed in this phase. Activities are consistently monitored in order to audit for progress against objectives. It has been noted that the extension of activities in the implementation stage is often attributed to the lag of progress reports which increases expenses (Youker, 2003). Due to the complexities concerning development projects, implementation issues are inevitable (Carvalho & White, 1996).

In a landmark publication, Gow and Morss (1988) examined 24 large-scale development projects funded by USAID. The authors identified nine issues in the implementation stage that impeded the projects’ progress: external environment (political, economic and environmental) limitations, institutional realities, personal constraints, TA constraints, lack of stakeholder participation, timing, information systems, differing agendas and sustaining
project benefits (Gow & Morss, 1988). External environment factors such as the economic conditions of the recipient country and the political climate are key problems that affect the implementation of development projects. Institutional realities refers to overly complicated administrative requirements enforced by donor agencies on recipient governments. Developing countries lack efficient bureaucratic systems and formal managerial systems that facilitate the effective coordination of activities within the implementation phase.

More importantly, Gow and Morss (1988) provided solutions to the issues identified. However, the solutions proposed are generic and provide little detail for recipients to enforce in practice. For instance, a country with an unpredictable and unstable political setting may experience implementation issues. Gow and Morss (1988) suggest three alternatives: (1) design the project accordingly; (2) attempt to change the conditions; or (3) accept the external environment and abandon the proposed project. These options are simplistically characterized and therefore fail to adequately deal with the complexity of the issue.

Similarly, Carvalho and White (1996) examined 67 development projects financed and executed by the World Bank in a various developing countries around the world. Their investigation found that project actors encountered numerous implementation issues including coordination problems, issues with procurement and cost outrun. Understaffing, high staff turnover and lack of competent staff were all identified as significant human resource barriers that negatively affected the implementation of development projects. Donor agencies have used a variety of alternatives to prevent staffing issues from affecting the implementation of project activities such as TA. TA is a frequently used mechanism for building the capacity of project staff members. However, the use of TA in the form of donor consultants has received negative criticism, with scholars questioning the impact and sustainability of such assistance (Godfrey et al., 2002). Godfrey et al. (2002) claim that the excessive reliance of recipient countries on foreign contractors to train and strengthen the capacity of local staff members at times questions the effectiveness and sustainability of project outcomes.

Procurement misunderstandings were also reported as a crucial impediment in the implementation stage of the 67 development projects examined (Carvalho & White, 1996). These misunderstandings included the misinterpretation and at times lack of understanding of donor monitoring and reporting procedures. Moreover, the diverse procurement requirements from different donor agencies also strained local systems. This issue is reflected in two of
principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, alignment and harmonization, which encourage donors to adjust their administrative systems to fit recipient systems.

Ika (2012) sees the issues identified in Gow and Morss (1988) and Carvalho and White (1996) work as project management issues and attempts to develop the results of these studies further. The conclusions of Ika’s (2012) study derive from interviews with development project managers coordinating and managing projects in African regions. The study identified that project management problems in development projects fall into three key categories: structural/contextual issues, institutional/sustainability problem, and managerial/organizational issues. Development projects do not operate in a vacuum and therefore project management practices will be influenced by external factors such as the political/economic environment and geographic/physical environment, and these are categorized as structural or contextual issues. Sociocultural factors such as religion, language, cultural traditions are also elements that may affect project management practices.

3.8.3 The evaluation stage

The evaluation stage has been cited as one of the most significant stages in the PLC framework as it involves determining and measuring the efficiency of project tools and overall effectiveness of the development projects (Golini & Landoni, 2014; Wells, 2012). The evaluation stage has become a knowledge area in itself and a growing research field. The considerable amount of research is based on the evaluation systems of conventional projects with an expanding literature base on assessment methods in development projects (Liket, Rey-Garcia, & Mass, 2014).

According to Cracknell (1996) and Crawford et al. (2004), there are two common reasons for aid evaluation: accountability and organizational learning. First, aid assessment ensures accountability for financial and human capital resources and proves the outcomes delivered. Second, evaluations provide specific learning outcomes that are used to improve future project endeavours. Crawford et al. (2004) note that these two inferences embody the interests of the different stakeholders, donor agencies, recipient governments and beneficiaries.

In 1991, the OECD Development Assistance Committee set assessment principles in an attempt to regulate the evaluation methods used and ensure more timely and transparent evaluation reports (OCED, 1991). The committee defined an evaluation as “an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an on-going or completed project, programme, or
policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability” (OCED, 1991, p. 4). The purpose of evaluation is to provide information to improve future aid activities through feedback of lessons learned and to provide a basis of accountability that includes the provisions of disclosing information to the public (OCED, 1991).

There is an implicit power imbalance implied in the notion of accountability. Winters (2010) argues that aid effectiveness agendas have overlooked that the chain of accountability is long and complex. This is because there are many parties involved in development practice which complicates identifying the accountability relationship dynamic. Winters (2010) states: “accountability implies that some actors have the right to hold other actors to a set of standards, to judge whether they have fulfilled their responsibilities in light of these standards, and to impose sanctions if they determine that these responsibilities have been met” (p. 219). Numerous studies have cited the importance of donor agencies adopting sufficient and effective assessment tools in order to adequately justify their operations and provide imperative information for improving future development efforts (Contandriopoulos & Brousselle, 2012; Hartungi, 2010). The evaluation stage is also seen as a learning process that development actors utilize to enhance the delivery of future development assistance (Biggs & Smith, 2003). Although the evaluation phase is recognized as a significant process for determining the efficiency and effectiveness of development efforts, little is understood about this stage as a part of the PLC framework.

Multiple evaluation tools have been identified in the literature (Golini & Landoni, 2014; Wells, 2012). As mentioned earlier, the original Logframe was redeveloped and has become a multifaceted tool used to facilitate various project activities such as planning, interim appraisal and ex-post evaluations (Hermano et al., 2013). Due to the Logframe’s versatility its relevance and use in each of the PLC stages has been questioned by Gasper (2000b). As an ex-post evaluation tool the Logframe model has been criticized for its inability to contextualize results.

Various authors have reported issues with the Logframe as an evaluation tool. Crawford and Bryce (2003) claim that there are three key issues. First, the framework lacks a time function which is a key component of the final appraisal of project activities. Due to resource constraints, predetermined goals must be completed within a fixed time period. Thus, the absence of a time dimension fails to provide clear boundaries for operations. Second, the
matrix column that depicts the means of verification contains inadequate detail, which has adverse effects on other components of the Logframe (Assumptions column). Last but not least, Crawford and Bryce (2003) claim that a serious limitation with the Logframe is the stagnant nature of the matrix. The Logframe presents an outline of project components at one point of time. Because different project actors are involved at different stages of the project, the Logframe is ineffective as it only provides a snapshot of project components at the time conducted. Another evaluation tool that is frequently used in development projects is impact evaluation (Prasad et al., 2013; White, 2010). This tool is based on determining whether the development project (intervention) caused the output or outcome.

The evaluation stage is not immune to the issues outlined above in the planning and implementation phases. It has been documented that donor agencies have in the past exaggerated the results of their development projects in an attempt to gain greater sponsorship (Dale, 2004). Another preventative issue with the evaluation function is that it serves more than one purpose, which complicates matters (Michaelowa & Borrmann, 2006). Furthermore, the results of development project evaluations can either provide assurance to donor agencies or hold development partners (donor agencies and recipients) accountable for their actions.

There are numerous practical challenges that inhibit the accurate assessment of development projects. There has been a long search for more appropriate indicators to measure development as the current index measurements are based on economic, rationalist paradigms. Such indicators fail to account for the wide scope and breadth of social implications of development projects. The different stakeholder agendas also influence the assessment methods employed, which amplifies the issue of establishing measurement indicators. Moreover, there are issues with identifying aid attribution, and establishing a causal effect can inhibit a true appraisal of project activities. The difficulty in establishing evidence of project attribution was discussed earlier in relation to causality chain (Bourguignon & Sundberg, 2007). Attribution in the evaluation literature is defined as “identifying causality between the intervention and changes observed” (Crawford et al., 2004, p. 176). Complications in evaluating the impact of development efforts at the project level are due to the difficulty of attribution. Problems with attribution relate to the difficulty of assigning detected changes in the outcomes to the intervention or development project. White (2010) states that the boundaries that distinguish impact indicators and outcome indicators are misunderstood.
Furthermore, scholars such as White (2010) claim that important evaluation terms need to be clarified. For instance, the term ‘impact’ has received extensive attention in the evaluation literature however little is understood about the parameters that bind the term. White (2010) provides a systematic review of the controversies and confusions regarding the impact evaluation discourse and concludes that the foundation of these disputes is the issue of attribution.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a comprehensive review of the literature related to the subject of this research. In the course of this review, the two prominent streams of knowledge (aid effectiveness and project management) and the existing literature in these areas were examined. This analysis has highlighted the fragmentation in the literature in the areas this study addresses. Due to the fractures in these two bodies of knowledge, foundational definitions for the critical concepts were defined in order to set the assumptions that inform this study.

Aid effectiveness is a topical area of knowledge that has received increasing attention, with global institutions formulating agendas to endorse strategies for more effective development assistance. Development projects were identified as the most common mechanism of aid delivery and a review of the relevant literature revealed a lack of research on the project management practices used in development projects. Moreover, the influence of contextual attributes such as the political landscape, complexities of power dynamics and cultural assumptions on project management practices are not considered in the current literature. This gap in knowledge is therefore the focus of this study, which will therefore contribute to the body of knowledge on project practice in collective, highly stratified societies such as Tonga.

The next chapter outlines the regional context and examines the prevalence of development assistance in the South Pacific region. It also contextualizes this study within the current regional environment and introduces notions such as the Pacific Way and the Pacific Paradox that are intrinsic to the process of development in the Pacific Islands.
CHAPTER 4: THE REGIONAL CONTEXT: DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC – TEU

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter exposed the significant gaps in our understanding of project management practices in development projects. This chapter provides general context for Chapter 5, which focuses on development in Tonga. It is important to understand the differences in approach to managing development projects in other Pacific Islands in order to ground my exploration of the unique cultural attributes that influence the project management practices used in Tonga. In line with the kakala framework outlined in Chapter 2, this chapter sets the scene in preparation for collecting the kakala. This process is necessary as it grounds and contextualizes the research constructs in a specific natural setting.

Michailova (2011) highlights the importance of contextualization in exploring management practices and encourages more meaningful contextualization in all facets of research. This chapter outlines the different approaches to development in the South Pacific region and reviews existing empirical studies on development assistance in different Pacific Islands to provide a holistic review of aid effectiveness in the region. Specific cases are discussed in an attempt to examine the prevalence and effectiveness of development assistance within the South Pacific region. In addition, two strategic regional development agendas are critically reviewed, and their usefulness to the aid effectiveness discourse is discussed.

Section 4.2 describes the notion of “the Pacific Way” that defines and distinguishes the process by which distinct PICs develop/operate in comparison to their Western counterparts. Section 4.3 discusses the intricate attributes that inform the Pacific Way shape our understanding of the development approaches of Pacific Island states. Section 4.4 explains the concept of the “Pacific Paradox” and the detrimental effects these attributes have on the economic transformative process in the Pacific. Section 4.5 discusses the “Pacific Plan”, a regional agenda developed to address the complexities intrinsic to the Pacific Paradox. Section 4.6 discusses the regional agenda for aid effectiveness, the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles, which were created in 2005. The last two sections examine the use and conceptualization of Western managerial practices in Pacific Island states and aid activity in the South Pacific.

Conducting a survey of the development ideas inherent to the Pacific region narrows the
focus of the study and contextualizes the specific development concepts and attributes that inform our understanding of Tonga’s situation, which is the subject of Chapter 5. In addition, by briefly outlining the historical circumstances and regional attributes that contribute to our understanding of development in the Pacific, we can identify how the findings of this study can be applied to the region as a whole. As stated earlier, it is important to understand the differences in approaches to managing development projects in other Pacific Islands to inform my exploration of the unique cultural attributes that influence the project management practices used in Tonga. Rousseau and Fried (2001) endorse this approach when they state: “our choice of research settings shape the variability that we can potentially observe” (p. 3).

4.2 Pacific Island states in the development literature

LDCs have continued to perform poorly despite the increasing amount of foreign aid (Blunt et al., 2011). LDCs are defined as “low-income countries suffering from the most severe structural impediments to sustainable development” (UN, 2008a, p. 15). The UN uses a three-factor criterion to determine whether a country is defined as LDC. This criteria considers gross national income (GNI), human resource weakness (calculated through the Human Assets Index) and economic vulnerability when assessing countries (UN, 2008a). Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are a distinct group of developing countries facing specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities (UN, 2012). SIDS are a distinguished from other LDCs by their geographic and economic size and are susceptible to external economic fluctuations (Dunn, 2011).

According to Laplagne, Treadgold, and Baldry (2001), the South Pacific is a region made up of many SIDS that are commonly referred to as Pacific Island Countries (PICs). PICs are traditionally high-aid-receiving countries compared to other countries in contrasting developing regions of the world (Fielding, 2010; Laplagne et al., 2001). Among these small developing islands is Tonga, which is conditioned to aid-dependent economic models such as the MIRAB economic framework (Bertram, 1993; Campbell, 1992). PICs such as Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Samoa have been the subject of academic research in regard to aid effectiveness (Delay, 2005; Feeny, 2003). Tonga has not received the same research attention, despite the island’s dependency on foreign assistance.

The past decade has seen a great increase in academic interest in the effectiveness of foreign aid in developing countries (Bearce & Tirone, 2010; Blunt et al., 2011; Winters, 2010). Existing studies have mostly limited their contextual focus to African and Asian countries,
with the South Pacific region receiving little academic attention (Diallo & Thuillier, 2004; Emuze & Smallwood, 2013; Jayaraman & Choong, 2006b). This is despite the fact that the region received NZ$ 1.5 billion in development assistance in 2007 (AusAID, 2009). Furthermore, between 1995 and 1999 self-governing states such as PNG, Fiji and Vanuatu (Melanesian islands) received an average of NZ$ 109 billion, three times more than countries in Sub-Saharan Africa receive (Brown, 2005). The existing literature on aid effectiveness in PICs is often outdated and inadequate as it fails to investigate micro-level perspectives such as aid delivery mechanisms and the role management practices play in coordinating the delivery of development assistance.

The South Pacific is made up of approximately 28 island states and is separated into three regions: Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia (see Figure 5) (Prasad, 2003). Hughes (2003) argues that Western preconceptions about the similarities between Micronesian, Polynesian and Melanesian islands hinder the progression and development of small island nations. For instance, islands within each sub-region vary in size and access to natural resources, and have encountered different colonial powers against whom they have struggled to regain independence. Other scholars argue that the use of the term ‘Pacific’ undermines the historical, social, political and cultural uniqueness of each island state (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001; Schaaf, 2009).

Another distinguishing feature of PICs – with the important exception of Tonga – is their historical acquisition by Western political powers. Niles and Lloyd (2013) argue that the motives behind colonial powers acquiring small island states were economically driven. A prominent argument is that PICs’ dependence on colonial powers has further exacerbated their excessive reliance on foreign aid. Their disproportionate dependence on foreign aid is associated with the deep-seated colonial mindset that has plagued and increased the heavy reliance of PICs on industrialized nations (Bertram, 2013).

Decolonization and regaining of independence came relatively late to some PICs (Brown, 2005). It was not until the decade of 1970–1980 that Melanesian islands such as Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu regained their independence from colonial powers. Although these islands were constitutionally independent, they were still politically and economically dependent on their former colonizers. The move towards interdependence in the South Pacific region gave rise to a new regional order where island states started establishing alternative regional agendas. For instance, development agendas such as the “Pacific Plan”
were designed to strengthen Pacific regional integration and cooperation and address the intrinsic development challenges of PICs (Tarte, 2014).

Figure 6: The South Pacific region


Development assistance has often been used as an instrument to appeal to SIDs and potentially gain their support in global forums (Brown, 2005; Wallis, 2010). Brown (2005) argues that the South Pacific region has significant weight in the voting systems of international forums such as the UN and that this has resulted in donors strategically providing aid to PICs. This form of conditional aid is not new in the South Pacific region and donor agencies have been known to provide financial aid in exchange for the right to deploy commercial fishing vessels in the region (Brown, 2005).

Considering the large flows of foreign aid into the region, the economic performance of PICs has been unsatisfactory (Fielding, 2010). This poor performance has been attributed to the size and location of PICs (Jayaraman & Choong, 2006a; Prasad, 2003; Prasad, 2008b). Toatu (2001), however, challenges this perspective and argues there is a lack of evidence that suggests there is a relationship between size, geographic location and economic growth. For instance, the Maldives is a small island state situated in the Indian Ocean that has thrived despite its geographic isolation and size (Toatu, 2001). The Maldives has demonstrated that
size and location are not barriers to economic wealth generation. Kelman (2010) supports this view and argues that the size of land mass and population are not characteristics that inhibit poor economic growth. Kelman (2010) proposes that PICs such as Niue are instead feeling the effects of climate change which influences their ability to perform economically.

Many PICs have focused on tourism as a driver of economic growth yet challenges such as the region’s vulnerability to climate change effects continue to undermine the development of their tourism industries (Huebner & Milne, 2015). Despite the steady increases in donor assistance, projects aimed at developing the tourism sectors of PICs have failed due to “unmanageable multitude of climate change related projects in the past coupled with hardly manageable donor initiatives” (Huebner & Milne, 2015, p. 199).

The UN World Tourism Organization has stated that the South Pacific is arguably the most vulnerable region to the effects of climate change (UN, 2012). The effects of climate change have significantly influenced the development endeavours of Pacific Islands such as Vanuatu and Niue (Kelman, 2010). Barnett (2008) predicted that PICs would be likely to receive substantial amounts of foreign aid in order to mitigate the effects of climate change in the near future. Climate change therefore represents a major challenge for the development and sustainable future of PICs and has been the focus of many donor agency development agendas (Huebner & Milne, 2015).

In a landmark study, Knapman (1986) examined the economic and development theoretical approaches used to study aid and its effects on Pacific Islands. The results of the investigation found that Western development theories were ineffective in sustainably maintaining economic growth and that aid is therefore subject to diminishing returns. Knapman (1986) suggests that PICs instead seek long-term budgetary support (in the form of grant loans) that would eventually develop their ability to finance and govern their own development. However, long-term budgetary support has been criticized as it perpetuates LDCs economic dependence on assistance (Moss, Pettersen, & van de Walle, 2006).

In a comparative study, Duncan, Codippily, Duituturaga, and Bulatale (2012) compared the economic growth and development of four PICs – Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati and Samoa – to that of two small island economies, one situated in the Indian Ocean – the Maldives – and the other in the Atlantic Ocean – Barbados. The study detailed several key lessons from the development experiences of Barbados and the Maldives, which included establishing development plans via a participatory process. Both states are politically independent and
have strong leadership that is committed to the development plans; they have both built the necessary institutions and encourage private sector investments from abroad (Duncan et al., 2012). Some of the economic growth and development strategies implemented in Barbados and the Maldives have been replicated with some success in Samoa and the Cook Islands. One of the key findings of Duncan et al. (2012) study is that small island development must possess strong leadership and commit to policy reforms that lead to economic and social development.

Feeny (2007) and Delay (2005) examined the effects of foreign assistance on development in two Pacific Islands: PNG and Samoa respectively. A common finding of both studies is that PICs are dependent on aid from various sources. These studies also highlight the lack of empirical research examining the management practices used to manage and coordinate aid-funded development projects in the South Pacific region.

Delay (2005) examined the effectiveness of aid management and coordination in delivering aid in Samoa. The study found that the government of Samoa had strategically focused on developing effective coordination policies, which had resulted in effective development projects. The state concentrated on institutional capacity, fostering strong relationships with a small number of donors and developing efficient coordination systems. Delay (2005) also found that administrative burdens were lessened as a consequence of hiring external project managers. Compared to having internal civil servants to handle the reporting requirements such as monitoring and evaluation of project activities, using foreign consultants was more efficient in carrying out these tasks and therefore lessened the administrative burden on local capacities. However, heavily relying on foreign consultants can foster dependence on international advisors and negatively affect the sustainability of development outcomes (Hirschmann, 2003).

Godfrey et al. (2002) reinforce Hirschmann’s (2003) criticism and argue that without effectively building the capacity of local stakeholders (training and developing project staff members) to perform crucial project activities, the recipient countries will continue to depend on foreign consultants. According to Hirschmann (2003), donors utilize foreign consultants and advisors to promote “institutional development”, however this increases the dependence of recipient countries on the guidance of TAs (p. 226).

PNG, by contrast, has been cited as PIC where development assistance has failed (Feeny, 2007; Hughes, 2003). Hughes (2003) notes that Melanesian islands such as PNG are
conditioned to aid fungibility. Inadequate institutions and corruption have perpetuated the aid fungibility issue. In addition, Hughes (2003) highlighted the inefficient management and coordination systems used as factors that have affected the poor performance of development projects in PNG.

4.3 The Pacific Way

The appeal of regionalism is not a new phenomenon among PICs. At a UN General Assembly meeting in 1970 Fiji’s then Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara coined the term “the Pacific Way” to differentiate the context and culture of PICs (Huffer, 2003). The Pacific Way is a concept that encapsulates and represents the distinct way in which PICs approach/think/operate in comparison to their Western counterparts (Corcoran & Koshy, 2010). It is a way of symbolizing the specific way that PICs develop, and involves the promotion of harmony, inclusiveness, respect, dialogue and, most importantly for the present study, integrating cultural values into the development process.

Over the years, the Pacific Way has evolved from a label into a tool that is used for “continued cooperation with metropolitan powers and a diplomatic device for maintaining Pacific protocol and approaches in regional and international affairs” (Huffer, 2003, p. 47). However, similar to the broad categorization of PICs as Melanesian, Polynesian or Micronesian, the tool has limitations in that it fails to acknowledge the uniqueness of each Pacific Island (Corcoran & Koshy, 2010; Huffer, 2003). The different cultural traditions and knowledge systems inherent to each PIC are not recognized and considered in development efforts. This is problematic because it is widely acknowledged that the cultural values of managers influence the project management approaches employed (Rees-Caldwell & Pinnington, 2013; Rodrigues, Costa, & Gestoso, 2014; Zwikael, Shimizu, & Globerson, 2005).

In addition, the widely used term ‘Pacific’ in the literature denotes a unified group of small islands and undermines the uniqueness of each island state (Bertram, 2013). Little significance is given to their differing histories and unique cultural values that inform governance systems, and this has contributed to a lack of understanding of development in the region. For example, Westerners have long drawn cultural similarities between Samoa and Tonga, both of which are Polynesian islands in close proximity to each other. Tonga, however, is unique among PICs in that it was never conquered by an outside power. Pacific Island scholars such as ‘Okusitino Mahina and Futa Helu have instead used the term ‘Moana’
to characterize the South Pacific region. ‘Moana’ is the word for ocean in many Pacific Island languages and therefore highlights the oceanic culture shared by citizens from the Pacific Islands (Mahina, 2010).

There are distinct cultural differences that inform the various governance systems and stakeholders’ conceptualizations of the development process. This is exemplified by the influence of the Tongan social structure on governance systems. Although Tonga has made steady progress towards a fully democratic system of governance, commoners remain underrepresented in parliamentary debates and therefore have little influence over government policies. The Tongan cultural nuances and the influences these have on the development process are discussed in Chapter 5.

### 4.4 The Pacific Paradox

The “Pacific Paradox” is a popular term used to describe the contradictory economic dimensions that PICs are subjected to (Jayaraman & Ward, 2006; Ogden, 1989; Toatu, 2001). The term is used by scholars such as Toatu (2001) to describe the sluggish economic growth experienced by PICs; despite the fact that these islands possess an abundance of natural resources, the influx of remittances from expatriates, and foreign assistance. PICs have substantial mineral resources and fishing rents that should enable rapid growth, but have instead shown poor economic performance (Hughes, 2003). Kiribati presents a very interesting case of the Pacific Paradox. Between 1983 and 1993, Kiribati recorded an average growth rate of real GDP capita as -1.2% per annum, despite the high amounts of development assistance received (Laplagne et al., 2001).

Recurring themes emerge from the literature such as PICs having inappropriate institutions, lack of governance and unsuitable policies that fail to facilitate the growth of their economies (Fraenkel, 2006; Laplage et al., 2001). Thaman (2002) argues that the apparent breakdown of much of the development discourse in the South Pacific region is due to the fact that the economic development ideologies such as globalization and sustainable development are not properly understood:

For most of us who grew up and still live in Oceania, such notions need to be translated into our various vernacular languages, and, if possible, equivalent ideas from our home cultures and languages need to be identified, in order to for us to make sense of them in our own thinking and embark on more meaningful communication.
and discussion. (p. 134)

Therefore, Western ideologies need to be clarified and researched from the perspective of PIC citizens.

Thaman (2002) tackles the Western notion of sustainable development and asserts that in order for development to be sustainable the term ‘development’ must first be rooted in the PIC cultural values. The author contends that relationships between different spheres – the spiritual, physical and environmental forms of lived reality – are used to describe culture in PICs, which demonstrates the connectedness of life and culture in these societies. For example, *anga faka Tonga* (literally, “Tongan way of life”) is a phrase used to describe Tongan culture. The Samoan equivalent to is *fa’a Samoa* (literally “Samoan way of life”). Thaman (2002) argues that development models enforced by donor agencies fail to consider this more circular, holistic and distinctive perspective of culture.

### 4.5 The Pacific Plan

In an attempt to address the poor economic growth of PICs and assist in mitigating the effects of the Pacific Paradox, members of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) together with prominent development experts formulated the Pacific Plan (Prasad, 2008b). The initial iteration of the Pacific plan was introduced in 2005 and outlined strategies for strengthening regional integration and cooperation to promote economic and social development in PICs. Regional frameworks such as the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations played a central role in facilitating the fruition of the Pacific Plan. The plan concentrated on a wide range of regional initiatives in an attempt to fulfil regional integration in areas such as economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and regional security (Huffer, 2003). More specifically, the 2005 Pacific Plan endorsed 15 objectives, which ranged from free trade to strengthening policies to support sustainable development.

In 2012, the PIFS published a report summarizing the progress of the initial 2005 Pacific Plan. The report described the Pacific Plan’s encouraging progress, which included securing financial and technical funding for implementing the Pacific Oceans Cape Framework addressing ocean security (PIFS, 2012). A number of significant challenges still face the region such as the issue of achieving sustainable economic growth and dealing with the impacts of climate change. A recent review of the Pacific Plan assessed the effectiveness of
the initiatives and more importantly stakeholder perceptions of the regional agenda (PIFS, 2013). The review found that different stakeholder groups were using terminology in different ways, and that this has hindered the regionalism discourse.

Prasad (2008b) is an avid supporter of the Pacific Plan and believes the agenda promotes regional integration and encourages regional competitiveness that will eventually lead to economic development. This view is supported by Balli and Balli (2011), who also encourage regional integration as a way of strengthening the economic development of PICs and more specifically promote the introduction of a common currency among PICs. These authors used economic modelling to demonstrate the potential gains from introducing a collective currency. Their study found that all PICs would positively gain from such a move, with particular benefits for Melanesian islands such as Kiribati, Palau and PNG.

A major criticism of the Pacific Plan is that it lacks detailed strategies to achieve regional integration. The plan lacks important aspects such as comprehensive tactics for successful achievement, timeframe and the roles and responsibilities different PIC institutions have in the arrangement. Rather, the plan is more of an emblematic declaration towards achieving a common regional development vision. The rise of newly formulated regional institutions has also complicated the situation, as their efforts are not streamlined to address the initiatives promoted in the Pacific Plan. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), and Pacific Island Producers Association (PIPA) are some regional organizations that focus on tackling regional development issues. However, these institutions are failing to mobilize their expertise and resources to concentrate on regional provisions.

These newly formed regional institutions have however changed the landscape of regionalism in the Pacific. A number of scholars have noted that there is a fundamental power shift with the rise of these institutions that are diverting power so that it lies within their own domain (Duncan et al., 2012; Prasad, 2008a; Ruru, 2010). According to Tarte (2014), PICs have established interregional relationships with non-traditional (non-Western) emerging states such as China, Russia and countries in the Middle East. More importantly, these newly established relationships have influenced PICs’ rapport with traditional donor agencies such as the European Union, Australia and New Zealand. Tarte (2014) further argues that SIDS are discontent with the new order of regionalism that has driven efforts to assert greater control over their own development. The recent exclusion of Fiji from participating in regional
conferences and engaging in institutions such as the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) (formulated by Pacific Island leaders and heads of state) has further changed the regional dynamics. Over the past five years, a number of similar mandates focusing on regional integration in PIC territories have emerged. Agendas such as the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and the Pacific Islands Development Forum both affirm their efforts in targeting increased regional integration for more peaceful and stable communities, good governance and policies, and improved livelihoods in PICs.

4.6 The Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles

In response to global aid effectiveness agendas such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles (2007) were established to guide aid delivery in the context of PICs (PFIS, 2007). Pacific Island leaders and heads of state created the framework at a PIFS meeting in Koror, Palau. The Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles consist of country leadership and ownership; strengthened institutional mechanisms and capacity; coordination between development partners; multiyear commitment from donor agencies; greater ownership of regional development partners; and provision of foreign consultants. Drawing on global aid effectiveness reports, the Pacific Island Aid Effectiveness agenda adopts the guiding principles of the Paris Declaration. A principle outlined in the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles (2007) report is the need to strengthen institutions and capacity in order to sustain development. This principle refers to the need for recipient countries to adopt or strengthen formal and informal institutional mechanisms in order to facilitate development. Ruru (2010) encourages the adoption of these principles and argues that they promote open discussion of the key issues (climate change, size, isolation) facing aid effectiveness in the Pacific region.

The agenda’s first principle, country leadership and ownership, encourages recipient PICs to be more accountable and transparent in planning and organizing development programmes and projects. Country leadership and ownership are argued as two of the most critical elements in mobilizing foreign aid (Brautigam, 2000; Huffer, 2003; Prasad, 2003). Ownership has been associated with countries being accountable for the results of development projects. However, ownership has proved a difficult notion to comprehend for PICs as it involves taking a lead role in establishing priorities and coordinating efforts. Governance has been a focal point for various aid effectiveness researchers and writers, but it has been inadequately examined from the recipient or Pacific perspective (Hooper, 2005).
PICs are encouraged to take the lead on their development priorities in order to ensure accountability by the recipient island for their own development. Aid recipients are therefore expected to develop their own national priorities and systems. Sjöstedt (2013) questions the usefulness of proposing ownership as the term is inadequately characterized and understood in the literature. Moreover, Booth (2012) claims that development assistance encourages contradictory results from that of ownership as it “shields incumbent leaders from the consequences of irresponsible or short-termist actions” (p. 539).

Building on the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles agenda and in a step towards improving the performance of development assistance committed to PICs, regional leaders and development practitioners participated in a discussion forum in Cairns, Australia, in 2009. The result of the meeting, the Cairns Compact, was formulated as an initiative in which development actors would collectively align their funding and practices. The compact focused on key principles that would eventually strengthen PIC economies such as the involvement of the private sector. Like other aid effectiveness initiatives, the major drawback of the Cairns Compact is the lack of specificity. The principles set forth operationalized strategies that are insufficient for the implementation of key initiatives. For instance, tactics for enhancing planning, budgeting and aid coordination systems and processes are not provided; rather, a “country led approach” is used as a generic guide to developing these key functions. Another limitation of the Cairns Compact is its failure to address contextual attributes that influence the administration and coordination of development projects. Political reforms in PICs such as Tonga are not acknowledged, which further undermines the applicability of the Cairns Compact.

4.7 Management practices in the South Pacific

As stated earlier, there is little academic literature that focuses on the management practices used in development projects implemented in PICs. In a landmark study, Traynor and Watts (1992) discovered that there was a dire need for improvement and further research on the management practices used in development programmes across the Pacific. PICs possess complex dimensions such as the significance of social status, which may influence the managerial practices used and their effectiveness on staff. Moreover, terms such as ‘management’ can be misunderstood in Pacific contexts and in some instances are only found in relation to government departments. Traynor and Watts (1992) note that the management practices implemented in PICs were formalized by past colonial administrations, which
explains the lack of cultural understanding in relation to managerial roles.

A significant finding highlighted by Traynor and Watts (1992) is the importance of cultural rituals such as the consumption of kava in Fiji when meeting with civil servants within formal structures. However, due to donor agencies imposing more formalized systems to guide efficient work processes, cultural rituals such as the kava ceremony are now only conducted during significant occasions, such as employee induction. In addition to this, Reddy (1991) claims that globalization has played a crucial role in the shifting from traditional rituals to more formalized Western systems.

The cross-cultural management literature has established that different cultures influence managerial practices and daily business operations differently (Dabić, Tipurić, & Podrug, 2015; House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002; Morris et al., 1998; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003). A vast amount of research has been conducted on the influences of Asian cultures on central managerial capabilities, but few studies have investigated the influences of SIDS cultures (Chen, 2004; Morris et al., 1998). Reddy (1991) examined the impact of five PIC cultures (Fijian, Samoan, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tongan) on management decision making in organizations operating in the South Pacific region. Among the findings, Reddy identified several key issues encountered by the chief executive officers (CEOs) in their organizations. Reddy (1991) found that the different Pacific indigenous cultures were not supportive of managerial decisions and somewhat hindered managers’ ability to coordinate business decisions. Furthermore, Reddy identified a lack of skilled subordinate employees which burdened managers as they had to execute administrative tasks such as filing and answering telephone enquiries themselves. Another interesting observation from the study was a lack of employee confidence, which led to subordinates resisting responsibility. For example, a manager’s work day consisted of “constant interruptions by intermediate subordinates and other staff visits seeking information, guidance, assistance and authorization on various aspects of their jobs” (p. 260).

In Tongan organizations managerial decision making was largely centralized due to the low level of technical skills and staff members’ inability to take responsibility. This reflects Tongan cultural traditions in which decision making is largely confined to the highest level of society (nobility) (Reddy, 1991). This explains subordinate employees’ lack of confidence with delegated responsibility. In general, PIC cultures are heavily influenced and value religion, kinship, communalism and reciprocity. In particular, Polynesian cultures such as
Samoan and Tongan traditional leadership are highly stratified. This explains the “over involvement” of the board of directors in managerial functions such as planning and controlling and the overall day-to-day operations of the business identified by Reddy (1991).

However, Reddy’s (1991) study has several significant limitations. Firstly, Reddy makes generalizations about indigenous cultures without providing valid evidence to support his claims. This is exemplified in the way that different cultural groups (Fijian, Samoan and Tongan) rank occupations according to their cultural values. The author makes weak linkages between occupational rank and cultural rank and inadequately provides empirical evidence to support his causal assumption. Reddy (1991) also alludes to having acquired his own preconceived notions of the indigenous cultures before engaging in the field work. However, the author does not account for how these preconceived notions of the culture could have potentially influenced the data-gathering process and more importantly the analysis of research materials.

4.8 Aid activity in the South Pacific

Table 4 illustrates the top 10 aid recipients in the South Pacific region in 2013. Melanesian islands top the list, with PNG receiving 28% of total overseas development aid (ODA) to the Pacific. PNG and Solomon Islands have received considerable amount of academic attention in regard to aid effectiveness (Balboa, 2014; Balli & Balli, 2011). Both Gounder and Sen (1999) and Feeny (2007) have investigated the impact of foreign aid on development in PNG.

A noticeable flaw in table 4 is that “Other recipients” account for 22% of ODA to the South Pacific region. It is widely acknowledged that data on aid in the Pacific is relatively weak and this contributes to the lack of accountability and institutional capacity (Hughes, 2003). Pavlov and Sugden (2006) however argue that over the years empirical economic data has improved in the South Pacific, which is affirmed by the fact that donor systems of reporting and procurement have enhanced PICs’ knowledge management networks and led to better quality data.

According to Dornan and Brant (2014), Chinese development assistance has recently attracted heightened attention due to their increased contributions to the Pacific region. In 2006, China announced that they would allocate a substantial NZ$740 billion in concessional loans to the Pacific region. Historically, China has used concessional loans or “soft loans”, which are granted at liberal and competitive market rates. More recently, China declared a
new regional assistance package that included up to NZ$1.5 billion in concessional finances provided over the next four years (Dornan & Brant, 2014). In addition, it was announced the China Development Bank would administer an additional NZ$1 billion in commercial loans to the Pacific region (Dornan & Brant, 2014).

Table 4: Top 10 ODA recipients to the South Pacific region in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacific Island</th>
<th>ODA (USD million)</th>
<th>Percentage of total ODA to South Pacific region</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia, Fed. States</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallis &amp; Futuna</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other recipients</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided general context for the ensuing chapter, which focuses on development in Tonga. I argued at the outset of this chapter that there is significant value in localizing and contextualizing this study at the boarder level and in outlining the regional mechanisms that facilitate PICs’ development efforts. This chapter has outlined the attributes that are inherent to PICs’ development processes. The Pacific Way and the Pacific Paradox were identified as important mechanisms that have informed approaches to development and managing development projects in the region. The Pacific Plan is a significant regional framework that has played a pivotal role in mobilizing efforts towards regional development. The following chapter refines the focus of this study further by describing the current Tongan, social, economic and political environments. Tongan cultural values, customs and knowledge systems are discussed in relation to the development process.
CHAPTER 5: THE RESEARCH LANDSCAPE: DEVELOPMENT IN TONGA - TEU

5.1 Introduction

The literature review conducted in Chapter 3 revealed that the cultural values and customary practices that inform the development process inherent to recipient countries are rarely considered or discussed, despite their importance. Chapter 4 then outlined the regional (South Pacific) approaches to development. Strategic frameworks such as the Pacific Plan were discussed in an attempt to highlight the distinguishing features and development challenges PICs face compared to the rest of the world. This chapter discusses the social values that are necessary to understanding the development process in Tonga.

Chapter 2 discussed with Tongan cultural values in relation to a transformational process (transforming raw materials into a final product) and the traditions and culturally embedded practices involved in the *tui kakala* framework. The *kakala* framework is a manifestation or expression of these customs in the form of a traditional transformational process. This chapter addresses two issues necessary to understand the development process in Tonga. First, the social norms, cultural values and the different conceptualizations of development are discussed in order to establish a foundational understanding of the development process that is unique to Tonga. Second, Tonga’s economic performance is examined and the analytical frameworks used to describe small islands remittance and aid dependence are discussed.

