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# Smashing through the ‘brown glass ceiling’: Exploring perceived barriers and facilitators to career advancement for Samoans in Aotearoa, New Zealand

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Management, The University of Auckland, 2018



## ABSTRACT

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There is a plethora of literature regarding the metaphorical glass ceiling and its impact on certain individuals, namely, women and people of colour. The glass ceiling represents subtle barriers that are found in organisations, such as systemic processes and discrimination that are based on preconceived ideologies concerning gender and ethnicity, and these obstacles severely restrict career progression. This thesis investigates a potential glass ceiling for Samoans at work in NZ organisations based on the minimal representation of Samoans in senior management positions, and their over-representation in laborious, manual-type, low-skilled jobs. This study uncovered the career barriers that presented dilemmas and the strategies and facilitators that were used as career mechanisms for access to upper management roles. These facilitators provide a solid foundation as a starting point for other Samoans to consider in their career trajectories.

Undertaken in the major cities of NZ, and employing a qualitative Pacific Research Paradigm, Teu le va methodology, and semi-structured interviews, this study focused on the experiences of 31 Samoan women and men in senior managerial occupations to reveal their career hurdles and success enablers. The findings indicated that Samoans juggle two separate cultures and values side-by-side, that is, Samoan and Palagi (Western-NZ). In some cases, these values are diametrically opposed to one's belief system and identity, as outlined in misinterpreted social-interactions in team meetings and dialogues. Moreover, racial discrimination, tokenism, and labour market segmentation barriers continued to thwart their efforts at accessing top positions. Indigenous Samoan hindrances included unequal power relations, intra-ethnic racism and gender bias from other Samoans that led to the manifestation of the 'U'u Coconut Crab Syndrome.'

Career strategies, facilitators, and coping mechanisms comprised of 'voice' and 'authentic self,' higher levels of efficacy, positive self-talk and implementing legacies for the next generation of Samoans. In addition, the indigenous Samoan values of va (relational spaces) and tautua (honourable services) are akin to relationship-building and altruistic orientations that enhance personal attributes and motivation at work. Mentorship and cross-race

mentoring, higher education and job mobility strengthened career profiles and are recommended as important antecedents to career advancement. This thesis concludes with an array of theoretical contributions and practical implications, the limitations, and areas for future research, and a personal reflection of the research journey.

## DEDICATION

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I dedicate this thesis to the fond memories of the following people:

My dearest Father who passed away in my final PhD year,  
and my loving Mother 爸你是我的英雄



*Afapene Lui Liu Chan Ofe and Nola Losi Tuiloma Folototo Ofe*  
爸爸媽媽我愛你們

Arohanui to my wonderful Mother-in-law  
Hilda Rangirauaka Wehi Grant (Tainui/Ngāti Mahuta) and  
precious Grandfather-in-law Ian Russell Grant (Oamaru-Scotland)

*Haere atu ra*



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---

*The midnight sky is a dark, hollow space  
without the moon and stars that give it light and joy!*

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*You are the bright stars that keep me sane and give me joy! Make me proud!*

Lastly, to my husband and soulmate Ross: I am humbled by your unconditional love and commitment to me in this voyage, and particularly around the time when I was at my weakest point of mourning and grief. You were there to carry me through those darkest months. I shall always remember the early 5 am starts and late nights when you drove me to and from the university so that I did not have to find a car parking space, or, fall asleep at the wheel!

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## GLOSSARY

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Agaga	Soul
Aiga	Family
Aigapotopoto	Extended family network
Aitu	Gods
Alofa	Love, compassion
Aso o le malamalama	Spiritual enlightenment
Aso o le pouliuli	Spiritual darkness
Aualuma	Single untitled Samoan women
Auamauga	Single untitled Samoan men
Cogito ergo sum	(Latin) I think therefore I am
Eleele fanua	Earth, land, placenta
Fa'aaloalo	Respect
Fa'aaukilani	The Auckland-Samoan way of doing and understanding
Fa'a fia palagi	Aspiring to whiteness, or, acting white
Fa'alavelave	Samoan commitments involving money, food, and service
Fa'asamoa	The Samoan way of doing and understanding
Fale	Traditional Samoan house
Fesoa'aiga	Reciprocity
Fia manaia	Act of appearing good but has deeper selfish intentions
Fia poto / Fa'a fia poto	Showing off / Acting intelligent
Fono	Meeting, conference
Fu'e	Fly whisk
Gagana	Language
Gagana Fa'aaloalo	Respectful speech (solely used for Chiefs)
Ifoga	Samoan ritual of seeking forgiveness for a transgression
Kumi	(Tongan) Searching
Lagi	Heavens
Lotu	Religion or church
Luva	(Tongan) Giving
Mafaufau	Mind
Malaga	Journey, migration
Malaaumatua	Curse
Malepe le va	Deteriorated or broken (about the va)
Mama	Feeding practise of chewing food for babies
Manatu	Spoken words
Matai	Samoan Chief
Mau	Samoan challenge against Colonial Rule
Meaalofa	Gifts, e.g., food
Pakeha	(Māori) White New Zealanders of European ancestry
Palagi	Western-NZ
Pese	Song or to sing
Rangatiratanga	(Māori) Chieftainship