The *kakala* framework outlines the sociological protocols used to conduct research in a culturally authentic manner. This chapter further contextualizes this framework by exploring the norms, values and ways of knowing that shape their approaches to economic and social development in Tonga, one of the highest aid-receiving islands in the Pacific. Another dimension or *kakala* (flower/leaf) to the story or *kahoa* (garland) is therefore added as this chapter briefly outlines some distinguishing features of the Tongan culture.

A discussion of the hierarchical system (social structure) by which the population is organized is followed by the core principles or cultural values that guide a Tongan individual’s actions and behaviour. The chapter then outlines Tonga’s historical economic performance before the role of development assistance in Tonga’s economic progress is explored and the relevant literature is discussed. The next section provides details on Tonga’s three largest development partners.
5.2 Society and culture

This section discusses Tongan societal structures and the cultural customs and values that inform the development process. Geographically, Tonga is located directly south of Western Samoa and west of the Fiji Islands. Tonga is home to the only reigning monarch in the South Pacific region. It is a small PIC made up of 172 islands, only 36 of which are inhabited. These small islands are separated into three groups: Ha’apai, Vava’u and the main island of Tongatapu, where 75% of the population reside (Taufatofua, 2011). Because much of Tonga’s population resides in rural areas of the island, there is limited access for citizens to public services such as healthcare and social services, which are situated in urban localities. Although absolute poverty is rare, the material hardships that Tongan citizens face are apparent.

Figure 7: The kingdom of Tonga


5.2.1 Tongan social structure and politics

Tonga’s people are divided into two distinct social classes: nobles and commoners. Some scholars have attributed the nation’s political instability and economic strife to this division (Kennedy, 2012). Benguigui (2011) suggests that there is an emergent middle class in Tongan society due to citizens’ changing relationships with the state and civil society.
Writers such as Kelly (2002) have been critical of claims regarding a Tongan middle class, however, and instead affirm that there is rather an educated elite.

Due to the fact that Tonga has never been colonized it has preserved many of its cultural traditional customs, values and maintained a highly stratified social structure. According to Filihia (2001), Tongan social structure is an open system which is acknowledged and rooted in cultural practices, including development. This social hierarchy consists of the king (tu’i) at the apex, followed by members of the royal family (hou’eiki), who are followed by nobles and high ranking chiefs (nopele), their respective attendants/talking chiefs (matapule) and finally commoners (tu’a). Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, Tongan society was feudal, with commoners were bound to hou’eiki or nopele. The dynamics of this tie/bond between nopele and commoner have changed over the past two centuries and will be discussed further below.

The social structure intrinsically influences the development process in Tonga (Benguigui, 2011). The effects of such social stratification are highlighted in the restrictive land tenure arrangement which has in the past been a measure of the degree of economic prosperity for a developing country (Bourguignon & Morrison, 1998). Völkel (2010) notes that “in a highly stratified Tongan society, the hierarchical social structure is expressed by spatial and possessive categories, such as access to land, sitting order and gift exchange” (p. 1). Moreover, the social class in which a civil servant belongs determines the role in which he/she plays in the development process (Benguigui, 2011).

The influence Tonga’s highly stratified society has on the development process is illustrated in the critical role high-ranking chiefs and nobles play in policy making and other strategic, high-level decisions within government. Although Tonga has made steady progress towards a fully democratic system of governance, commoners have little influence over government policy. For example, citizens elect only nine representatives to the Legislative Assembly, who play a weak minority role. Hou’eiki and matapules play a significant role and hold the majority of power, which is a distinct feature of Tonga’s political landscape and development process.

Tongans are also organized into clans (ha’s) who are dependent on the leadership of a nopele or group of nopele. Ha’s are arranged according to geographic location (village), ancestral roots, and familial lineage to the monarch. Historically, ha’s have cultivated their relationships (va) with their network of nobles (leaders) by exhibiting their lotoloto (humility).
and *ofa* (love) through their service (gift giving in monetary and material form and ceremonial attendances) to their nobles. Conversely, a *nopele* should demonstrate his/her *ofa* to their people in their service to the community and governance style. As Evans (1999a) notes, “a good noble treats his people generously and demands things only occasionally and only for specific types of events for which nobles are customarily entitled to support from their people” (p. 148).

There has recently been an interesting shift in the general population’s perception of their representation in the Legislative Assembly. There is a consensus that the absolute power of nobles representing the people has been ineffective. The lack of transparency and legitimacy of the nobles’ actions has increased tensions in the assembly. For instance, alleged misuse of government funds has long plagued the reputation of nobles in government (Powles, 2007). This shift in political perception has further altered the dynamics between villagers and their leaders. Fua, Tuita, Kanongata’a, and Fuko (2011) note that “the increasing avoidance/ignorance of traditional ties is contributing to the fragmentation of traditional Tongan ties and networks. This is most evident in the political view that noble’s representatives in parliament only represent nobles, while people’s representatives are the true representation of the people” (p. 13).

The Tongan *famili* (family) is also stratified. Sisters are considered *eiki* (of higher rank) in relation to their brothers. This is seen in sisters’ treatment in the household and also elaborately exhibited at ceremonial gatherings. For instance, the sister will receive all material and monetary gifts and be honoured at her brother’s children’s milestone celebrations such as birthdays and graduations. The eldest sister receives the title of *fahu* that signifies her rank within the family. In regard to the parents, the father/husband role within the family is the breadwinner. He is expected to engage in social politics and provide a revenue stream for the family. The father plays an active role in disciplining his sons. However, he is mostly absent in the development and nurturing of his daughters. Due to the significance of the father’s role he is often at the apex of the family structure and is often referred to as the *taki oe famili* (leader of the family). The wife plays a significant role in maintaining the household and sustaining ties with her husband’s paternal and maternal family. This is illustrated at the death of a member from the husband’s side of the family, where the wife/mother prepares the material provisions to represent her children’s lineage to the deceased.
5.2.2 Tongan core values

Pacific ethnic groups are defined by their own distinct core values that are embedded in the process of socialization. There are four core principles that define Tongan values: faka’apa’apa (respect), mamahi’i mea (loyalty), lototo (humility) and tauhi ‘va (reciprocity). These are the principles which guide human action. These values encompass and define angafakatonga (the Tongan way of behaving). Writers such as Fua et al. (2011) suggest that the four values can also be viewed as principles of practice. In this sense, the generational shift in value systems has ultimately changed the focus from these traditional values (the principles listed above) underpinning Tongan behaviour to a list of practices that Tongans should aspire to. This fundamental shift is attributed to the globalization of cultural norms. However, regardless of the cause it is important to acknowledge how cultural evolution influences the development process. A fundamental institution that upholds and reinforces these cultural values is the lotu (church). The most dominant religion in Tonga is the Christian faith. However, over the last five years this faith-based tradition has received increased criticism for the economic burden it places on families and the lack of spiritual care it provides its congregations (Ketu'u, 2014).

5.3 Tongan conceptualization of development

As mentioned earlier, a much debated question in the development literature is the tension between Western paradigms of economic and social progress and indigenous development thinking and practices (Biggs, 2005; Thaman, 2002). Scholars such as Thaman (2002) argue that indigenous/Pacific knowledge systems should be granted the same instrumentality in development discourse as Western frameworks and theories. This point is reiterated by Pulu (2013) who states, “development is not defined or owned by Tongans, themselves. The public service and parliamentary discourse on development, in actuality, boils down to nothing Tongan by historical origin, nor exclusively Tongan in social orientation. It is, in fact, behaviour that is learned, borrowed, and copied largely from the West” (p. 352). This section attempts to unpack the Tongan conception of development, fakalakalaka.

The orthodox Western conceptualization of development is significantly different from the Tongan perception of the notion. Fakalakalaka translates as ‘to progress’ or ‘to improve’. In his early Tongan dictionary, Churchward (1954) defined fakalakalaka as ‘to develop’. Similarly, Thaman (2003) translates it as ‘moving forward’. These interpretations assume that fakalakalaka is a step towards something better in the future as there is a spatial component
to the term that presumes movement.

Another dimension of fakalalaka is the temporal aspect (past, present and future). Polynesian cultures perceive time as cyclical, which means that past, present and future are all considered in the notion of fakalalaka (Herlin, 2007). Thaman (2002) notes that “Western, scientific, linear and financially driven notion of time rather than a circular perception, more characteristic of Oceanic cultures” (p. 234). In addition, the Western conceptualization of time in development scholarship sees time as segments, with an associated monetary value to each segment. For instance, a project stage is determined by its time and budget. By contrast, the Tongan conceptualization of time links the past, present and future in a circular configuration.

In 1997, Ruth ‘Ilaiu (1997) was one of the first academics to coherently articulate the embedded attributes of fakalalaka. ‘Ilaiu (1997)’s ethnographic study examined the meaning of fakalalaka to Tongan woman in relation to their academic pursuits. Her conceptualization of the term comprised three elements: the economic; technological; and material progression or development of a person or community (‘Ilaiu, 1997). ‘Ilaiu further asserts that the true essence of fakalalaka extends to all areas of natural life and that economic, technological and material development cannot take place without an individual or community’s development. The participants in ‘Ilaiu’s study stated that fakalalaka is a process in which the self is actively involved in moving forward. Her findings affirm the holistic and all-encompassing element of fakalalaka.

Fakalalaka also incorporates the laumalie or spiritual sphere of growth which includes the values and beliefs that guide well-being (Faleolo, 2012). This dimension includes ‘atamai (an individual’s intellectual well-being) and sino (the physical well-being of a person). This is highlighted in ‘Ana Koloto’s (cited in Drewery & Bird, 2006) perspective of development:

Tongans view life as a holistic process, the main purpose of which is the development of the tangata kakato (total person). There are three main aspects of development emphasized in the concept of tangata kakato: mou’ui fakasino (body or physical well-being) mo’ui faka’atamai (mind or intellectual well-being), mo’ui fakalaumalie (soul or spiritual well-being). Inherent in this thinking about development is the belief that the individual is born to perform certain fatongia (responsibility, duties or obligation) and to become ‘aonga (useful) to their famili (family), siasi (church), and fonua (country). (p. 62)
Herlin (2007) examination of *fakalakalaka* concluded that dominant Western notions of development only correspond with the physical aspect of *fakalakalaka*. Herlin states that “dominating Western notions of development, however, tends to favour modernity, technology and economic progress as the key to ‘develop’” (p. 35). This contradicts the essence of what ‘Ilaiu (1997) found: that *fakalakalaka* is all-encompassing and its attributes must coincide in order for *fakalakalaka* to be valid and meaningful.

Talei (2014) builds on the work of ‘Ilaiu (1997) and Faleolo (2012) and extends the notion of *fakalakalaka* to understand architecture and sustainable housing within Tonga. Simply put, Talei (2014) examined *fakalakalaka* in relation to Western ideas of sustainable housing designs. Talei found that the perceptions of what constitutes Western sustainable designs do not correlate with the dimensions of *fakalakalaka*. Talei offers five tangible senses of *fakalakalaka* as applied to building houses in Tonga. One of the key findings of this study is that *fakalakalaka* is a locally constructed view. Ideas of what constitutes progress were dependent on the geographic location of the village. However, it was acknowledged that understanding *fakalakalaka* was crucial to improving our understanding of development.

Tensions were identified in Talei (2014) study with the technological aspect of *fakalakalaka*. For instance, in the Western Village of Tatakamotonga, residents felt that mobile phones have a number of beneficial uses and demonstrate economic and social progression, but such technological advancements were also perceived as having negative social implications. Talei (2014) found that there was a strong consensus among respondents about the negative ramifications on crime in the village: “theft is on the rise and [respondents] were of the view that mobile phones were to blame as they allowed thieves to conspire more efficiently when owners were not at home” (p. 41).

Herlin (2007) argues that there is a generational gap in the understanding and conceptualization of the notion *fakalakalaka*. Although Herlin fails to corroborate this statement with empirical evidence, there are some similarities with the dynamic shift in the significance of maintaining kinship/ties between *ha* and *nopele* (as stated above) and people’s understanding of *fakalakalaka*. Overall, *fakalakalaka* is significantly different from the notions of development that underpin the aid projects administered by donor agencies. These conflicting views of what constitutes development affect the implementation of policies and consequently project management tools and frameworks.
5.4 Tongan conceptualization of management

This section outlines the existing literature on Tongan cultural values and their influence on managerial practices. Tongans conceptualize the term and act of managing or management significantly different from their PIC counterparts. Traynor and Watts (1992) claim that the significance of the noble and chiefly hierarchy in Tongan society is reflected in the way that government workers support managers. The authors argue that a manager who is not from a chiefly line will “normally enjoy only secondary loyalty from staff” (p. 70). Managers who are commoners are given less support and have been known to have their decisions overruled by nobles who are of lower rank in the workplace. Furthermore, nobles external to the government department can have a more influential role than internal managers.

Traynor and Watts (1992) further note the cultural distinction between leaders that are descendants of royal blood and who have inherited godlike qualities and managers who are viewed through a rationalist lens and tasked with creating processes that are more efficient, and who engage more directly with staff members. This is an instrumental distinction as it demonstrates the power dynamics between ordained (through royal blood) leaders and managers whose position is based on their accomplishments (experience and qualification). The influence of these cultural conceptualizations on traditional managerial practices and roles begs the following question: What implications does this have for the application of project management tools and frameworks in development projects? Managers play a significant role not only in government departments but also in development projects.

5.5 Tonga’s historical economic performance

The following section discusses the historical events that have informed the current state of the economic affairs in Tonga. These events have played a significant role in enabling Tonga’s dependence on foreign assistance. Like other PICs’, Tonga’s economic performance over the past decade has been sluggish (Brown & Jimenez, 2011; Wallis, 2010). This is despite the fact that in 2012 Tonga was ranked one of the highest PICs on the Human Development Index (HDI), at 0.710 (UN, 2013). The HDI is a statistical measure used to quantify social and economic development that include indicators such as life expectancy, literacy levels and income of a population. According to a UN Development Programme report, “Tonga’s 2012 HDI of 0.710 is above the average of 0.64 for countries in the medium human development group and above average of 0.683 for countries in East Asia and the Pacific” (p. 3). However, the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAid)
claims that despite the promising access to education the quality of the curriculum, particularly in the secondary schooling system, is inconsistent (NZAid, 2014).

Tonga’s economy has traditionally relied on the agricultural sector (Evans, 1999b; Storey & Murray, 2001). However Storey and Murray (2001) note that over the past 50 years exports of agricultural products have become less and less significant. The authors suggest the commercialization of agricultural products such as squash pumpkin and vanilla is now a minor method of wealth creation compared to remittances and international aid from aboard. Besnier (2009) claims that the shift from cultivating crops to sustain Tongan citizens’ livelihood to cultivating cash crops is the most significant factor that has contributed to the decline of the agricultural sector in Tonga. New Zealand became one of the largest importers of Tongan bananas during the 1960s and in addition provided development funds to assist in the advancement of agricultural production in Tonga. However, a number of diseases such as black leaf spot began to plague banana plantations and ultimately affected Tonga’s exports.

Besnier (2009) suggests two additional factors that contributed to the decline of the agricultural sector in Tonga. Firstly, the increase of internal and international migration has led to a decline in Tongan landownership. Land ownership enables Tongan citizens to engage in agricultural activities such as establishing plantations for local markets. Therefore, the lack of landownership is linked to the substantial recession of agricultural activity in Tonga. Secondly, the decline of the agricultural sector is due to Tongan males finding alternative work in urban cities overseas. In addition, with the rise of urban culture, young Tongan males perceive the role of farmers in society as trivial and insignificant.

Tonga’s geographic remoteness has also contributed to the decline in the sales of agricultural products (Wallis, 2008). In comparison to other PICs, Tonga is remotely located, which restricts its trade opportunities with potential vendors. Its distance and insularity from its key trading partners – South Korea, Japan and New Zealand – often results in high transport costs, high per-unit costs and uncertain supply. According to Wallis (2008), high transport costs are a result of Tonga being excluded from dominant trading routes. In addition, fragmented cargoes lead to an increase in the price charged for each unit. Uncertain supply may arise from transport delays and unreliable weather conditions.

5.5.1 Unconventional methods of economic development

Some authors focus on the limitations of focusing on agriculture as a means of economic development (Horan, 2002; Storey & Murray, 2001; van der Velde, Green, Vanclooster,
Clothier, 2007). In the early 1990s unconventional methods of development such as aid-funded credit schemes were widely used to create cultural products (Tongan koloa) for mass sale (Cave, Ryan, & Panakera, 2003). However, according to Horan (2002), credit schemes were “designed as ‘failures’ by the funders because the recipient groups of textile producers, who were meant to be engaging in commercial handicraft production as development, were instead making and seemingly ‘retaining’ textile koloa (indigenous wealth)” (Horan, 2002, p. 205).

5.5.2 History of Tonga’s national strategic development plans

Tonga’s economic development has long been driven by the monarch (Campbell, 2008; Campbell, 1992). In a pivotal speech, King Tupou IV (1965) (reign: 1965–2006) declared four development priorities: enhancing technical education, greater emphasis on export trade; better use of land; and developing an alternative labour industry in order to neutralize the decline in agricultural sector (Campbell, 1992). National leaders and chiefs established the first five-year National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP1) in an attempt to operationalize these priorities and mobilize resources to achieve development objectives (Campbell, 2008; Campbell, 1992). This section outlines the historical evolution of Tonga’s national development plans.

NSDP1 was implemented in 1965 to serve as a framework for improving Tonga’s economic conditions and was funded largely by bilateral foreign assistance from the British, Australia and New Zealand. Fifty percent of the cost to finance NSDP1 was sourced through loans from the British government (Mountfort, 2013). This plan primarily concentrated on four key areas: developing an efficient and productive agricultural sector; advancing the health sector; developing infrastructure; and enhancing education (Langa’oi, 2009).

The second five-year Development Plan (NSDP2, 1970–1975) was established as an extension of NSDP1. NSDP2 focused on development priorities set in the previous plan which were not achieved and emphasized developing infrastructure and improving the health sector. The objectives of NSDP2 however were also not completely achieved and development planning was identified as weak with a lack of a central planning agency with the institutional capacity to carry out tasks such as monitoring progress and mapping development activities (Campbell, 1992).

Due to weak planning and design of NSDP2, international consultants were contracted to draft the third five-year Development Plan (NSDP3, 1975–1980). It was initially estimated
that NZ$6.2 million was required to devise NSDP3, with 53% of the budget funded by foreign aid. The remaining 47% of the budget would be funded by Tonga’s capital investment programme, however it was later reported that foreign assistance funded more than 90% of NSDP3 in its final evaluation (Campbell, 1992).

Despite Tonga’s endeavours to promote its development objectives through long-term development plans, their efforts have been unsuccessful (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2011). In 2011, the Government of Tonga developed its first national development framework, the Tonga Strategic Development Framework. This framework provides the guiding assumptions that drive the development work of the most recent government administration. The Strategic Development Framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

5.5.3 The Economic Model – MIRAB

With the decline of the agricultural sector, remittances have dramatically increased as a revenue stream for Tonga (van der Velde et al., 2007). In an analysis of the effects of the agriculture sector in relation to remittances, Bertram (1999) found that remittances had accounted for 20 to 25% of gross national product (GNP) in the past decade, whereas agriculture exports accounted for only 10% of GNP in 1999. The MIRAB is a conceptual model that describes Tonga’s dependence on remittances and foreign aid as a factor that generates economic wealth (Bertram, 1993). The model stresses Tonga’s heavy reliance on external dimensions such as remittance and foreign assistance, and details how migration and bureaucratic systems hamper the sustainability of PIC economies. One favourable characteristic of the MIRAB model is that it shifts the focus from Western development paradigms and focuses on non-traditional channels of national revenue such as remittances. Another positive aspect is the inclusion of cultural dimensions such as kinship and social ties that are essential to Polynesian and more specifically Tongan development processes (Evans, 1999b).

Evans (1999b) specifically explored the effects of the MIRAB model on social relationships in rural villages within the Ha’apai Islands. Evans emphasizes the link between migration and kinship, stating that “transnational kin ties knit migrants to their homelands in a variety of ways” (p. 140). Migrants send money back to their homeland to continue their connection to the kin. This connection and maintaining familial relationships and affiliation to the land are embedded in cultural values such as tauhi’va (reciprocity). These sociocultural practices and
traditional customs are not taken into account in these traditional economic models and therefore are not a fair representation of the economic realities of Tongan citizens.

The first dimension detailed in the MIRAB model is migration. An increasing problem that faces Tonga’s main island is interisland migration whereby citizens migrate from smaller outer islands to the main island, Tongatapu (Taufatofua, 2011). According to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), poverty and the lack of employment opportunities are the key drivers of the rise in interisland migration (Taufatofua, 2011). Citizens from the outer islands such as Ha’apai and Vava’u migrate to the main island Nuku’alofa in order to gain access to better housing and living conditions, healthcare services and employment opportunities. International economic factors such as the effects of the global economic crisis have also influenced the migration patterns of Tongans (Ratha, Mohapatra, & Silwal, 2009). Jimenez and Brown (2012) examined the poverty impacts of migrants’ remittances in Tonga and found that remittance reduced the incidence of poverty by 31%. Evans (1999b) argues that migration strengthens, and in some ways contributes to sustaining, cultural traditions and customs.

Another component of the MIRAB model is remittance, which is the transfer of monetary payments from one party to another. Tonga’s economy heavily relies on remittance, and over the years, has been unable to generate a sustainable alternative revenue stream (Lee, 2004). The IMF stated that “over the past decade, remittances as a share of GDP in Tonga have varied between 30–55 percent, with an average of around 45 percent, making Tonga the leading recipient of remittances relative to GDP among Pacific Island countries” (Lin, 2011, p. 3).

Figure 8: Top remittances recipients among developing countries in 2009

![Figure 8: Top remittances recipients among developing countries in 2009](image)
Adapted from Ratha et al. (2009).

Figure 6 indicates that Tonga’s remittance inflows are 38% of GDP, which is the second highest among developing countries. Furthermore, in October 2011 remittances increased by 53% from the previous month (Ministry of National Planning, 2012). This substantial increase is attributed to the many technological advances in transfer channels and systems such as mobile transmissions, making it easier for parties to transfer funds (Ministry of National Planning, 2012). Remittances to Tonga have ranged between 55% and 60% of GDP over the past decade (Lin, 2011).

Jayaraman, Choong, and Chand (2014) recently explored the effects of foreign aid and remittances on the competitiveness of PICs’ exports between 1980 and 2012. They found that out of the six major PICs (Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, PNG), the remittances recorded in 2012 were relatively higher for Tonga in comparison to its counterparts. More specifically, Tonga’s remittances as a percentage of GDP were 10% higher than compared to PNG and the Solomon Islands. These figures demonstrate the significant role remittances play in Tonga’s economic performance.

The strain of financially sustaining family members back in Tonga is exemplified in an email sent by one Tongan expatriate that was published on the website of the Australian radio station Pacific Beat:

> We simply just want to survive. We cannot survive while trying to sustain our respective Tongan community, if we are expected to subsidize Tonga’s frail economy. It is not our responsibility. That is the responsibility of Tonga’s government. . . . We do not want to perpetuate the financial blunders of generations past and give, give, give our way to the unemployment line, the welfare line, to government housing or homelessness. . . . As for the issue of identity, let me ask you this: why should we sustain the economy of a country that hasn’t made an effort to embrace our generation? . . . Tonga only wants our money, but not us. (Wolfgramm, 2005)

This statement captures the frustrations shared by migrant Tongans who feel the pressure to support family members back in Tonga.

The MIRAB model also describes the dependence of Tonga’s fragile economy on development assistance from both neighbouring states and multilateral donors. In order to understand the nature of foreign aid in Tonga it is imperative to grasp the introduction of
foreign aid as a key driver for development. Campbell (1992) noted that the first foreign assistance experience began in 1987 from the multilateral agency World Health Organization (WHO). WHO partially funded and supplied technical consultants to assist in developing an environmental sanitation plan. The following section discusses aid activity in Tonga.

5.6 Aid activity in Tonga

In recent years, questionable aid activities have received media coverage both in Tonga and aboard (Tonga, 2014). In 2013, it was exposed that the Chinese government gifted an MA60 aircraft to the Tongan government that planned to use it as a domestic carrier. A number of local media outlets and government opponents criticized the gift and ultimately categorized the aircraft as a strategic move by the Chinese government to gain access to Tongan waters for commercial fishing rights. In addition, questions about the safety certification of the aircraft were raised. The Pacific Aviation Safety Office, the aviation body responsible for regulating safety requirements in the Pacific, recommended that the aircraft be grounded until internationally accepted safety certification was attained (Tonga, 2014). However, the government refused to ground the airliner and continued servicing flights to and from the outer islands. New Zealand was particularly concerned with the state’s decision to continue operating the aircraft and withheld TOP$10.5 million in tourism aid until the fleet gained the appropriate safety accreditation (Dornan & Brant, 2014). In March 2015, the aircraft was reportedly leased to an unnamed group (Tonga, 2015).

In 2008 China Eximbank, one of the three institutional chartered banks in China, approved the first of two substantial loans to Tonga. The first concessional loan was approved by parliament and Eximbank for approximately NZ$108 million with the intention to fund the reconstruction of the business district in Nuku’alofa that was destroyed after rioting in 2006 (Dornan & Brant, 2014; Pulu, 2011). Leaked budget discussions raised concerns about the allocation of funds, however. It was reported that NZ$15 million of the reconstruction loan was spent on the renovations of the then king George Tupou V’s royal residence. It was further established that a substantial amount (approximately NZ$23 million) was reported as “other expenses” with no additional information detailed in the budget (Pulu, 2011).

A year and a half later (June 2009), Eximbank granted a second loan for road improvements in Nuku’alofa of NZ$70 million. Hon. Dr Feleti Sevele’s administration certified this loan and he received a substantial amount of criticism for his failure to analyse Tonga’s current debt condition. Dornan and Brant (2014) were critical of Tonga’s indebtedness at the time the
second loan was approved, stating “public debt in Tonga was 43 percent of GDP the majority of which is external debt (39 percent of GDP)” (p. 353). Moreover, the two large loans constituted 64% of the debt stock which resulted in the IMF labelling Tonga as being at “high risk of external debt distress” (p. 353). In the midst of these controversial development loans and grants and the states inability to service these debts the current administration has recently vowed to take a more stringent approach to conceding debt and has declared a “no new loans” policy.

As alluded to above, in 2006 the majority of the commercial district in the capital of Nuku’alofa was destroyed during riots. Pro-democracy protestors and civil servants calling for an increase in their salaries targeted state-owned and elite-controlled property (Kennedy, 2012). The riots have had long-lasting adverse effects on the Tongan economy and have exacerbated the economic and political constraints the island faces (Kennedy, 2012). A number of international agencies including the World Bank and the UN provided humanitarian aid to assist in improving civil services such as water supply, road maintenance and enforcing law and order by strengthening the police force (AusAID, 2009).

In 2012, a research team consisting of Teena Brown Pulu, a female Tongan academic, and the economic consultant Melino Maka were commissioned by the government to investigate the Nuku’alofa Central Business District Reconstruction project funded by a substantial concessional loan from with China. As a result of the investigation a critical report was submitted to the Prime Minister’s Office in which the authors made uncompromising and bold statements about the unconstitutional use of the development loan (Pulu, 2012).

According to Kalafi Moala, who subsequently published a book by Pulu on transparency in the Tongan government, because the report “did not confirm the allegations of funds having been mishandled or misused, the report was rejected and the author and contributors were summarily dismissed from the inquiry” (Haas, 2012, p. 1). Haas (2012) notes the lack of quality media/journalism that critically examines politicians and their policies and advocates for more governance transparency.

Tonga reportedly received NZ$121 million in foreign aid in 2013, with the four largest donors listed as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), AusAID, NZAid and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (OECD, 2014). These donor agencies govern their financial assistance differently and therefore employ diverse management practices.
5.6.1 Tongan development partners

Tonga has a wide range of development partners that include the ADB and the World Bank. Table 5 lists the top 10 aid donors to Tonga in 2012–2013. The section briefly discusses the four largest donors and the results of their past aid commitments to Tonga. It also evaluates the effectiveness of each donor’s project activities.

Table 5: Top 10 ODA donor agencies to Tonga in 2012-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Country/Agency</th>
<th>Foreign aid (NZ$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>International Development Association (IDA)</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank Fund (Asian Development Bank Fund)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>European Union institutions</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>World Health Organization (WHO)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 6 delineates the strategic focus areas in which donors concentrate their development efforts.

Table 6: Donors' strategic focus areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor agency</th>
<th>Strategic focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public sector reform, technical and vocational education, infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Environmental management/renewable energy, health, education, infrastructure/transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Economic development (transport, energy, Small-Medium sized enterprises support, technical and vocational training, and tourism), police support, and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>Roads, rural health centres, and reconstruction of central business district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>Transport, energy, telecommunications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6.1.1 NZAid

NZAid has been one of the most prominent development assistance donors to Tonga over the past decade. According to the official development assistance figures from the OECD, NZAid contributed NZ$31.4 million in 2012–2013 (OECD, 2014). This is a significant increase from 2008 when Tonga received a total of NZ$8 million in development assistance from NZAid (Ministry of National Planning, 2012). Despite this significant increase in assistance, GDP has decreased substantially. The NZAid programme focuses on developing four strategic areas: economic development through transport, energy, vocational training and tourism, police support and education.

From the perspective of NZAid, Tonga faces numerous development challenges including skills shortages and small domestic markets. NZAid reiterates the sentiments of researchers that Tonga is vulnerable to natural disasters (Storey & Murray, 2001). In early 2013, Cyclone Ian destroyed 80% of Ha’apai, where damages were estimated at NZ$54 million (OECD, 2015). Between 2009 and 2012 NZAid donated NZ$51 million development assistance to support the bilateral programme between the countries. In addition, NZAid provided additional support to regional agencies such as Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

5.6.1.2 ADB

The OECD (2011) recognizes ADB as one of the largest multilateral donor agencies to Tonga. Since 1972, Tonga has received 15 development loans worth NZ$15 billion and approximately 96 development projects amounting to NZ$21.05 billion (ADB, 2011a). As of December 2014, the ADB had approved seven grants totalling NZ$105.87 million through the Asian Development Fund. Another six substantial loans worth NZ$68.04 million are being processed (ADB, 2014). In regard to project success, ADB has reported a success rate of 50% (ADB, 2014). An ADB-Tonga Fact Sheet reports that this project success statistic correlates to two projects evaluated independently in 2005 and 2012 respectively (ADB, 2014). The Fact Sheet further indicates that the project evaluated in 2012 was rated as 100% successful, whereas the project evaluated in 2005 was unsuccessful. However, the 50% success rate is not a fair representation of the total number of projects sponsored by ADB and therefore is inaccurate. Furthermore, there are difficulties in substantiating the ADB’s claims as independent results and evidence were not accessible.

5.6.1.3 AusAID

AusAID is the largest development donor to Tonga. AusAID contributed TOP$20.44 million
in development assistance between 2007 and 2008 (AusAID, 2008). In 2013–2014 the amount of development assistance substantially increased to NZ$30.5 million (OECD, 2014). In 2012, AusAID contributed “36.8 percent of all aid from OCED DAC member countries” (AusAID, 2014, p. 4). In addition to providing direct bilateral assistance (as loans, grants and direct aid), AusAID also collaborated with NZAid, the World Bank and the ADB and pooled funding to contribute to regional agencies such as Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Australia’s aid programme concentrates on three key strategic areas: public sector reform, technical and vocational education, and infrastructure. In regard to AusAID’s progress towards programme objectives, it claims to be making steady progress: a more efficient and effective public sector, enhanced technical and vocational skills within government departments, and improved health for the general population were recorded as advancements(AusAID, 2014). However, one area of the programme that has little progress is the development of urban infrastructure (AusAID, 2014). According to one report, “development of infrastructure progress is somewhat less than expected for this point in time and restorative action will be necessary if the objective is to be achieved” (AusAID, 2014, p. 6).

5.6.1.4 JICA

Japan and Tonga established diplomatic relations in the 1970s and have continued to strengthen their affiliation through trade agreements and regenerated development assistance agendas over the past two decades. JICA development assistance focus on four key areas: environmental management/renewable energy (issues surrounding climate change); health; education; and economic and social sectors. While JICA’s development cooperation is vast in scope the specifics of the influence of their efforts on achieving national priorities are not clear.

In 2013 the amount of grant aid JICA provided was recorded as NZ$4.8 million in development loans (technical cooperation). A staggering NZ$194.3 million was contributed in development projects during 2011–2013 (OECD, 2014). JICA are the most prolific users of international consultants, dispatching 153 experts to Tonga between 2011 and 2013. Little is known about the quality of the services provided and the effectiveness of these foreign advisors.
5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the specific context of this study and provide some contextual background with specific reference to the economic, social and political environments inherent to Tonga. A discussion of the distinguishing features of Tongan culture and political makeup, which ultimately influence the development process, has been provided. The Tongan social structure was explained and identified as a distinctive aspect that underpins Tongans’ lived reality. It is necessary to understand Tongan cultural values such as tauhi ‘va and the Tongan social structure in order to understand the distinctive perceptions of development and development process in Tonga.

The historical and current economic conditions of Tonga was also discussed. Developments such as the decline of the agricultural sector have shaped Tonga’s recent economic performance. These events led to the use and further dependence of Tonga’s economy on the MIRAB model that sees the country’s dependence on remittances and foreign aid as a factor that generates economic wealth. The four most prominent donor agencies contributing development assistance to Tonga were outlined and their aid activities in Tonga were discussed. The following chapter presents the research design of this study and articulates the methodological strategy and procedural techniques used to gather data. This study employs an ethnographic approach to exploring the managerial practices used in development projects in Tonga.
CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY – TOLI

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter revealed Tonga’s economic dependence on development assistance and the overall ineffectiveness of aid programmes in the country. The purpose of this chapter is to delineate the methods used to gather data and the techniques used to analyse and interpret it.

In relation to the kakala framework, this chapter represents the toli stage. The two key aspects of this stage relate to the preparation of weaving tools: methodological approach and data collection methods. Materials such as the threading material and sample patterns are organized and set out for the weavers to utilize. The weaver also needs to be aware of his or her lineage in relation to the social setting. This last point is important for research endeavours in Tonga and my understanding of my immediate and distant familial circles determined my conduct, behaviour and the way I presented myself on field trips.

This study employed a range of qualitative techniques to examine the project management practices used in development projects implemented in Tonga. It was deemed appropriate to utilize contrasting data collection techniques such as convergent interviewing and the talanoa method in order to gain multiple perspectives from significant stakeholders. Section 6.2 presents the two important components of the methodological design for this study. Section 6.3 outlines the methodological strategy used to investigate project management practices, the multi-case study strategy, including its limitations. Section 6.4 outlines the project selection criteria developed to select the most appropriate case studies. Section 6.5 briefly outlines the three distinct methodologies employed to obtain data. The Tongan research methodology, talanoa, is explained in detail in Section 6.6 and the Western data collection methods in the following section. In Section 6.8 I next share my experiences in the field in the hope that it may shed some light on the intricacies involved in applying two distinctive methodologies in different settings. Section 6.9 describes the third methodology used, document evaluation. Finally, I discuss the data analysis technique used to interpret the data collected, thematic analysis.

6.2 Research design

This section outlines the research design crafted to address the research objective. The nature of the research problem determines the methodological process used to investigate the phenomenon under study. Moreover, scientific investigations are based on a particular
underlying philosophical assumption about what constitutes valid research and which research technique(s) are appropriate for the development of knowledge in a given area (Myers, 2008; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

A phenomenological line of inquiry was used to investigate and gain insight into the beliefs and attitudes of project stakeholders and explore how their value systems influence the project management practices used in development projects in Tonga. A very well established philosophical discipline, phenomenology also lends itself to academic fields such as organizational management. Phenomenology is a philosophical standpoint that gives precedence to human experiences. The majority of the empirical evidence of project management studies is based on the positivist paradigm, and phenomenology was used in this study to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of project actors.

Chapter 2 outlined the philosophical orientation of this study and argued the significance of the kakala framework in weaving this distinct Tongan worldview into the research process. The kakala framework provides an authentic representation of Tongan traditions, beliefs and value systems that are common to Tongan society. I argue that by embedding the kakala framework as a central pillar of cultural consciousness throughout this thesis, an accurate, creditable and culturally robust theory can be developed as an outcome.

6.2.1 Quantitative vs qualitative

There are two mainstream approaches to research in social sciences – qualitative and quantitative. The nature of this study places it clearly in the qualitative realm. My decision to utilize a qualitative approach was informed by the nature of the research questions at the core of this study. Bluhm et al. (2011) explain that decisions regarding method of inquiry are dependent on a number of compelling factors such as research design, desired contributions and research questions driving the study. Existing development project management studies tend to use quantitative methods such as questionnaires (Ika et al., 2010; Ika, Diallo, & Thuillier, 2012; Khang & Moe, 2008). Very few quantitative studies explore the phenomenon in its natural social setting and therefore lack a deeper understanding of project management practices and their responsiveness to the context.

The merits of qualitative research have been widely attested in management scholarship. According to Bluhm et al. (2011), qualitative research is crucial for exposing the deeper thought processes, experiences and attitudes of individuals, teams and organizations and for understanding the dimensions that influence these processes. Moreover, qualitative research
is responsive to context and resists making generalizations (Schutt, 2012). Various authors note that qualitative studies provide rich descriptions rather than the measurement of specific constructs, thereby giving further insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Tracy, 2010).

Qualitative methods have also been praised for their ability to provide a holistic representation of stakeholders and their interactions in and with the social environment (Schutt, 2012). MacIntyre (2008) suggests that qualitative approaches enable the researcher to paint a more holistic picture of the phenomenon in question. This type of methodological design takes into consideration the whole environment and gives the researcher the ability to explore the interconnectedness of variables and the complexity of relationships in its natural surroundings. This aspect of the qualitative approach enabled me to apply two distinct data collection techniques (talanoa and convergent interviews) while maintaining the integrity of both methods. I was able to be absorbed in my research inquiries and make meaning of the data while still having the ability to extract myself to examine how it all fit into the bigger picture. Nevertheless, this constant shifting in and out of two different frames of thinking, interpreting the scenario from both a Tongan and Western or palangi (Caucasian) perspective, proved difficult at times. I believe such an approach was essential to this study as it assisted in gauging more robust and truthful data.

As stated earlier, most project management studies have taken a positivist approach to examining project management practices, with very few exploring the qualitative nature of the constructs involved. These studies have focused on hard systems based on orthodox assumptions that accentuate instrumentality and objectivity in regards to project orientation. However, the intrinsic soft characteristics of development projects require a shift in epistemological approach that ultimately alters the methodological strategy. Therefore, this study has employed a qualitative approach to explore project management as a social practice that is enacted in dynamic environments. According to Cicmil et al. (2006), “project management practice is . . . seen as a social conduct, defined by history, context, individual values and wider structural frameworks” (p. 676). In the same vein, Golini and Landoni (2014) argue that projects are socially constructed entities and require an authentic social impact assessment. With these assumptions, it is necessary to understand the lived experience of project actors and explore the social and political underpinnings that explain the decisions and actions these individuals make in regard to the project management practices they enact.
6.3 Multi-case study strategy

This section discusses the research strategy employed. Noor (2008) highlights the importance of the choice of strategy and states that the decision is essentially dependent on the nature of the research proposition or problem. As investigative strategies influence the results of the study, it is appropriate to detail the specific approach employed. The multi-case study strategy was adopted to gain a detailed understanding of the managerial practices used in development projects in Tonga. This approach has a number of attractive features and was deemed the most appropriate as it “seeks to study phenomena in their context, rather than independent of context” (Gibbert, Ruigrok, & Wicki, 2008, p. 1459).

Thomas (1996) and Woodside (2010) note that the case study approach is the principal method of inquiry in the social sciences. A case-oriented approach allows researchers to “retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2003, p. 3). Yin (2003) adds that the multi-case study strategy is a comprehensive research approach that enables researchers to utilize multiple data collection methods. The ability to employ various data collection methods verifies and triangulates the data collected and contributes to the validity of the research (Cutler, 2004; Piekkari, Welch, & Paavilainen, 2009). Piekkari et al. (2009) state that case-oriented strategies produce generalized causal descriptions for each unit of analysis under examination.

Differing themes and epistemological perspectives have skewed the definition of case study research (Noor, 2008; Thomas, 2011). A number of prominent scholars from sociology, education and psychology tend to view case study research through the interpretative paradigm, while those from business, politics and other theoretical areas may adopt philosophical assumptions from the positivist paradigm (Thomas, 2011). Moreover, the categorization of research variables also alters the definition and application of the case study research strategy (Piekkari et al., 2009; Thomas, 2011). A well-cited and established definition of the case study is that it is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). This definition emphasizes the examination of the concept or event in its natural setting.

Yin (2003) identifies two types of case study approaches: single case and multi-case. The single case method is criticized for its inability to generalize from the generated results (Flyvbjerb, 2006). The multi-case study approach however is “regarded as more compelling,
and the overall study is therefore regarded as more robust” (Yin, 2003, p. 46). The multi-case study approach differs from conventional single case studies in regard to the number of units of analysis apprehended for investigation (Tharenou, Donohue, & Cooper, 2007). Therefore, employing the multi-case study approach strengthened the external validity of this study’s findings.

The multi-case study approach enabled me to explore different applications of the PLC framework and further examine the differences in managerial practices employed by various donor agencies. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) point out that “multiple cases also enable broader exploration of research questions and theoretical elaboration” (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). Project selection criteria were developed to select the most appropriate projects and avoid potential biases. As a result, five development projects were selected as units of analysis and these are discussed in Chapter 7.

6.3.1 Limitations of the multi-case study strategy

A critical discussion on the research strategy adopted must include its limitations and pitfalls, which are the subject of this section. In general, research investigations are bound to encounter methodological imperfections (Gibbert et al., 2008). Limitations such as investigative biases, predisposition of measurement, and restrictive analytical frameworks have been documented as methodological oversights (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The multi-case study strategy is not immune to these methodological inadequacies. Gibbert et al. (2008) argue that the case-oriented approach is prone to concerns related to methodological rigor while Cutler (2004) identifies the inability to generalize from the case study strategy as one of its most significant methodological weaknesses. Noor (2008) meanwhile notes that these limitations stem from the fact that there is no common procedural framework which dictates the employment of the case study approach. A central debate within case study research concerns the tension between selecting a single case study approach which bears rich theoretical insights or a multi-case study approach that provides replication logic (Piekkari et al., 2009).

Given these considerations, a limitation of this study is the small sample size of projects. In comparison to the substantial number of development projects implemented in Tonga, the sample size might be perceived as relatively insignificant. However, the aim of this study is not to draw generalized implications from the research results. Rather, the objective is to highlight how the distinctive worldview of project actors influences the project management
practices enacted in development projects. Therefore, a multi-case study approach was the most applicable strategy for gauging the wide range of project management practices used.

Moreover, this study addresses the concerns of external validity by adopting a multi-case study approach that enables a degree of generalizability in respect to the types of development projects and donor agency practices. In the same vein, the nature of this study is exploratory and purposefully seeks to explore and reveal the current project management practices used in Tonga.

### 6.4 Project selection criteria

This section presents the project selection criteria formulated specifically to select the most appropriate units (projects) for analysis. In a seminal article on theorizing from case study research, Eisenhardt (1989) underlined the importance of selecting appropriate case studies for analysis. Cases should be selected in relation to the specified population in order to “constrain extraneous variation and sharpen external validity” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 533). The project selection criteria illustrated in Table 7 were developed to select the most relevant and appropriate projects for analysis. The criteria encompass four components: donor agency, project objectives, completion timeframe and government sector/thematic area. Firstly, projects were selected based on sponsoring agency (one of the four largest development assistance contributors). There are two reasons for this criterion: (1) to avoid selecting duplicated projects implemented by other large donors; and (2) to gauge the different managerial activities/processes used by bilateral donors (where funding is directly issued from one state to another) and multilateral agencies (where funding sourced indirectly from pools of various international agencies).

Five projects, sponsored by the ADB (2), JICA (1), AusAID (1) and NZAid (1), were selected. Scholars such as Landoni and Corti (2011) and Golini et al. (2014) note that traditional project management endorses the use of standardized tools and frameworks for organizing and coordinating project activities. However, the complexities that are intrinsic to development projects require tailored managerial frameworks and practices. Most donor agencies have institutionalized their own managerial practices and tools. Landoni and Corti (2011) found that donor agencies utilized differentiated versions of standardized project management models. This study explores the different project management practices within the PLC stages to manage and coordinate project activities and evaluates them against project outcomes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Four donors | • Two projects from ADB  
  • One project from JICA  
  • One project from AusAID  
  • One project from NZAid | • Avoid selecting similar projects sponsored by other donors  
  • Gauge the diverse management practices utilized by both bilateral and multilateral donors |

| Relevant project objectives | Economic and social development project objectives | Distinguish between humanitarian and development projects  
  • Provide a holistic view of patterns, managerial practices and results |

| Completed within a specified timeframe | Selected projects to be completed between 2004 and 2011 | |

| Government sector/thematic area | Education sector  
  Economic Infrastructure and services sector  
  Social infrastructure sector | Select projects that are representative of the variety of projects implemented  
  • Gauge range of project management practices applied by different executing agencies (government department) |

Secondly, the projects needed to aim to improve the social and economic conditions of Tongan citizens. This criterion was established to distinguish humanitarian efforts from development projects, which are the primary focus of this study. Economic development projects broadly concern the enhancement of public sectors such as transport, communications, energy generation and supply, and banking and financial services. Social development projects broadly concern the enhancement of public sectors such as education, health, water supply and sanitation, government and civil society, and other social infrastructure and services.

Thirdly, projects had to have been completed between the years of 2004 and 2011. Completed projects were selected to gain a holistic view of the patterns of project management practices enacted in each project stage. In order to determine the effectiveness of these practices, project outcomes were considered as performance indicators for project management practices. Therefore, for the purpose of measurement, outcomes were required and thus projects had to be completed.
Finally, the selected projects had to address a wide range of thematic areas. This criterion addresses generalizability concerns in that a representative sample of the different development projects implemented in Tonga was selected. The OECD (2014) identified three prominent sectors that development projects primarily address: education, social and economic infrastructure, and services. These sectors are institutional units whose outputs are intended for individual and collective consumption. The development of institutional frameworks such as the economic infrastructure is presumed to lead to more advanced public services available to citizens which in turn contribute to the improvement of their standard of living. Moreover, this aspect was applied to gauge the variety of perceptions of civil servants from different government departments/executing agencies in regard to the project management practices.

Various methodology researchers discuss the role of research variables and further analyse misconceptions when identifying the subject and object of study in case study research (Piekkari et al., 2009). As this study analyses different project management practices and the various applications of the PLC framework, a multi-case study approach was appropriate as it enabled me to investigate variations of project management practices within different donor agencies and government departments, and staff involvement in these activities.

### 6.5 Data collection methods

This section describes the data collection techniques used to ascertain research data. Firstly, a brief description is given of the merits of utilizing three distinct data collection methods. Secondly, the *talanoa* approach is introduced and further discussed in regard to what, how and why it was used in this study. Thirdly, convergent interviews are outlined. In addition to this, reflections from the field will be presented to provide experiential detail of how these methodological tools were utilized in the field. Finally, the data analysis tool used, thematic analysis, is discussed.

In total 50 people participated in this study. The primary method used to generate data was *talanoa faka‘eke‘eke* conducted with 35 Tongan participants based in either Tonga or Fiji using a set of broad open-ended questions/prompts to guide the *talanoa*. This was supplemented by material from convergent interviews conducted with 15 non-Tongan participants. An interview guide was developed prior to starting the interviews and refined during the process.
According to Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2003) the case study approach combines various data collection procedures. Evidence for case studies can derive from sources such as archival documentation, observations and interviews (Eisenhardt, 1989; Noor, 2008; Thomas, 2011). Three distinct data collection techniques were used in this study: convergent interviews, *talanoa*, and documentation evaluation. Furthermore, these data collection techniques were used within different contexts, which contributed to data reliability.

In using three different data collection techniques the data collected from each source can be validated through a process called triangulation (Jick, 1979; Seale, 1999). This type of cross-validation is common in organizational studies and contributes to the rigor of this study and further enhances the credibility or trustworthiness of the research results (Cox & Hassard, 2005; Tracy, 2010). Put another way, “findings may be judged valid when different and contrasting methods of data collection yield identical findings on the same research subjects; a case of replication within the same thing” (Bloor, 2001, p. 324). The triangulation process followed in this study is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Triangulation process

![Figure 9: Triangulation process](image)

In a landmark publication, Denzin (1978) outlined four different types of triangulation: (1) data triangulation; (2) investigator triangulation; (3) theory triangulation; and (4) methodological triangulation. These types of triangulation are applied in different stages of the research process. Data, investigator and methodological triangulation can be applied during the data extraction process. Data triangulation is where data is collected from different sources at different time periods. Methodological triangulation involves the use of different
data collection techniques and methods to extract data. Investigator triangulation encompasses different researchers and involves collecting data independently. By contrast, theory triangulation is applied within the analysis process and involves utilizing multiple theoretical perspectives to analyse the data set. By using multiple theoretical lenses the researcher is able to assess the utility of the various theoretical viewpoints.

This study employed both methodological and data triangulation to validate research data and increase the rigor of results. Methodological triangulation aims to reduce the possibility of instrument or measurement biases (Bloor, 2001). This type of triangulation involved engaging in contrasting data collection methods to ensure that the research instruments did not affect the data collected and to facilitate data validation (Emerson, 2001).

The talanoa methodology was used with Tongan research participants in both Tonga and Fiji. Talanoa recognizes Tongan cultural elements such as reciprocity and empathy as focal aspects that enhance the engagement of participants in the dialogue. Convergent interviews were conducted with non-Tongan respondents who were generally employed by donor agencies and situated in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga. The fact that data were extracted from different sources at different times also added to their validity.

Talanoa sessions were carried out with Tongan project stakeholders within government ministries (Government of Tonga), NGOs operating in Tonga, and with participants in the private sector (Primary Data – A). Talanoa involves semi-structured interviews and takes more of a conversational approach to data gathering instead of seeking predetermined, structured accounts.

Project management theories possess a weak theoretical foundation that has hindered the development of research and scholarship (Patanakul et al., 2010). Convergent interviewing is a key qualitative technique acknowledged for its ability to “address research topics that lack theoretical underpinnings” (Williams & Lewis, 2005, p. 219). Convergent interviews (Primary Data – B) were conducted with key participants in the four donor agencies, NGOs and Pacific regional institutions (Primary Data – B). Archival documentation (Secondary Data – C) such as project monitoring reports, evaluations, scope reviews and contracts were also ascertained and examined as research data.

6.6 Tongan data collection method: Talanoa (Primary Data – A)

Western methodologies and paradigms of knowledge production dominate the academic
literature and few culturally specific techniques acknowledged. Authors such as Smith (1999) and Nabobo-Baba (2006) are critics of the colonization of underdeveloped countries which undermined traditional knowledge and ignored indigenous frameworks for constructing and encoding theories and methodology. Vaioleti (2006) has called for more culturally appropriate techniques and has encouraged indigenous researchers like myself to contribute to the methodological rhetoric and scholarly debate.

For Pacific researchers, cultural identity is intrinsic to their research approach. Cultural values, traditions and belief systems are powerful and pervasive elements that inform research design and are a vital tenant for methods that are representative of stakeholders. This is evident in the emergence of ethnic-specific Pacific research frameworks that are based on culturally significant artefacts. These include, the *Samoan Ula* (Sauni, 2011), *faafaletui* (Sauaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014), and the Fijian vanua framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2006). Inherent with methodological reform, these Pacific methodologies resets the power imbalance between researcher, academy and indigenous participants. However, despite the existence of different Pacific methodologies, their legitimacy, significance and rigor have remained questioned in relation to theory development.

The use of Western paradigms to understand indigenous phenomena has been widely criticized (Schaaf, 2009; Smith, 2012). The adoption of these generic techniques has failed to attain authentic knowledge as at times they have been intrusive and failed to acknowledge indigenous knowledge as a legitimate form of knowing (Thaman, 2003). Thaman (2003) states that “what we might perceive to constitute Pacific Studies (knowledge) therefore constitutes a type of power exercised over those who are ‘studied’ or ‘known’, and who produce the discourse (that is, we) have the power to enforce its validity and its scientific status and make it true” (p. 3).

Historically, research into Pacific issues has been conducted through Western lenses which Vaioleti (2006) has criticized as “disempowering research” (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 22). Orthodox or dominant research approaches are driven by hypotheses and often bound by strictly guided interactions with participants that are based on different thinking from that of Pacific peoples. The disparity between the objectivity sought by traditional research and the subjectivity of the participants is often not recognized in Pacific research contexts (Vaioleti, 2006). For example, in a research situation in a Pacific community, the participants will behave and respond differently depending on the age, gender, cultural rank or community standing of the
researcher. These variables may significantly affect results and the implications that are drawn from the research. *Talanoa* is a Pacific methodology and sense-making approach that recognizes the intricacies of conducting research based on the Pacific.

Cross-cultural research requires culturally appropriate methods of data extraction (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003). In addition, the treatment of culture in cross-cultural studies remains a critical issue as researchers fail to recognize the difference between national culture and country (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003). Therefore, it was important for me to differentiate and integrate my cultural values and use culturally sensitive research procedures in order to understand project management practices and gauge accurate information. More importantly, it was imperative for me to adhere to established cultural norms and practices in order to empower research participants and in turn provide relevant and useful results to government departments. In addition, because the topic under investigation is sensitive it requires a research approach that is credible and trustworthy while culturally sensitive.

Pacific Island research methods are scarce in the academic literature, however *talanoa*, which has emerged from education literature is gaining increasing attention (Vaioleti, 2006). *Talanoa* is entrenched in the Tongan oratory tradition and has been recognized across various Pacific Islands as a common method for gaining research data. Meo-Sewabu (2014) explains that the *talanoa* technique is “subjective because its purpose is to give meaning to whatever is being discussed” (Meo-Sewabu, 2014, p. 34). Moreover, this indigenous method is understood and applied across different Pacific contexts with their own cultural values that influence the ways of knowing. The *talanoa* approach at the same time resists Western and PIC leaders’ attempts to apply regional labels to PICs. Regional notions such as the “Pacific Way” have long been used to categorize island realities however, such prejudicial notions fail to acknowledge the complexities and distinct characteristics of each island.

*Talnoa* is subjective as parties collaborate with the intention of creating meaning from whatever is being discussed (Meo-Sewabu, 2014). This is illustrated by the literal translation of *talanoa* in the Tongan context: *tala* means to tell and inform, as well as enquire and apply. *Noa* means without thought, of no value. Therefore, *talanoa* translates as “talking about nothing in particular, and interacting without rigid framework” (Vaioleti, 2006, p.23).

Although the term itself lacks specificity, Otsuke (2006) and other prominent Pacific scholars state that in carrying out *talanoa* the investigator must take culturally appropriate precautions when carrying out fieldwork in PICs.
6.6.1 Architectures and articulation of the talanoa

Tongan scholars such as Timote Vaioleti and Sitiveni Halapua have both been instrumental contributors to the development of our understanding and application of the talanoa methodology. The concept of talanoa is a well-established cultural practice in Tongan society, but Vaioleti (2006) reconceptualized and translated the talanoa concept into a research-related technique. According to Sauaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea (2014), “by adding to it a technical research-related meaning, Vaioleti, in particular, has in some ways transformed talanoa to be not just about the ‘talk’ of participants but also about the way that ‘talk’ is set up and analyzed for academic research purposes” (p. 333).

While Vaioleti (2006) focused on developing our understanding of talanoa as a research method, Sitiveni Halapua (2013) has developed talanoa into a Pacific negotiating method used to resolve political and social conflicts. Halapua (2013) examined the use of the talanoa method as a tool for facilitating democratic governance in various Pacific settings that include Fiji and Tonga. Halapua warns against political leaders using their positional power to control the direction and content of talanoa. Rather, the author encourages a participative talanoa that enables participants the freedom to “maintain or change the direction of development in their lives” (Halapua, 2013, p. 5).

Political reforms in Tonga have required a great deal of persistence and facilitation (Halapua, 1997). Talanoa has been used as a mechanism for facilitating political reform in Tonga with scholars such as Halapua (2008) advocating for the technique to receive more acknowledgement in the academic literature. Halapua understands talanoa as “engaging in dialogue with, or telling stories to each other absent [of] concealment of the inner feelings and experiences that resonate in our hearts and minds” (Halapua, 2008, p. 1). Within the political reform context, talanoa has been a useful instrument in promoting open dialogue between Tongan citizens and government. However, the nature of Tonga’s hierarchical social structure has often limited the parties involved when discussing development policies, which has hindered the use of this facilitative mechanism.

6.6.2 Talanoa as a research methodology

As mentioned earlier, PIC cultures have unique epistemologies that are not adequately acknowledged within traditional research methodologies. The epistemologies and lived realities of Pacific peoples are based on their relationship with three dimensions: ancestors, god/s, and the spiritual world (Vaioleti, 2011). This unique perception of reality influences
daily interactions and social and political structures. Therefore, with this distinctive scope and origin of knowledge, research undertaken in the Pacific region requires a customized method of research.

The *talanoa* research approach allows for culturally appropriate and contextual interactions with Pacific participants in order to create truthful knowledge (Vaioleti, 2006). Further to this, “*talanoa* firmly places the power to define what the Pacific issues are at the centre of the encounter between the researchers and kau nga fa’u [participants]” (Vaioleti, 2011, p. 128). This approach is grounded in oral traditions and seeks to gather authentic information. The *talanoa* method can be described as a mode of communication or an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether in formal or informal forum (Vaioleti, 2006). Nabobo-Baba (2006) defines *talanoa* as “a process of which two or more people talk together, or in which one person tells a story to an audience of people who are largely listeners” (p. 27).

The *talanoa* methodology is used in various PIC contexts and has been employed as an indigenous method for collecting data different fields of knowledge. An illustration of the wide scope of disciplines in which the *talanoa* has been applied is given in Halapua and Halapua (2010), who examine global democracy using the method. Southwick, Kenealy, and Ryan (2012) utilized *talanoa* to capture the views of Pacific people in regard to health care delivery and MacIntyre (2008) used it to explore how Tongan mothers contribute to their offspring’s education. This demonstrates the significant utility of the method and highlights its versatility.

According to Vaioleti (2006), *talanoa* “allows people to engage in social conversation which may lead to critical discussions or knowledge creation that allows rich contextual and inter-related information surface as constructed stories” (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 24). The *talanoa* method is flexible and provides opportunities to explore, challenge and clarify participant responses, creating and disseminating more robust, valid knowledge (Vaioleti, 2006). This attribute of the *talanoa* method resonates with what Welch and Piekkari (2006) describe as the ‘localist’ interviewing approach. This approach views interviews as an inter-relational and contextually grounded process where the participants mutually produce knowledge. The construction of meaning is therefore relevant and contextualized as participants collaboratively draw upon their shared knowledge to make sense of the content that is being discussed. This approach has comparable traits to the *talanoa* method in that participants collaborate and conspire to draw out the meaning of the content that is being discussed.
6.6.3 Characteristics of talanoa

Over the last decade talanoa has been outlined and described too generically by Pacific scholars, and existing descriptions fail to acknowledge the cultural and traditional intricacies of each Pacific culture which inform the application of talanoa. PICs each have their own distinguishing traditions and cultures that are the underpinnings of their lived realities. In addition, Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2012) criticize researchers for inadequately describing the process of conducting the talanoa.

A favourable characteristic of the talanoa approach is that it creates a culturally safe environment for participants to participate and share their experiences with the researcher. Talanoa lessens and in some cases removes the distance between the researcher and participant and therefore creates a secure and assured spaced for parties to interact. Establishing and sustaining relationships is a significant feature of PIC cultures and therefore this dimension of talanoa is crucial for facilitating research. Kurtz (2013) emphasizes the importance of creating an environment that supports cultural protocol and encourages the reciprocal exchange of experience. The talanoa approach is a reflexive and relational process that has allowed me to understand and discern the research problem from a more authentic and culturally bound perspective.

Tongan participants taking part in talanoa make a concerted effort to extend and contribute to creating knowledge within the session. The Tongan conceptualization of talanoa highlights this attribute:

if [participants] are not the most senior or knowledgeable people in the field, it is likely that she/he will direct the researchers to the most appropriate people, those who can articulate the community’s situation most appropriately for the benefit of the collective (the community and the fonua/country). (Vaioleti, 2011, p. 129)

Vaioleti (2011) further asserts that “collective accountability ensures that key kau nga fa’u [co-constructors] will only engage in a research dialogue if she feels safe, her/he feels safe, for her/himself and her collective, and can do the work with creditability” (p. 129).

6.6.4 Different types of talanoa

Vaioleti (2006) describes different types of talanoa that are carried out in diverse environments and yield different responses. These include talanoa vave; talanoa faikava; talanoa usu; talanoa tevolo; po talanoa; and talanoa faka’eke’eke. Various characteristics of
the different forms of *talanoa* are used in daily life. For instance, an individual may use *talanoa vave*, which is an informal brief exchange of information, when confirming a meeting time. This may be followed up with *talanoa faka’eke’eke*, where the exchange is more formal, in-depth and content-specific. Due to the varying characteristics of each type of *talanoa* it is imperative that each form is accurately distinguished and described in order to provide a more credible and adequate depiction of the *talanoa* technique.

It should also be noted that the *talanoa* technique is not applied within a vacuum. The social and political context influences the type of *talanoa* used. This can be seen in the case of *talanoa faikava*. A *po* (evening) or *kalapu* (social club) *faikava* involves males of varying ages and of different social status enjoying an informal drink of kava. This type of *faikava* is usually held in a member’s residence or the social club headquarters, which is often an uninhabited garage. This type of environment yields different *talanoa* or banter between participants, as the pretext is casual and arbitrary.

### 6.6.4.1 Talanoa vave

*Talanoa vave* is an informal verbal exchange of information between two or more parties. *Vave* literally means ‘brief’ or ‘quick’. The purpose of this type of *talanoa* is to inquire, inform or pass on information that is relevant to the parties involved. Generally, this *talanoa* is held between family members, friends and/or colleagues. A key characteristic of this form of *talanoa* is that the more senior person initiates the dialogue. This characteristic relates back to the Tongan cultural dimension of significance of hierarchy based on age, gender and social status. An example of *talanoa vave* would be an aunt, parent or elder telling a child or younger family member details about a family engagement. It is considered ill-mannered for young Tongan individuals to inform older family members of details pertaining to family events as such information can be perceived as unsupported, insignificant and lacking in depth and seriousness.

### 6.6.4.2 Talanoa faikava

*Talanoa faikava* in the Tongan context is the verbal exchange between males. There are two distinct contexts where kava is consumed: privately or in a social gathering (*kalapu kava Tonga*). Private kava sessions entail more personal and intimate exchanges (*tala loto*) between kava participants, whereas *kalapu kava Tonga* is an exchange of mythological stories and the legitimization of the stories’ details. According to Vaioleti (2011), *talanoa faikava* involves male participants testing each other’s mental agility and alertness as the
consumption of kava is known to cause “sedation [and] oral and lingual dyskinesia” (Singh, Gupta, & Saraf, 2012, p. 885). *Talanoa faikava* is purely used for entertainment purposes where participants engage in informal, social banter. However, there are limitations with using this form of *talanoa* for research investigations. As the effects of kava distort individuals’ perceptions, information exchanged may be exaggerated or inaccurate. Therefore, this form of *talanoa* is not recommended as a method of data extraction in research studies.

6.6.4.3 *Talanoa tevolo*
*Talanoa tevolo* has been associated with stories of spiritual demonic connotations. *Tevolo* literally means ‘devil’ and *talanoa tevolo* has been known to evoke negative emotions in some participants. Participants involved in *talanoa tevolo* tell tales of supernatural beings and share mythical traditional tales of ancient ancestors. Themes such as dreams and visions or visitations from ancestors or deceased family members are also associated with *talanoa tevolo*. This type of *talanoa* can also cover topics such as Christianity and other forms of religion. For this reason, researchers in the field of theology may use this type of *talanoa* to engage with their participants as it is subject-specific.

6.6.4.4 *Po talanoa*
*Po talanoa* is a medium that parents use to engage with their children and is usually conducted in the evening. *Po* means ‘evening’ in Tongan, which is culturally identified as “family time”. Before television and video games, *po talanoa* was used as a way to entertain and engage children by telling them folk tales. The grandparents or elderly relatives in the households usually told these folk tales. This tradition continues today with parents also using this time to talk with their children about their day and reflect on their daily activities. A number of parents have stated that *po talanoa* is an effective technique to use in order to stay connected with their children.

6.6.4.5 *Talanoa faka’eke’eke*
Qualitative indigenous researchers frequently utilize *talanoa faka’eke’eke* as it is a technique that yields rich contextual description. This method produces authentic responses due to the safe and culturally sensitive space in which exchanges take place. ‘Eke implies the act of questioning or enquiring and “eke eke” implies verbal searching which could manifest in the act of questioning and depending on the answer for that question, more probing questions are formed” (Vaioleti, 2011, p. 120). The researcher or seeker of knowledge facilitates the
discussion between herself/himself and the respondent and uses techniques such as repeating questions and refocusing the discussion by rephrasing the question to gain a detailed response. This gives the respondent the ability to clarify explanations and provide detailed examples to support her/his response. *Talanoa faka’ēke’ēke* was used to generate a substantial amount data in this study.

### 6.6.5 Talanoa and the kakala framework

Vaiioleti’s (2006) landmark publication was instrumental in establishing *talanoa* as a research-related technique. As a part of his conceptualization of *talanoa*, Vaiioleti integrated it with the *kakala* framework to metaphorically explain the process of conducting a *talanoa* session in the Tongan context. As stated above, little scholarly literature addresses the specific processes involved in applying the *talanoa* technique. Following Vaiioleti, I believe the *kakala* framework effectively facilitates and metaphorically embodies the steps necessary to carry out *talanoa*. The *kakala* framework is a useful tool for synthesizing and departmentalizing knowledge and presenting it in a culturally valuable way. As described in Chapter 2, the framework is based on the traditional process of weaving flowers and leaves together to produce a fragrant garland (*kakala*). This process involves four instrumental phases – *teu* (prepare), *toli* (pick), *tui* (thread) and finally *luva* (offer).

The *teu* stage involves planning, mapping out and selecting the most appropriate flowers that will be used to create the garland. The type of garland prepared will depend on a number of different factors such as the ceremony type, whether a high-ranking chief or royalty will be present and also the suburb in which the ceremony hosts hail from. This stage also involves preparing the tools for extracting flowers and leaves such as the *helepelu* (machete) and locating threading material and needles. Threading material is made from scratch and often uses dried bark or thin strings of *tapa* that are tough and sturdy. According to Vaiioleti (2006), this stage is associated with the first phase of applying the *talanoa* technique – where the researcher prepares content before engaging in *talanoa*. This preparation process includes collecting background information on the research content and context and also ensuring that as a researcher you are culturally informed and prepared. Themes of inquiry are prepared to be referred to when conducting *talanoa*.

The second stage of the *kakala* framework, *toli*, relates to the act of physically picking flowers and leaves for the garland. MacIntyre (2008) states that the *toli* stage “connotes a sense of freedom and choice among women, yet it is a delicate task” (p. 94). This stage is
closely associated with the *talanoa* method as it characterizes the process of freely and fluidly engaging in the discussion (*talanoa*). These attributes of fluidity and freedom must be used cautiously in *talanoa*, however, as the researcher is required to be tactful, patient and responsive when conducting *talanoa*. Vaioleti (2006) also equates the *toli* stage with the process of selecting the community and participants which the researcher will engage with. Similar to Western research approaches, this stage is informed by the activities carried out in *teu* or planning and preparation stage.

The *tui* stage of the *kakala* framework is associated with the discussion part of the Western research process where the researcher explains the apparent links and correlations from the data. This stage is vital as it is where the investigator integrates and synthesizes the information gained in the *toli* stage. This process also involves interpreting and presenting research material in a logical and organized manner.

The final stage of the *kakala* framework is *luva*. This stage is related to making contributions to academic research in the Western research process. The *luva* stage corresponds to the offering of the final product (*kahoa kakala* /garland) to the honoured attendee at the ceremony. Aspects such as the social status of the attendee will determine the type of *kahoa kakala* he or she receives. Therefore, the *luva* stage involves the identification of the attendee’s social ranking and assigning the most appropriate garland for him/her. The act of offering (*lei*) the *kahoa kalaka* is thus the final action. Similarly, the findings of a study are offered to extend knowledge or propose a model or tool to better understand particular phenomena.

### 6.6.5.1 Talanoa protocols

Indigenous methodologies require the researcher to understand and conduct research according to cultural protocols that respect the values and traditions of indigenous peoples (Kurtz, 2013). Cultural protocols reflect the accepted norms of a society and are deemed a critical element that researchers should be aware of and understand before embarking on research. Kovach (2010) adds that “protocols are a means to ensure that activities are carried out in a manner that reflects community teachings and are done in a good way” (Kovach, 2010, p. 41).

Unlike conventional Western research methods, *talanoa* does not have a stringent process or particular way that it is administered. This is because different *talanoa* approaches require various procedures and culturally accepted protocols. This is evident in the different types of
talanoa (po/kalapu/talanoa; talanoa faikava) which encompass the consumption of kava and hold their own formalities and customary etiquettes. For instance, during a faikava session a young unmarried female is seated next to the kava bowl and serves the men kava while they engage in talanoa. The female is not addressed and will politely serve kava. In comparison, po talanoa is conducted in a family setting where the elderly members share folk tales.

Also, talanoa holds different meanings in different Pacific contexts (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2012). This is evident from a comparison of customary protocols of conducting talanoa in the contexts of Fiji and Tonga. In Fijian culture, talanoa is usually implemented within a yaqono (kava) session. Otsuka (2006) notes that these gatherings encourage communal sharing of stories and folk tales. Yaqono or what is known as kava in Tonga, is a beverage with sedative and anaesthetic properties made from the ground roots of the Piper methysticum plant (Biersack, 1991). In contrast, kava is consumed in a faikava setting and entails informal and casual talanoa between participants.

Historically, underprivileged communities have not been afforded the same ethical considerations as Western communities. When conducting research in foreign contexts using unique methods it is imperative to maintain the ethical standards that bind the researcher to his/her institution (Smyth & Morris, 2007). Ethical behaviour is not only governed by the researcher’s institution’s policies but also by the cultural underpinnings of the context under investigation. According to Vaioleti (2006), Pacific peoples’ ethical behaviour is based on the personal relationships individuals have with their god/s, land and nature. Meo-Sewabu (2014) argues that the concept of cultural discernment contributes to understanding and dealing with cultural ethical dilemmas.

Talanoa, from the Tongan perspective, has research protocols that aim to protect the integrity of participants, which is referred to as ‘anga faka-Tonga (Tongan ways) (Smyth & Morris, 2007). There are five concepts which encompass ‘anga-faka Tonga: faka’apa’apa (respectful, humble, considerate), anga lelei (tolerant, generous, kind, helpful, calm, dignified), mateuteu (well-prepared, culturally versed, responsive), poto he anga (knowing what to do and doing it well) and ‘ofa feunga (empathy, love for the context, compassionate).

Faka’apa’apa requires the researcher to be respectful and considerate when conducting talanoa. Commenting on Tongan core values, Thaman (1987) notes that “faka’apa’apa is a relational concept in the sense that it is a two-way process, and the definition of the concept would vary with the position of the participants and the nature of the transaction/situation” (p.
This protocol places heavy emphasis on describing the expected behaviour and actions of researcher and participants. The researcher’s dress code and body language are also important aspects of conducting *talanoa*. A researcher should ensure that he or she is wearing appropriate cultural attire (*kiekie* – female outer skirt; *tauovala* – male waist mat). When I ventured out to conduct my first set of *talanoa* in Tonga my mother prepared my *kiekie* and *puletaha’s* (female cultural dress) for each session. Although I had been taught the difference between different customary mats and *kiekie* and the different events and functions that each were appropriate for, I did not fully comprehend the reasoning behind why each was worn at certain times. I wore a *kiekie* to each one of my *talanoa* sessions which signified my commoner status and was also a sign of respect.

Moreover, researchers are required to beware of situations where a participant’s brother or sister is present as it will demand a different set of behaviours. As mentioned earlier, a guiding and significant principle for Tongan lived realities is *faka’apa’apa* or respect. This core value influences an individual’s actions and generally define the way that relationships are formed and maintained between parties. It also characterizes the way in which individuals conduct themselves within this relationship as *faka’apa’apa* is relevant to the content of discussion between participants. For instance, it is frowned upon for siblings (brother and sister) to discuss content that is intimate or is sexual by nature.

The *faka’apa’apa* principle’s scope is in fact widened when conducting research. The principle is not restricted to siblings but is also relevant to distant relatives and even participants of higher stature and of the opposite gender. My experience of conforming with this principle in the field was difficult and required some initial tactical planning. One example was my experience of conducting *talanoa* sessions with two high-ranking mature male participants within Tonga’s central planning department, the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. I was advised by a family member, who has experienced in conducting research in other government departments, to organize for another party to be present during the sessions to witness the *talanoa* exchange. The role of this third party was to observe and testify that the *talanoa* session was conducted appropriately and that cultural protocols were adhered to. It was also important for the observer to establish that the content discussed was relevant to the research topic. The third party acted as a silent bystander who observed the process and the way the exchange was conducted, without participating in any way or form.

The selection of the witness was a crucial process in itself as their gender and employment
status are components that would affect the quality of the data obtained. The witness’s gender and position within the organization could signify the researcher’s seriousness or intent. The observer represents the intentions of the researcher; if the witness is a young female of junior status within the organization, this would demonstrate to the potential participant that the researcher deems his knowledge as frivolous, unimportant or without merit. In contrast, a witness that is mature and of higher rank than the research participant may cause the individual to feel insecure and they may not fully disclose information. I identified the one witness used in this study through an associate. It is worthy to note here that the witness is a female who is employed outside of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning but who had experience in the department and therefore has some knowledge of its processes.

Anga lelei requires the researcher to be tolerant, kind and helpful. Not only is the researcher required to conduct him/herself in a respectful and dignified manner but must also make the participants feel their contributions are worthwhile and helpful. If participants do not feel that their contributions are helpful this may affect the amount of information they share (Vaioleti, 2006). Furthermore, researchers are also encouraged to be inclusive, warm and perceptive in order for information sharing to flow fluidly.

Mateuteu refers to the need for researchers to be prepared in regard to talanoa subject material and in regard to the participant. Researchers are encouraged to explore the participant’s fakahoko (family background) and social standing. Understanding these key connections and statuses are important in order for the researcher to conduct him/herself accordingly. An important conversation I had with my mother before my first expedition to Tonga was crucial for gaining deeper understanding of my ascribed status as a tu’ā (commoner). However, in this conversation she shared with me my maternal great-grandmother’s lineage to the monarch and details of the strong va (relationships) she established with a wide network of nobles. These relationships were based on kinship however; the bond or tie was further strengthened by my great-grandmother demonstrating lotoloto (humility), feveitokai’aki (reciprocity) and ofa (love) through her service (gift giving and ceremonial attendance) to the network of nobles.

The network that my ancestors established was strengthened by my grandmother who continued to serve nobles by escorting them to ceremonial functions and participating in gifting ceremonies in Auckland, New Zealand. My awareness of these wide-ranging relationships helped me to be mindful and also aware of the repercussions of the way I
conduct myself as a young female Tongan researcher. It also made me realize the importance of sustaining relationships that have been cultivated and nurtured by my predecessors. MacIntyre (2008) states that “the researcher must also be aware of her own social standing among her would-be participants as well as how she[he] fits into the social structure of any group involved” (p. 96). The reason for this is that participants are then able to make a more meaningful connection with the researcher which will inform the talanoa process. The mateuteu principle also requires the researcher to be well prepared in regard to the content that will be discussed. The researcher should be knowledgeable about the subject in order for the talanoa to be an exchange of information.