Sa	Sacred
Samoa mo Samoa	Self-Government
Servise	(French) Service
Servitium	(Latin) The condition of slave, service, slave and slavery
Talanoa	Casual conversation
Talofa	Hello
Tapu	Forbidden or sacred
Taulele'a	Untitled Samoans
Tautua	Service, commitment
Teu	Keep, preserve, look after, nurture
Tina	Mother
Tino	Body
To'oto'o	Staff (ceremonial stick)
Tua'ā	Ancestors
Tui	(Tongan) Plaiting together
Tulaga vae	Cultural footprint
Ula	Lei, garland flower used in necklaces
Ulu valea	Stupid head
Va	Relational space

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

---

The origin of this thesis is based on my experiences, observations, and reflections as a New Zealand-born Samoan working in Human Resources roles in different sectors and hearing the stories of Pacific peoples' work experiences from my father, uncles, and church members who were early Pacific migrants to New Zealand. These migrants left their homes and families to work in NZ factories as manufacturers, domestic cleaners, and hospital wards-maids. Their jobs were tough and labour-intensive, and their communication skills and social-capital were limited. Nonetheless, they continued to work in NZ with the goal of supporting their families here, and back in the Pacific homeland.

From the first wave of migration in the 1950s to today, Samoans, (and by extension, the Pacific people) have had minimal movement, or, representation in senior management careers, despite having improved their socio-economic status, and the efforts of HR initiatives aimed at increasing their participation and presence in executive positions (Spoonley, 1978; State Services Commission, 1997, 2010, 2015). In fact, recent statistics revealed that Samoans continue to over-represent the lower distribution of unskilled and manual-type roles with minimal pay – near matching their first recorded occupation statistics in 1976 (New Zealand Department of Statistics, 1976; Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Considering these statistics, and personal reflections, I found myself wondering why Samoans are less likely to be seen in the upper echelons of the NZ organisations, and what is holding them back? Is there a glass ceiling operating in NZ for Samoans in the labour-force? My interest in careers and the stories of Pacific people led to a convergence of curiosities, and ultimately, the exploration and writing of this thesis.

## 1.1 Research Background

The phenomenon of the glass ceiling is a metaphor created in the 1980s that describes a work occurrence where distinctive barriers were assigned to certain people, namely women and people of colour that controlled their attempts at access to senior managerial positions in organisations (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). The word ‘ceiling’ indicates the maximum threshold that certain individuals can work towards on the corporate ladder. ‘Glass’ represents the subtle transparency of obstacles that prevent minority groups from attaining senior roles related to dimensions like gender and race (Morrison, Schreiber & Price, 1995). Some individuals might have visualised the next career rung on the ladder, but the invisible hindrances (that may or may not be evident to the individual) prevented access to it. Thus, the glass ceiling represented the translucent complications that inhibited individuals from reaching top positions. Unfortunately for some, these constraints tended to worsen with further upward career movement (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia & Vanneman, 2001).

There is an abundance of literature concerning glass ceiling studies that tend to focus on two dimensions (sometimes simultaneously), that is, gender and race, such as African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-American women (or men) who confront specific impediments that restrict their career opportunities (e.g., Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Catalyst, 1999; Chin, 2016; Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Hosoda, Nguyen & Stone-Romero, 2012; Woo, 2000). These studies delineate the glass ceiling barriers to the organisational, societal, and individual levels, and present an array of obstacles that impact on upward career mobility for women and people of colour. As an example, several authors found that the global perception surrounding the successful manager prototype upholds the characteristics, temperament and attributes most often found in white men (see Davidson, 1997; Rosette, Leonardelli & Phillips, 2008; Schein, Mueller, Litchy & Liu, 1996; Tomkiewicz, Brenner &

Adeyemi-Bello, 1996). Thus, gender and race discrimination may explain why certain groups, for example, females and people of colour, are found in administration and support roles, rather than supervision and management (Newman 1993).

## 1.2 Contribution to Academic Knowledge

Knowing that there exists an ample body of work about the glass ceiling with other cultures, I wanted to extend the literature by exploring the career hindrances and enablers from a Samoan perspective, of which there are presently limited studies concerning Samoans in fields such as Management, Human Resources, and careers in general. Additionally, research about Samoans is pigeonholed as ‘Pacific’<sup>1</sup>, ‘Asian-Pacific’<sup>2</sup> or, ‘American-Asian Pacific Islander’ thereby classifying their experiences as ‘pan-Pacific.’ The studies that are available tend to be outdated, or ‘Americanised’ given that most of the researchers concerning Samoans and careers are from the United States studying diasporic Samoans (e.g., Alexander, 1972; Franco, 1991; Gray, 1960, Parker, 2005; Schmitt, 1972). It seemed that Samoans as a stand-alone study and culture was neglected in the academic literature. Therefore, this research explores the glass ceiling experiences of Samoans working in the NZ labour-force, by a Samoan researcher employing Samoan methods and philosophy.

This study contributed to the glass ceiling library of metaphors that provided tangible accounts of individual, societal, and institutional obstacles that exposed hidden dynamics at work and called for additional exploration (e.g., gender discrimination). Parallel to the developments of the African-American metaphors ‘concrete ceiling’ (Bell & Nkomo, 2001;

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<sup>1</sup> The terms ‘Oceanic, Pacific, Pasifika, Polynesian, and Pacific Islander’ are used to describe the island nations that fall within the anthropologic categories of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia, e.g., Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands, Fiji, Tokelau and Tuvalu. In NZ, ‘Pacific’ or ‘Pacific Islander’ are terms commonly used in association with Samoans and Tongans.

<sup>2</sup> The United States censuses and population surveys have classed Pacific people as Asian-Pacific (e.g., DOL 1991).

Catalyst, 1999; Davidson, 1997) and more recently ‘black ceiling’ (McGirt, 2017) that capture the biases and challenges that are unique to people of colour, I propose a ‘brown glass ceiling’ that encapsulates the phenomenon established by conflicting cultural values and institutions for Samoans in a Palagi working environment. Specifically, the brown glass ceiling refers to the misalignment of the Samoan va (spatial relations) with cultural identity as it yields organisational and cultural forms of disadvantage.

In addition, I introduce the *U’u Coconut Crab Syndrome* to the academic literature that describes a Samoan socio-cultural dynamic that may impact on careers for Samoans. This syndrome is metaphorically founded on the desperate survival acts of native Samoan Coconut Crabs which when caged, will clamber towards the exit point and tear the limbs of other crabs that are nearest to the top. That is, crabs that block other crabs from reaching the highest point are torn apart. From a Human Resources perspective, this syndrome impacts on career progression where Samoans might conceal their work accomplishments, restrict creativity, avoid promotions and opportunities for relationship-building that are crucial for professional development to avoid cultural alienation and negative attention of ‘fa’a fia potu’ (showing off) and ‘fa’a fia palagi (aspiring to whiteness) by other Samoans in the organisation.

In addition, this syndrome denotes structural aspects of Samoan culture, for example, fa’amatai (chieftainship) and the stratification of individuals assigned to different forms of power, class, and the va (spatial relations). It is possible that Samoans in senior managerial positions may experience the effects of the U’u Coconut Crab Syndrome because of seeking higher aspirations outside of one’s post in the Samoan hierarchy, thereby, fracturing the peace and harmony of the va. This syndrome highlights the potential cultural repercussions

of stepping outside of one's rank without regard to the hierarchical socio-political structure of Samoan society.

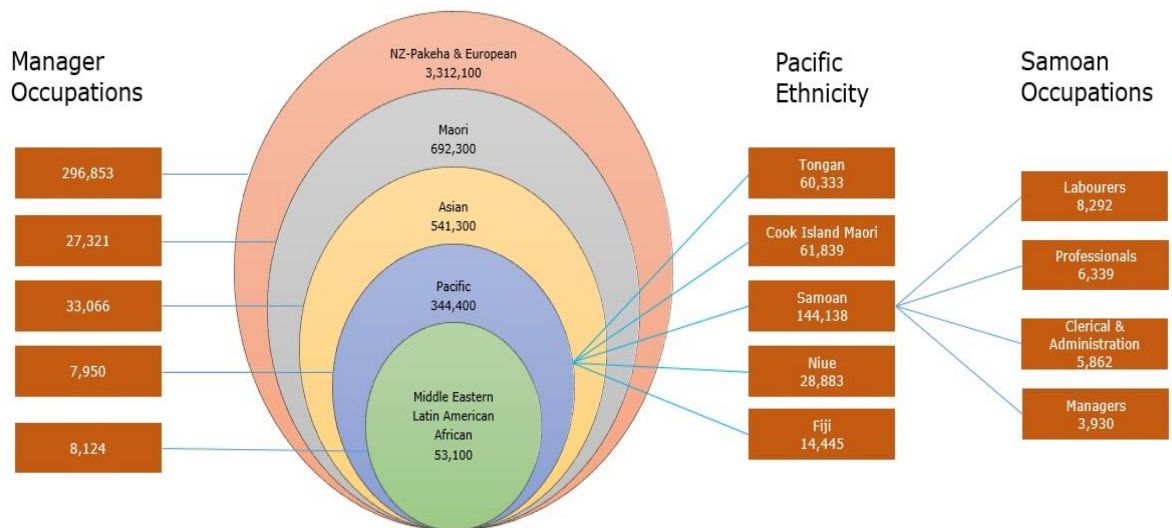
### 1.3 Why study Samoans?