Poto he anga requires the researcher to know the research process and have the capability to proceed through the research stages efficiently. Researchers should also be culturally versed and understand the importance of social structures. However, it is also vital that the researcher does not flaunt or boast his/her capabilities, as this may be perceived as arrogance and hinder the flow of information (Vaioleti, 2006).

Finally, ‘ofa fe’unga refers to the researcher showing the appropriate empathy and compassion within the context of the talanoa. Empathizing with the participant may facilitate the process of building trust and enhance the relationship between the participant and interviewer, leading to the natural flow of information. ‘Ofa fe’unga is also related to anga lelei, in that the research outcomes should contribute to the betterment of the community (Vaioleti, 2006).

6.6.5.2 Limitations of talanoa

The paucity of rigorous academic studies on the talanoa has hindered development of its theoretical and empirical implications. This has led to talanoa being superficially understood and applied as a data collection method. In particular, there is a lack of coherent guidelines which adequately describe how to accurately apply the talanoa method. This is a particular issue for non-indigenous researchers, who accordingly refrain from “contributing to the decolonization of research in the Pacific” (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2012, p. 5).

Vaioleti (2006) highlights issues around the validity and reliability of the talanoa method. These concerns stems from the possibility of talanoa yielding different viewpoints and reactions, as it affects the learning of both researcher and participant. The intentions behind adopting the talanoa approach have not yet yielded generalizable results talanoa nevertheless does highlight the realities and experiences of research participants.
6.7 Western data collection method: Convergent interviewing (Primary Data – B)

Duffy (1985) points out that minimizing methodological procedures narrows the researcher’s perspective and disposes his or her ability to generate results that are more conclusive. Similarly, multiple data collection methods enables the cross-validation of methodological procedures and further enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of research results (Bloor, 2001).

Silverman (2001) states that there are four categories of qualitative tools that researchers employ: observations; analysing texts and documents; interviews; and recording and transcribing. Researchers investigating organizational phenomena generally engage in a variety of these tools. Research interviews are praised for their ability to ascertain rich and meaningful data and “are a form of interaction jointly constructed by the interviewer and interviewee” (Garton & Copland, 2010, p. 533). There are two distinct types of research interviews, structured and semi-structured. Adams, Khan, Raeside, and White (2007) point out that structured interviews are verbal interactions between two parties that are limited to pre-established questions and consequently interviewees are restricted to a set of responses. In contrast, semi-structured interviews give the researcher the opportunity to improvise, probe and get the interviewee to elaborate on specific topics (Stephens, 2007).

Semi-structured interviews were particularly appropriate to this study as they created a shared space where I as a researcher was able to explore the subject being discussed and where the participant was able to delve deeper into his or her responses. Semi-structured interviews also embody the innate characteristics of talanoa. As discussed earlier, the talanoa technique accentuates the researcher’s ability to validate and further probe the participant’s responses and allows for a more deep-seated account of the situation. This section outlines a derivative of the semi-structured interview technique, convergent interviewing.

Convergent interviewing is a prominent interviewing technique used in management research (Jepsen & Rodwell, 2008) and was devised by Dick (1990) in 1980. It has been employed by researchers to identify key issues within organizations. Dick (1990) describes convergent interviewing as “a way of collecting qualitative people’s attitudes and beliefs through the use of interviews” (p. 2). This interview technique is particularly relevant to this study as a distinguishing element of the convergent interview procedure is the process by which participants are selected (Jepsen & Rodwell, 2008). Organizational studies, more specifically
management researchers, go through a lengthy process that starts with focus groups or selecting participants from a representative sample group (either using the stratified or convenience sampling technique). However, the issue with selecting from a full range of employees is that participants tend to acknowledge and stress similar if not the same themes in content (Jepsen & Rodwell, 2008). Convergent interviewing on the other hand focuses on selecting participants with varying characteristics, subject knowledge, job description, etc. in order to gain a holistic perspective of the phenomena under research (Jepsen & Rodwell, 2008).

The quality of scientific investigations is gauged by their ability to satisfy the methodological soundness criteria of reliability, internal and external validity and objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The first hand expressions and descriptions of participants support the internal validity and credibility of a study (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Dick (1990) distinguishes between content and process in convergent interviewing technique. In regard to exploring the content, convergent interviewing is unstructured but the process of implementing the technique is semi-structured. As convergent interviewing uses a structured approach to select subjects who in turn identify pertinent issues, the internal validity and credibility of the study is satisfied (Jepsen & Rodwell, 2008).

As established in previous chapters, the phenomenon under investigation (development project management) lacks theoretical foundations which is another rationale for the use of the convergent interviewing technique (Hanisch & Wald, 2011). Convergent interviewing attempts to address research phenomena that lacks theoretical underpinnings (Williams & Lewis, 2005). Furthermore, development projects involve a range of individuals at various professional levels in different organizations. The distinctive ability of the convergent interviewing technique to select research participants with varying characteristics (subject knowledge, experience, etc.) gives a more holistic perspective of development projects and the management practices used to coordinate and manage activities. Therefore, I interviewed a range of project actors (project administrators, junior staff and project managers), development agency workers (lead economists and programme administrators) and government employees (junior employees, middle managers and ministry CEOs). A more detailed account of the way I selected participants is given in the following section.

Williams and Lewis (2005) describe the process of conducting convergent interviews as being comprised of seven steps. These steps were simplified into four broad phases of an
iterative cycle that was followed to gather qualitative responses from non-Tongan participants. A number of alterations to the interview guides and framing of questions were made during this process. In the first phase, I constructed an interview guide that contained the themes to be discussed and made reference to the project management practices, development initiatives and implications that are established in the literature. The second phase involved me identifying potential research respondents. The participant selection process is outlined in the following section. I selected participants who possessed a range of project management abilities and managerial experience and who were from different donor agencies. As mentioned earlier, this aspect of the convergent interview technique was appealing as the perceptions of a wide range of project stakeholders would provide a more comprehensive account for the managerial practices used in development projects.

The third stage involved the implementation of the interview technique in the field. I used the interview guide I established in the first phase and conducted the first interview in Wellington, New Zealand, with a high-level diplomat situated in NZAid. The fourth stage involved identifying issues regarding the way that questions were framed and the prompts to be used in the initial interviews. These issues were rectified and alterations to the interview guide were made accordingly. This four-stage process was repeated until the data collected was recognized to be saturated.

6.7.1 Selection of participants

A combination of purposive and snowball sampling was used for selecting research participants. The purpose of this study was to explore the managerial practices used to manage and coordinate development projects. The role and perceptions of civil servants in using the PLC framework were examined and therefore research participants were selected according to their level of experience with the selected development projects. Access to government reports and employee contact details were gained by applying and gaining approval for a research permit from the Tongan Prime Minister’s Office.

A crucial element in selecting research participants was to ensure that they were willing to provide true accounts of their experience and stories as opposed to providing details the they think the researcher wanted to hear. More importantly, it was crucial build a rapport with them in order for these informants to reveal true accounts of their experiences. Academic scholars with experience in conducting fieldwork in Tonga have often relied on people they have established relationships with. Taylor (2010) acknowledges this situation and found that
participants who knew him gave him a more truthful account of events and recounted their experiences more honestly. Ilaiu (1997) endorses the opinion that participants in this situation are more responsive and are willing to provide more detailed descriptions as a result.

My past research endeavours in Tonga had resulted in a pool of research contacts who had extensive experience in development projects. I also have cultivated a number of influential research contacts that were tremendously helpful in identifying additional research participants. I was fortunate enough to be able to draw on these contacts and was referred to other participants because of these crucial contacts. This snowball approach to selecting participants proved successful and was in line with convergent interviewing technique.

6.8 Reflections from the field

Fieldwork was undertaken in three countries, New Zealand (in Auckland and Wellington), Tonga (in the capital Nuku’aLOFA on the island of Tongatapu) and Fiji (in the capital Suva, between February 2013 and September 2014. Convergent interviews were conducted with participants from NZAid in Auckland, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in New Zealand, in Wellington, ADB Pacific Department in Suva, and the New Zealand High Commission in Nuku’aLOFA.

My experience of conducting both convergent interviews and talanoa sessions with participants was positive. When I conducted convergent interviews in New Zealand, participants were particularly comfortable with the process especially in regard to solidifying the ethical considerations of the study. As a number of these participants were donor representatives they were often subject to numerous fact-finding endeavours by state agencies or research institutions. Therefore, procedures detailing ethical research practices were understood (participant information sheets and consent forms).

However, there were some interesting differences in the way that convergent interviews were carried out with participants based in Nuku’aLOFA. I found that the participants of European descent I conducted convergent interviews with were more comfortable in conversing in a colloquial manner. Three participants requested that the interview be conducted in a more informal manner and specifically requested it a more conversational style or dialogue rather than a semi-structured interview. These participants had extensive experience in providing policy advice to government agencies and managing development programmes in Tonga. Their comprehensive practical experience in dealing with Tongan stakeholders resulted in
them feeling assured and comfortable in using a more *talanoa* form of conversing.

*Talanoa* were carried out with project staff based in Tonga and also government officials within the Government of Tonga. *Talanoa* was also used in Fiji with ADB employees of Fijian and Tongan descent. I found that Tongan participants based in Fiji engaged in *talanoa* differently to the Tongan participants based in Tonga. Those based in Fiji were much more reserved and refrained from expanding or validating information I was putting forward.

### 6.9 Project archival reports (Secondary Data – C)

This section discusses the third technique used to gather research material, the evaluation of archival reports. This provided a layer of data that reinforced the qualitative material collected through the *talanoa* and convergent interviewing processes. Archival documents are a rich form of project information and are often used for administration purposes, assist in facilitating evaluation activities and used for management and or control functions (Sorensen et al., 1996). Ashan and Gunawan (2010) utilized secondary data to investigate the cost and scheduling issues of development projects. The authors’ justification for utilizing material such as project proposals and monitoring and evaluation reports was that the nature of development projects is that they are temporary, which restricts the ability of the researcher to obtain necessary past project data. A number of different archival documents were collected for analysis.

Archival documents such as project proposals or concept papers and monitoring and evaluation reports contain an abundance of relevant information in terms of the selected projects. These different types of reports formally document various project management components such as feasibility criterion, project designs, monitoring, evaluation systems utilized, and more importantly the management practices employed to control project activities. In addition, donor agency reports and industry reports supplied a wealth of information in regard to the institutional processes and the general managerial approaches taken to manage development projects in the Pacific region.

### 6.10 Data analysis method

The purpose of the data analysis process is to interpret and transform the research material collected into meaningful ideas, theories and paradigms that best represent the experiences and understandings of the participants (Stage & Manning, 2003). I encountered numerous pitfalls in this phase of the research journey, as I was again challenged by the two paradoxical
ways of knowing and conducting research as an indigenous Tongan woman in a Western Institution. The interpretation of research material does not occur in a vacuum and I was therefore conscious of the role that my own experiences, observations and intuition would play in deciphering data.

Table 8: Project archival documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archival document</th>
<th>Outline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs assessment reports</td>
<td>• Feasibility criteria – evaluation of need, viability, relevance to development priority of recipient country and sustainability of project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cost-benefit analysis – assessment of financial means and sponsorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Stakeholder consultation results – consultation with community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project proposals</td>
<td>• Scope of project – outlines the parameters and the scale of the project through its objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feasibility – details sustainability, relevance and stakeholder consultation assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resource/funding requirements – detailed analysis of budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitoring/evaluation frameworks – describes assessment tools to be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project plans</td>
<td>• Operationalize feasibility components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify performance indicators for the monitor and evaluation purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management tools and systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organizational structure – details of management team, local coordination team and project team roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring reports</td>
<td>• Terms of reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Progress report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation reports</td>
<td>• Outcome – project results explained in regards to objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Impact assessment – development impact assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Official project status – whether project achieved objectives (successful or unsuccessful).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Issues encountered during the implementation of the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant reports</td>
<td>• Community consultation reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Justification of actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A prominent method used to analyse qualitative research data is thematic analysis. This analytical tool is a method of recognizing, classifying and documenting patterns or themes that emerge from the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis has been praised for its ability to capture the “complexities of meaning within a textual data set” (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012, p. 32).

“Thematic analysis is a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of
the phenomena” (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 825). This analysis tool is used across various disciplines associated with a lack of clear descriptions and definitions available to researchers (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). Thematic analysis involves transcribing the interviews and then carrying out discourse analysis and inspecting for linkages between theoretical paradigms and interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Generally speaking, it is a procedural mechanism for recognizing patterns within the data and therefore assigning themes which further become categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a systematic account of implementing thematic analysis and this was employed as a loose directive for analysing the data in this study (see Table 9).

Table 9: Thematic analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Review of academic literature and development of coding guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assessment of project archival documentation (secondary data – data set 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Transcription of interview data (primary data – data set 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Collation and exploration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Braun & Clarke (2006).

Given the diverse sources of information and various data collection methods employed in this study, an information database was created to organize and sort research data. The database was organized according to the selected projects and allowed me to conduct comparisons based on research constructs such as project outcome and project management practices across donor agencies and the implementing departments within the Government of Tonga. This allowed me to identify patterns through the database within projects and across diverse data sources, which increased the internal validity of the findings.

As shown in Table 9, the first phase involved the methodical assessment of the two relevant fields of knowledge, aid effectiveness and development project management. As a result of reviewing the literature and in an attempt to develop credible and reliable code segments, a coding framework was developed. This framework served two primary purposes. Firstly, is
guided the initial development of themes or codes. Secondly, the coding framework served as a data management tool and assisted in organizing categories and sections of the data that were comparable.

The second stage of the analysis process was associated with assessing project archival documentation and as a result distinctive codes and features were generated. The third phase involved the transcription of *talanoa* and convergent interviews and repeating the latter half of stage two in categorizing distinct features of the narrations. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that this allows for both sets of data to be analysed simultaneously. The last stage in the analysis process involved the collation and exploration of themes. This entailed collecting codes and assembling them into potential themes, and then relating these themes back to the academic literature. The cyclical aspect of this process provided me with a more comprehensive and holistic perspective on development projects and therefore thematic analysis was the most appropriate data analysis tool for this particular study.

**6.10.1 Identification of themes**

It has been argued by scholars such as Ryan and Bernard (2003) that explicitly discussing the process followed in identifying themes solidifies the significance of the research topic and validates the themes that emerge. This section therefore outlines the framework used for identifying themes in this study. Themes are defined in the literature as “abstract constructs that link not only expressions found in texts but also expressions found in images, sounds, and objects” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 87). Themes articulate the uncounted expressions and explain actions and behaviours of participants in situations. Furthermore, themes provide the investigator with a tool for organizing and clearly enunciating the voices of the participants involved. Various terms are used to articulate thematic ideas. For instance, Guba and Lincoln (1994) use the phrase “units” to describe the expressions shared by participants. Regardless of the labels used, the basic concept of a reoccurring idea or expression that emerges from research material pervades.

It is first important to establish what constitutes a theme and in turn how they are identified. Based on the work of renowned anthropologist Morris Ophler, Ryan and Bernard (2003) developed three principles for distinguishing an unfounded observation and a theme. The first principle relates to the fact that a theme is a manifestation of expressions in data. The authors add that “expressions are meaningless without some reference to themes” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 86). The second principle that distinguishes a theme is that the terminology and
related expressions which describe a theme are commonly understood by a collective group. Finally, the theme represents a collective understanding of a social, cultural system which encompasses a set of interrelated themes. Therefore, themes act as conceptual labels that describe happenings, events and other manifestations distinct manifestations of phenomena.

This study identified themes through an inductive process. This process involved identifying initial signposts or themes materialized in the teu stage (literature review). I also brought my own experiences, knowledge and perceptions on the subject which helped in how I organized data. Based on the signposts generated from the literature, open-ended questions and prompts were developed and applied in convergent interviews and talanoa faka’eke’eke.

6.11 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodological procedures used to obtain research data in this study. A qualitative approach was adopted utilizing a multi-case study strategy to explore the project management practices used in development projects in Tonga. Three methodological techniques were used to collect data: the talanoa method, convergent interviewing and evaluation of project documentation. Talanoa faka’eke’eke acknowledges the intricate and culturally sensitive protocols involved in doing research in a PIC and was of significant value to this study as it lessened the power distance between myself and the participants and led to more truthful responses to inquires about project management practices. The following chapter provides brief descriptions of the case studies in this research.
CHAPTER 7: DEVELOPMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS - TOLI

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the methodological approach employed to obtain data in this research. This study employed a multi-case study strategy and a project selection criteria were developed to ascertain the most appropriate projects for analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief explanation of the selected projects and supply context for the findings that are discussed in Chapter 8. This chapter adds to the kahoa kakala by picking the flowers and arranging them (toli) in preparation for the next stage. First, the selection criteria are reintroduced and then brief outlines for all five projects selected for analysis are given.

7.2 Selection criteria and overview of projects

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) note that one of the most challenging aspects of theory development from case studies concerns the selection of appropriate cases. This section restates the criteria used to select projects in this study and provides key facts about them. Four criteria were developed to select the most relevant and appropriate projects for analysis and these respectively related to donor agency, project objectives, completion timeframe, and thematic area. Table 10 provides an overview the five selected projects.

Each project is described below using five subheadings: project background, project objectives, resource input, results, and evaluation assessments. These terms are interpreted differently in various disciplines and it is therefore important to explain what they mean in the context of this study.

The project background sections provide a brief explanation of the projects’ formation. Giving a brief account of the context in which the project was formulated explains why the project was initiated. The project objectives sections detail the ultimate intended goal that the project attempted to achieve. The resource input sections give the sources of support (human and capital) provided through the projects. These sections also document the various agencies (executing and implementation agencies) involved in the coordination of activities, performance review and implementation of projects. Stakeholder participation refers to the engagement of agencies, institutions and community members in the project.
Based on the literature and practitioner best practice guidelines, there are three types of project results: outputs, outcomes and impacts. Outputs are the results that are visibly observable immediately after the implementation of the project activities and are often referred to as deliverables. The outcomes are the mid- to long-term results and are measured and expressed at the end of the project. Outcomes are often intangible, abstract and therefore difficult to measure. The literature defines outcomes as the “state of affairs from the lead organization’s perspective following completion or abandonment of the project” (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993, p. 321). Evaluators refer to impacts as the final link of the causal chain and these are the long-term effects of the project (White, 2010).

The evaluation assessment sections report the official appraisal status given to each project. Evaluation is the objective assessment of the achievement of project objectives and involves appraising the efficiency of activities and effectiveness of project outputs, outcome, and
impacts in regards to the overall development goal. Evaluation assessment in this study refers to the final assessment at the completion of the project. In the evaluation discourse a significant component of assessing the effectiveness of a project is the lessons learned. The key lessons learned are documented in these sections, as well as the evaluation method used to assess the project.

7.3 Aid coordination in Tonga

In order to set the stage and ground the project descriptions in the research setting, the institutional landscape is explained in this section. This enables a sound understanding of the context in which development projects are implemented in Tonga. A feature that is intrinsic to the contextual landscape is the institutional coordination strategies used to govern development projects. First, a brief background of the MFNP, the central government department that governs all foreign aid affairs, is given. Second, the role and responsibilities of the Aid Management Division (AMD) are explored.

7.3.1 Ministry of Finance and National Planning

The MFNP is the central government department that governs all international aid affairs. More specifically, this agency is responsible for providing financial and economic aid policy advice to parliament. The MFNP is structured into five operational units: the Budget Division, Corporate Services Division, Policy and Planning Division, Project and Aid Management Division, and the Treasury Operations Division. Figure 10 depicts the MFNP organizational structure.

Figure 10: The Ministry of Finance and National Planning
7.3.2 Aid Management Division

The Joint Declaration of Aid Effectiveness is an agenda that the Government of Tonga signed with its major development partners in 2007 (ADB, AusAID, NZAid, World Bank, and JICA) in an effort to centralize efforts towards aid effectiveness. As a result of this joint agreement and the identification of the serious pressure the MFNP faces in regard to being more accountable for aid activities, the AMD was created in 2006. This division is located within the MFNP and serves as a centralized hub for all matters involving the management and delivery of foreign aid. The AMD does not have a practical role in managing individual sectoral programmes or aid projects; the purpose of this division is to monitor and report to government departments on the progress of donor-funded activities. In addition, the unit also acts as an advisory arm to the government, making recommendations on aid policy and foreign affairs regarding donor agencies. The AMD is responsible for the operational strategies, project administration and procurement, whereas the MFNP and Ministry of Immigration act as the political access points (strategic level) for development partners.

The core responsibilities of the AMD involve:

- Informing ministries on aid policies and also advise on potential management issues
- Harmonizing donor-funded development activities in order to avoid duplication of development activities, coordinate planning and management of aid activities
- Establishing and cultivating aid information and acting as a centralized aid information database
- Assisting in coordinating national budgets with ministries
- Assisting in enhancing donor coordination and harmonization by aligning donor’s systems and processes with local administrative procedures
- Preserving and maintaining relations with donor partners and ministries

Source: Ministry of Finance and National Planning (2010)
7.3.3 The Activity Management Cycle

This section details the managerial cycle used to govern the process of initiating, executing and completing a development project in Tonga. The process encompasses a series of phases and is managed by the AMD in conjunction with the implementing agency.

Government ministries or implementing agencies are primarily responsible for administering, executing and controlling development projects. The strategic direction of ministries is dictated by their respective corporate plans, which detail the intended objectives of each ministry for the following five years. The implementing agency (government department) is responsible for identifying vulnerabilities or gaps in capacity that is affecting their ability to work towards their strategic goals. The ministry is required to align the project objectives with the overall strategies detailed in its corporate plan. Ministries are encouraged to conduct feasibility studies in order to substantiate project activities and provide evidence to support the need for the project. However, confirmation and evidence to justify the initiation of projects is lacking in government departments; this is discussed further in the following chapter. The project proposal is submitted internally to the AMD. Potential donor agencies are approached and proposals are made for funding.

Once a project proposal is submitted to the AMD, a division coordinator is assigned to the project to ensure the project objectives comply with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP; discussed further below) and the ministry’s corporate plan. In addition, the coordinator assesses the viability of the project and designs a potential monitoring and evaluation framework for the project. The coordinator is responsible for guiding the project through the aid management cycle and ensuring that systems are followed. A third party, the Project Aid Coordination Committee (PACC) evaluates project proposals and feasibility reports and ensures that the priorities align with the NSDP. The project is either approved, declined or a request is made for more information. Project proposals that are approved are endorsed by the Legislative Assembly and transferred back to the AMD which then collaborates with the proposing department on submitting applications for funding to potential donor agencies. Once the donor agency agrees to the proposed project, sponsorship contracts are drawn up, conditions established, and clauses are formalized. The project is then initialized by the proposing government department and is consistently monitored by the AMD.
7.4 Project One: Support for Economic and Strategic Management

7.4.1 Project background

Similar to other SIDS in the Pacific, Tonga’s development objectives and strategies are outlined in Tonga’s NSDP. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Government of Tonga has struggled with formulating effective and purposeful strategic development plans. The NSDP provides a holistic framework that delineates the resources and strategies for achieving the objectives. Government departments are required to formulate strategies for addressing the priorities set in the NSDP. The MFNP has long struggled to develop tactical plans to address economic and strategic policy priorities set out in the NSDP (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2011).

Early development plans such as NSDP 2 (1970–1975) failed to incorporate tactical development objectives and required more flexibility to be able to respond to extraneous events (Campbell, 1992). More recent strategic development plans such as the NSDP 7 (2003–2008) have had similar problems with rigid budgetary frameworks inhibiting the resilience of financial institutions. Two issues at the core of the NSDP are the lack of a structured monitoring framework and the inability of the MFNP to provide effective economic policy and analysis. In response to this gap in capacity, technical support was requested from the ADB towards developing the NSDP 8, which developed Project One.

7.4.2 Project objectives

The project aimed to enhance the capacity of the MFNP to provide more timely and robust economic policy analysis to decision makers. Planning documents revealed that the overall objective of this project was to improve the economic national development process and strengthen the capacity of the central agency (MFNP) to conduct and facilitate these processes.

There were four sub-objectives:

- To appraise and report on the progress of the NSDP

It was identified that the MFNP lacked clear and well-designed monitoring systems to appraise the progress of the NSDP. This objective was specifically set to review the overall structure of the NSDP and further ensure that the administrative arm’s corporate plans are formulated in line with the strategic plan.
• To prepare a budget strategy for the financial year 2012

Under this objective, the TA consultants and counterparts would prepare a budget strategy and complete revenue forecast models by the end of the project.

• To establish the Economic Development Committee (EDC)

Through this objective, the project would ultimately establish the EDC as an economic dialogue forum set up to provide a space for private sector affiliates, government officials and donor representatives to discuss significant issues constricting the economic progression of the state.

• Improve policy coordination

It was identified that policy coordination was fragmented due to the restructuring of government departments. A more systematic and integrated approach to fiscal policies was needed to facilitate better parliamentary decision-making.

7.4.3 Resource input

The ADB approved approx. NZ$738,000 to finance the project. However, it was identified that the executing agency only utilized approx. NZ$713,000 of the authorized budget. The overarching executing agency (MFNP) was primarily responsible for the overall performance and accomplishment of project goals. The budget, policy and planning divisions within the MFNP were responsible for implementing the project plans.

7.4.3.1 Project steering committee

A TA project steering committee (PSC) was established, as an entity within the MFNP to make strategic decisions concerning the actualization of project outcomes. The PSC was chaired by the Permanent Secretary and consisted of the heads of departments from Budget, Policy, Planning, and Project and Aid Management. Three international advisors were appointed to work on various aspects of the project. A project manager was appointed by an ADB representative and was contracted for 14 months. The project manager was assigned a secretary and local advisor with knowledge of administrative systems.

7.4.3.2 Local counterparts

Local counterparts were used in this project to assist in a smooth transition for the foreign advisors. Government employees acted as local counterparts and were expected to provide
knowledge and experience on local operations and systems and further provide crucial links for international consultants through their established rapport with key stakeholders (ministerial staff members, private sector and other external agencies). For this project donor representatives organized counterparts two months before the first foreign consultant was deployed (contracted to Tonga).

7.4.3.3 ADB/World Bank representative

At the time the project was initiated in 2009, the ADB and the World Bank established a local office within the MFNP. The office was occupied by a representative/focal officer whose role was twofold. Firstly, the representative’s role involved coordinating development efforts among the different donors and government agencies. Active donors in Tonga hold quarterly coordination meetings where they coordinate their efforts in different thematic areas in order to avoid project duplication. As a result, the ADB/World Bank representative was responsible for coordinating and providing a crucial link between the two parties. The second role of the representative was contracting and managing local counterparts. The representative was heavily involved in the project and provided additional support to counterparts and advisors by transferring information between consultants and government departments.

7.4.3.4 Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre

The Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC), an external agency, was consulted during the planning and implementation of the project. This centre is one of the IMF’s regional hubs that provides technical expertise and training to strengthen the ability of PIC governments to effectively mobilize TA. Project reports extensively detailed the involvement of PFTAC in facilitating the process of TA in the MFNP and across various complementary ministries. It was detailed in project documentation that “discussions were also underway with the PFTAC to leverage their competitive advantage in the area of economic modelling” (ADB Project Data Sheet, 2014).

7.4.4 Results

7.4.4.1 Output

There were three outputs realized at the completion of this project:

- A NSDP monitoring framework was developed

  A monitoring framework was developed in line with the criteria established by ADB.
Furthermore, the NSPD was translated into the Tongan language.

- Establishment of EDC

The EDC was established and quarterly meetings were scheduled for the following two years.

- Presentation of economic policies and to the EDC

Civil servants within MFNP presented policies to the newly formed EDC. However, there were issues surrounding the quality of the presentation and the depth of explanation regarding the policies provided.

7.4.4.2 Outcome

According to the completion reports, the expected outcome was that government would adopt the improved economic and strategic management process.

7.4.4.3 Impact

The intended impact of the capacity development TA was enhanced resource allocation to foster economic growth and achieve national development priorities.

7.4.5 Evaluation assessment

This project was assessed and deemed partially successful as the four project objectives were not satisfactorily achieved according to the success indicators set out by the PSC. Evaluation reports noted that there was a need to build the capacity of civil servants to undertake more robust economic policy analysis to support decision making. Furthermore, support was required to strengthen the capabilities of staff to prepare components of the development plans. In terms of project management success, the project failed to achieve one of the key dimensions – completion within proposed timeframe. There were issues with procuring specialized advisors that resulted in the extension of the project for an additional year. It is important to note here that the evaluator and author of the first evaluation report was an internal staff member employed under the Pacific Division of the ADB unit in Fiji.

A key lesson learnt was that the MFNP was under serious pressure to ensure that financial funds met public expenditure. The increased need for accountability “placed significant strain on the capacity of MFNP staff to meet the demands placed on them” (Tora, 2013, p. 1). In addition, the project was established at a time of political uncertainty as Tonga was in the
first phase of shifting to a democratic system of governance. These additional dimensions highlight the complexities the MFNP faces in regard to strengthening institutional capacity. Issues concerning the need to operationalize plans within the central planning department were also identified. There were a significant amount of TA and advisory resources committed to this project. However, it was identified in project evaluations that the engagement of these supplementary support units was inadequate and could have been better facilitated.

7.5 Project Two: Urban Planning and Management System

7.5.1 Project background

The development and improvement of basic infrastructure on the main island of Tongatapu, home to the capital Nuku'alofa, has long been a development focus of the state. It is anticipated that by 2030 the population of Nuku'alofa will increase by 34% (ADB, 2012). However, infrastructure and urban services has not matched the expanding urban population. The increasing number of individuals migrating from the outer islands has had adverse effects on Nuku'alofa’s infrastructure which has deteriorated significantly over the years (ADB, 2012). Increased migration has resulted in peak hour congestion on urban roads. Nuku'alofa has had little to no urban planning and management in place. In addition, there was no designated government department for urban design and planning which led to little attention being paid to spatial infrastructural planning in NSDP 7.

Over the past 10 years, the Government of Tonga has reformed government departments to improve functionality. In 2004, the World Bank conducted a comprehensive review of the transport sector which highlighted its fragmented institutional structure. It was recommended that government integrate all modes of transport into one streamlined ministry. Several ministries were affected by this restructure. In 2006, the transport functions within the Ministry of Marine and Ports and the Ministry of Civil Aviation were consolidated into the Ministry of Transport. Then in 2008, the Ministry of Transport was further reorganized and combined with the Ministry of Works to create the current Ministry of Infrastructure. The Ministry of Infrastructure is the administrative arm that focuses on seven primary divisions: civil aviation, land transport, marine and ports, building, engineering, meteorology and the national emergency management office.

The Government of Tonga has long attempted to develop and improve the state of the
infrastructure in Nuku’alofa with little success. In 2010, the government committed its efforts in developing municipal services and infrastructure in Nuku’alofa in the NSDP. In order to address the lack of urban planning expertise in the Ministry of Infrastructure, Project Two was developed. In light of the lack of infrastructure facilities and support mechanisms, the Government of Tonga formulated the National Infrastructure Investment Plan that outlines the priorities and plans for major initiatives in economic infrastructure, which includes energy, telecommunications, water, solid waste management, and transport over the next 5–10 years. The implementing agency the, Ministry of Lands, Survey, and Natural Resources, supervised and coordinated project activities.

The Nuku’alofa Urban Development Program (2007) primarily concentrated on improving the living conditions for Nuku’alofa residents. The programme strategically focused on strengthening six key areas of urban development in Nuku’alofa: policy environment, water supply services, solid waste services, project management services and raising community awareness of municipal services. The Urban Planning and Management System project focused on strengthening the policy environment for the delivery of urban services (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Nuku'alofa Urban Development Program


7.5.2 Project objectives

There were four objectives for this project:

- To prepare and establish planning legislation and policies

Due to the reformation and synthesis of government departments there were
insufficient and inadequate policies to govern urban planning in Nuku’alofa.

- To develop an urban integrated development plan for 2009–2020

There are various components required for an effective development plan: clear, concise and measurable objectives, and outline strategies for attaining the intended objectives. As the Ministry of Infrastructure was newly constructed there was no strategic plan outlining the objectives of the ministry. Due to the lack of structure and planning capacity within the newly constructed ministry, more assistance was required to develop the strategies for staff members to conduct planning activities.

- To strengthen the institutional capacity of the Planning and Urban Management Division (PUMD)

Little institutional capacity is developed and retained in government departments within Tonga. Specifically, the newly constructed PUMD had inadequately skilled and trained staff members and therefore technical capacity needed to be strengthened in order to provide more efficient public services. There were four components to this objective: (1) provide technical consultation to assist in drafting different plans including an urban framework plans and sustainable management plans; (2) arranging and facilitating environmental planning processes; (3) involve stakeholders in developing planning procedures and; (4) arrange and administer public awareness programme about project activities.

- To conduct a traffic management study in order to inform policy

This objective was established to provide the Ministry of Infrastructure staff with information and analysis on traffic management. An analysis regarding traffic volumes, flows, patterns and road works was needed to inform policy analysts in creating the most effective guidelines for traffic management.

7.5.3 Resource input

ADB headquarters authorized approx. NZ$1.3 million to complete the project. It was detailed in the final evaluation report that there was a remaining balance of approx. NZ$890,000.

Figure 12 visually portrays the project actors and agencies involved in the project activities.

7.5.3.1 Planning and Urban Management Division

The PUMD was the overarching unit that was accountable for guiding and governing
activities associated with urban development in Nuku’alofa. This unit was a specialized
group made up of experts from urban planning and infrastructure and highly experienced
delegates from varying government departments. In accordance with the terms and conditions
set out by the ADB, the PUMD was provided additional support in the form of Project
Implementation Assistance (PIA) consultants. These international consultants reported to the
PUMD manager. Figure 12 depicts the urban planning and management project actors.

Figure 12: Urban Planning and Management System project actors

Source: Adapted from ADB (2011)

7.5.3.2 Consultants

A total of nine PIA consultants were recruited to provide a range of specialist expertise across
three agencies: Planning and Urban Management (PUMA); Tonga Water Board (TWB); and
Water Authority Limited (WAL). The anticipated effects of employing a range of foreign and
local advisors was that the skills transferred between consultants (international to local)
would be retained within the assigned agencies.

Table 11 depicts the foreign and national consultants’ staffing schedule. Originally, five
foreign consultants and eight national advisors were expected to provide advisory and
technical support. However, during the initial implementation phase it was found that a further 15 consultants were required. These advisors were recruited and contracted to guide, advise and oversee various parts of the project. The terms of reference of these international advisors were not adequately formulated however, which resulted in an overlap of expertise. For instance, five consultants were recruited to provide urban planning expertise. Two of the environmental specialists had capabilities and experience in urban planning tasks however these competencies were not used. The use of these advisors in the planning aspects of this project and providing environmental expertise would have resulted in saving costs. This meant that there was an oversight made in regards to the competencies of consultants and project managers failed to survey the scope of capacity of advisors. TA consultants produced the required reports in a timely manner and assisted in presenting outcomes in the final evaluation. However, what was not clear was whether these consultants were involved in community engagement.

7.5.3.3 Project Steering Committee

The role of the PSC was to guide project activities and ensure the delivery of project outputs in an attempt to achieve the project outcomes. The PSC was responsible for providing advisory guidelines and was not directly involved with the operationalization of project plans. The head of the MFNP was the chair for the PSC which included delegates from the Ministry of Works, Ministry of Land, Survey and Natural Resources, the Director of Health, and the Solicitor General. Two local district officers from Kolomotu’a and Kolofo’ou were also included in proceedings as representatives of the community. In the second phase of the project, representatives from the woman’s association and private sector delegates were invited to take part in PSC meetings. The PSC was scheduled to meet every quarter during the implementation of the project to provide tactical direction and guidance to the project manager and consultants.

The PSC also formalized a specialized Project Management Unit (PMU) that served several important purposes: it acted as an administrative agency for the PSC overseeing project procurement, maintaining accounts and advising and guiding the project team. The PMU was responsible for the implementation of project activities and also documenting and reporting the progress of the project to the executing agency and sponsoring organization. The MFNP designated the executive positions of the unit. The PSC also advised the government on any concerns or issues regarding the project. An issue the PSC notified the government about was
the timeliness of project activities. The PSC provided resolution to the issue by proposing the skipping of certain project activities within the implementation stage. The PSC was also primarily responsible for proposing subprojects to the ADB.

Table 11: Consultants’ staffing schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant/Position</th>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Assigned agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign consultants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team leader</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>PUMA, TWB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply/leakage exposure engineer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>TWB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid waste specialist</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>WAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planner</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>PUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental specialist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>PUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National consultants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy team leader/project engineer</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>PUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning specialist</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>PUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planner and gender inclusive specialist (gender action plan)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>PUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting/financial management specialist</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>TWB, WAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ADB (2011b, p. 28)

The PSC was deemed effective in its role of reporting potential issues with project activities to parliament. However, the response time of the PSC was poor as discussions and recommendations were not filtered to the appropriate government departments and project staff in a timely fashion. The PSC reported this issue to Parliament along with suggested recommendations to improve the timeliness of project activities in the implementation stage. However, these recommendations were not presented to project actors in time to make revisions to the project. Therefore, there was an obvious need to assess the information-sharing channels present and attempt to strengthen these lines of communication.

7.5.4 Implementation

7.5.4.1 Coordination of development projects

Table 12 shows the different agencies and the project commitments they made towards developing urban infrastructure in Nuku’alofa. Historically, development assistance aimed at
enhancing Tonga’s urban sector primarily focused on rural areas and outer islands. In recent years, there has been an increase in assistance from a number of different donors such as JICA, the European Union and AusAID. Furthermore, these donor agencies have concentrated on developing support infrastructure and facilities such as water supply, drainage and roads. In line with partnership declarations, donor agencies have pledged to concentrate on certain priority areas of infrastructure development. The ADB and AusAID concentrated on waste management; JICA pledged to support water supply and sanitation, and the World Bank channelled their resources into developing the transport, information and community technology sector.