Samoans are one of New Zealand's most established immigrants, making up almost half (48.7 percent) of the total Pacific people population (295,941) (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). About 62.7 percent (89,271) of Samoans are NZ-born with a median age of 21.5 years, most of whom speak English as their first language. There are approximately 64 percent (58,320) of Samoans (aged 15+ years) who are employed and mostly found in Manufacturing (17.3 percent), Health Care and Social Services (9.1 percent), and Retail (8.7 percent) industries. In addition, about 19 percent (8,292) of Samoans are labourers and Samoan men (21.6 percent). There are more Samoan women in the Health Care and Social Services industries working in clerical and administrator roles (19.5 percent). Furthermore, projections estimate that Pacific people will amount to 10 percent of the overall NZ population by 2026 (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2017). Thus, Samoans (and the Pacific people) will occupy a large segment of the next generation of workers and contribute a significant role in the NZ economy (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

Interestingly, labourers and service workers as the main occupations for Samoans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is almost the same as it was in the 1950s, where Samoan men (alongside Māori) were over-represented in the lower paid, unskilled labour-intensive jobs found in the Production, Transportation, and Construction industries, while the Samoan and Pacific women dominated the Service sector as hospital and domestic workers (Gibson, 1983; NZ Department of Statistics, 1976). Unlike other migrants such as the British, Irish, and Dutch, who achieved relatively rapid rises into management, Samoans and the Pacific people remained at the

bottom tiers of the employment hierarchy, and predominately in the factories (Brosnan, Rea & Wilson, 1995; Restifo, Roscigno & Qian, 2013; Spoonley, 1978). Not much has changed since then. In fact, when compared to the other four major ethnic groups in NZ (Māori, NZ-Pakeha, Asian, and MELAA)<sup>3</sup>, Pacific has the lowest numbers of managers (7,950), and almost half are Samoans (3,930) (Figure 1). This data led to the question: Why are Samoans continuing to cluster in the lower tiers of the labour market as recorded from the 1950s to the present day?

Figure 1 NZ Statistics of the National Population by Ethnic Pacific Groups and Occupations



Dataset compiled from Statistics New Zealand, 2014

Another reason for researching a potential glass ceiling for Samoans stems from Samoa's unique historical relationship with NZ that, arguably, does not feature with any other Pacific nation. Samoa's relationship with NZ commenced at the outbreak of World War 1, where NZ ruled Samoa and was the colonial power until 1962. This relationship was controversial and founded on strict obedience and injustices of power without consultation, or,

<sup>3</sup> MELAA: Middle Eastern, Latin American and African.

explanations, more severe than the German predecessor (Hempstall, 1978; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1987). The actions of the NZ administration led to unfortunate episodes of tragedies, decades of mistrust, and became the foundation of forthcoming Samoan grievances.<sup>4</sup>

With the assistance of the Labour Party government in NZ, Samoa became the first Pacific nation to re-establish its independence in 1962 and set a precedent for other island nations to follow. Furthermore, Samoa and NZ instituted the ‘Treaty of Friendship’ (1 August 1962) that promoted the well-being and social progress of Samoans. Thus, guaranteeing and continuing the relationship and support between the two countries. To date, no other Pacific nation has a treaty as such with New Zealand. My curiosities concerning this relationship and the welfare of Samoans and their careers further propelled the exploration of a glass ceiling that might have constricted their upper movement into senior managerial roles.