The AMD was supposed to play a significant role in coordinating the various urban development projects and donor agencies. The coordination of these externally funded infrastructure projects was inadequate however. This was due to the proliferation of donor agencies and their contrasting demands concerning monitoring and reporting procedures, which created an administrative burden on the AMD. During the execution of the project, the AMD lacked the capacity and its employees were not equipped with adequate technical skills and coordination strategies. In addition, the infrastructure projects had similar objectives that further hindered effective coordination. For example, the ADB-funded Integrated Urban Development Sector project primarily focused on improving roads and drainage in Nuku’alofa, as did the Nuku’alofa Reconstruction project, which was managed by the Nuku’alofa Development Corporation that utilized different planning and monitoring standards than the ADB. In adopting contrasting design, monitoring and reporting standards inevitably increases the cost and intricacy of preserving roads and drainage.

7.5.5 Results

7.5.5.1 Output

According to the completion report there were four reported outputs which were achieved after the implementation of the project:

- Planning legislation and regulations

  The National Spatial Planning and Management Bill (2010) was drafted as a result of this project. Rather than independently focusing on urban planning, this bill took a sector-wide approach to urban development and concentrated on enacting legislation that governs national spatial development. Following the appropriate checks and balances,
the drafted bill was presented and endorsed by the PSC. Cabinet recommended the bill to the Legislative Assembly, however the 2010 general election impeded the progress of the bill being passed.

Table 12: Major urban development projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor agency</th>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Funded amount ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban sector development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Integrated Urban Development Sector</td>
<td>2008–2013</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Nuku’alofa Urban Development Sector</td>
<td>2012–2017</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td><strong>Urban Planning and Management System (TA)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2009–2010</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Nuku’alofa Urban Development Sector (Proposed)</td>
<td>2012–2017</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Nuku’alofa Reconstruction Assistance</td>
<td>2007–2018</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>Sustainable Urban and Environmental Management Capacity Building and Environmental Protection</td>
<td>2008–2012</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waste management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Solid Waste Management</td>
<td>2004–2010</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZAid</td>
<td>Popua Dump Rehabilitation</td>
<td>2006–2009</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water supply and sanitation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation, and information and communications technology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>Transport Sector Consolidation</td>
<td>2008–2013</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Nuku’alofa Urban Roads and Drainage Study</td>
<td>1993–2002</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JICA</td>
<td>Airport to the Central Business Area Road</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ADB (2011)

- Capacity building in the PUMD

The PUMD was developed to assist with coordinating project activities for the Urban Integrated Development project. However, the lack of technical expertise and project management skills of staff was problematic. Thus, the project focused on developing the capacity of staff members within the unit to prepare plans that included (but were not
limited to): urban frameworks, plans for the preservation of ecological, historical land marks and provincial agendas. PUMD staff were trained in urban planning, spatial structure and design.

- Development of the Urban Integrated Development Projects (UIDPs)

A budgeted plan was developed with procedures detailing the specific programme components for the UIDPs. The plan included 65 subprojects with 56 recently proposed projects and 13 ongoing projects that were merged according to the relevance of their objectives. These subprojects entailed various soft and hard objectives and varied in budget and timeframe.

- Development of the Traffic Management Plan in Nuku’alofa

Project planning documents envisioned that one of the project outputs would be the development of a Traffic Management Plan for the city centre. However, this output was not realized due to the shortage of technical capacity and lack of financial resources.

7.5.5.2 Outcome

The project focused on strengthening the policy environment by formulating an urban integrated development plan, developing the institutional capacity of the PUMD, carrying out a traffic management study, and establishing planning legislation. A traffic management study was conducted and advisors recommended further assistance was required to develop an understanding of road maintenance. Planning design legislation was developed however; little progress was made in parliament in regards to putting it into practice. The AMD was not established when the project was initiated and thus it was not assessed against their screening criteria which would have recognized the oversight in regards to maintenance.

7.5.5.3 Impact

Evaluation reports stated that the impact of the project would be the improvement of the living conditions of Nuku’alofa residents. However, due to there being many similar projects, assumptions were made about the extent of the projects’ impacts on the greater community. In addition to this, there were unsubstantiated points made in the evaluation report that failed to support this impact claim.

7.5.6 Evaluation assessment

This project was assessed as successful. According to the evaluation report, it achieved the
intended outputs which were highly relevant and well received by the operating ministry and other government departments. However, concerns regarding the legitimacy and creditability of project success claims were raised. These concerns were based on two factors: firstly, the evaluation report was contracted and executed by an internal ADB employee, which raised questions about the reliability of results. Secondly, research respondents made remarks that contrasted with the results published in the evaluation report, which challenges the transparency of the project.

One of the outcomes for this project was to strengthen the capacity of the PUMD by providing advisory and technical expertise in the form of foreign and national consultants. However, it was noted in the evaluation report that the longevity of project outcomes was unsustainable. Recommendations for improvement included sustained efforts and long-standing commitment from the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources and donor agencies to ensure that the sustainability of TA was considered during the conception and feasibility assessment phase. To address these capacity issues it was recommended that training programmes be set up to provide continuous guidance to the PUMD and more specifically the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources. This will ensure local counterparts are adequately trained and the transfer of knowledge and expertise is sustained in the division. However, these recommendations were neglected due to a shortage of coordinating consultants and ministerial resources.

Another lesson learnt from this project was the need to ensure ridged coordination policies in order to govern the various urban infrastructure projects and activities. As explained earlier, there were a number of similar projects that concentrated on developing the urban infrastructure in Nuku’alofa over the same period (see Table 12). Coordination is crucial to avoid the duplication of efforts and promote a more synergized, collective and sustainable approach to urban development. Therefore, it is imperative for the coordination division (AMD) to correspond with both donor agencies and the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources in order to harmonize activities, avoid replication and determine sustainable outcomes.

7.6 Project Three: Health Sector Management

7.6.1 Project background

“Tonga is characterized by generally high levels of access to health care and high quality of
life, with health indicators improving over the last 50 years” (WHO, 2012, p. 1). However, the Ministry of Health (MOH), the institution that administers and governs the country’s healthcare services, has been underdeveloped over the past two decades. MOH is one of the largest ministries in the Government of Tonga and has received substantial financial aid over the years to assist in attaining its development objectives and strengthen its ability to sustain its improvements.

In 1994, a joint review was conducted by the ADB and AusAID to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the MOH. It was identified in the assessment that the administrative arm was facing issues with strategic planning and organization and management constraints that hindered its ability to meet its objectives. The Health Sector Management project was therefore established as a part of a larger programme aimed at addressing these issues and strengthening the general financial and HR management within the MOH. The initial assessment of the efficiency of the MOH found that the high staff turnover was a result of inadequate recruitment procedures.

At the commencement of the project, the MOH possessed an inflexible organizational structure with an autocratic style of governance. Decision making was centralized which translated into a top-down management approach. Officials voiced their concerns about the lack of opportunities to progress in the organizational structure. There is substantial empirical evidence that shows a positive correlation between managerial characteristics, structure and management approach, and their influence on organizational culture (Dauber, Fink, & Yolles, 2012; Vroom, 2002). Organizational culture also determines staff productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, there was an obvious need to cultivate a more constructive organizational culture that would ultimately improve the capacity of the MOH and the services it delivers to the community. This project focused on improving the governance and management within the MOH. Broad management issues concerned the ministry’s vision and organizational culture, and the decentralization of the decision-making process. Moreover, strategies geared towards improving HR policies needed to be developed to build the capacity for training staff.

The initial appraisal identified specific capacity issues such as lack of clear managerial functions, absence of HR policies, and little financial management in the ministry. The MOH requested the assistance of AusAID in addressing these issues.
7.6.2 Project objectives

Three project objectives guided activities:

- To develop managerial processes and build the capacity of managers within the MOH

Senior MOH employees lacked formal managerial training. Managerial processes such as communication, clarification tasks and allocation of resources were deemed weak prior to the initiation of the project. Therefore, this objective was established to strengthen the ability of senior ministerial staff to conduct managerial tasks within the MOH.

- To establish a MOH financial system to report expenditure

Financial systems in the MOH were unrefined and outdated. More sophisticated and practical systems were required in order to provide more timely and accurate information. In addition, financial system training programmes were required to develop employees’ skills and produce expenditure reports.

- To develop policies that govern the external use of public healthcare facilities and personnel

In order to rectify the issue of resource deficiency, policies that governed the use of public healthcare medical facilities by private healthcare providers had to be developed.

7.6.3 Resource input

It was detailed in project evaluation reports that the project cost NZ$4.5 million. A compelling feature of this project was the significant involvement of Hon. Viliami Tangi (Minister of Health at the time of project initiation) who was a key advocate and campaigner of the project activities. The minister was regarded as a champion of the project. Moreover, senior ministerial staff and service delivery employees (doctors, nurses and administers) supported the delivery of project activities and their active engagement also facilitated effective leadership. This amount of commitment from high-ranking officials was unprecedented at the time.

This project was highly participatory and utilized a consultative approach at various stages. In the initial stages, project actors such as AudAid representatives and two employees from the
AMD consulted members from the MOH and medical and administrative staff from Vaiola Hospital. These stakeholder consultants held small focus groups in the hospital’s administration office.

7.6.4 Implementation

The project was implemented in three phases. The first phase involved the assessment of managerial functions. The assessment process encompassed the appraisal of managerial competences through interviews with senior MOH staff and questionnaires administered to subordinates. Four independent consultants undertook interviews and issued questionnaires. This evaluation was undertaken over 11 months and was considered slow and disruptive. The second phase was executed in three months and involved designing a training programme to address the managerial inefficiencies in the MOH. In addition, a financial system was developed and training programmes were generated. The final phase involved the operationalizing of training schemes and the financial system. It was identified that the project’s progress towards achieving the objectives was slow and an extension of the project timeline was considered.

7.6.5 Results

The project focused on developing three building blocks: development of MOH management, HR and financial management. By altering managerial processes and HR procedures, it was anticipated that the overall organizational culture would change.

7.6.5.1 Output

There were two project outputs:

- Policies that govern public healthcare personnel
- Development of an MOH financial system

7.6.5.2 Outcome

The project focused on developing managerial functions by developing HR reward systems and cultivating a productive organizational culture. A successful reward programme implemented as an outcome was the “Good Idea of the Month” award which encourages innovative problem solving and rewards employees who implement good ideas without funding. The HR reward programme also helped improve managerial aspects such as organizational culture as the scheme promoted creativity and productivity.
7.6.5.3 Impact

The project was intended to positively impact the delivery of clinical health services. In addition, the project strengthened the organizational capacity within the MOH. The extent to which this particular project affected the clinical health services delivery was unclear however. Although this project was primarily associated with the health sector, the impacts were categorized under governance reforms in the area of improved financial and public service management.

According to the project evaluation report, “the development and use of good quality manuals can deepen the project’s impact where they are available to reinforce training. However, the Budget Policy and Procedures Manual, and the Financial Policy and Procedures Manual were not available to be used in line Ministry training in 2003–2004” (AusAID Evaluation, 2004, p. 41).

7.6.6 Evaluation assessment

This project was assessed as successful. The evaluation team consisted of four donor agency representatives. The team did not include a counterpart from the Government of Tonga and therefore failed to provide a complete perspective. This project approached capacity building in a fundamentally different way as activities and efforts were concentrated at strengthening institutional capacity at the ministry level. The project strategically focused on building the capacity of staff within the MOH with the hope that these trained employees would in turn train new staff in related areas.

7.7 Project Four: Upgrading and Refurbishment of Vaiola Hospital

7.7.1 Project background

The National Strategic Planning Framework (2010) expresses the state’s commitment to enhancing the healthcare system’s credibility in the long-term and explicitly requires “the establishment of a health system which Tongans can be proud of by 2020” (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2011, p. 9). Although access to healthcare services has substantially improved and the general health of Tonga citizens has been enhanced over recent decades, the quality of healthcare services and facilities has long been an issue. The Government of Tonga has struggled to develop and advance health services and facilities in order to provide better capacity for local citizens. More specifically, in the fact-finding phase of this project it was recognized that the current the capital’s medical centre, Vaiola Hospital,
had significantly deteriorated over the years.

Vaiola Hospital is located in Tofo’a, Nuku’alofa, and is the only hospital that provides advanced medical care in Tonga. It was formally opened in 1971 and the medical facilities have changed minimally since its opening. There were specific issues identified with the ageing medical centre such as unhygienic and rundown operating theatres, shortage of medical consulting rooms, lack of appropriate sterilizing equipment, and insufficient post-operative beds for recovering patients.

The Government of Tonga requested the support of the World Bank to develop a “master plan for the re-development of Vaiola Hospital” (JICA, 2006, p. 4) with the intention of improving the quality of service and facilities provided to Tongan citizens. This comprehensive plan proposed to implement the redevelopment in six stages which involved the construction of a new Clinical Services Building (CSB). The plan listed donor agencies such as JICA and AusAID who had committed support towards achieving the strategic objectives detailed in the overall strategic plan.

The Upgrading and Refurbishment of Vaiola Hospital project was created to address the shortage of appropriate medical facilities and equipment within the hospital. The project also aimed to improve the credibility of the hospital and address the perceptions of futility and distrust among local citizens. The project constituted a part of the master plan for upgrading the entire Vaiola Hospital and was deemed highly relevant as it was associated with NSDP 7 and correlated with the development needs of Tonga. Furthermore, the project objectives and outcomes were constructed in accordance with Japan’s overall development assistance policy for Tonga. There is no evidence to show that project design plans were tested against mandatory relevance criteria set forward by the MFNP or more specifically the AMD.

### 7.7.2 Project objective

The objective of this project was to improve the medical services provided by Vaiola Hospital by upgrading and refurbishing its medical facilities and equipment. It was intended that the enhancement to medical facilities would in turn contribute to the overall improvement of medical services provided to Tongan citizens.

### 7.7.3 Resource input

JICA approved NZ$17 million, however only NZ$16.5 million was spent on project activities. At the start of the project a Facilities and Equipment Committee was created to
assist in governing the procurement of resources and liaise with Parliament regarding project activities and policies. Further to this the committee advised project staff on aspects such as resource allocation and ministerial support available. The committee was formally created by the MOH to assist the AMD with coordinating the donor agencies and Parliament. Members of the committee included the director of health, and representatives from the Ministry of Infrastructure, AMD and Ministry of Finance.

7.7.4 Implementation

In regard to the construction of the CSB there were slight amendments made to the original architectural design including the addition of safety provisions such as fire doors, emergency stairs and the widening of patient room doors. These amendments were made during phase two and according to project evaluation; reports had no negative impacts on project management components such as timeliness and expenses.

The second phase of the project included the construction of an outpatient building, an annex and a dental ward. The building designs and plans were submitted to the Ministry of Infrastructure. Codes of building practice and design needed approval before the construction and renovations started. According to the project evaluation reports building designs and plans complied with the ministerial regulations, however I was unable to locate formal documentation regarding the compliance audit. There were delays in starting the construction process due to administrative setbacks including the deferment of approvals for procurement reports from the ministry (Ministry of Work). This situation is discussed in more detail in the Chapter 8.

7.7.5 Results

7.7.5.1 Output

There were a number of significant outputs for this project. A range of medical facilities and equipment were delivered as a part of the overall improvement of Vaiola Hospital. The new CSB included operating theatres, x-ray room, birth care unit, surgical wards, and septic tanks. Associated medical equipment was also issued as a part of the delivery of the project outputs. Table 13 presents the specific outputs of this particular project. The improvement and refurbishment of Vaiola Hospital through the outcomes of the project were expected to reduce the risk of inpatient infection and decrease infant and maternal mortality rates, thereby enhancing the integrity of the healthcare system.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Medical equipment provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Services Building</td>
<td>Operating theatre:</td>
<td>• Anaesthetic equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 operating beds</td>
<td>• Ventilator unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds</td>
<td>• Patient monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Day surgery reception room</td>
<td>• Surgical scrub station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improved electrical lighting system</td>
<td>• Operating microscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Blood bank laboratory</td>
<td>• Surgical equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paediatrics Ward</td>
<td>Birthing care suite:</td>
<td>• High pressure steam sterilizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 6 patient beds</td>
<td>• Ultrasonic water table top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 6 baby cots</td>
<td>• Blood cell counter, blood bank refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Care Nursery</td>
<td>• Safety cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delivery room</td>
<td>• X-ray unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Ward</td>
<td>• In-patient pharmacy</td>
<td>• Adult patient monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 34 patient beds</td>
<td>• Distilled water unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratories</td>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>• Traction apparatus with bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical equipment workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Pulse oximeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Septic tank</td>
<td>• Infant incubator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: JICA (2006).</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Baby resuscitation trolley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Paediatric patient monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Foetal monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivery table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivery light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Medical refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Blood cell encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety blood cell cabinets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintenance set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

166
7.7.5.2 Outcome

The final evaluation report included the results of a survey conducted by the MOH in 2011 on the perceptions of medical staff and Tongan citizens about the improvement of medical equipment and facilities as a result of the project outputs. The survey drew a total of 680 patient respondents and found that 94% of the participants responded that they were either “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the overall hygiene and comfort of the hospital facilities. In the same vein, 96% indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of health services provided by the hospital. In terms of medical staff, quantitative statistics (generated from the survey instrument) show that 64% of hospital staff thought the medical facilities had significantly improved, whereas 34% felt there either was no real significant change or did not feel that facilities had changed.

The main limitation of this survey is that there is no statistical evidence that demonstrates an association between positive perceptions regarding the medical facilities and the project outcomes. In order to gain a comprehensive view of the project outcomes, the MOH conducted interviews with hospital staff and found that the employees perceived an overall improvement in the credibility of the hospital. Seventy per cent of respondents recognized that the hospital required improvements in the form of basic facilities and more advanced medical equipment. It was further determined through these interviews that while hospital staff had rather harsh overall evaluations of hospital improvements, ex-inpatients demonstrated greater trust in the hospital facilities and services.

7.7.5.3 Impact

The intended project impact was to improve Vaiola Hospital’s credibility and the quality of medical services that the hospital supplies. This would in turn have a positive impact on health indicators such as infant and maternal mortality.

7.7.6 Evaluation assessment

This project was assessed as successful. Project outputs were completed within budget and there were minimal issues with the timeliness of project results. The project was assessed as successful against the project management success criteria. In regard to the final output there were issues with the maintenance and preservation of medical equipment and facilities. More specifically, biomedical equipment such as the radiographic and fluroscopic x-ray was not
properly used due to a technical malfunction. Recommendations were made to establish maintenance and operations procedures to sustain the quality of equipment and facilities.

7.8 Project Five: Graduate Diploma in Public Sector Management Courses

7.8.1 Project background

In 1997, NZAid and the ADB assisted the Government of Tonga in systematically reviewing the competencies and overall performance of civil servants in a range of government departments. It was found that Tonga’s senior civil servants lacked management skills that were required to effectively and efficiently perform managerial tasks and functions such as identifying benchmarking indicators.

In addition to funding the review of managerial competencies, NZAid and the ADB also financed the newly established Prime Minister’s Office which provides executive support for the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The Tongan government determined that Massey University in New Zealand’s Diploma in Public Sector Management (Dip PSM) offered by the Institute of Executive Development was suitable for their training needs. The state requested the assistance of NZAid to fund student intakes and it was established that NZAid would fund additional intakes in 2002 and 2004. This funding enabled participants from a range of government agencies to undertake training.

7.8.2 Project objective

This project had two objectives:

- To increase the level of competence of the course participants (civil servants) ultimately leading to improvements in public sector management in Tonga

- To enhance the ability of the course participants to perform functions set out in the Dip PSM module learning outcomes.

7.8.3 Resource input

Course costs varied for each intake year. For Intake One, course expenses ranged from approximately NZD$132,000; for Intake Two they were around NZD$194,000. Intake Three ranged from NZD$220,000 to $230,000. Information regarding the cost for Intake Four was unavailable. Each training intake was managed and implemented by different government
departments. In the first intake, the Prime Minister’s Office was the executing agency. As mentioned earlier, the executing agency is responsible for the overall performance of projects and oversees the activities and tasks in accordance with project plans. The implementing or principal agency, which is principally involved in planning, managing and coordinating the project, was the Civil Service Training Centre, which is within the Prime Minister’s Office. New implementing and executing agencies were used in subsequent intakes. For the second and third intakes the executing agency was the Ministry of Education, and the project was formally managed and implemented by the Short-Term Training Centre within the Ministry of Education.

### 7.8.4 Implementation

The initial intake for the Dip PSM course was intended to be made up of heads of departments (HODs) and middle managers. However, only few HODs enrolled and only 30% of the total participants were middle managers.

#### 7.8.4.1 Selection of participants

The selection of participants was initially planned to be a collaborative effort, with a number of ministerial staff from different hierarchical levels taking part in the decision. However, it was found that the selection for a number of intakes was problematic. The first phase of the project implementation required the selection of civil servants. The first intake consisted of HODs (of each ministry) selecting participants from their department. However, only 30% of the selected participants attended the course. It was identified that the cause of such a poor attendance was because HODs did not find the training programme necessary or useful.

Selection of students for the second, third and fourth intakes was open to applications from a wider range of civil servants and was advertised through various media such as radio and newspapers. The advertisements included the age limit of 45 imposed by the government, which was counterintuitive given the focus on HODs and senior or higher-level staff.

#### 7.8.4.2 Intake One

The first intake of 25 students was selected and began their Dip PSM at Massey University in March 1998. It was reported that 19 students graduated with the remaining six students either withdrawing or failing the course.

#### 7.8.4.3 Intake Two

In March 1999, a second intake of 21 students was admitted into the Dip PSM course. The
Government of Tonga then requested NZAid fund another intake of students. However, the funding agency declared that funding would be released on the condition of the results of a review. An independent review was conducted on the first two intakes and it was found that the impact of the course was mostly positive. Senior civil servants gained qualifications which strengthened the managerial competence within the public sector. It was decided that NZAid would fund two additional student intakes.

7.8.4.4 Intake Three

In February 2002 the third intake of 21 civil servants was deployed to New Zealand to undertake their studies at Massey University.

7.8.4.5 Intake Four

In 2007, 15 more students were funded to undertake the DIP PSM course. The Government of Tonga then requested that NZAid fund an additional two intakes. In line with the previous request for funding, NZAid ordered an independent review be carried out before a decision was made. However, a decision was not reached as the government was then in a process of democratic transition which inhibited ministries’ ability to push training agendas due to the lack of resources and time constraints. From the perspective of the donor, development partners were not as involved and engaged during the transition phase.

7.8.5 Results

7.8.5.1 Output

**Intake One:** This intake had a total of 25 students. According to government reports this intake was the most successful in regard to completion of course requirements. Statistically, this intake had a graduation rate of 76% with 19 students graduating or eligible to graduate. A tracer study conducted by the Prime Minister’s Office, 5 years after the first intake found that that 9 of the 25 past students were still employed in a government department in senior roles. It was reported that one of the graduates from this intake year had become the CEO of a state-owned enterprise (SOE). An additional two graduates own private companies and one is the head of the Tongan Amateur Sports Association. The remaining participants have either retired or migrated overseas.

**Intake Two:** This intake had a total of 21 students. Only four students graduated or were eligible to graduate, which is poor in comparison to the graduation rate of Intake One. A restricted amount of information is available about these participants as only 11 participants
responded to the tracer study. It was found that four of the 11 students graduated, with three withdrawing before the end of the course. One of the graduates is now the head of a large SOE and two other participants are in private employment. Another two graduates are not in any form of employment due to personal/family responsibilities and two other participants are retired.

**Intake Three:** Twenty-one students were a part of this intake. This intake of students performed poorly with only one completing course requirements and graduating. In comparison to earlier intakes, this cohort of students had the lowest graduation rate with 4%. Trace study results showed that 12 of the respondents were currently employed in government departments and were all in senior positions. Eight of the 12 civil servants were selected to participate in similar training missions. Three participants were in high-ranking positions within a SOE. Another graduate was in a senior role for a non-for-profit organization and two participants were employed in private firms. An additional four participants had migrated out of Tongatapu.

**Intake Four:** This intake had a total of 15 students, only two of whom graduated. According to the tracer study, nine of the students were employed in government departments. Four were employed in the private sector, with two past students migrating to New Zealand.

7.8.5.2 **Outcome**

According to the tracer study, 14 out of 19 respondents acknowledged the positive influence the course had on their work behaviour since completing the programme and claimed there was a “great change”. This influenced various facets of organizational behaviour within the ministries. Elements such as HR management, managerial style and staff training programmes were positively affected. The tracer study found that there was a significant change in managerial style among the senior civil servants that had taken part in the training programme. These participants used a more decentralized approach to decision making, which allowed for lower-ranked staff to get involved in decision making. Furthermore, respondents expressed how their training contributed to the development of corporate planning and also lateral and longitudinal HR planning. By laterally reviewing and developing HR management, more skilled staff members from the respective ministries and also external agencies are able to develop the annual management plans.
7.8.5.3 Impact

The intended impact of the project was the improvement of civil servants’ individual performance in their respective ministries, which would in turn positively influence the public sector’s efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, the overarching impact of this project was to strengthen public sector management in government departments within Tonga.

7.8.6 Evaluation assessment

The project was assessed as partially successful by an external consulting firm, Gray Matter Research Ltd, and the evaluation report was published in July 2008. A total of 31 students graduated from all four intakes which equates to a 37% success rate. The performance of civil servants, in regard to productivity and quality of work outputs, would significantly improve because of the training programme however. It was also envisioned that the improvement of individual performance would result in improving the public sector efficiency and effectiveness. However, there was little evidence to demonstrate that this impact was achieved. External evaluators associated the lack of improvement in the public sector with the ongoing restructuring and redundancies in government departments.

A tracer study was used as the internal assessment method. This methodology is an established and widely used procedure used to measure the long-term impact of aid intervention. It is especially effective in education and assesses the effectiveness, sustainability of results, and the impact of the training programme. Eight students were found to have withdrawn from the course but limitation of the tracer study is that it does not identify the reasons behind students’ rejections.

A tracer survey was conducted with past students and it was found that participants thought the personalized course outline enhanced their engagement, as material was more applicable to their context. It was found that the course material administered was well suited and relevant to Tonga. Course instructors conducted visits to Tonga in order to provide educators with insight and information to customize a course outline that is relevant to the context. For example, a module was constructed around public sector reform. In addition, class projects were set on local fisheries which account for a large proportion of local employment.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided brief descriptions of the development projects to supply a context to the research findings discussed in the following chapter. Five projects were selected on the
basis of the sponsoring agency, strategic focus area, year of completion, and project objectives. To ground the selected projects in their settings, the institutional framework with regard to the government strategies for managing and coordinating development projects was described in this chapter. The following chapter discusses the key findings of this study.
CHAPTER 8: KEY FINDINGS – TUI

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the contextual landscape and institutional and governance structures that inform the managerial practices used in the five selected development projects. The purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings in relation to the questions posed at the outset of this thesis. The findings presented throughout this chapter address the first research question: how are development projects managed and coordinated in Tonga? The chapter describes the different coordination and management practices used in manage development projects. The research subquestions are specifically addressed in the second part of this chapter.

In order to explore the intricacies of each theme that emerged from the data analysis, this chapter is divided into two parts. Part I discusses the themes that relate to the institutional mechanisms that govern projects at the national level. The government systems that govern the arrangement of projects influences the project management approaches adopted. The themes in this section address the coordination strategies used to arrange projects at the national and sectoral level. While the focus of this study is on how development projects are managed and coordinated in Tonga it was important for me to delve into government institutional mechanisms such as its approach to coordinating projects in order to ground my argument. Furthermore, it was important to acknowledge the influence of institutional frameworks and recognize the consequences externalities such as coordination strategies and structural changes have on the project management practices used within the project.

Part II of this chapter outlines the findings related to the project management practices used in each stage of the PLC model. In particular, these findings address the research subquestions:

- What types of project management practices are used in the PLC model?
- How do these project management practices influence project outcomes?

Fifty participants took part in this study. Twenty-five were civil servants who were involved in the projects analysed; eight of these were employed in the AMD. Seventeen participants were employed as donor agency representatives during the projects and were spread across three geographic contexts. Three participants were local advisors and five were foreign consultants.
PART I

Externalities and mechanisms that affect the functionality of projects

The first part of this chapter discusses the externalities and mechanisms outside of the project teams’ control that affected the functionality and project management approaches adopted. More specifically, this part explores the institutional mechanisms or lack thereof within government and donor agencies that informed the practices employed in the projects. The findings address the coordination strategies used to arrange and coordinate projects and the various PLC structures imposed by donor agencies. Table 14 presents the external research themes presented in this section.

Table 14: External research themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination of development projects</td>
<td>Institutional mechanisms such as coordination strategies are inadequate and fail to arrange projects in an effective manner. Donor agencies utilize coordination tactics as a measure of power. Due to the lack of effective coordination strategies, factors such as information sharing between government ministries and between projects is affected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural differences of PLC framework</td>
<td>Donor agencies impose different structural arrangements to organize PLC activities. These varying designs have caused administrative burdens and ultimately affected project outcomes.</td>
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</table>

8.2 Coordination of development projects

An externality that influenced the project management approaches used in the projects was the coordination strategies. At the macro level, the coordination between different projects and donor systems was identified by participants as a significant issue that influenced project activities. The project coordination issue is rooted in the central aid coordination hub, the AMD. This finding reveals that coordination issues on both the donor level and development level (see below) complicated the way executing agencies enacted project management practices.

Recognizing coordination issues exposes the institutional imperfections that inform our wider understanding of the project management practices used in the different stages of the project.
cycle. Weinstein and Jaques (2010) argue that “the implementation of project management practices depends heavily on the idiosyncrasies of the organizations applying its various practices. Nonetheless, it is possible to codify the structural components of project management, and the federal government [U.S Government] has moved steadily toward instituting more formalized processes” (p. 48). Projects are not implemented in a vacuum and externalities such as government systems and donor frameworks influence the internal functions of the project. In light of this, the institutional mechanisms in both the government-based and donor-established systems that affected the execution of projects are explained.

Two dimensions that affect project coordination at a governance level: donor coordination and development coordination. These two aspects are also perceived as sequential stages of coordinating development projects. Donor coordination (stage one) refers to the arrangements and mechanisms agreed to by external agencies to ensure effective delivery of projects. This dimension of coordination is concentrated at the governance and diplomatic level of donor agencies and is established before the commitment of foreign assistance. Donor agencies collaborate to ensure that their aid commitments and systems are consolidated. Recipient governments play a passive role in this stage as it is beyond their sphere. Development coordination (stage two) relates to aid coordination at the national or sectoral level of the recipient government, which involves synthesizing recipient government policies with aid commitments and ensuring that efficient cooperation mechanisms are in place. This element of project coordination is dependent on the recipient government’s systems and requires well-established policies to facilitate the coordination process (Bourguignon & Platteau, 2015).

This study found that there were issues with both forms of coordination tactics in the Government of Tonga. Donor agency coordination was apparent through roundtable discussions. These discussions were held on a quarterly basis and were used as a forum for donor agencies, NGOs and government departments to coordinate and harmonize aid coordination strategies. These donor agency strategies are outlined in donor reports and agenda documents. However, in regard to implementing and operationalizing these strategies there was little evidence found to substantiate the application of coordination strategies. In relation to the development coordination at the sectoral level, there were significant issues in sharing information between government departments and an absence of an adequate knowledge management system, which exacerbated coordination issues in the AMD.
8.2.1 Donor coordination

The data revealed that there was minimal coordination between the many urban development projects. An issue that affected the coordination of these projects was the proliferation of donor agencies and their contrasting demands. Five donor agencies were funding urban infrastructure projects. These donors imposed different monitoring and reporting procedures that caused administrative burdens for government departments and the AMD. For instance, JICA requires consistent monitoring reports in line with their Plan, Do, Check, and Action framework that emphasizes clear benchmark checks at each stage. JICA also have a monitoring blueprint document that requires extensive evidence and rigorous measurement. On the other hand, bilateral agencies such as AusAID demand a final audit report at the completion of the implementation stage with specified guidelines for preparing monitoring reports. These donor agencies were unable to align their administrative systems to create a more simplified and streamlined approach to monitoring and reporting systems.

At the project level, project staff were unable to accurately disseminate project objectives and provide clear boundaries for each of the urban development projects in the infrastructure portfolio. This was due in large part to the difficulty the AMD had in distinguishing the projects due to their objectives being so similar in nature. This is exemplified in one civil servant’s statement:

*There were just far too many projects [urban development projects] all with the same objectives and so it was always hard to separate which project was aimed at what. It was even harder to generate the monitoring reports for these projects because the results were aimed at dealing with the same issue and there was no real difference in the offerings.* (Participant 18)

Another civil servant reiterated this point and stated:

*To be honest at the end of the day there are just too many little projects under one umbrella and that one umbrella is far too big and different donors have different systems, so it is very hard to grasp one system. So you could just imagine the chaos when there are 5 different projects from 5 different donors at the same time in 1 ministry.* (Participant 2)

Another civil servant agreed and associated the lack of donor coordination with the quality of service the AMD provides:

*There is a lack of coordination between the donors and the ministries and that really means that the aid coordination is not working as well as they should be and you can see that from how many donor are involved in the urban development program but there is no real coherency in the division to deal with it.* (Participant 25)
On a positive note, 12 donor agency representatives commented more favourably on donor coordination and the role of the AMD. One stated:

> With the support of the aid management division in government by providing donor coordination advisor over the last 4–5 years, the role of that government advisor is to help that process of harmonizing donor inputs and resources in a way that government can manage. (Participant 36)

This point was reiterated by an experienced senior civil servant:

> I think that we are sometimes overly critical of the unit [AMD] but I think that coordination of projects has significantly improved since it was established. If we have a look like, 6 years ago it was much harder for ministries to gain funding but since the AMD they provide support for seeking funding. It’s also good for us to know what each department is doing and AMD are good for that. (Participant 18)

One donor programme manager reiterated these sentiments stating:

> I get really frustrated and every time they talk about donor coordination, I tune out because it is a broken record. We can discuss how things would improve if we harmonize our systems but it’s all talk. The lack of coordination really comes down to how donors collaborate. We need to make sure that we are being more open to one another and make use of roundtables and have open discusses about our different intentions. (Participant 31)

8.2.1.1 Relevance of harmonization

The harmonization principle described in regional agendas such as the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles is based on the assumption that if donor agencies collaborate their systems for project activities such as monitoring, procurement and evaluation will improve the recipient’s ability to coordinate development projects. This assumption does not hold in Tonga, as shown by one civil servant’s comment:

> The lack of harmonization is the fault of the donors themselves but that does not happen in Tonga’s case. They all seem to scramble and try to make things work here but they rely on us [AMD] to do all the things that they should be doing before it reaches us here in Tonga. We shouldn’t have to deal with making arrangements and aligning their [donors] procedures – that needs to be set up between the donors before it reaches us. This is because there are a lot of political and strategic agendas that need to be sorted amongst them. (Participant 17)

A donor representative reinforced this point and stated:

> Harmonization is difficult but it should be at the centre of our aid commitments. We should be leading by example and ensuring that we set the tone for development activities to be more effective for the citizens. (Participant 45)

These statements reveal the absence of effective donor coordination. Donor agencies fail to agree on common arrangements and mechanisms for delivering projects. This type of
coordination is concentrated at the governance level between donor agencies and is a collective effort between donor agencies and government departments.

Another civil servant expressed his views on harmonization:

_They really need to come together to collaborate and align their ways of doing things and we [AMD] need to give them space to do that. I also think that we need to play an active role in this process and have our voices heard so that an appropriate common system that we are comfortable is made and is customized so that is more effective for us._ (Participant 19)

**8.2.1.2 Coordination as a measure of power**

An unanticipated finding regarding the lack of coordination and harmonization of donor systems was the fact that donors often resisted harmonizing their activities because they perceived this as a renunciation of power over project activities. Bilateral agencies tended to ignore the requests of government agencies to align and further harmonize managerial practice such as project feedback and monitoring systems. Rather, these donors endorsed and institutionalized the use of their own systems in projects that they sponsored. There were instances of productive negotiations between donor agencies to utilize more collaborative systems. However, for the most part donors felt that taking ownership of their own systems was a reflection of their power. This point is exemplified by one bilateral donor representative’s statement:

_Harmonization is the fault of us donors. We need to recognize that harmonization does not mean that we don’t have power anymore. It means that we need to understand that we are collaborating for the social good so that the results of aid filters down to the right people._ (Participant 27)

In comparison to bilateral agencies, multilateral donors were found to have more experience in coordinating with a multitude of agencies and supported the processes in an attempt to provide services that are more efficient. This finding suggests that the issue of harmonization is more deep-seated and ingrained than the standard assumptions associated with the institutional frameworks that bind these different agencies and strategies would suggest.

Another donor representative shared similar sentiments and also addressed the power issue:

_Don’t get me wrong, we [donors] do have annual round table discussions and they are useful at times but sometimes they seem redundant because we [donors] don’t put our egos at the door and we don’t fix deep seeded problems before dealing with harmonizing systems. So to some extent there is a power struggle between us donors because of our history._ (Participant 31)
This quote expresses the deep-rooted nature of the power struggle between donor agencies. Historically, neighbouring states such as New Zealand and Australia have exerted their power by establishing control over small islands in the Pacific. These control mechanisms include absolute power and governance as exemplified by New Zealand over Niue. This Trans-Tasman rivalry is not only present in the governance systems but is also represented at the micro level and manifested in the coordination of development projects. This finding goes beyond the exposure of coordination strategies as a measure of power and suggests that collaboration on coordination strategies is also influenced by long-standing state rivalries.

A civil servant substantiated the existence of power dynamics in the coordination process:

> I think that donors use their coordination strategies as a platform for demonstrating control over the projects they fund. This type of control is very invisible and is obvious at face value and I think that it’s been a part of development practice here in Tonga that it is not recognized as control but it’s seen as public service because we don’t know how to do it ourselves. (Participant 8)

This quote demonstrates the complex use of coordination strategies by donor agencies as a measure of power.

### 8.2.2 Development coordination

Development coordination relates to aid coordination at the national level of the recipient government and involves the synthesis of policies and ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of aid projects. This section discusses the finding regarding the lack of development coordination which leads to the ineffective delivery of projects in Tonga.

#### 8.2.2.1 Issues of information sharing

There are significant issues with information sharing within government departments that ultimately affected the development coordination of projects at the sectoral level. The AMD is tasked with the coordination of development projects and focuses on synthesizing policies and assisting state departments with aligning project plans with ministerial corporate plans and donor agency funding contracts. In addition, the unit manages the inflow of development projects from donor agencies and aligns these commitments to government departments. Essentially, the AMD is the principal unit that collects all information regarding aid inflows and therefore acts as a nerve centre for all aid matters.

The complications surrounding the coordination of urban infrastructure development projects culminated in a recent recommendation that the AMD create an aid database to centralize all
relevant project information. The rationale behind the project database is that improving the locality and accessibility of information regarding activities would facilitate the coordination of development projects.

Evidence from the Urban Planning and Management project demonstrates the significant role of information management and record keeping influencing the coordination of project activities that ultimately attributed to the failure of the project. The focal lesson learnt from this project was the ineffective transfer of knowledge between government departments. The PSC was responsible for reporting complications and providing risk management appraisals to Parliament. However, the manner by which the information was transferred was deemed to be inefficient and the clarity of the results was assessed as poor. This affected the timeliness of the project and further influenced the poor strategic decision making regarding project procurement made in Parliament.

One civil servant discussed the issue of information sharing and more importantly record keeping within the AMD:

*Donors need to help them [AMD] develop a way to manage information about the projects because we have problems on our end trying to make sense of the pieces of information we are getting filtered. From an institutional wide point of view, there is no information sharing through government departments full stop. This extends to the private sector and NGOs they don’t know what is going on because policy discussion and government discussions are not being made transparent. This also severely affects the coordination of projects they [AMD] don’t have enough information to make informed decisions and make policy decisions.* (Participant 22)

This was also found in the Upgrade and Refurbishment of Vaiola Hospital project where there was not enough information regarding project plans sourced from the AMD to inform decisions regarding project evaluation activities. Due to inadequate information, the assessment process of the project was delayed and at one point the wrong information was provided, which initially influenced the evaluation rating. One donor representative involved in the independent evaluation stated:

*It was a time consuming process to try to get information from the unit [AMD]. You really have to go through strenuous process and you need to actually go through and do a lot of research yourself because most of the time the information that is recorded or in their possession is outdated and so we have to go through the necessary channels to get the right information that we need. At one point, we received the information we requested but it didn’t tell us everything because they tend to focus on stuff they did, rather than what they resulted in. This problem with information really does bear costs to the coordination efforts of the unit.* (Participant 35)
These two revealing statements identify the lack of access to adequate and trustworthy information as an aspect that severely affects the reporting of project outcomes. The quality of information available at a project’s initiation is out of project employees’ control and is therefore classified as an externality.

In recent years, NZAid has assisted in developing an information management system for aid activities in the education sector. One donor stated:

*We are helping to get that information system going so that we get better monitoring and evaluation information out. But it has been difficult because it is an institutional issue and is not isolated to the education sector. We as donors really need to start facilitating this process and stop restricting our responsibility to our individual priority areas.* (Participant 32)

This statement clearly demonstrates the lack of information sharing is deeply-rooted in government departments and this relates closely to the finding concerning project team silos that will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

Another disconcerting finding regarding the AMD is its junior employees’ lack of understanding of the term “aid coordination”. This was evident in this statement by a subordinate AMD staff member:

*To be honest, I don’t understand what coordination means, but I know that it [harmonization] is used a lot by the seniors. Sometimes the donors and other ministries run trainings for aid coordination but only the executive staff attend them so we really don’t get involved in that side of the project and procurement.* (Participant 21)

As mentioned earlier, the AMD acts as the nerve centre for aid administration and coordination. Staff members within this division are expected to understand the purpose of the unit and to possess a general understanding of terminology and the operationalization of these terms. This finding suggests that training initiatives should be made accessible to a wide range of employees within the division to build and strengthen the understanding of staff so that they can engage in a more meaningful way in the coordination of development projects.

Roundtable discussions is a method used to assist in building more transparent lines of communication and help to improve information transfer between donor agencies and government departments. Roundtable sessions are held between donor agencies and government departments to discuss each donor’s focal area of commitment (sectoral approaches) and attempt to align systems to facilitate a more effective delivery of projects.
Essentially, these sessions are supposed to provide a space to share information and collectively agree on streamlined systems. A great number of participants expressed the value of roundtable discussions in providing a safe space for exchanges regarding the delivery and mechanisms that govern development projects, with one donor agency representative commenting:

*I think that the roundtable has been very beneficial in breaking down those walls and allowing all development partners to come together and have an open discussion about our activities. We can map out the different priorities and identify who is doing what.* (Participant 33)

Although roundtables are appealing for their ability to facilitate an open dialogue, senior civil servants attested that donor agencies often concealed their underlying agenda in order to gain more traction. One senior civil servant recounted a roundtable discussion where a multilateral donor was in discussions with a private fisheries plant for a private commercial contract. In order to secure the contract, the multilateral agency did not openly disclose this commercial opportunity in fear of losing the commercial contract.

*We have to deal with the different agendas of the donor agencies and these are not always clear in the roundtables. There have been some situations in the past few years that are questionable but because we don’t have the capacity to challenge these motives we often just go with it which is obviously bad practice – but like I said, what can we do when they hold the power?* (Participant 23)

### 8.3 Structural differences regarding the PLC framework

This section discusses the findings concerning the conceptualization and optimization of the PLC framework by civil servants. Employees within government departments understand the framework only on a superficial level and this influenced the way that project management practices were enacted in specific phases of the project. An aspect that perpetuates this lack of understanding is the fact that different donor agencies enforce different structural arrangements of the traditional PLC framework. This finding suggests that there are significant problems with the conceptualization and application of the PLC framework in government departments, which has influenced project management success and outcomes.

The benefit of developing a deeper understanding of the way civil servants conceptualize frameworks such as the PLC is twofold. First, how civil servants’ perceptions and worldviews drive their actions and behaviours in regard to the PLC framework will be understood. Second, highlighting the different ways in which civil servants perceive and
apply the PLC framework will illuminate the different project management approaches used within different stages.

When participants were asked about their understanding of the PLC framework, those who represented donor agencies were very familiar with and consistently used the framework in their project work. However, government employees specifically noted that only one department was trained and skilled in using the PLC framework – the AMD. In this division, the PLC is commonly used and project management terminology is extensively utilized. A civil servant who had extensive experience in using the PLC framework stated:

Yeah, I think that we use it so much that other ministries expect us to map out their PLC in plans but it should not be like that. They should be using the PLC on their own terms but because they don’t understand it properly they come through and make us do it and these requests are always in a backlog because there is such a big demand because they just don’t know how to use the PLC. It also doesn’t help that there are different types that donor impose. (Participant 20)

In the executing agencies (government departments), the model and the project activities enacted within the stages were not clearly understood by the civil servants. This caused some problems in ultimately implementing and monitoring project activities. Moreover, donor agencies did not provide training sessions to develop civil servants’ ability to effectively apply the PLC framework independently. Government departments therefore relied on the AMD to bolster their capacity to enact the framework in project proposals. This was explained by one civil servant:

They [donors] don’t train us to use their specific cycle so we do tend to rely on the aid management team to develop our proposals before putting it through to the donors. (Participant 4)

As mentioned earlier, different donor agencies imposed and used contrasting versions of the PLC framework which often caused confusion among project actors and more importantly civil servants from the executing agencies. This can be illustrated by the different structural frameworks imposed by AusAID and JICA. AusAID use Project Cycle Management (PCM) as their standard project model, which they impose as a condition of their aid commitments to Tonga. PCM includes the common stages of planning, implementation and evaluation, however it also involves additional preparation phases that require added processes. A distinguishing element of PCM is the “learning and adapt” stage. This phase comes after the evaluation stage and involves project stakeholders taking stock and reflecting on the relevance, efficiency, sustainability and overall effectiveness of the project. According to the Australian Council for International Development (2012), this additional phase “provides the
opportunity for you [the project manager] to step out of the day-to-day business of implementation and ask bigger questions about the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability” (ACID, 2012, p. 10). The purpose of this reflective stage is to report the lessons learnt in the hope of applying these pearls of wisdom to future project endeavours. PCM also involves additional stages within the planning stage that require a design and appraisal iteration.

The project sponsored by AusAID, the Health Sector Management project, therefore incorporated the additional processes imposed by the PCM structure. The design phase involved the executing agency, the MOH, and additional international advisors independently conducting research in regard to the organizational structure and validating plans against the corporate plans. Both parties independently formulated design documents that were submitted to various committees for final approval. The AMD felt considerable strain in managing and coordinating the two autonomous design documents. This was a time-consuming process for project staff and created administrative burdens for civil servants within the division. In addition, the lack of constant collaboration and coordination regarding the PLC framework utilized and further reinforced the silo effect throughout the MOH. One civil servant commented that:

*Donors have different reporting requirements, prerequisites and project standards are sometimes confusing especially for us who have to make sure that line ministries are keeping to donor requirements. I mean not having a common model for this important assessment is difficult, especially when we have limited capacity to fulfil these requirements.* (Participant 18)

In contrast, JICA imposes the Plan, Do, Check, and Action (PDCA) framework to organize project activities which encourages consistent monitoring throughout the lifetime of the project. The PDCA is institutionalized by JICA as their official evaluation system for assessing development projects. In Project Four, the Upgrading and Refurbishment of Vaiola Hospital, the PDCA was used a structural framework for organizing project activities. Ministerial staff members voiced their frustrations with the impracticality of this framework in the *talanoa*. Specifically, the operationalization of the PDCA model was described as difficult as there was an excessive number of procedures and formalized reports that required sign off from different government departments before the project could progress to the next phase. However, gaining approval from these various ministries was a time-consuming process that often held up project activities. For instance, the Tonga Asset Managers and Associations Ltd required policy documents regarding construction and building warrants of
fitness before activities progressed. In addition, procurement-costing approvals from JICA headquarters were mandatory before plans and design documents were executed in the implementation stage. This finding suggests that donor agencies impose structural changes to the PLC model under the assumption that civil servants, and more widely government departments, have the necessary skills to adapt to their requirements.

A junior civil servant mentioned their frustration with being unable to participate in PLC training sessions and stated:

It’s difficult to try and learn all of these different PLC methods. In the past, us juniors were only invited to one of the JICA training sessions when they introduced the PDCA and then after that the executives were the ones teaching us the structure of reporting and things like that. (Participant 22)

Opportunities for training and attending PLC workshops were scarce for junior civil servants. Training initiatives for implementing these different PLC structures were concentrated at the senior managerial level.

PART II

Project management practices within the PLC framework

The previous part outlined the key themes that emerged from the data analysis dealing with the contextual landscape and aspects that were external to the project. Government institutional mechanisms, coordination strategies and donor frameworks were discussed. Part I essentially laid contextual foundation for understanding the more intricate project management practices used in projects outlined in this part. Table 15 presents the research themes discussed in this section.

This part discusses the themes that emerged from each stage of the PLC framework and explores the varying implications these findings have on project management practices. It addresses the overarching research question and identifies findings that answer the research subquestions of this study:

- What types of project management practices are used in the PLC model?
- How do these project management practices influence project outcomes?
Table 15: Internal research themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLC stage</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning stage</td>
<td>Lack of project planning skills (hard skills)</td>
<td>Civil servants lacked key planning and design competence (hard skills) that resulted in duplication of projects and further negatively influenced project outcomes. Civil servants also lacked knowledge and experience in successfully utilizing project planning tools such as the Logframe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of people focus</td>
<td>Lack of human resource consideration in the initial stage of the project. Furthermore, civil servants are inadequately recognized for their project work that resulted in a lack of commitment to project objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation stage</td>
<td>Significance of relationships among project actors (soft skills)</td>
<td>Interpersonal competence (soft skills) plays a significant role in facilitating project management processes in the implementation stage. Consultants lacked these interpersonal skills and failed to acknowledge the significance of relationships and building rapport with public servants. This ultimately affected the timeliness of project management processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project team silos</td>
<td>Project teams functioned independently and operated in isolation that resulted in a breakdown of communication and lack of commitment from project staff to the achievement of the overall project objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation stage</td>
<td>Sustainability of TA</td>
<td>Lack of consideration for the long-term sustainability of TA (international consultants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency in evaluation reports</td>
<td>Tensions between the results disclosed in evaluation reports and the observable results, which raises questions about the credibility of evaluation reports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.4 Integration of frameworks

This section outlines the organizing principles informed the structure of this part of the chapter. I argue that there is tremendous value in utilizing a more comprehensive and reflective framework that integrates both the PLC structure and the kakala framework. Figure 14 depicts the integration of these two frameworks.
These two frameworks have similar underlying characteristics and can therefore be instructively integrated. First, the traditional project management PLC structure focuses on the transformation process. Each stage within the PLC framework adds to the transformation of inputs, aligned to achieve project objectives, to make the final output. Similarly, the stages in the \textit{kakala} framework highlight the customary process of transforming raw materials (\textit{kakala}, flowers, thread) into a final product (\textit{kahoa kakala}, garland). Both of these frameworks are based on paradigms that are informed by the contextual settings and lived realities of the implementers.

Second, both models emphasize the use of strategic tools and techniques in each stage and require the appropriate skilled people to conduct these activities. For instance, the Logframe planning tool used in the PLC framework can be aligned with the \textit{helepelu} (machete), the tool used to extract flowers and leaves to create the \textit{kahoa kakala}. The project management literature emphasizes the importance of project managers as the decision-making authorities who are responsible for the successful completion of project activities (Müller & Turner, 2007; Pollack & Algeo, 2014). This role is considered an established profession with international standards set out in the Project Management for Development Professionals guidelines (Brière, Proulx, Flores, & Laporte, 2015; Hermano et al., 2013). Project managers are the authoritative figures in regard to the day-to-day operations of the project and play a significant role in enacting project management practices. Similarly, elderly village woman are considered the authorities in weaving and arranging \textit{kahoa kakala}. 

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Figure 13: Integration of the PLC and \textit{kakala} frameworks
The *kakala* framework has been used throughout this thesis as a way of interpreting and conceptualizing the research process. This study extends the *kakala* framework to provide a culturally authentic nuance for understanding and further conceptualizing the PLC framework from the Tongan perspective.

8.5  *Teu* and *toli* – the planning stage

The planning stage of the PLC framework is associated with the two initial stages of the *kakala* framework, *teu* and *toli*. The *teu* stage encapsulates the preparation involved in creating a *kahoa kakala*. This stage lends itself to explaining the preparations and arrangements of project planning stage. *Teu* involves process planning which deals with identifying the various steps towards completing the outcome and establishing the resources required to create the *kahoa*. Similar to the initial stages of the research process, the project planning stage is concerned with identifying the need for intervention or development vulnerability.

8.5.1  Lack of planning and design skills

This section addresses a prominent theme that emerged in the planning phase, civil servants’ lack of planning and design skills. Civil servants are responsible for all planning activities, including identification of project need, assessment of feasibility, and drafting concept and design documents. The identification of project need relates to the recognition of vulnerabilities experienced by the local community or government department and assessing the feasibility and practicality of the project. The absence of civil servants’ capabilities to conduct these activities led to a number of issues, including wastage of resources. Moreover, it was found that civil servants were unable to effectively utilize planning tools such as the Logframe which further hampered their ability to conduct planning activities effectively.

8.5.1.1 Absence of “project need” skills

Eighteen out of the 25 civil servants who participated in this study indicated that they did not have project recognition skills or experience. Furthermore, nine civil servants who were involved in various functional support areas for the project and some within the project itself discussed the absence of imperative mechanisms, specifically feasibility studies, for assessing the viability of projects. These key findings indicate a lack of understanding and comprehension in regard to identifying the need for a project and substantiating the project proposal. One project coordinator specifically stated that:
We need to strengthen ourselves on how to appraise these project proposals because sometimes things are just identified on an ad hoc basis from the ministries. We need to know whether it is really coming out of their corporate plans because we are trying to discourage them from identifying things that they didn’t plan for. (Participant 17)

A significant skill required by civil servants across all government departments is the ability to analyse and further identify the need for a project. In addition, civil servants are required to possess the ability to assess and verify the legitimacy of a project. This concerns validating the project need against a feasibility criterion in the initial stages of designing and planning project components. The identification of the need for intervention (essentially the project) is a prominent issue that government ministries face. This is exemplified in the following statement of a senior public servant:

Most of the time, projects are proposed without real evidence of the need for the project. I mean there are certain departments that still use feasibility studies to assess the practicality and need for the project. In adopting a feasibility approach the ministry needs to engage the stakeholders in a very systematic manner. (Participant 18)

A donor representative reinforced the lack of attention paid to collecting evidence to substantiate the initiation of projects and stated:

We are trying to discourage them [government departments] from identifying things that they didn’t plan for but the real problem is the fact that ministries are unable to compile evidence to justify the initiation of projects. I don’t think that this issue is centred around the capacity but rather that we don’t have the right systems in place and I guess we have to blame ourselves [donor agencies] for this sometimes. (Participant 30)

This point was reiterated from the perspective of a donor agency, with one representative stating:

In designing and thinking about the project, they realize “oh we don’t really need it” so the very good idea becomes just an idea, and later on along the line we will say no that was not really a project it was just an idea. (Participant 31)

This statement highlights the absence of identification (skill) and assessment (task) as to whether the initiation of the project was feasible. The absence of such imperative skills in the planning stage influences the progression of project activities and the overall outcome. A staggering number of participants supported the above statement and highlighted the ad hoc nature of identifying and planning for projects. These informants found that projects were often initialized on a superficial basis with no real concrete evidence to validate the existence of the project. Due to the lack of evidence to substantiate the need for the project, resources were often wasted on designing proposals, procuring materials and implementing activities.
One foreign consultant who had extensive experience in providing planning capacity to the Government of Tonga expressed her views on the government’s approach to planning, and more importantly initiation of projects:

*The whole picture has been one of really just an ad hoc approach to project identification and planning. There is no real system and it’s because the capacity for setting these standards are not there. Donors have their own internal standards for checking whether the proposal is legitimate but on the ground there is no systematic training to make sure that staff know how to identify these needs and check for evidence.* (Participant 30)

The Tonga Graduate Diploma in Public Sector Management Training project (Project Five) is a compelling case that exhibits this failure to assess the feasibility of initiating a project. In the proposal of the project (pre-planning stage), it was found that civil servants across different ministries lacked managerial skills. However, a specific government department was not identified, which led to training participants being selected across all divisions. This aspect created issues with selecting participants to engage in the training, as there were no formal criteria for selecting trainees. As a result, participants were selected from a range of government departments and this was reported as a challenging endeavour due to senior employees’ conflicting work commitments. Accordingly, the training was not directed at the problem area due to the lack of evidence to support the project in the first instance. One past student commented:

*The training was not successful because they were training the wrong people. The CEOs that needed training didn’t attend and the seniors that did attend the training didn’t need too. So we were left with having to select middle managers and in some cases anyone that would be free to attend the training.* (Participant 2)

Furthermore, project proposals failed to outline the selection criteria for appointing training participants, which influenced the effectiveness of the training and capacity development. This is because managerial skills were not developed or improved in the appropriate staff. Again, this highlights the issue of projects being proposed on an ad hoc basis with little or no evidence to support the need for them.

Chapter 7 outlined the Activity Management Cycle that governs the process for completing a development project. This cyclical model identifies which government department is responsible for surveying and making formal proposals to donor agencies in the hopes of gaining sponsorship for the project. The donor agency revises project proposals and proposes conditions on actions outlined in the initial proposal. It is at this point that donor agencies evaluate the feasibility and need for the project. Their responsibility is to ensure that the
projects proposed are necessary and are in accordance with the corporate plans of the
ministry. It is clear that the donor mechanisms to audit project plans and ensure legitimate
value and substance are not in place.

Out of the five projects analysed, only two project proposals detailed a feasibility criterion.
Feasibility studies assess and determine the credibility and practicality of project activities.
Such assessments are conducted in the project conception stage, which is inherently
embedded in planning activities. Feasibility studies involve collating evidence to determine
the viability of the proposed project. Only two of the projects conducted feasibility studies,
which demonstrates the arbitrary nature of project planning in Tonga. This point was
substantiated by a donor agency representative, who stated:

We have long had issues with ministries not submitting feasibility reports. These are
very important because they should confirm that what they are requesting is a
legitimate plan for action. It’s evidence and should be a way for ministries to be
accountable for what they are requesting. (Participant 34)

A possible reason for the absence of such critical identification skills relates back to the lack
of training provided. Donor agency representatives voiced their frustrations they experienced
in organizing training sessions, and one donor representative stated:

There are formal channels, checks and balances that we need to go through before
our consultants provide planning training on the fly like that. Especially on our end.
There is a lot of documentation that is required, thing like feasibility reports and
evidence. But you know, sometimes there are times that we need to respond to the lack
of capacity in more of a timely fashion and that means creating small focus training
groups on the spot because once that moment is gone, it’s gone. (Participant 35)

According to this representative, the consultants and advisors have to perform the task that
they are contracted to provide. From an HR perspective, the terms of reference in an
advisor’s contract also protects the consultant and restricts the liability of his/her work.
However, when planning skills are deficient this may result in external technical support and
heighten aid dependence.

Notions regarding country-led development reinforce the beneficiaries’ voice in giving them
the power to identify the vulnerabilities they face and enact strategies to address these issues.
This finding implicitly contradicts the positive notions of demand-driven intervention as civil
servants lack the crucial skills to identify vulnerabilities. This begs the question: How can
government departments effectively identify vulnerabilities when civil servants lack the
appropriate skills to conduct such activities? This finding was confirmed by a local donor
representative:
If they [government departments] don’t know any better how on earth are they going to improve anything? We assume that these ministries know what they are looking for and how to assess its feasibility but that is not the case in Tonga. Assumptions have no room in projects because it leads to missing opportunities to develop capabilities. (Participant 33)

8.5.1.2 Absence of skills in using planning tool

There was also an absence of competence in using planning tools such as the Logframe. This was evident in the Health Sector Management project (Project Three), where government employees from the executing agency (MOH) failed to understand the core components of the Logframe tool. The project aimed to develop managerial processes and build managers capacity within the MOH. During the planning stage of the project, civil servants found it difficult to understand and operationalize the Logframe to justify planning activities. This was reinforced by a donor agency employee, who commented:

Some of the staff members in the design didn’t have any knowledge or experience with using the Logframe. They had a lot of problems in terms of the scope of the Logframe. The first one that was submitted to the AMD was very weak and didn’t have enough information for appropriate measurement indicators because they simply don’t know what they are doing. They don’t know how to use the Logframe. (Participant 27)

Another civil servant reiterated the lack of understanding of the Logframe by detailing an example regarding four employees who were assigned the task of collecting supporting information to validate performance indicators for the Logframe:

They collected all this information but didn’t know how to present it in the Logframe. For some of them it was the first time they had seen one. (Participant 5)

This was a common issue across all ministries and was a prominent topic raised by participants who contributed to planning activities in the selected projects. One civil servant stated:

This is very common throughout the ministries and the projects that I have worked on. I think that it is more prominent in the newly established departments because I suspect that they don’t have the right expertise to help them improve their understanding of the Logframe components. (Participant 3)

Civil servants from across different government departments found the planning tool inflexible and hard to operationalize. This was encapsulated in the following statement:

Once it is in the Logframe that’s just it. But in reality things don’t work like that. Things change and that’s why it [Logframe] is inflexible, especially when things are
constantly changing and it just becomes a plan on paper instead of a framework to help us organizing changing information. (Participant 17)

A number of senior ministerial staff commented on the formalization of planning tools in government documents in order to standardize their approaches to planning. One senior ministerial employee stated:

In our department it is a standard model that we use so that we are consistent in the way we approach planning. It goes back to what I said earlier about centralizing all the systems so that there is a general way of doing things. (Participant 18)

Similar to the different PLC structures instituted by donor agencies, different sponsoring agencies imposed contrasting planning tools. Agencies such as JICA used the German Zielorientierte Projektplanung (ZOPP), also known as the Goal Oriented Project Planning (GOPP) approach. NZAid, AusAID and ADB utilized the basic Logframe structure with a few additional columns that represented the dimensions of stakeholder analysis and timeframe. The four donors required documentation that substantiated the use of their framework before activities would progress to the next stage.

8.5.2 Lack of people focus

HR factors such as employment and employee retention in Tonga have remained a significant issue for government departments, the private sector and NGOs, and this is consistently outlined in donor agency reports. This issue is perpetuated by the lack of HR practices that help govern recruitment, retention and development of current employees. HR practices, such as professionalization of project staff tasks and effective recruitment of staff were also absent in the development projects analysed, and this affected project outcomes.

HR processes in the health sector project were especially suspect. Project staff members commented on the lack of formal procedures to govern the process of contracting a staff member. This is exemplified in one project worker’s statement:

I think that a key weakness is that there is no sort of HR process for hiring or sustaining project staff in projects. Like take me for example, I somehow just stumbled into helping with procurement because I did a few reports for another program and the consultant on that job was the same advisor on this project so naturally he was used to my system of doing things. (Participant 24)

This was reinforced by a senior public servant:

A big factor is HR practices. There is no real focus on the human side of capacity and we don’t really have the appropriate systems to retain or develop government staff and we have seem this filter into the personnel available for projects. (Participant 4)
One donor agency representative disclosed her frustrations about the lack of HR practices in government which hindered the quality of employees readily available to assist in projects:

Also in terms of HR the fact that these are newly formed ministries there is more of an emphasis on stabilizing processes rather than setting up proper practices to recruit and retain employees. This has negative effects on the staff that are available to work on the projects because they are not skilled enough or have the right attitude. (Participant 39)

A clear cause of this capacity issue was the little consideration given to HR aspects such as assignment of tasks and the professionalization of project staff in the planning stage. More specifically, there were extensive overlaps in projects that resulted in delays. Another disconcerting finding was the fact that civil servants felt a lack of commitment because their project work and the tasks that they fulfilled were not formally acknowledged in their job descriptions.

This was also found in the Urban Planning and Management project (Project Two) where the fast-paced decision making and urgency in recruiting extra consultants resulted in inadequacies in formulating consultant contracts and determining task descriptions were problematic and caused an overlap of expertise. Five consultants were recruited to provide urban planning expertise. However, two of the environmental specialists hired were also qualified and experienced urban planners. Therefore, the costs to hire and retain these advisors could have been mitigated if arrangements had been made to hire the environmental specialists to carry out the planning tasks. A donor representative reinforced this point:

HR sometimes falls on the back burner for us donors and this is again related to our assumptions. We used to play an active role about 5–10 years ago but once Tonga’s national priorities shift, our focus needs to move and we end up focusing on the new priority, and forget that we need to continue to develop HR systems. Because we are working towards Tonga’s overall development outcomes and in order to do that we need to continuously develop the HR systems and processes. (Participant 45)

One senior civil servant observed:

What I can see too is that long-term HR planning in government is an area that needs strengthening or actually needs to be developed. Like in one case, the MOH had someone to advise the planning of the project but they had to leave before the project was over or in other cases sometimes they [advisors] just don’t get the right skilled people to be working with and end up doing all these other jobs beyond their terms of reference. But I find that a key weakness is that there is no sort of planning, HR planning. (Participant 1)
8.5.2.1 Professionalization

The professionalization of civil servant project positions was identified as an HR issue that affected project management practices in the planning stage. The professionalization of positions refers to solidifying and formally acknowledging them through the institutionalization of job descriptions. This process is the act of legitimizing employee tasks through formal policies, regulations and contractual agreements which are generated in the initial stage of project planning. One civil servant described the lack of professionalization they had experienced:

*How do you get commitment from people when you don’t offer them a real position or stability for that matter? We tell them to go to this project and do this, six months later go this project and do this. This should be done at the start of the project so that everything is established. There really needs to be some foresight for this to happen and we have it but we just don’t put it into practice.* (Participant 5)

This point was emphasized by another civil servant:

*Because there are no formal contracts at the beginning of the project for these positions we see a period of transition where the ministry worker doesn’t engage fully in the project work because there is they are still in the routine and alliance of their own ministry.* (Participant 2)

Project staff felt a lack of engagement in project activities due to the short-term nature of projects but also because the affiliation of employees were not properly established. This lack of project staff commitment was highlighted in the Health Sector Management project (Project Three). There was a significant display of commitment to the project objectives and a sense of strong leadership from the MOH at the initial stage of the project. However, project staff did not share this commitment, as the executing agency and donor did not formally affirm their roles and job descriptions. Project staff situated in the MOH had conflicting views about their roles and responsibilities. This is because these employees are commissioned by the executing agency to implement their role within the ministry and have no formal agreement with the donor agency to conduct activities within the project. This creates confusion for the staff members as their role is not formalized and is not acknowledged as a position in its own right.

One civil servant who was intensely involved in the MOH project recalled:

*I really didn’t have my feet set on the ground because I was called to do things on the project and then I needed to do something for my policy job and because the project is temporary and my role in the project is not really confirmed I sometimes didn’t feel as dedicated to finishing the job as I should you know?* (Participant 3)
This statement reinforces the linkage between lack of commitment and failure to acknowledge civil servants for their project work and contributions. Project staff felt that their project roles not being formalized through contractual agreements and the temporal nature of projects ultimately affected their dedication and commitment towards achieving the project goals.

8.6  **Tui – the implementing stage**

In the second stage of the PLC, project activities are implemented and project staff members monitor the progress of these activities in an attempt to rectify any issues that arise in this phase. This stage executes the plans that were detailed in the previous stage (planning). This stage is associated with the *tui* stage of the *kakala* framework as it describes the act of threading and beading the floral pieces and arranging the flowers to create the garland. The *tui* stage has similar traits to the implementation stage in that there are set periods that allow parties to organize tools and resources to perform the activities established in the planning phase.

8.6.1  **Significance of relationships among project actors**

Relationships and networks were identified as a crucial soft aspect that played a significant role in legitimizing exchanges between civil servants and donor agencies. This section describes the importance of project staff having soft skills that facilitate the building and sustaining of relationships and how these connections influence project management approaches adopted. Furthermore, this section details the use of local advisors whose established networks and indigenous knowledge improve the engagement of international consultants in project activities. Drawing on different case examples, the relationships shared between civil servants, project actors and donor agencies, and their respective belief systems, values and cultural identities, are discussed in relation to how they influence the implementation of projects.

Establishing relationships and networks led to a sense of trust and confidence from the perspective of the foreign consultants, one of whom stated:

*Relationships are a key dimension to establishing trust and confidence in the process and the content of what you are training the counterparts with. So I think that if you initially build a partnership with the counterpart has a more vested interest, has a sense of ownership about his/her training.* (Participant 30)
A donor representative reiterated the significance of relationships in facilitating effective managerial practices and states:

*One of the things we found in our international guys is that in order to get some traction we need to build relationships right from the beginning. So the first 3 months of their contract should be dedicated to building relationships and gaining trust and confidence from government employees and project actors as this leads to more efficient management processes.* (Participant 43)

It was further noted that different types of donors (multilateral versus bilateral agencies) have different sorts of relationships with the state. Another donor representative stated:

*I suppose, we have a different sorts of relationship with bilateral agencies like Australia and New Zealand. Primarily because, well one of the reasons I think anyway is that Tonga is a member of ADM and a member of the World Bank.* (Participant 44)

A civil servant reinforced this point:

*I believe that we have a closer relationship with donors like NZAid because we have a long-standing history, trade relations, rapport and I guess we know how each other operate and that sort of limits the risk of failure.* (Participant 27)

These statements reveal that at the institutional level the Government of Tonga and donor agencies have established relationships that are based on historical trade and aid interactions.

One donor representative eloquently expressed the significance of relationships:

*I base my work around building relationships. I attempt to develop these connections with everyone that is involved because I think that it’s also important for the international guys to have that trust because the premise of development projects is partnership.* (Participant 39)

8.6.1.1 Counterparts with established relationships

Local counterparts or local advisors are often used by donor agencies to help facilitate the interpersonal aspects of international advisors’ engagement in the field. Local counterparts are civil servants assigned to assist foreign consultants in transitioning into the local context. These advisors play a significant role in facilitating the initial engagement of the consultants and assist in explaining departmental procedures, national frameworks, and in facilitating information searches in different ministries. A crucial component of this role is that civil servants should have already established relationships and rapport with the relevant agencies as they play a significant role in facilitating the process of foreign consultants engaging in the ministry.
One donor representative discussed the advantages of local counterparts and the importance of their experience and established relationships with other government employees in facilitating the implementation of activities:

*We found that ever since we took on board these local experts there has been a lot more progress. There is a case of one lady in particular, Mele Seini who is the former head of budget in Tonga and who is now a senior civil servant in the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. She has done a lot of work for us [donors] and she has been quite instrumental in making sure that the homework that we leave behind is done and one of the reasons for that is because she obviously has a lot of experience, she knows who to talk to and how to get them to do things. Some of the people in decision-making process are former colleagues or current subordinates but they have that relationship already. These relationships helped foreign consultants make decisions faster and be more responsive because they didn’t have to deal with figuring out who to get this from, how to do that. Mele Seini already had that rapport.* (Participant 45)

These established relationships play a significant role in facilitating project activities, particularly in the implementation stage. In light of the significance of interpersonal skills, it is evident that trust is an important component that is required for effective project management in development projects. The ADB is one development partner that has recognized this and utilizes local counterparts extensively due to their established connections. Trust is a fundamental principle that underpins the value of establishing relationships. According to one ADB representative:

*When you have local consultants that you can trust and that you have confidence in their capabilities to get the job done it really does affect the way that projects progress and are implemented. I have really found that we [donors] have really found it beneficial to use local advisors because the trust is already built in the relationships they have. So what we found that since we took on board these local counterparts was that things were able to move more fluidly through the department.* (Participant 46)

Another advantage of local experts is that they have a deep understanding of cultural protocols, which are lived realities for them. This was evident in the Urban Planning and Management System project (Project Three), where the assigned local counterpart’s age and cultural knowledge influenced the progression of the project to the next stage:

*The [donor] representative and consultant did not understand that our culture is based on structure and the status of staff members actually matters and it influences how things move forward. You know, you have to know people and have those links to make sure that it moves along. If you have the wrong person, asking for something it won’t happen. That is simply just that. It’s our culture and although it doesn’t look efficient this is tradition and our culture.* (Participant 6)
Another local counterpart related her experiences with civil servants attempting to get a procurement report signed off before construction activities could go forward. She explained that the implementation of the Urban Planning and Management System project was delayed due to the cultural misunderstanding on behalf of the foreign consultant:

*The original counterpart that was responsible for processing progress reports was a tu‘a (commoner) and so the report was sitting on his table for two weeks before I had to get another counterpart [noble] getting it signed off. Now it was not the fault of the employee as it is unpleasant to state or present one’s eiki (higher status) but it was really the fault of the project manager for not thinking of that aspect from the start.* (Participant 16)

One donor representative stated:

*It is important that we understand the subtle details of the Tongan culture as these features provide insight to the way they perceive processes. This is not to say that other cultures don’t value relationships but it highlights the way that relationships influence the efficiency of processes.* (Participant 29)

Another donor employee with experience in building rapport with Tongan counterparts emphasized the ease and fluidity of establishing relationships due to the common frames of thinking and the importance of sustaining linkages with project actors:

*We are based in Suva and most of us are Pacific Islanders so we really don’t have to work as hard to have that rapport with our counterparts in Tonga there is a lot of work too.* (Participant 46)

### 8.6.1.2 Local counterparts providing local knowledge

Another advantage of utilizing local counterparts is that these employees have a vast amount of local knowledge and are specialized and well versed in cultural practices. This can improve the efficiency of project processes in the implementation stage. One local counterpart commented:

*So you have Tongans to work as consultants with a project team because they know the country and the culture and the language, they can get the information a lot faster than consultants and they are there all the time. And the whole idea is for national consultants, what I told you before when my mission team come. We sit down and talk a lot, I can tell you we do fight a lot about ideas and issues in Tonga, they come with their thinking and say this is how it is, and I say no that is not how it is.* (Participant 6)

One civil servant highlighted the significance of relationships and stated:

*Because a lot of them [project managers] are I mean they are well qualified they have masters and have been these positions for a long time but because they don’t take the time to build that rapport with us here in the AMD and it’s hard because we base a lot of value on that.* (Participant 19)
8.6.2 Project team silos

Another finding relating to the implementation stage was the existence of project team silos. Evidence of these insular project groups materialized in the implementation stage as a result of poor information management. Project team silos affected various project management practices and influenced project outcomes. First, silos distort communication channels within and between business units, restricting the flow of information and affects the efficiency of project work. Second, silos create isolated units that function and operate independently. In addition to this, project teams have competing interests, which influences the commitment of project staff to the overall development agenda which their project is contributing towards. The nature of development activities requires a collaborative approach to implementing project activities. Therefore, project team silos have had a detrimental effect on project management practices and the overall outcome of development projects in Tonga.

Four out of the five projects analysed contained subproject units. These teams often functioned independently and their actions and decisions affected the operations and implementation of the larger project. These insular silos created disruptions in the flow of information between the project stages and more importantly the transfer of knowledge between project actors and government ministries. For instance, the Support for Economic and Strategic Management project (Project One) included a PSC as well as an Economic Development Committee responsible for guiding evaluation systems to assess economic policies. This specialized unit provided technical support and contributed to setting up project frameworks.

Project team silos were evident in the Urban Planning and Management System project (Project Two), which had a PSC that functioned independently from the project unit responsible for implementing the project. The PSC delegates were from various government departments in order to create a diverse pool of experts. The purpose of the PSC was to provide tactical guidance to the project manager and consultants. The PSC created a project management unit (PMU) to act as an administrative arm for the PSC and also supervise the procurement process, maintain accounts, and advise and guide the project team. The PMU was also responsible for the implementation of project activities and documenting and reporting the progress of the project to the executing agency and the ADB. The decisions of these two project team silos affected the larger project operations and were therefore crucial.
to understanding the project management approaches used in the implementation of the project.