## 1.4 Research Questions

Given the limited existing literature and research relating to Samoan careers and the lack of Samoan representation in senior managerial occupations, two questions are posed. Firstly, recognising the interplay of cultural, political, organisational and social factors that may affect one’s career development (Bandura, 1982), question one solicits:

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<sup>4</sup> Significant mentions include the incompetence of the NZ administration that allowed a steamship to dock in the Apia Samoa harbour with infected passengers (Spanish flu) that wiped out 22 percent (about 8,000) of the Samoan population (Tomkins, 1992), and the killing and wounding of peaceful Samoan protesters (30) on the main street of Apia. These events are a reminder of the negligent and unconstitutional measures taken by the NZ administration, at a time when Samoans had been exposed to two separate colonial powers (Germany and NZ) – each group ignoring the Samoan polity of institutions and values that were already in place.



*What are the barriers and challenges to senior career advancement for Samoans in New Zealand?*

The findings of this question provide a unique view of the career dilemmas that are likely to stall advancement into the upper ranks of an organisation. In addition, this thesis intends to empower Samoans with knowledge of efficacious careers from seasoned Samoans that navigated the corporate streams of hierarchy. Therefore, question two enquires:

*What strategies and facilitators assisted with achieving successful higher careers for Samoans?*

To answer these questions, I undertook a qualitative study and interviewed 31 Samoans employed as CEOs, Directors, and senior managers in various industries from the North and South islands of NZ and located in the public and private sectors. A third of the respondents were Matai, and the ages ranged from 29 to 82 years. I employed a Pacific Research Paradigm that provided an avenue for the participants to voice their stories as aligned to fa'asamoa cultural underpinnings. These stories were recorded during participant semi-structured interviews that were sometimes shared with a meal, song, and prayers, as is the Samoan custom of meaalofa (gifts, such as food). The aim of providing different stories in this design is to stimulate a variety of replies that overall, fosters a more profound breadth of learning (Seidman, 2006). In addition, the use of semi-structured interviews is appropriate where the topic is already known, for example, glass ceilings, but less is known about the subjective knowledge and experiences of Samoans. Therefore, the participants had an appropriate medium that allowed for reflexivity and sharing stories of their challenges and successes.

## 1.5 Structure of Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. Chapter one introduces the study of the brown glass ceiling for Samoans with the research background, questions, and objectives. Chapter two contextualises the study in the relevant glass ceiling literature, from its first inception in the United States to other evolving cross-disciplinary contemporary metaphors. Theoretical explanations for the glass ceiling are provided, as are success mechanisms that assist with career advancement. Chapter three discusses the available studies about Samoans and careers. Although limited and somewhat outdated, there is some evidence of previous work concerning Pacific people and career initiatives.

One of the strengths of this thesis is the application of Samoan cultural underpinnings and methods as described in the next chapters, where Chapter four discusses the philosophical assumptions, epistemology, and methodology, while Chapter five outlines the methods and analysis used in this study. This research orientation promotes inclusivity and provides a discursive space for Samoans to voice their narratives about their experiences regarding career advancement in the NZ workplace.

Having analysed the data, Chapters six and seven present the findings of this research using the key themes. Chapter eight discusses these themes with theory and cultural concepts to elucidate the findings. The final Chapter nine concludes this thesis with a summary of the key findings, the theoretical and practical contributions to academia, the limitations and areas for future research, and personal reflections of the study.



## CHAPTER 2: GLASS CEILINGS, PAST, AND PRESENT

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*“Someone’s got to break the glass ceiling, and once it’s broken,  
everybody else comes clamouring up behind.”*

Helen Clark, 2001  
(Former New Zealand Prime Minister, 1999-2008)

This chapter reviews the existing glass ceiling literature to outline the theoretical background and context of which studies have been developed and situated. The chapter commences with a definition of the glass ceiling, its origin, and the historical initiatives that began the investigation of its existence that culminated with preventative measures. I provide the theoretical offerings that attempt to explain the glass ceiling at work and the career success facilitators that potentially eliminate, or, minimise its effects. In addition, I present a table of other glass ceiling metaphors that indicate the evolutionary extensions of which representations have emerged from other disciplines, followed by the counterarguments of the glass ceiling and career enablers.

### 2.1 Glass Ceiling Definition

Cotter and others’ (2001) definition of the glass ceiling is perhaps, the most often used in research. They contend that the glass ceiling dwells in the middle to senior levels; affects minority<sup>5</sup> groups and represents racial differences in their upward mobility, and further worsens at the higher end of management. The authors distinguish this definition as discrimination that increases with upward career mobility (at higher, senior levels) rather than

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<sup>5</sup> The term minority, ethnic minorities and immigrants (used interchangeably in this study) refer to non-white-skinned people who have originated from so-called third world, or, developing nations that may have an association with colonialism, and are now living in a larger Western mainstream society, e.g., New Zealand, the United States and Australia. The emphasis and use of the term minority surrounds ‘skin-colour’. As an example, Norwegian citizens who have chosen to live in New Zealand are not considered ethnic minorities unlike Samoans.

racial inequality that can occur in all occupations and levels. Cotter's definition will be used in this study given that the Samoan participants' occupations range from mid to senior level positions, for example, CEOs, Directors, and senior managers. These participants may have higher qualifications and years of experience in different sectors and industries. Therefore, they are in a stronger position to identify potential glass ceiling obstacles that further worsen towards the upper end of management.