Silo mentality and its varying effects such as withholding information were not only found within and between project teams but also identified on a more boarder, national level among government departments. AMD staff often acted as information hoarders and failed to transfer information on to the relevant ministries. One AMD civil servant stated:

*I think that we should be doing more to channel the information into the right departments. But because there is a sense of secrecy and sometimes competitive nature amongst our divisions we hold off. Its cause unproductive and inefficiency in other areas but when it is deep seated you really just have to go with it.* (Participant 19)

This is a worrying finding as the AMD is the central hub for diffusing aid information to all government departments. The common suppression of relevant knowledge due to departmental competition reveals a sense of rivalry and independence among government departments. In addition, the presence of secrecy among government departments implies the existence of distrust and doubt between ministries.

Although the decisions made by these project team silos had been influential to the functioning to Project Two, they functioned independently and focused on their own individualized objectives rather than the collective outcome of the overall project. The PSC was disconnected from the operations of the urban planning unit and the committee was unable to effectively report progress or issues to the executing agency and the PMU. As a result, civil servants and project staff did not receive accurate information and were at times ill-informed about the progress of activities. Furthermore, during the execution of activities, the PSC focused their efforts on establishing new procedures and systems for recording acquisitions and asset funds, which was one of their main unit objectives. The PSC’s attention and capacity was channelled towards this objective with little regard for disseminating information and collaborating with project actors and supporting units.

The Health Sector Management project was initiated to address the managerial inefficiencies in the MOH. A training programme was designed to address the autocratic management style that existed in the ministry and reform the rigid hierarchies that delineated formal lines of command and communication. Senior staff within the MOH were trained to adhere to a more collaborative, participatory approach to decision making and feedback initiatives to encourage more facilitative channels for communication between senior executives and
junior civil servants were introduced. The training programme was assigned to a completely separate project unit to execute and evaluate the training regime.

Again, this project unit operated independently from the wider project team and focused on implementing the training scheme with MOH senior managers. The training project unit failed to collaborate with the wider project team and as a result neglected to transfer relevant information. This was due to the fact that the project team concentrated on achieving their own objectives and producing the specific outcomes outlined for their specific project. A senior programme manager emphasized this point:

> What worries me is that it seems like they work in silos, they don’t have that collective team work to focus on the overall outcome. This is disappointing because it creates unnecessary pressure on the project manager and the implementing agency to fill the gap between these silos to make sure that everyone is getting the same information and that everyone has a clear vision in terms of the original projects. (Participant 29)

8.6.2.1 Project team silos creating communication barriers

The Upgrading and Refurbishment of Vaiola Hospital project (Project Four) included a Facilities and Equipment Committee that was responsible for liaising with Parliament regarding project activities and policies. It was found that four foreign advisors from JICA were contracted to advise the committee on the regulations and monitoring procedures required from the agency. These advisors voiced their concerns in regard to the committee’s disengagement from project work and claimed civil servants on the committee often had an overwhelming amount of procedural tasks that required attention which affected their ability to engage effectively with other supporting units and more importantly the project team.

According to one foreign advisor, these civil servants had:

> too much on their plate because they had to focus on some many things that could have been lessened if they collaborated with the other units. I mean, there are obvious benefits in concentrating all your capacity on your goals but in some ways you limit your capabilities to develop more generalized outcomes and to be perfectly frank I think this resulted in them disengaged from the whole process. (Participant 31)

The advisors also expressed their apprehension regarding secrecy of information and the lack of open dialogue between project actors and the committee. Covert information practices were seen as foreign to the international consultants who were accustomed to more fluid information systems, particularly in the implementation stage. An example of this type of behaviour was demonstrated in Project Four. An independent engineer was solicited to advise the project unit on the structural integrity of the renovations. The engineer made requests to the committee for building work reports, however these appeals were not dealt with in a
timely fashion and in some instances the engineer was treated evasively. The committee was denied timely information due to pressure to submit their own progress reports based on the building and construction documents that were previously requested by the engineer. One foreign advisor stated:

*The committee staff were unhelpful at the best of times. They were very closed off and secretive which I thought was strange because we were all working towards the same goal in trying to make these renovations successful. I tried to access some building work information and was given a bit of a run around because if granted access straight away the committee would essentially be set back a few weeks in their progress reports. (Participant 49)*

This reinforces points made earlier about a lack of information sharing because of significant and broader project coordination issues. This finding suggests that lines of communication at different levels of interpersonal, interdepartmental and interfirm (between donor agencies and government departments) were relatively weak. A foreign advisor reiterated this point:

*For projects like the Economic and Strategic Management project it was very hard to streamline the ministries’ outputs and impacts as there are insular units within the departments that have their own agendas, outside pressures and expectations that influence what they push for. So because of the lack of coordinated information project units and supporting divisions were fragmented. (Participant 34)*

### 8.7 *Luva – the evaluation stage*

The *luva* stage of the *kakala* framework refers to the act of offering the completed *kahoa kakala* to the attendee. Chapter 2 described the intricate details involved in the *luva* stage of the *kakala* framework. Metaphorically, this stage is closely related to the final contributions and wider implications of the scholarship generated from academic research. The act of offering the *kahoa kakala* in the Tongan culture demonstrates reciprocity and mutual cooperative exchange between parties. In the context of ceremonies and gatherings, offering a *kahoa kakala* to an honoured guest demonstrates the host’s gratitude and signifies the stature or calibre of the attendee.

The *luva* stage is associated in this thesis with the evaluation stage of the PLC, and it is intended that the overall outcome of this study will be a contribution to collective knowledge that will help to build a more coherent and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The evaluation stage is the systematic assessment of project outcomes and impacts in relation to the objectives. This assessment is broadly associated with appraising the projects’ contribution to the development efforts of the recipient country. This process is
closely associated with the *luva* stage as the offering of a garland is a declaration of the importance of the attendee’s presence at the occasion.

There was little understanding of what constitutes a project evaluation among civil servant participants, who were often impatient with the process. This is exemplified in a local advisors statement:

> Stakeholders don’t understand the concept of evaluation at the end of the project. They are not seeing results within the monitoring stage therefore don’t finish projects adequately. Evaluation reports are not completed. (Participant 47)

A local advisor reiterated this point and associated this lack of understanding with cultural perceptions:

> It is time consuming and requires a lot of reflection that as you know that doesn’t resonate with Tongans and that’s why I think it is difficult for some of them [civil servants] to understand. (Participant 27)

### 8.7.1 Lack of sustainable TA

Another common theme was that external consultants often failed to adequately impart knowledge and expertise and to train local employees, which led to questions about the sustainability of TA projects. The long-term sustainability of TA is discussed in the following section.

#### 8.7.1.1 Sustainability of TA

It was found that TA played a significant role in boosting the technical skills within projects. However, lack of consideration for the sustainability and longevity of TA undermined the effectiveness of short-term assistance, which was designed to strengthen the long-term capabilities of civil servants.

Capacity building has long been the focus of public sector development in order to cultivate more resilient and productive civil servants and improve their ability to perform project activities. There are varying interpretations of what constitutes capacity building; variable terminology is used due to the different perceptions and definitions that frame the concept. Regardless of the varying definitions and jargon, the central idea behind capacity building remains that developing efficient institutions and effective project staff promotes ownership.

TA is a fundamental feature of capacity building. Donor agencies utilize foreign consultants as TAs and solicit these consultants to develop and train civil servants to perform tasks effectively. Three out of the five projects in this study were capacity-building endeavours.
The results of these projects were assessed as unsustainable as the training and coaching provided by TAs was insufficient in developing the capacity of civil servants to perform project activities.

A notable flaw realized in the evaluation stage of the Urban Planning and Management System project (Project Two) was the lack of sustainable outcomes. This was noted in the evaluation report:

Comprehensive and realistic assessment of the existing capacity and resources available within a proposed implementing agency is necessary prior to planning capacity building activities, especially if the recipient agency is weak and medium – to long-term strengthening actions are required to generate a sustainable outcome. (TA Completion Report, 2009, p. 2)

A significant number of advisors were contracted to provide various technical expertise in developing the capacity of staff within the PUMD to perform their own planning and infrastructure design tasks. However, it was identified that the method used to develop these institutional capacities was not effective and technical skills were not retained within the division. Training schemes on environmental planning and technical consultations were not adequate, and three of the civil servants involved in the training attested to their complexity and difficulty, which led to lack of skills transfer. One civil servant stated:

\[
\text{We were not provided with training manuals or guides and it was really difficult to follow the advisor because the advisor knows the technical side urban planning inside out but he didn’t know how to train people. So most of the training sessions he was just doing all the work himself and not really talking about the steps or why he was doing what he was doing. So then when we are asked to do it again we didn’t know how to because the advisor just did it all and didn’t really train us. (Participant 10)}
\]

This brings to light questions regarding the quality of TAs. There has been a long-standing discussion in the literature in regard to the extent to which TAs develop the capacity to replace themselves (Blunt et al., 2011; Hirschmann, 2003). However, these discussions have been centred on the quantity and length of a consultant’s assignment in the field, and fail to address the variation in quality of advisors who are contracted to provide technical support.

Another issue concerning the sustainability of TA projects was the fact that advisors completed tasks without completely training civil servants. This was evident in the Urban Planning and Management System project. The PUMD was created to guide and govern project activities associated with urban development in Tonga. As mentioned earlier, the
PUMD was made up of donor consultants, ministry delegates and specialized project management experts (consultants). One civil servant stated:

*When the project ended all of the foreign guys [international consultants] left and it left a big gap in the PUMD because we were so used to them dealing with all the work. I mean they are very uptight about standards so at times it was easier for them to do it rather than for our guys [civil servants] do it because then they will have to come back and fix our mistakes.* (Participant 9)

This reveals a sense of dependence on foreign consultants to perform tasks when the civil servants were supposed to develop the skills to conduct their own project activities.

From the perspective of donor agencies, sustainability was an aspect to be considered at a more general programmatic level and less in the context of projects. This is reflected in one donor representative’s statement:

*We get asked a lot of times about what is the sustainability of this program and a lot of thought has to go into this. It is identifying the right type of capacity building at the design or conception stage. So we have to actually justify that this can be a sustainable training.* (Participant 43)

Another donor agency representative claimed that TAs are overall ineffective and inefficient and stated:

*I think TAs are not effective because it is not as sustainable as building the capacity of ministries from scratch. They are then able to manage and coordinate their own development. You know that staff turnover is quite high so you lose a lot of institutional knowledge you have a lot of new people.* (Participant 33)

### 8.7.1.2 Lack of framework to measure quality of TAs

There were no frameworks used to measure the performance of TAs and, as noted in the previous section, the quality of service and training provided by these consultants was questionable and affected the sustainability of training schemes. A significant number of international consultants were solicited to train civil servants and in some instances provide technical expertise in project units and government departments. The variability in the level of expertise of consultants and their ability to train civil servants was an important aspect that was addressed by civil servants, with one commenting:

*There have also been questions about the quality and capacity of consultants because it’s a mixed bag. Sometimes you get good ones and other times there are issues with how much project training they have.* (Participant 18)

Another civil servant reiterated this point:
The advisors’ capacity in the project was very poor but you know it’s always different with the advisors. We have a pool of commonly used ones that we like to use but at the end of it has to be signed off by the donors, so it’s really not up to us. (Participant 15)

This was confirmed by a local advisor, who stated:

I have to admit the quality of TA is slowly deteriorating and I have to put it down to the donors for having these haphazard ways of selecting consultants. I remember 8 years ago when I was involved in providing financial advisory services for this project and I remember clearly the project manager was a very young consultant who had all of these degrees but no experience in financial processing. It’s very bad.

(Participant 28)

8.7.2 Transparency in evaluation reports

Four out of the five projects in this study failed to explain the assessment methods used to evaluate the completed project. Despite the small sample size, if 80% of the projects had unsubstantiated assessments then questions must be raised concerning the accuracy and legitimacy of the results presented in the assessment reports. Moreover, concerns were raised in regard to the validity of the conclusions drawn in evaluation reports. This raises concerns regarding the credibility of post-project appraisals. The Tonga Graduate Diploma in Public Sector Management Courses (Project Five) was the only project that clearly disclosed the evaluation methods used to harvest results, namely the tracer study technique. The quality and the legitimacy of the tracer study method has been extensively recognized in pedagogy evaluation literature (Worthen & Schmitz, 1997).

One of the purposes of the evaluation report is for donor agencies to hold recipients accountable. However, evidence from two projects illustrates the commonality of the practice of falsifying project results in project evaluations. This was evident in Project One and Project Two where project actors could not corroborate details regarding specific outcomes in reports. The Urban Planning and Management System (Project Two) evaluation report disclosed that certain project outcomes were realized, however upon investigation it was found that these claims were unsubstantiated. For instance, the outcome concerning the training of the PUMD staff was reported as positively achieved. However, when project staff were questioned regarding this outcome, their account was significantly different from what was detailed in the report. One civil servant who worked on procurement documents for the Urban Planning Management project stated:

As far as I know, there was no real training for the PUMD for the Urban Planning and Management project. To be honest, I think that the training was only between the
CEO and the advisor. So it was very isolated so I wouldn’t call that a training. (Participant 9)

Another civil servant affirmed this point:

*I would use the word training lightly because it didn’t really happen that way. There wasn’t any two day workshop or a group of us going through and being trained. Like, we really didn’t get trained. None of us did to be honest. There was technical support that came in and advised the planners but they didn’t have a training program. It was more to see if they understood the core components of structural fit and urban planning and then that was it. So it was very light. I think it was more of a conversation.* (Participant 10)

This contradicts the results reported in evaluation report, which states:

*Capacity building in the PUMD was done mainly in conjunction with the development of the UIDP and included, (a) provision of technical advice, assistance and training for the preparation of a range of plans, including urban frameworks, action area plans, sustainable management plans, plans for special areas such as ecological and historically important sites, and regional plans.* (ADB, 2013)

The discrepancies between these sources raise questions regarding not only the transparency of government departments, but also the credibility of evaluation reports commissioned and delivered by donor agencies.

The speculative nature of the results presented in evaluation reports was also apparent in Support for Economic and Strategic Management (Project One). Inconsistencies between evaluation documents and the perceptions of project staff undermined the credibility of the evaluation report. For instance, the report stated “objectives have been satisfactorily achieved” (ADB, 2013) but also noted that the official status of the project was “partially successful”. These are significant indicators of the speculative nature of the assessment rating. Furthermore, the evaluator and author of the evaluation report was an internal staff member, which further hindered the credibility of the results presented in the report.

These points indicate some serious issues around the plausibility and transparency of donor agencies’ evaluation practices. Another point that exacerbates questions of legitimacy is the disconcerting practice of appointing internal employees (assigned from within donor agency) to formally evaluate projects. Three of the five projects under investigation were formally evaluated by internal staff, which suggests that this is common practice. The OECD Development Assistance Committee point out that transparency of the evaluation process is pivotal to the credibility and legitimacy of the assessment results reported.
8.7.2.1 Bottlenecks in feedback loop

The serious questions raised in the previous section regarding the legitimacy and credibility of project success claims in evaluation reports arose from two factors. First, internal ADB employees from the Pacific Division conducted the evaluation reports in question. When evaluators/authors of the report have a stake in the success of the project, this undermines the disclosures made. Second, multilateral donor agencies such as the ADB fund their projects and humanitarian efforts through the substantial financial pledges of diplomatic agencies and international institutions. Consequently, donor agencies have to exhibit favourable project results in order to continue to receive funds from these institutions.

Agencies such as NZAid have stringent evaluation checklists such as the Activity Evaluation Decision Checklist, a matrix used to assess the feasibility and legitimacy of project evaluation. However, the results of these donor-driven assessments are not shared with government departments, which hinders the ability of departments to address and respond to the feedback in a timely manner. This point was made by a civil servant:

*Evaluation results are not filtered through to the right agencies and that is to the detriment of those departments as they do not have sufficient information to move forward.* (Participant 18)

8.7.2.2 Reporting evaluation results

There were significant issues raised regarding the methods and systems used to report the evaluation results. According to an experienced donor agency representative:

*In smaller projects, especially the capacity building projects stakeholders do not understand the concept of evaluation at the end of the project. They are not seeing results within the monitoring stage therefore do not finish projects. Evaluations are then not completed therefore no reporting is done.* (Participant 37)

A civil servant reiterated this point:

*Because they are not trained to evaluate projects and identify intangible outcomes they don’t report it. That is where we come in. We know how to do all these [evaluate] and identify these things the problem lies in not having enough of us to do that.* (Participant 17)

A civil servant talked about the quality of assessment methods:

*We don’t critically assess the quality of evaluation methods here on the ground. We really just use what the donors tell us to use.* (Participant 3)

Another civil servant supports this point:
The quality is not questioned and of course there are technical things we examine but in terms of the overall quality of methods it is left up to the AMD and donor agencies to ensure that the right techniques are given to us. (Participant 10)

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the findings of this study, which reveal a lack of effective project management practices used to govern project activities. Part I revealed the lack of coordination strategies, with both donor and development coordination strategies absent at the governance level. The absence of these vital strategies influenced the enactment of project management practices in the projects analysed. Part II exposed the different project management practices (or lack thereof) enacted in each of the PLC stages. In the planning phase, project staff lacked planning and design skills and also failed to incorporate HR practices. In the implementation stage, relationships among project actors were confirmed as an important aspect of project management practices. Local counterparts were recognized as personnel that possessed these established relationships and trusted networks. Another finding that emerged from the implementation phase was the existence of project team silos. Finally, two significant findings were found regarding the evaluation stage. First, the sustainability of TA was not successful in the long term. Second, the transparency of the evaluation reports was found to be questionable. The following chapter explores the implications of these findings and provides reflections in relation to the current project management literature.
CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION– TUI

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter systematically presented the issues identified by the research participants in the general Tongan aid context and more specifically the project management practices within each PLC stage. The research findings indicate the lack of effective project management practices used in Tongan development projects. More specifically, the findings identify a lack of cultural consciousness on behalf of foreign consultants, the existence of project team silos, and the absence of planning competences, all of which negatively influence development projects in Tonga. This chapter discusses these findings and engages with existing literature to identify the implications of this study for knowledge and practice. In line with the kakala framework, this chapter weaves all the threads and fabrics to create the final kahoa kakala (garland). Metaphorically, this represents the act of synthesizing the findings presented in the previous chapter and drawing on existing literature to explain what they imply for theory and practice.

9.2 Democratic reform in Tonga

In 2008, the presiding monarch at the time, the late King George V, launched and promoted Tonga’s shift towards a more democratic system of governance. This political reform was initiated during the establishment and implementation of the selected projects. As a result, certain government departments merged to provide more efficient and accurate policies.

The democratic reform has transformed the institutional structure and, more importantly, the capability of ministries to manage and coordinate development projects. Various administrative arms have been reorganized and as a result the project governing systems are not adequately developed. Reporting systems were altered which affected managerial functions such as chain of command and organizational culture. This has in turn influenced the productivity and effectiveness of civil servants to adequately perform their duties. Although these issues are expected in an evolving democracy, there is still an urgency for ministries to govern activities and be accountable for these actions.

Through this evolving political reform, various administrative arms have reorganized to deliver more efficient and effective services for citizens. This is reflected in the formation of the Ministry of Infrastructure. In an attempt to streamline the services provided by the various
transport ministries (Aviation, Land and Transport, Marine and Ports), the Ministry of Infrastructure consolidated their services.

In addition to this democratic reform process, the projects in this study were initiated at a time that Tonga’s economy was severely affected by the 2008 global financial crisis. As Kumar and Singh (2010) note, little progress has been made towards financial stability and economic security since the crisis: “there is no definite policy option for Tonga in response to the global crisis but long term planning towards the primary sector is likely to give favorable results” (p. 13).

General aid context

9.3 Project coordination

In the field of public administration, coordination is defined as “synchronizing of system elements to forge a coherent, integrated whole” (Roberts, 2011, p. 677). Thus, coordination is not understood in terms of its results but by the attempts to integrate and design system activity (Roberts, 2011). This study extends the understanding of coordination and examines the process of coordination through donor coordination among sponsoring agencies and development coordination at the national/sectoral level.

The findings reveal that the inadequate coordination of multiple development projects resulted in project duplication and caused administrative burdens. There were issues present in the two levels of coordination, development and donor coordination. At the local level, development coordination was ineffective because of the absence of information sharing among project units and government departments. In regard to donor agency coordination, participants noted that sponsoring institutions often viewed coordination mechanisms as a measure of power, which widened the distance between recipient and agency.

Aid coordination has been characterized as an important component in delivering effective aid (Bigsten & Tengstam, 2015) and has become a hot topic with recent special editions of World Development focusing on elucidating the supply side of aid coordination (Addison & Tarp, 2015). Literature regarding aid coordination investigates donor mechanisms and arrangements for organizing development projects. The surge of academic attention has highlighted the fragmentation in donor coordination but there remains a significant gap in understanding in regard to how recipient institutions coordinate development projects.
Moreover, studies have concentrated on the macro, strategic level of aid coordination with little attention paid to project operation coordination.

In global development agendas, aid coordination is perceived as the most enticing objective for aid activities as it results in more meaningful and desirable aid results. The benefit of aid coordination for recipient governments is that projects target the intended stakeholders. On the other hand, the advantage of successfully coordinating development projects for donor agencies is the reduction in transaction costs. Therefore, effectively coordinating development projects ensures the efficient delivery of development projects. Bourguignon and Platteau (2015) state that these benefits are “achieved through more effective disciplining of the central or local government agencies in the host countries” (p. 95).

9.3.1 Development coordination

The previous chapter noted that development coordination relates to aid coordination at the national/sectoral level and involves synchronizing policies with aid commitments. This aspect of coordination is therefore dependent on the quality and effectiveness of national policies and institutions. A specific aspect that influenced the development coordination of the projects in this study was the lack of information sharing among project units and government departments. This issue was further exacerbated by the absence of a knowledge management system in the central aid management unit. Bourguignon and Platteau (2015) confirm the causal relationship between the lack of centralized information systems and the failure of aid coordination. Kilby (2011) echoes the findings of this study and states that “efforts to reduce aid fragmentation typically emphasize the role of information sharing in donor coordination” (p. 1989).

Wenner (2007) and Bourguignon and Platteau (2015) argue for the promotion of information sharing and suggest that central aid departments within government should cultivate an organizational culture that endorses open exchange of data. Lack of information sharing and collaboration also perpetuates the silo mentality. Roberts (2011) states that “smokestacks and silos, metaphors for the inability to share information and integrate system activity, focus on attention on the lack of coordination throughout government” (Roberts, 2011, p. 677). Therefore, facilitating the exchange of information and encouraging a more collaborative platform for sharing knowledge are important for coordination.

Civil servants saw roundtable discussions as an important mechanism used to provide a space and encourage open dialogue to share aid information. Roundtable discussions enable
development partners to build transparent lines of communication and help improve information transfer between donor agencies and government departments. However, roundtable discussions were found to be ineffective for facilitating collaborative strategies and aligning systems due to donors withholding crucial information regarding aid activities.

9.3.2 Donor agency coordination

This study found that the lack of alignment between donor coordination strategies hindered the initiation of development projects. Donor agencies were reluctant to align systems and generate a common procurement and administrative system for more productive project coordination. The need to harmonize donor systems is highlighted in the literature as a significant aspect for effective project outcomes (Kilby, 2011). The lack of a common system for reporting and monitoring projects results in donor agencies imposing varying frameworks, which in turn leads to administrative burdens for government departments. This approach to coordination is viewed as “top down and heavily centralized decision making” that results in poor project coordination at the sectoral level (Winther-Schmidt, 2011, p. 55). Rather, coordination strategies should be reflective of the institutional mechanisms of recipient governments. Precedence should be given to inclusive, participatory approaches to coordination that include and encourage the use of recipient systems.

The Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles (2007) accentuate the significance of development coordination strategies and state “Pacific development partners and countries pursue a coordinated approach in the delivery of assistance. Encouraging harmonization will be a priority for both” (PFIS, 2007, p. 1). This principle implies that development partners and government ministries should share information with relevant parties. More critically, similar to global aid effectiveness guidelines such as the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Coordination (2011), the regional agenda targets institutional frameworks at a strategic level but fails to provide more specific tactics for coordinating projects at the ministry level.

9.3.2.1 Power

Another finding that emerged was that donors often resisted harmonizing their activities, perceiving such a move as renouncing their power over project activities. Power in the aid effectiveness discourse is perceived as a notion that gives beneficiaries a voice. Participatory approaches and the endorsement of ownership strategies, as outlined in global agendas, are both attempts to encourage development partners to regulate development and align their
efforts to recipient systems. One of the few studies that have explored power differentials in development projects is by Ika and Hodgson (2014), who argue that power is not limited to the wider coordination strategies but also influences the project management approaches used within projects.

This study found that bilateral agencies tended to suppress the request of government agencies to align and further harmonize their managerial practices such as project monitoring systems. Civil servants commented on the deep-seated nature of the power struggle between bilateral agencies. Historically, neighbouring states such as New Zealand and Australia have exerted their power by establishing control over small islands in the Pacific. These control mechanisms include absolute power and governance, as exemplified in the relationship between New Zealand and Niue. This Trans-Tasman rivalry is not only present in the governance systems but also represented at the micro level and manifested through the coordination of development projects systems. This finding goes beyond the exposure of coordination strategies as a measure of power and suggests that collaborating on coordination strategies is a process to widen the power distance between bilateral agencies themselves. In addition, this study reveals that coordination strategies are used beyond the utility scope of the mechanism.

9.4 Divergence in structural formation of PLC framework

This study found that civil servants in various government departments had a superficial understanding of the PLC framework that ultimately influenced the way that project management practices were enacted in specific project phases. This weak understanding of the PLC is perpetuated by the structural divergences imposed by different donor agencies. This finding suggests that donor agencies impose structural changes to the PLC model under the assumption that civil servants and, more widely, government departments have the necessary skills to apply these frameworks. Structural changes and inconsistencies resulted in the dependence of government departments on TA from external agencies to conduct the relevant project management activities. Furthermore, government departments experienced administrative burdens as a consequence of the differing bureaucratic systems imposed by sponsors.

Scholars such as Cracknell (1996) and Khang and Moe (2008) emphasize the advantages of using the PLC model as an effective tool for organizing project work. Landoni and Corti (2011) recognize that donor agencies impose contrasting approaches to applying the PLC
framework. However, these authors provide a superficial and simplistic comparison of different structural frameworks with little critical analysis. Landoni and Corti only compare the number of stages and the ways in which project activities are segmented. Another disconcerting aspect of this study is that it was purely based on secondary data in the form of agency guidelines and fails to provide empirical results to support the discussion. The present study therefore provides empirical evidence to support the ineffectiveness of imposing different structural models and its influence on the application of project management practices within different stages of the PLC.

As stated in the literature review, there are two dominant theoretical perspectives for understanding and distinguishing the task and organizational perspectives of project management (Yung, 2014). The task perspective emphasizes planning and controlling functions exemplified by the PLC framework. The different PLC structures concentrate on different functions and often focus on the learning orientation of the PLC framework. This is exemplified by AusAID’s PCM structure that emphasizes learning and adapting in an additional implementation stage. This iterative cycle enables project actors to reflect on project practices to provide lessons learnt and enhance the project management practices used in future development endeavours. JICA imposes its PDCA structure that encourages consistent monitoring and injecting feedback into the cycle in order to rectify issues in a timely fashion. Again, this structure encourages reflection and learning in the cycle. These alterations deviate from the task perspective and focus more on cyclical learning capabilities. This is a key divergence from the traditional task conceptualization of the PLC framework and departs from the planning and controlling functions of the model to encourage a facilitative, knowledge-based framework.

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**Project management practices within the PLC framework**

### 9.5 Planning stage

#### 9.5.1 Lack of hard project management skills

This study found that civil servants lacked planning and design competences which resulted in the duplication of projects and further negatively influenced project outcomes. Scholars such as Golini and Landoni (2014) stress the importance of project identification in the initial planning and design stage and assert that the focal objective of this phase is to define the scope and determine the goals of the project. Historically delivering development assistance
has been based on trickle-down or top-down approaches to identifying development priorities. A key feature of this type of strategy is that development projects are supply-driven with donor agencies taking responsibility for identifying the vulnerabilities in social services, standard of living and institutional capacities and then initializing a project to addresses these gaps.

The emergence of principles such as ownership and the movement towards a bottom-up approach to project recognition have shifted to the onus of problem identification on to recipient governments. These assumptions are clearly endorsed in regional aid effectiveness agendas such as the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles for more effective aid. The central argument behind this movement is that projects should be demand-driven so that recipient countries exercise leadership and as a result are accountable for project activities. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this finding implicitly contradicts the positive notions of the demand-driven strategy of project identification that endorses the principle of ownership. The responsibility for identifying projects is placed on government departments but the competence and tools for effectively recognizing and further initiating projects were not evident.

Out of the five projects analysed, only two project proposals detailed a feasibility criterion. This points to the absence of quality assessment in evaluating project proposals. This finding also demonstrates that there were no donor mechanisms in place to audit project plans and ensure legitimate project initiation. In Chapter 7, the Activity Management Cycle used to govern the process for acquiring and securing funding for a project was described. A significant step in this cycle is the assessment of the project proposal by the AMD and a third party. This study reveals a concerning lack of donor assessment of the feasibility of project proposals.

The feasibility of projects involving TA and training initiatives are particularly difficult to assess due to the longevity of such projects. This is a particularly difficult issue, as it requires a certain reflective process on the part of government departments. It is also difficult to measure the usefulness and feasibility of training schemes as the value and outcomes of these initiatives are subjective.

9.5.1.1 Cultural categorization of knowledge

The way in which Tongans categorize knowledge and appoint specialized custodians of forms of knowledge may reveal why civil servants lack planning skills. The responsibility
and act of identifying and substantiating projects is placed on government departments. This finding reveals that projects are often initiated on an instinctive basis with little evidence to substantiate the rationale for a project. Civil servants lack key competences and tools to effectively recognize and validate the inception of projects. These types of skills are recognized as crucial managerial competences and are in practice only enacted by qualified, experienced or senior employees in the department (as explained in Chapter 7). However, the findings reveal that senior civil servants failed to take responsibility for identifying vulnerabilities and instead relied on international consultants to legitimize proposals and ensure that the intended projects were aligned with their strategic framework. An explanation for the lack of responsibility displayed by public servants is the distinct way in which Tongans’ categorize knowledge. Tongan knowledge is categorized as collective knowledge and highly specialized knowledge. Project identification skills are perceived as a highly functional, specialized type of competence that requires skilled, experienced and well-equipped staff to perform. Project managers or international consultants are considered learned people (tufunja) who are perceived as the guardians or bearers of knowledge.

Project management has been described as an authorized expertise and recognized as an official approach to governing and coordinating project activities (Buganza, Kalchschmidt, Bartezzaghi, & Amabile, 2013). Project managers are solely responsible for performing project management activities and are responsible for governing the project to completion. Project managers are assigned by donor agencies and are experts that have number of crucial skills required to successfully manage the project to completion (Brière et al., 2015). More importantly, trained project managers are equipped with the skills to identify, validate and substantiate project concepts in the initial stage. Tongan civil servants view project management competence as a specialized knowledge base and consider only qualified project managers/foreign advisors (experts/custodians of the specialized knowledge) to have the legitimacy to enact these managerial activities. Therefore, the distinctive way of categorizing knowledge and bestowing custodianship could influence the actions and behaviours of Tongan civil servants in development projects and explain why they fail to actively engage in project management activities.

Knowledge in this sense is not afforded to everyone, particularly specialized functional knowledge such as project management. Knowledge is therefore restricted to the specific custodians of the specialized functional knowledge such as project management who are associated with authority and privilege. This is reflected in the tui stage, where indigenous
weaving patterns are only understood and known by certain women in the village. This type of indigenous knowledge is only understood and practised by women who are authorized to learn the weaving patterns (this idea was discussed in more detail in Chapter 2).

Another possible reason for the absence of critical planning skills may relate to the lack of training provided to strengthen project identification capabilities. Training programmes were difficult to enact due to the complexities of donor agency conditions and the prominence of the use of TAs. This connects with another prominent theme that emerged from the evaluation stage: the lack of sustainability of TA.

9.5.1.2 Institutionalization of “best practices” planning tools

Similar to the different PLC structures instituted by donor agencies, it was found that different sponsoring agencies imposed different planning tools. This finding reflects the institutionalization of “best practice” tools in the planning stage. There is to some degree a strong assumption held in government departments that institutionalizing frameworks such as the Logframe will ultimately lead to more successful and effective planning. The findings of this study contradict the traditional narrative that asserts that planning tools should be adapted to the nature of the project objectives (Ika & Saint-Macary, 2012; Jones et al., 2009).

This finding supports the finding of Landoni and Corti (2011) that different planning tools imposed by different donor agencies cause administrative burdens. Landoni and Corti found that institutions imposed best practice planning tools with little regard or attention paid to their utility or whether the techniques were user-friendly. The Project Management for Development Professionals (PMD-Pro1) certification scheme has played a significant role in formalizing best practices and creating a network for collaborative learning in project management practice. This network further endorses the use of accredited tools and frameworks and allows for the adaptation of established planning tools such as the Logframe (Hermano et al., 2013).

9.5.2 Lack of people focus

This study found a lack of HR practices used in the projects analysed. This is despite the literature identifying HR management practices one of the focal elements that contribute to project success (Yang, Chen, Wu, Huang, & Cheng, 2015). The behavioural perspective of HR argues that HR practices have a positive effect on employee behaviour which contributes to project behaviour (Yang et al., 2015). HR management can positively influence job
satisfaction and employee commitment (Berman, 2015). This substantiates the findings of this study, which argues that a lack of HR practices negatively influenced employee performance in project activities and led to objectives not being fully achieved.

In contrast to the findings of this study, Pinto and Prescott (1988) argue that the human aspect is a managerial component that has little influence on project success. However, the constructs/items Pinto and Prescott used to represent HR practices failed to acknowledge the complexities of managing capacity. For instance, the constructs were grouped into a “Personnel” item on the questionnaire and did not adequately separate recruitment, selection and training as constructs on their own. Studies by Belout (1998) and Belout and Gauvreau (2004) provide statistical results that further undermine the impact of HR practices on project success. Their findings attest that the lack of consensus as to what constitutes HR in project management fragments the development of more effective HR practices.

This study contests this stance and argues that HR management practices are a significant aspect that contribute not only to project success but also to the efficiency of government departments. This argument is based on the lack of commitment of civil servants to project objectives and the absence of a recruitment and employee retention scheme within government departments. HR aspects that are not considered in projects include the assignment of tasks and the professionalization of project staff in project work.

9.5.2.1 Hard planning systems versus soft aspects

HR has long been an issue in development projects and is recognized in donor agency reports and ministerial documents as one of the central components that need addressing in order to improve project results (AusAID, 2014). Project management is grounded in a hard paradigm that emphasizes control mechanisms and mechanistic frameworks with little attention paid to soft elements such as HR management (Crawford et al., 2003; Crawford & Pollack, 2004; Hanisch & Wald, 2011). Hard project management paradigms accentuate instrumentality, rationality and objectivity, and are heavily reliant on deterministic models and therefore view project management practices through clearly defined parameters emphasizing well-defined objectives and established managerial functions (Crawford et al., 2003; Pollack, 2009). These characteristics are intrinsic to the task-oriented perspective of project planning that devalues the impact of HR in project results (Yung, 2014). The findings of this study support a shift in epistemological assumptions to recognize the importance of soft system elements such as HR that incorporate contextual complexities, content ambiguities and cyclical processes.
9.5.2.2 Professionalization

This study found that project job descriptions were ill defined resulting in civil servants lacking commitment to their roles. The lack of recognition public servants received for their involvement in project work is noted in the literature as a failure of professionalization. This concept refers to the solidifying and formal acknowledgement of staff positions through the institutionalization of job descriptions. In this study, civil servants’ project work was not crystallized through formal job descriptions and contracts, leading to a lack of commitment to achieving the project objectives. Roth (2012) points out that the “professionalization process can have positive effects not only from aid recipient, who obtain better services and for the careers of aid personal, but also for donors and hiring aid organizations which benefit from a skilled workforce” (Roth, 2012, p. 1459). Following such a process would lead to substantial improvements in commitment from government employees involved in development projects.

9.6 Implementation stage

9.6.1 Significance of relationships

Relationships play a significant role in facilitating project management processes in the implementation stage (Donate, Peña, & Sánchez de Pablo, 2015). Relationships are a focal dimension embedded in Tongan cultural values and customs which emphasizes the connection of the individual to one’s spiritual being, land, family, clan, water, and so on. This section describes the importance of project staff having soft skills that emphasize building and sustaining relationships and how these connections influence project management approaches adopted.

There has been a consistent lack of attention paid to the views and values of project staff in development work. Fechter (2012) notes that “much of development research has tended to focus on institutions rather than individuals, although an incipient emphasis on personal change and agency may be emerging” (Fechter, 2012, p. 1387). Little research is devoted to the influence of relationships and networks of project staff and their impact on project management practices. This finding addresses the significance of soft skills such as interpersonal competence which inform relationships.

Tongan cultural values emphasize collectivism through the principles of tauhi’va (reciprocity) and mamahi’mea (loyalty). These principles ultimately guide an individual’s
actions and behaviour and heavily rely on the interaction and engagement in spaces that encourage relationships. Due to the heavy significance of collectivist, interdependent attributes, Tongans therefore define themselves based on the relationships that they have cultivated. The complexity of relationships between donor agencies and recipient government is an established stream of literature in the aid effectiveness discourse. Khang and Moe (2008) argue that the complex relationships between project stakeholders influence the project management approaches, tools and practices used in development projects. Landoni and Corti (2011) further assert that relationships play a significant role in facilitating project processes.