Numerous studies of the glass ceiling phenomenon focus on identifying organisational and individual biases and practices that may stall careers. Gender stereotyping (Fernandez & Sosa, 2005; Hoobler, Wayne & Lemmon, 2009), lack of available mentors (Wilson, 2014), entrenched discrimination (Cotter et al., 2001; Murray, 2015), unfair hiring and promotion procedures (Catalyst, 1996; Kurtulus, 2012), lack of developmental opportunities (Ohlott, Ruderman & McCauley, 1994) and personality differences (Powell, 1990) are some of the research findings that describe the career dilemmas some individuals experience when accessing senior positions. Furthermore, Braddock and McParland (1987) found that some individuals have fewer social networks, resulting in fewer opportunities in securing sought-after top positions. Moore (1990) found that women's networks are often smaller with fewer ties to co-workers than those of men. In addition, Zeng (2011) states that when such persons do reach senior roles, they may experience less support with networks and mentors because cross-race relationships are dissimilar to same-race relationships.

One perspective argues that at the top end of the hierarchy above the glass ceiling are 'homosocial' males who are the gatekeepers that maintain the status quo by recruiting employees who seemingly resemble themselves (Bihagen & Ohls, 2006; Duehr & Bono, 2006; Helgertz, 2011). As posited by Kanter (1977) and Maume (1999), some men in high managerial positions might prefer appointing people with similar cultural penchants that already exist in

the organisation to confirm their male identity, self-reflection, and social support. As an example, a survey by Morrison, Schreiber, and Price (1995) of 304 American organisations revealed that white male Human Resource managers were uncomfortable with those unlike themselves (i.e., women and people of colour), stating that they ‘had greater comfort with their own kind’ (p. 19). Their responses were a clear indication of the lack of success in developing diversity policies (e.g., sexism and racism) that limited implementation with minimal accountability.

Some authors claim that the glass ceiling exists at the entry point or mid-management (e.g., De la Rica et al., 2008; Pendakur & Pendakur, 2007; Yap & Conrad, 2009) rather than senior positions because these recipients have limited job ladders. However, Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) describe the constraints of the glass ceiling as being in ‘the whole structure of the organisations in which we work; the foundation, the beams, the walls, the very air. The barriers to career advancement are not just above... they are all around them’ (p.136), thus, suggesting that the translucent hindrances may exist at different levels in various organisations. Moreover, it is typically used to indicate obstacles to entry into top-level management positions that, in due course, severely restrict career advancement.

## 2.2 Historical Overview

Gay Bryant (cited in Frenkiel, 1984) first coined the term glass ceiling in the 1980s and described it as an area in middle management where women were ‘getting stuck’ (p. 5) and could only reach a certain point in their careers. Although some females do manage to break through the glass ceiling and attain higher positions at work, the research and anecdotal evidence indicate that it is not the case for many women who become frustrated, lose

initiative and remain in their stagnant positions (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; King, 1993; Morrison, White, Van Velsor & The Center for Creative Leadership, 1987; Palmer & Simon, 2008). Furthermore, some women choose to exit their role, create businesses for themselves (because they have no choice) or, leave work to raise families (see Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Dominguez, 1992).

For years, the glass ceiling was viewed as a myth and primarily supported by subjective evidence and individual perceptions. However, the term was reborn into popular mainstream view when journalists Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986) highlighted the inequities of American hiring and promotion practices for management positions and the underrepresentation of women in senior roles. Thus the emergence of research and ‘rescue’ triggered the call for investigators and researchers to explore the dominion of men in the upper echelons of management, and the visible lack of women in this tier.

In response, the U.S. Department of Labor (1991) began routine investigations using focus groups and surveys of Federal Contractors with the intent of documenting the scope of the glass ceiling phenomenon. A literature review revealed the nationwide extent of the glass ceiling across industries such as academic institutions, trades, and within organisations. The Department further established the ‘Glass Ceiling Commission’ (1995) to identify the barriers that excluded, or, delayed career progress for women *and* other minority groups such as African-Americans, American-Indians, Hispanic males and Asian-Pacific people<sup>6</sup> (DOL, 1991).