Firstly, the recognition of differing types of relationships among international institutions and donor agencies suggests an element of elitism. Multi-lateral institutions such as ADB consists of the economic elite and policy planning networks that possess power. Whereas bilateral agencies such as AusAID is governed by an independent democratic administration. This aspect of development practice accentuates the imbalance of power in regard to Tonga’s own negotiating power in developing and taking ownership of their own coordination strategies. These inequalities were also evident in Tonga’s efforts to attain membership in the World Trade Organization (Wallis, 2010). Modern forms of colonialism are manifested through unequal trade agreements and regional treaties have perpetuated the power differentials between bilateral donors such as New Zealand and Australia. Secondly, a possible explanation for the differing relationships could suggest that there are different levels of trust between civil servants and donor agencies. Trust is an implicit aspect of relationships. Doney et al. (1998) found that societal norms and values or national culture influences the cognitive trust-building process between managers and subordinates. The authors convincingly argue that culture influences the cognitive processes which in turn affect the trust in relationships.

This finding therefore supports those of Zwikael, Shimizu and Globerson (2005), Bredillet, Yatim and Ruiz (2009) and Golini and Landoni (2014) who argue that the cultural values that bind an indigenous community should be considered in project management practices. Zwikael et al. (2005) specifically note: “project managers in different countries run project of similar nature, but in different ways. Differences may derive from cultural distinctions” (p. 454).
9.6.1.1 Local counterparts with established relationships

This research found that local counterparts or advisors exhibited established relationships and utilized these connections to engage in more efficient project processes in the implementation stage. Ramaprasad and Prakash (2003) endorse the use of local counterparts as crucial human assets that are able to strengthen the capacity of other local employees to implement future project activities and hence contributing to the sustainability of the project. Local counterparts are government employees assigned to assist foreign consultants to transition to the local context. This position involves aiding consultants in departmental procedures, national frameworks and facilitating information searches in different ministries. Local counterparts are expected to provide knowledge and experience on local operations and systems and provide crucial links for international consultants through their established rapport with key project stakeholders (ministerial staff members, private sector actors and other external agency workers). These advisors have established relationships and rapport with relevant agencies and play a significant role in facilitating project activities.

As mentioned earlier, Tongans define themselves in relation to their family’s connection to the monarch, which implicitly reveals individuals’ social rank. This is a distinctive Tongan cultural norm that helps explain why the personal relationships and established rapport developed by civil servants are important and play a role in facilitating project management activities. Muriithi and Crawford (2003) suggest that cultural values influence the application of standard project management practices and processes: “when [project management is] used in cultures whose values are not based on economic rationality, the techniques may be inappropriate and results in project failure” (p. 311).

Tongan cultural values are based on the interconnectedness of different spheres of life and are related to the interdependence of living organisms in terms of nature, the human spirit and familial relations. The enactment of these cultural values is not isolated to social interactions of different spheres. The value of relational interactions of project actors is highlighted by this particular finding, which provides empirical validation of the significance of cultural norms and their influence both on the project management practices employed and on the way that civil servants perceive them. It further highlights the need for donor agencies to make more of an effort to build a rapport with civil servants and other project actors.

Zwikael et al. (2005) claim that differences in the application of project management approaches can be associated with cultural differences. Furthermore, the authors caution that
“mismanaging cultural differences can render otherwise successful managers and organizations ineffective and frustrated when working across cultures” (Zwikael et al., 2005, p. 454). However, Zwikael et al. (2005) do not account for differences in managerial styles which could potentially influence the enactment of project management practices. Moreover, the authors use the term ‘culture’ frivolously and fail to distinguish between the three most dominate types of culture: national culture (of project manager/project staff); organizational culture; and individual/team culture. Culture tends to be treated superficially in project management studies and has been pigeonholed into one category of social interaction. Rees-Caldwell and Pinnington (2013) echo this when they state that “a further problem concerns understanding the variation arising from organizational cultures, project cultures and individual native cultures” (p. 213).

This finding also supports the finding of Traynor and Watts (1992) that cultural distinctions between nobles and commoners are reflected in the dynamics between civil servants in government departments. The authors argue that a manager who is not from a chiefly line will “normally enjoy only secondary loyalty from staff” (p. 70). Managers who are commoners are given less support and have been known to have their decisions overruled by nobles who are of lower rank in the organizational setting. Furthermore, nobles external to the government department often have a more influential role than internal managers.

9.6.1.2 Local advisors providing local knowledge

Local advisors are experts in local systems and possess local knowledge. Local knowledge is a tacit and specialized cognitive frame that is specific to a certain environment and population. Ramaprasad and Prakash (2003) argue that local knowledge is “widely shared than specialized scientific knowledge, no one person, institution, or authority encompasses it all” (p. 200). Local knowledge is not easily accessible or understood by outsiders/international consultants, which highlights the significance of local advisors/government counterparts. Ramaprasad and Prakash add that “local knowledge critical for successful project management is likely to be procedural and not declarative: stating what should be done and how but not why. Such procedural knowledge is likely to be embedded in many superstitions, rituals, and historical practices” (p. 201).

9.6.2 Project team silos

Project team silos were found to have detrimental effects on the project management practices and overall outcome of the development projects in this study. The term ‘silo’ has
been used in the literature to describe organizational units that focus on the intrinsic functions with little or no regard for external forces, whether within the immediate locality of the organizational setting or in the general context. The manifestation of organizational silos is common in government administrations, large hierarchical organizations and has more recently been seen in service firms (Banson, Nguyen, Bosch, & Nguyen, 2015). These types of organizations are divided into a series of departments that focus on discrete functions and objectives. Dell (2005) argues that “silos cause problems primarily because they focus on filling a function rather than on achieving a process outcome” (p. 34).

The temporal nature of project teams and the social systems that are created within these units may explain the behaviour of project staff and civil servants in regard to the insularity of project units. As Tongan civil servants are only assigned to projects on a short-term basis, their engagement is momentary. The temporality of their work leads to a lack of commitment. Sydow, Lindvist, and DeFillippi (2004) note that the “one-off and non-occurring nature of project activities provides little scope for routinized learning or systematic repetition” (p. 1477). Project staff are embedded in their own organizational and interorganizational settings that have their own inherent systems.

Due to staff insularity and the emphasis on achieving the unit’s immediate goals, staff members lack commitment towards achieving the wider project goals. Aspects such as inclusive decision making could potentially promote and improve commitment and engagement from civil servants in projects. Mbengue and Sané (2013) are advocates of such participatory decision making, which “gives better access to information and improves the quality of outcomes” (p. 23). Therefore, enabling project staff to actively engage in the decision-making process could potentially improve commitment and access to information and result in improved project outcomes.

9.7 Evaluation stage

9.7.1 Capacity development

Capacity building has long been a focus of public sector development in cultivating more resilient and productive institutions and improving their ability to perform project activities (UN, 2013). The sustainability of TAs was a prevalent theme in the interview data. Consultants are extensively used in Tonga to boost the effectiveness of governance systems and strengthen institutional capacity. Instead of playing a focal role in delivering training
programmes for local ministerial employees, sustainability was rather an abandoned term used in planning and evaluation documents to validate the effectiveness of development projects. This demonstrated in the lack of transparency in evaluation reports.

Hirschmann (2003) notes that TA is “intended to encourage initiative, local human and capital resources and then enhance them” (Hirschmann, 2003, p. 266). TA should therefore be based on local agendas and endorse stakeholder participation which will ultimately lead to local ownership. The Pacific Effectiveness Principles (2007) endorses this position and states “provisions of technical assistance, including in aid coordination and management, in such a way that ensures that capacity is built with tangible benefits to the country to support national ownership” (p. 3).

Hirschmann (2003) argues that “sustainability becomes a rather vague collective good for those whose interests are not threatened by it, such as visiting consultants” (p. 242). The author goes on to note that although local stakeholders may on the surface be negatively affected by a lack of sustainability, there is little “material return on sustainability” (p. 242). Furthermore, Godfrey et al. (2002) state that “while sustainability is ultimately the government’s responsibility, donors also have a responsibility to press for the reforms of administration, finance and salaries which alone can ensure that their projects level behind viable institutions. To be effective, this pressure can only be exerted collectively, not by individual donors” (Godfrey et al., 2002, p. 367).

9.7.2 Creditability and transparency of evaluation reports

Another theme that emerged from the findings relevant to the luva stage was the tensions between the results disclosed in evaluation reports and the observable results. This finding echoes Forss and Carlsson (1997) discouraging results regarding the trustworthiness of assessments. The authors suggest that the quality and output of evaluation results need to assessed against a validity chart to ensure reliability.

These types of tensions undermine the credibility of evaluation reports and question the transparency and accountability project actors have to the ultimate beneficiaries and taxpaying citizens of donor countries. In addition, Crawford et al. (2004) note that the purpose of aid evaluation is twofold: to ensure accountability for resources and further to promote learning for the betterment of future interventions; and to ensure more effective aid interventions. However, scholars such as Michaelowa and Borrmann (2006) highlight that one of the central issues concerning evaluations is that they serve more than these two
purposes. Michaelowa and Borrmann assert that evaluations “are simultaneously used as an instrument of transparency and control, accountability, legitimization and institutional learning” (p. 313).

9.7.2.1 Quality and legitimacy of evaluation methods

In order to understand the quality and legitimacy of evaluation reports it is important to discuss the purpose of disclosing the evaluation system/method. The purpose of any evaluation system is to systematically determine the merit, value, worth and significance of an intervention against an established criteria (Liverani & Lundgren, 2007). However, evaluations systems used in development projects are ill defined and have practical challenges that inhibit the adequate assessment of projects. These practical challenges include the measurement mechanism and attribution of cause. Measurement mechanism are complicated the lack of established performance indicators. Complications surrounding attribution was discussed in Chapter 3 (literature review – teu), where attribution problems were specifically related to the achievement of project outcomes (White, 2010).

The general evaluation literature offers multidimensional benchmarks to measure the quality of evaluation methods. These standards are field-specific and non-transferable to unknown landscapes. For instance, the pedagogy literature describes the different forms of evaluation methods, formative and summative, that are administered at different times in the effort to provide corrective measures in a timely fashion. Aid evaluation standards are inadequately discussed in the literature, with a number of studies assessing individual constructs within each technique rather than critically examining the validity of methods and the conclusions drawn from such assessment tools.

One of the primary purposes of evaluation reports is to make feedback information more accessible to interested parties. Accessibility to information such as feedback in evaluation reports reinforces agency transparency. However, the evaluation reports analysed for this study contradict this notion of transparency and reflect the unethical assessment practice of falsifying in evaluation reports.

9.7.2.2 Bottlenecks in feedback loop

Various obstacles may hinder the efficiency of evaluation feedback systems. Bottlenecks can occur such as lack of incentives to learn, institutional tunnel vision and the unequal nature of stakeholders aid relationships. As mentioned earlier, issues around aid relationships and
perceptions of power among stakeholders are deep-seated and not easily recognized. Unequal aid relationships constrain the partnership between recipients and donor agencies and therefore skew feedback and more importantly the accuracy of evaluations.

An adequate feedback loop that does not include all the intended beneficiaries plays a significant role in perpetuating the vicious cycle of inaccurate evaluation documentation. Evaluation reports are used as a mechanism for inserting feedback into the relevant development agencies and recipient institutions in order to instigate change and improve project processes in future interventions. The feedback loop refers to the system in which information or output is filtered in a circular direction to help inform the correction or improvement of future activities. Cracknell (1996) argues that bottlenecks exist that affect the transmission of assessment results back into the project cycle to inform future projects. These bottlenecks result in a lack of information transferred to relevant ministerial agencies.

Significant issues were present in regard to accessing accurate and timely information, which can be attributed to the prevalence of the silo mentality in development practice in Tonga.

Michaelowa and Borrmann (2006) note that there are significant incentives to use evaluations to enhance legitimacy. Accountability plays a significant role in legitimizing the actions of development actors. The documentation and public disclosure of accurate information through evaluation reports highlights transparency and endorses accountable project systems. This also plays a significant role in improving future projects. The OECD (1991) long ago noted that “through the evaluation of failures as well as successes, valuable information is generated which, if properly fed back, can improve future aid programmes and projects” (OCED, 1991, p. 5).

Easterly and Williamson (2011) view the accessibility to information such as feedback from project evaluations as a form of agency transparency. The authors highlight the significance of feedback, stating that “the absence of feedback from aid recipients is widely regarded as one of the fundamental problems with aid effectiveness” (p. 14). This demonstrates the instrumental role of feedback in demonstrating agency transparency.

9.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings of this research in relation to the existing literature. This study has identified a concerning lack of project management practices in five development projects carried out in Tonga. More specifically, the findings identify the
attributes that influence this lack of project management practices, which include a lack of cultural consciousness on behalf of foreign consultants, the existence of project team silos, and the absence of planning competences.

The traditional, rational and instrumental view of project management still prevails in theory and practice. This hard system approach to project management remains a prevalent strategy in development projects and the findings of this study call for the consideration of soft elements such as cultural attributes and HR management. The cultural competencies of international advisors should be developed to help facilitate the adoption of suitable project management practices. Moreover, local knowledge systems and categorization of types of knowledge are crucial for understanding why ministries, and more specifically civil servants, fail to develop project management competencies. The next and final chapter reiterates the objective of this research and evaluates the extent to which the research questions have been addressed. The contributions of this study to knowledge and practice are summarized, and these are followed by some concluding remarks.
CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS – LUVA

10.1 Introduction

The recent failures of development projects in Tonga detailed in Chapter 1 justify the need for systematic analysis of the managerial practices used to coordinate and manage project activities. The review of the existing literature in Chapter 3 identified a gap in our understanding of project management practices used in development projects. This study therefore set out to examine the use of the PLC framework in development projects in Tonga. More specifically, this study explored the effectiveness of development project management practices used in Tonga. In pursuing this research, three key research questions were addressed:

- How are development projects managed and coordinated in Tonga?
  
  o What types of project management practices are used in the PLC model?
  
  o How do these project management practices influence project outcomes?

This chapter answers these questions and outlines the contribution this research makes to theory, research and practice. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the phenomenon studied and the varying methodological techniques employed to explore the subject matter, the results of this study have various implications for practice and different fields of knowledge.

The purpose of the luva stage is to honour the participants that have contributed knowledge by gifting the results of the study back to the community. However, this act of gifting is not taken lightly as the findings challenge the development practice community to progress the academic conversation.

10.2 Summary of findings

The findings of this study reveal a lack of project management practices used to manage and coordinate development projects in Tonga. At the sectoral and national levels project coordination is flawed. The inadequate coordination of multiple development projects resulted in government departments experiencing pressure on their administrative capacities. At the donor coordination level, the proliferation of donor agencies and their contrasting requirements resulted in further administrative burdens. Moreover, bilateral agencies tended to perceive coordination and harmonization strategies in relation to power dynamics. This
authoritative power widened the distance between donor agency and project implementers and further hindered donor coordination of projects.

A key factor that influenced the lack of development coordination strategies was the absence of an information-sharing system among departments. Although regional aid effectiveness agendas explicitly encourage information sharing, little action has been taken to facilitate mechanisms for effective information sharing in Tonga. In regard to the PLC model, this study found that donor agencies imposed different structural models that caused administrative burdens for government departments. The absence of a standardized structure negatively influenced the project management practices enacted in different project stages.

At the micro level, there were project management practices absent in the specific PLC stages. This study found that civil servants in government departments lacked project identification and validation skills that are critical for project planning. The absence of these competences resulted in the duplication of projects and negatively impacted project outcomes. An explanation for the lack of such skills can be found in the unique way Tongans perceive knowledge and, more importantly, the bearers of specialized technical knowledge. Project identification is categorized as a treasured knowledge that is enacted and practised only by qualified, experienced individuals who are of high esteem. Civil servants therefore perceived the acts of identifying and legitimizing projects as the responsibility of international consultants.

Another significant finding that emerged from this study is the significance of relationships in facilitating project management processes in the implementation stage. Relationships and networks are a focal dimension of Tongan cultural values and customs that emphasizes an individual’s connections to the land, family, clan and water (to name a few).

Significantly, this research revealed a lack of communication between the project management team and the supporting project units, and the existence of project team silos. These functioned autonomously and operated in isolation, which resulted in a breakdown of communication between government ministries, civil servants and project staff. The silo mentality also affected staff commitment to the overall project objectives. Civil servants were loaned from different government departments to engage in project work. These staff members felt conflicting loyalties to their ministry and to the larger governing project, and the temporary nature of projects perpetuated the lack of commitment from civil servants.
In regard to the evaluation stage of the PLC framework, there was a lack of consideration for the sustainability and longevity of TA which undermined the effectiveness of short-term assistance. Instead of playing a focal role in implementing and evaluating training programmes for local ministerial employees, sustainability was used as a term to justify and validate the effectiveness of development projects.

Lastly, it was found that some of the results disclosed in certain evaluation reports did not match the observable results identified or experienced by the interview participants. This raised questions regarding the credibility of official assessment reports endorsed by donor agencies. Accessibility to information such as feedback in evaluation reports reinforces a form of agency transparency. The discrepancies between the results disclosed in evaluation reports and the experienced outcomes have serious implications for donor and executing agency relations.

10.3 Scholarly contributions

This study provides an original contribution to knowledge on the project management practices used in development projects implemented in Tonga. The contributions of this research and their implications apply to the areas of project management theory, development policy, and research design.

10.3.1 Theoretical contributions

10.3.1.1 Shift to a project management paradigm that is informed by the worldviews and ideologies of recipient countries

This interpretivist study concentrated on understanding and interpreting project actors’ experiences in development projects. A recurring theme in the findings of this study is the detachment between the philosophical assumptions that underpin project management practices and those of the local project staff. Project management practices are based on the ideologies of Western advisors and consultants which are foreign to Tongan public servants and beneficiaries. These practices are based on positivist, quantitative and hard paradigms that accentuate instrumentality, rationality and objectivity.

In the same vein, orthodox project management scholarship concentrates on hard models that are based on epistemological premises rooted in positivist research paradigms. Hard models have dominated mainstream project management and accentuate instrumentality, rationality, objectivity; they are also heavily reliant on deterministic models. In this light, project
management effectiveness is determined by the tangible outputs and clearly defined project objectives. However, soft project management elements such as HR management require a shift in the epistemological assumptions and highlight the contextual complexities (cultural assumptions), content ambiguities and cyclical processes of development projects.

In revealing the true nature of development project management practices in Tonga, this study has identified the pivotal role cultural values play in interpreting civil servants’ behaviour. Tongan cultural values accentuate relationships and categorization of knowledge and operate on vastly different philosophical assumptions than hard models. This study has established the significance of relationships between project actors and the need for networks to be cultivated in the managerial practices. This is especially pertinent for collective societies that value interpersonal connections such as the Tongan culture, which is very different from the project management model that focuses on hard skills and encourages the use of standardized systems and processes that are based on rationalist and objective view of staff engagement.

There is a need to negotiate between the task and organizational perspectives and ensure that there is an adequate balance between soft and hard elements of project management. On the one hand, projects are conceptualized, scheduled and executed activities, which emphasizes the hard, engineering component of the practice. However, projects are notably executed by humans and their behaviours and perceptions are governed by social behavioural theories embedded in the New Institutional Economics literature (Yung, 2014). I suggest a merging of hard and soft project models – a middle ground that appreciates technical tools and frameworks and is adapted to fit the philosophical assumptions of the individuals enacting the project management practices. With these considerations in mind, international consultants should therefore assume the role of facilitator rather than expert or superior. Advisors should empower and enable local public servants to effectively perform project management activities themselves.

10.3.1.2 Project life cycle framework

In regard to the PLC framework, this study found that different structural models imposed administrative pressures on government departments. These burdens hindered various facets of the administration, coordination and management of projects. Moreover, the project management practices used in the PLC framework varied as a result of these structural variations. Government ministries and donor agencies should take a more active role in
pursuing a more unified structural arrangement of the PLC framework. This will facilitate a shift away from prescriptive models based on the dominant philosophical assumptions towards a contextual framework that is reflective of native knowledge and ways of knowing. This would require a cyclical structure that has culturally ingrained assumptions embedded in the framework. This study proposes a framework that merges the PLC framework with the kakala framework to accommodate the two distinct worldviews that underpin the orthodox Western cycle and the Tongan ways of knowing and understanding.

10.3.1.3 Resolving sustainability – learning to learn

The sustainability of development efforts has long been an issue affecting the effectiveness of foreign aid (Banson et al., 2015). More specifically, the sustainability of TA provided through international consultants is criticized due to the lack of long-term effects in respective ministries (Hirschmann, 2003; Quartey, 1996). This study found that foreign consultants failed to develop the capabilities of civil servants to conduct technical tasks, which undermined the long-term sustainability of the training scheme.

There is a need to develop a more effective and sustainable method for transferring knowledge in order to retain the specialized expertise in government departments. A strategy that may facilitate a more feasible method of strengthening the capacity of local staff to implement their own project management activities would be a more collaborative approach to creating a shared learning paradigm that would benefit both government departments and donor agencies.

Creating a generative learning environment by sharing different knowledge systems may provide a way forward for improving the sustainability of TA. This is important for fostering a collaborative environment rather than enabling information silos in project teams, government departments and supporting agencies.

10.3.2 Methodological contributions

10.3.2.1 Value of the kakala framework (research approach)

A key strength of this study is the exploration of the authentic narrative of civil servants, project staff and donor agency representatives and their experiences in development projects. This was made possible by integrating the kakala framework. Research investigating development practice is based on the positivist paradigm that is based on a different worldview to that of Tongan development practitioners. These underlying cultural norms and
practices can be manifested through the *kakala* framework, which brings to light the distinctive Tongan knowledge system.

The *kakala* framework has been used extensively in the field of Pacific pedagogy. This study extends the use of the *kakala* framework to provide culturally authentic nuances for understanding and conceptualizing the PLC framework from a Tongan perspective. The framework has generated meaningful results that reflect the knowledge systems of Tongan participants. This research approach incorporates the cultural assumptions that are embedded in ways of knowing and enabled me to tap into the intricate dimensions that informed the participants’ perceptions and behaviours in regard to project management practices.

### 10.3.2.2 Value of talanoa (research tool)

The sensitivity of the research topic required a research approach that provided a safe space for participants to share confidential information regarding aid practices. I believe that I would have not been able to access such sensitive information and culturally rich data if I had used an alternative method. *Talanoa* lessened the distance between myself and the participants and ensured security and minimized judging, which allowed the participant to disclose authentic information.

Cultural values embedded in the application of *talanoa* were significant in overcoming the barriers of shame and the possibility of participants concealing information. Participants were also able to share their experiences in more detail. For instance, *tauhi ’va* (reciprocity), *faka’apa’apa* (mutual respect) and *lototo* (humility) were specifically used to elicit creditable and truthful responses. These three cultural values reinforce the importance of social relations and of engaging in truthful reciprocal exchanges in a modest manner.

For example, *faka’apa’apa* was expressed through my attire and my conduct during the *talanoa* session. The respondent reciprocated this respect in the manner, tone and depth of their responses. Depth of explanation and consciousness are aspects that demonstrate a participant’s respect. In this sense, participants perceived the topic as useful (*aonga*) and therefore provided a deeper account of the causes and consequences of their experiences. In addition, the reciprocity embedded in the *talanoa* method promoted mutual accountability in that both the participant and I were responsible for the content discussed. This added to the trustworthiness and quality of the research findings. Moreover, empathy is an emotion that is inherent in the application of *talanoa*, which distinguishes the method from orthodox Western methodologies. However, this intrinsic feature contradicts the Eurocentric rhetoric
that suppresses emotions as a means of regulating bias and preventing dictatorial and irrational research (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014).

As noted previously, there is no procedural description available for conducting the *talanoa* method. This study has contributed to developing a prescriptive agenda for conducting *talanoa faka’eke’eke* and provides suggestions for creating a safe and comfortable environment to facilitate the method.

### 10.3.3 Practical contributions

#### 10.3.3.1 Managerial implications

There is a need to rethink and redevelop aid modalities as a majority of the committed resources are focused on developing the policy landscape with little attention paid to the delivery mechanisms. For instance, AusAID recently funded an incentive-based policy reform matrix that encourages responsive policies to support economic and public financial management (AusAID, 2014). With such heavy emphasis on policy enhancements, there is little regard for the quality of project management practices. I do not suggest the contribution or effectiveness of economic policies is unimportant, but rather that we need to focus more attention on the project management practices that govern development projects. Moreover, the managerial practices employed should be reflective of the nature of the project and the need or vulnerability that is being addressed. There is a need to shift from using generic and descriptive frameworks such as the PLC framework and adopt models that are more flexible and considers the political and cultural context in which it is applied.

HR practices in development projects also need to be reconsidered and more responsive measures adopted for improving the commitment of project staff and civil servants. Long-term HR plans are required to address employee retention and preserve highly skilled public servants in government ministries. Such plans should also assess the motivation strategies used by managers to reenergize the commitment of employees to unit objectives and project endeavours.

Technological improvements to centralized information systems would potentially enable government departments to combine a number of knowledge management systems, finances, and the monitoring of information. This would contribute to more efficient process times for project documentation and procurement. However, while recognizing could bring about
positive benefits to efficiency and performance, technical experts in change management will be required to manage the process of change.

10.3.4 Policy implications

10.3.4.1 Rethinking coordination strategies

It is widely understood that effective policies and well-established institutions facilitate productive and long-lasting aid results (Burnside & Dollar, 2000; Cheng & Zhang, 2008). Burnside and Dollar (2000) argue that aid is more effective in policy environments that are conducive of growth. Moreover, Alvi, Mukherjee, and Shukralla (2008) specifically state that “aid is growth enhancing in a good policy environment” (Alvi et al., 2008, p. 693). The findings of this study substantiate these claims with specific focus on policies that result in adopting more effective coordination strategies both at the sectoral level and among donor agencies.

The basic model by which projects are coordinated is insufficient and therefore more responsive and dynamic strategies are need to deal with the multiple agents involved. Rethinking the traditional mechanisms for coordinating development projects to provide strategies that are more responsive requires a safe space for authentic dialogue between development partners. Donor agencies that demonstrate unethical and fraudulent behaviour in regard to withholding information during coordination discussions need to be held accountable. Aid coordination policies that are enacted by the central department that governs aid activities (AMD) should facilitate civil servant engagement at the donor coordination level. Enabling civil servants to engage and collaborate with donors could potentially lessen the power distance between the ministry and agency.

As stated in the previous chapter, a centralized knowledge management system is acknowledged as a mechanism for enhancing the effectiveness of development coordination. NZAid recently recommended that the AMD create an online database to establish a foundation for generating a sound knowledge base. However, little action has been taken to consolidate information, create a centralized system and more importantly gain acceptance and agreement from government departments to take part. The findings of this study substantiates the appeal for a localized knowledge base and will hopefully energize discussions regarding the importance of creating a space for collective knowledge.
A specific policy enhancement that could potentially reduce the administrative burden and transaction costs would be to simplify reporting systems. The aligning and harmonizing of procedures is required as a foundation for effective coordination. As Bigsten and Tengstam (2015) state, “by reducing the reporting burden and simplifying coordination of activities it should be effectiveness enhancing” (p. 77).

10.4 Reflections on the research process

This study assumed a life of its own that paralleled my own personal life journey, which involved celebrating joyous milestones, encountering overwhelming feelings of despair, and persisting when things seemed to be going against me. Similar to the kakala framework utilized throughout this thesis, I found myself weaving the experiences I encountered in order to make sense of the kahoa kakala I was attempting to create.

I found the kakala framework embodied more than the cultural nuances embedded in researching Tongan phenomena and each stage also represented the struggles that an indigenous researcher encounters when embarking on academic research. For instance, in the teu stage, where I focused on problematizing the phenomenon, I had to approach the task with a certain amount of objectivity that is counterintuitive to anga fakatonga (the Tongan way of behaving), where fatongia (duty) plays a crucial role in defining the extent and revealing the true nature of the problem. The plural nature of this Tongan-based study highlighted the sometimes paradoxical nature of frameworks adopted and this was difficult to negotiate at the best of times.

10.5 Future research paths

Reflecting on the findings and the implications discussed in the previous section, the following section offers recommendations for future research paths in relation to mechanisms to improve the delivery of development assistance and enhancing the managerial practices used in development projects. These recommendations are articulated intentionally in a wide-ranging manner in order to point out the possibilities in the scope of future research.

10.5.1 Managerial approaches to HR practices

This study found that project actors failed to consider HR practices in project work. More research is required to explore how the cultural background of the project manager influences HR practices such as supervision style and approaches to long-term HR planning. Therefore, there is an opportunity for research that would potentially develop an understanding of the
concept of professionalization in development practice, reveal the significance of task differentiation, and explore the influence of project staff commitment.

10.5.2 Project team silos

Project support units and project staff within the projects often functioned independently and participants in this study linked this type of behaviour to silos. Research is needed to characterize project silos and identify the extraneous characteristics that cultivate silo mentality among project actors. An additional research path would be to examine the effects of these silos on wider organizational functions and performance.

10.5.3 Power in aid delivery mechanisms

One of the most compelling findings of this study is the existence of power differentials and the use of coordination mechanisms to perpetuate these dynamics. This study did not however explore to what extent these mechanisms are used in this way. There are opportunities to extend this finding to explore the power dynamics in relation to managerial practices used in the individual project stages.

10.6 Limitations

The methodological limitations of this study was discussed in Chapter 6 and relate to issues regarding sample size, generalizability, and the limitations of the data collection methods. Firstly, I should acknowledge that the size of the sample selected for this research was small when compared to the development projects implemented in Tonga on a yearly basis. The sample size is reflective of the difficulty in accessing project information. Project information is highly sensitive as it regards political strategies, and reporting these may in some cases involve unethical behaviour. The intention of this study was not to generalize the results but rather to reveal the current managerial practices used to manage and coordinate development projects.

Due to this limitation, the generalizability of the results is restricted to the elements that define the projects analysed in this study: the thematic ideals (infrastructure, health, economic policy, education and civil servant training); donor agencies (AusAID, JICA, ADB, NZAid); and executing agencies (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Infrastructure, Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Ministry of Urban Planning). That said, the fact that a majority of development assistance is filtered into the three largest sectors – education, health, and economic infrastructure and services (OECD, 2015).
10.7 Final Remarks

In answering the question, this thesis has argued that Tongan knowledge, cultural practices and values play a vital role in understanding effective ways of coordinating and managing development projects in Tonga. I have illustrated this with reference to the relevant literature reviewed (*teu*), comprehensive and culturally appropriate empirical study with an appropriate methodological approach (*teu*), detailed methods and well-designed instruments to answer the research questions (*toli, luva*). In conclusion, the worldviews and ways of knowing of primary stakeholders need to influence the way project management practices are enacted in development projects (*luva*).
References


ADB. (2011a). *Development effectiveness brief Tonga: Sustaining a strong culture while building the future of work*. Manila, Philippines: ADB.

ADB. (2011b). *Nuku'alofa urban development sector project: Project administration manual of work*. Manila, Philippines: ADB.


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Tonga, M. (2014). Tonga's aviation struggles to abide by international standards. *Matangi Tonga*


**GLOSSARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tongan words:</th>
<th>Meaning:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atamai</td>
<td>The mind or intellectual well-being of a person</td>
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<tr>
<td>anga fakatonga</td>
<td>Tongan way of behaving or way of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘aonga</td>
<td>Usefulness or practicality</td>
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<td><strong>F</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>fahu</td>
<td>Fathers eldest sister, or her children who are considered highly ranked in family and ceremonial settings</td>
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<tr>
<td>fai fatongia</td>
<td>Carrying out obligations or duty to extended family and/or religious affiliations</td>
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<tr>
<td>faka’apa’apa</td>
<td>Respect or conducting oneself in a respectful manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>faka’otusia</td>
<td>Ceremonial garland only bestowed on members of the royal family</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakalakalaka</td>
<td>A Tongan conceptualization of development that encompasses economic, technological and material progression.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>famili</strong></td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>heilala</td>
<td>A flower that is indigenous to Tongan soil</td>
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<tr>
<td>helepelu</td>
<td>Machete that is used for gardening purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heliaiki</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hou’eiki</td>
<td>Members of the royal family</td>
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<td><strong>K</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>kahoa kakala</td>
<td>Fragrant garland</td>
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<tr>
<td>kahoa</td>
<td>Necklace or pendant</td>
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<tr>
<td>kainga</td>
<td>Clan or tribe that consists of distant relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakala</td>
<td>Fragrant flowers and leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kau nga fa’u</td>
<td>Co-creator of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiekie</td>
<td>Traditional female skirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>koloa</strong></td>
<td>Traditional scared treasures such as flax mats and bark tapa</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
<td>The act of weaving, interlacing or threading natural threads of fabric or material</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>lalaga</strong></td>
<td>A persons spiritual well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>lototo</strong></td>
<td>Humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>luva</strong></td>
<td>To offer or contribute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td>Loyalty, allegiance or faithfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mamahi‘i mea</strong></td>
<td>Speaking chief or attendant for high ranking noble</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>matapule</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>High ranking noble</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>nopele</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P</strong></td>
<td>Individual of European decent</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>palangi</strong></td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pekia</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>S</strong></td>
<td>Fijian ceremonial garland</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>salusalu</strong></td>
<td>Church, religious affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>siasi</strong></td>
<td>The physical well-being of a person. Body</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>sino</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Leader or head of the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taki oe famili</strong></td>
<td>Informal or formal conversation, dialogue, story-telling between 2 or more parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>talanoa</strong></td>
<td>A traditional waist mat worn to church and special occasions. This type of traditional wear can signify different things for different occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taovala</strong></td>
<td>Reciprocity. The practice of exchanging with others for mutual benefit. Maintaining relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tauhi`va</strong></td>
<td>To prepare, plan or design something</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
toli  To collect or retrieve something
tu’a  Commoner
tufunga  Learned, educated people. Often referred to as guardians of knowledge.
tu’i  The monarch, king
tui kakala  The act or process of threading a floral ceremonial garland
tui  Thread, bind or collate
tupenu  Formal waist wrap worn by males or females in special occasions

U
uhinga  A person's frame of thinking, logic or meaning
Appendix 2: Participation Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Project title:
The effective management of development projects in Tonga

Name of Research:
Sisikula Sisifa

Researcher Introduction
I am a doctoral student (degree of Doctoral Philosophy) in the Faculty of Business and Economics, Management and International Business (MIB) department at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. As a part of this degree I am undertaking field work leading to a doctoral thesis.

Research Description and Invitation
The aim of this study is to examine the management systems utilized to manage and coordinate development projects in Tonga. Specifically, the Project Life Cycle management model (PLC) will be examined in regards to how well it facilitates project activities to achieve the intended objectives. Furthermore, this study seeks to examine the evaluation tools used to assess development projects.

I am inviting staff members from various sectors (Aid and Project Division and the Policy and Planning Division) of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning and other government departments in the Government of Tonga to participate in this study exploring the management systems utilized to manage development projects implemented in Tonga. Before you decide whether or not you approve the participation of Ministry of Finance and National Planning staff members in this study, it is important for you to understand why this research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask any questions.
Research Procedures
Data for this study will be collected through an interview procedure and interview questions are open-ended. Interviews will be digitally recorded and these recordings are optional. This process will take approximately 1-3 hours of a staff member’s time. There are no anticipated risks involved in this process or to staff member’s participation in this study. However, your assurance that staff member’s participation or non-participation (including withdrawal from participation) in this research will in no way affect their employment status within the Ministry of Finance and National Planning or any other government department.

Please note that all digital recordings will be transcribed and translated by myself.

Data storage/retention/destruction/future use
Any information provided by staff members will only be used for the purpose of this research study. This information will be kept in a locked cabinet of which the location is only known to me and my supervisor. All data including digital recordings, transcripts and electronic data collected during this study will be destroyed after a period of 3 years following the completion of the study. Transcripts will be destroyed using a paper shredding device, digital recordings and electronic data will be permanently erased from all electronic storage devices.

The results of this research study can be made available to the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (within the Government of Tonga) upon your request. You can make your request to me through the contact information provided at the end of this document.

Right to withdraw from Participation
Participation is voluntary and all research findings recorded and reported will be on an anonymous basis and will not be associated with the names of participants. Participants have the right to withdraw from participation at any stage of the interview or at any time up until the 1st July, 2013. My contact details are provided below if staff members wish to withdraw from participation before the 1st July, 2013.

Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from participating in this study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from this study you have the right to extract the data you contributed from the research up to a specified date.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
The identity of participating staff members in this study will be kept strictly confidential. I plan to publish the results of this research study in my thesis. However, the results and information will be provided in such a way that individuals cannot be personally identified. Participant name and any information that could identify them in this research will be removed before the information is transcribed and translated to protect their anonymity.
Thank you taking the time to consider this study. If you approve the participation of staff members in this study, please sign the attached consent form. This information sheet is for you to keep for future reference.

Contact Details
Researcher:
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Head of Department (HOD):
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Telephone: +64-9-373-7599 Ext. 83266

For any queries regarding ethical concerns in regards to this particular study you may contact:

Ethics Committee:
Chair,
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
The University of Auckland
Office of the Vice Chancellor
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142
Telephone: +64 9 373 7599 Ext. 83711

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPATION ETHIC COMMITTEE ON 24th September 2012 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 8537
Appendix 3: Consent Form

Consent Form

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 3 YEARS

Project title:
The effective management of development projects in Tonga

Name of researcher:
Sisikula Sisifa

This form is to gather your consent to participate in this research. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information. This form will be locked in a cabinet separate from the information gathered from the interview to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Apart from this form, all other identifying information will be removed at the completion of this research.

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I agree:

- to take part in this research.
- to being interviewed for approximately 1-3 hours.

I understand:

- that I am free to choose whether or not to be digitally recorded.
- that if I agree to be digitally recorded, I am free to refuse being digitally recorded at any time during the interview process.
- that my participation (or withdrawal) from participation in this study will in no way affect my employment status within the Ministry of Finance and National Planning.
- that information I provide during this study will only be used for the purpose of this research.
that this information will be kept in a locked cabinet and isolated from all other information including audio-tapes, transcripts and electronic data.

that all data including digital recordings, transcripts and electronic data collected during the study will be destroyed after a period of 3 years following the completion of the research study.

that if requested, results from this study will be made available to me at the completion of the study.

that my identity as a participant in this research will be kept strictly confidential.

that the results from this study will be published in a way that would protect my anonymity.

that this consent form will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.

I understand that I am free to withdraw participation without any explanation at any time during the interview process and/or to withdraw any data traceable to me up to the 1st July, 2013.

I agree / do not agree to be digitally recorded.

Name ____________________________

Signature _________________________ Date ________________