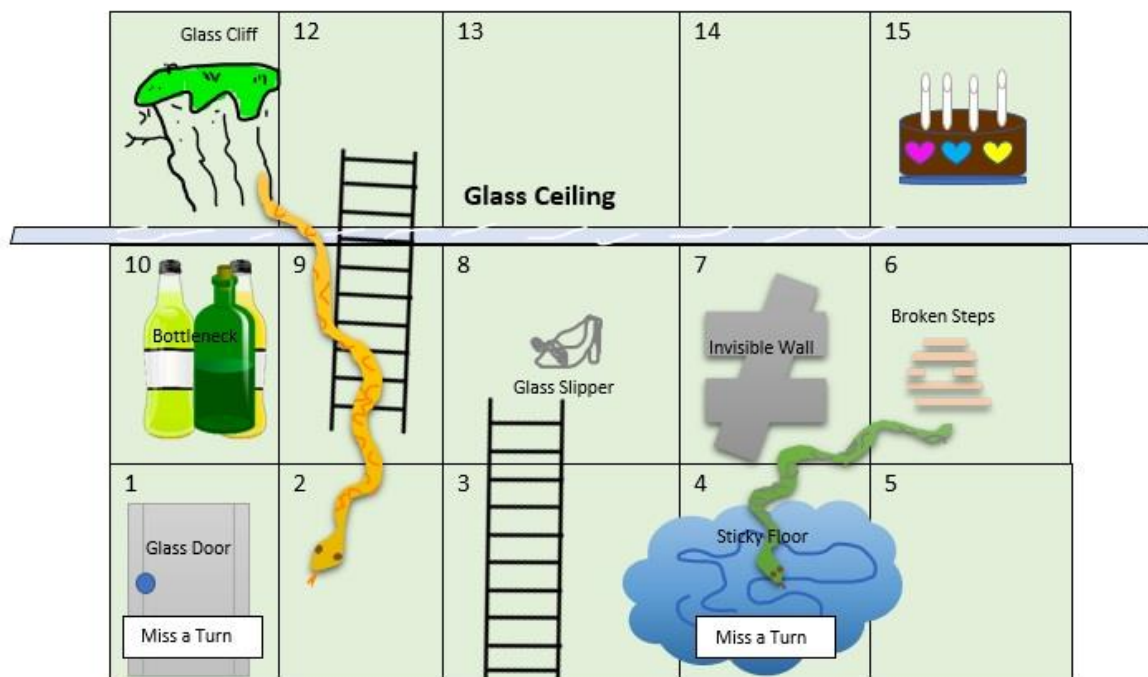
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<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, ‘Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders’ are sometimes grouped as one homogenous culture in the American glass ceiling studies, as indicated in the Glass Ceiling Commission (DOL, 1995, Sedlacek & Hung-bin, 2013; Yan & Museus, 2013). However, Pacific people (not ‘Pacific Islanders’) in this study (as found in other Pacific studies by native researchers of indigenous Pacific descent) are confined to individuals with ancestry from the South Pacific basin who speak a language from the Pacific nations, e.g., Cook Island-Māori, Fijian, Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan, or Niuean. Indian and Chinese languages do not originate from the South-Pacific nations.

The ‘promise’ of this initiative was enhanced productivity from maximising the full potential of the American labour force (Dominguez, 1992). However, the outcome of the Commission found that job rewards, promotions, and other success factors were unequal and inaccessible to specific groups based on gender, race, and ethnicity (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, p. 10-11; Woo, 1994). Moreover, the findings revealed that ethnic minorities plateaued earlier than women in their careers. Thus, the visible evidence of the glass ceiling included salary and job mobility disparities between men, women, and racial minorities.

### 2.3 Other Glass Ceiling Metaphors

Figure 2 Glass Ceiling ‘Snakes and Ladders’ Metaphors for Ethnic Minorities



Author’s impression of complex snakes and ladders career barriers and facilitators that block ethnic minorities from accessing senior roles.

The scholarship of the glass ceiling is quite eclectic, or, as Jackson, O’Callaghan and Aderias (2014) describe, a ‘multiplicity of concepts’ where the term has evolved outside of its



original definition of the 1980s to include other disciplines that capture the complexities of this phenomenon (Altman, Simpson, Baruch & Burke, 2005). As such, a redefinition of the glass ceiling triggered new labels to fit context-specific situations for women and people of colour.

### 2.3.1 Gendered Metaphors

An example of gendered metaphors includes the *Glass Escalator* that fast-track white men who work in female-dominated professions into more senior roles than women in the same position, for example, nursing (Williams, 1992 & 1995). These men experience a ‘smooth’ and relatively ‘easy ride’ in upper management roles. This metaphor captures the transparency of privilege alongside discrimination for women. However, in this example, it is more of a career facilitator, or, ‘ladder’ and advantageous to men while being an obstacle for women.

The *Glass Cliff* metaphor places minorities in precarious leadership roles in organisations of crisis, or, decline (Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Haslam, 2007). This phenomenon occurs after minorities attain senior positions and, therefore, pertains to individuals who have shattered the glass ceiling. In a study by Mulcahy and Lindham (2014) of companies listed on the UK stock exchange with losses from 2004 to 2006, women were more likely to be over-represented in senior board positions of these organisations facing high risks of failure. At face value, it may appear as advances, or, cracks in the glass ceiling in that minorities are indeed accessing top jobs, but the reality is that risk and precariousness may underpin these inroads.

The *Stained Glass Ceiling* (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012) refers to gender barriers for females seeking leadership positions in Christianity, such as female pastors, or, bishops. In this situation, females aspiring to higher positions can see the pulpit but rarely have the opportunities to speak from the podium. Historically, the concept of leadership in Biblical days was passed through the line of men, that is, the Abrahamic Covenant, although, there were female prophets and exemplars such as Sarah and Mary. Presently, we know that most of the leadership and management roles in organisations are dominated by men,<sup>7</sup> and therefore, a parallel may exist within churches (and organisations) for women aspiring to the higher laity.

*Broken Steps* (Reichman & Sterling, 2004) refers to gender discrimination towards women (explicit and implicit) through institutional processes and expectations that are designed with men in mind. *Glass Walls* (Mattis, 2004; Sandgren, 2014) describes the situations where individuals are unable to move laterally between departments, particularly in the high-tech industry for engineers and scientists. Unlike the glass ceiling that restricts individuals from the higher tiers of the corporate ladder, glass walls isolate them from ‘breaking out’ laterally, for example, creating technology startups because of prejudice and discrimination.

The *Glass Slipper Effect* (Ashcraft, 2013; Rudman & Heppen, 2003) is perhaps different from the other glass ceiling metaphors. Essentially, the glass slipper is about idealised romantic fantasies based on fairy tales that perpetuate gender roles, (e.g., Cinderella and her handsome, wealthy Prince). Admittedly, some people may be inclined to associate their romantic perceptions of the ‘ideal woman’ or, ‘perfect man’ and succumb to stereotypical expectations, for example, men are leaders (in organisations) and earn money, while females

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<sup>7</sup> For example, current figures indicate only 18% of senior managerial positions in New Zealand are filled by women (Fletcher, 2018).

stay at home and make babies. In turn, women may limit their aspirations of seeking senior roles in organisations because of being perceived as deviating from female-oriented roles. Although this metaphor of the glass slipper is assigned to gender studies, it does evoke an interesting alternative to the glass ceiling phenomenon.

### 2.3.2 Ethnicity-related Metaphors

Glass ceiling studies about ethnic minorities exposed the impervious layer of barriers that face people of colour. Bendl and Schmidt (2010) identified discrimination as a career obstacle for ethnic minorities, or, *Firewall* based on the information technology metaphor that prevents, or, allows (through gate-keepers) access to hard-drives and software. These authors suggest that minorities may break through – albeit with complexities. *Glass door* prevents minority groups from entry to employment in high-wage firms (Abowd, Kramarz & Margolis, 1999; Pendakur & Woodcock, 2010). *Sticky floor* and *mid-level bottleneck* imply overcrowding of ethnic minorities at the bottom and again at mid-level positions (De la Rica, Dolado, & Llorens, 2008; Pendakur & Pendakur, 2007; Yap & Konrad, 2009). These phenomena occur at the entry to mid-levels where employees are likely to have low educational qualifications and fewer opportunities for career advancement (see Figure 2).

The glass ceiling metaphors for African-Americans and Asian-Americans are more profound. They include *Concrete wall* (Bell & Nkomo, 2001), *Concrete ceiling* (Catalyst, 1999; Davidson, 1997), and more recently *Black ceiling* (McGirt, 2017) that portray a thick and almost impenetrable layer of constraints that are exclusive to people of colour based on historical cultural domination of their African heritage and as slaves to white Americans. *Bamboo* and *Rice-bowl ceilings* (Chin, 2016; Leong & Tang, 2016; Oguntoyinbo, 2014; Woo, 2000) pertain to the glass ceiling obstacles for Asian-Americans (i.e., Chinese, Asian,

Indian, and Filipino) where racial stereotypes such as the ‘china doll’ (Bassett, 2002) ‘robots’ (Hossfield, 1994) and perceived placid and noncombative qualities were more likely to perpetuate Asians as an incorrect ‘fit’ for senior managerial positions. Thereby, limiting their ascension to higher roles in the organisation.

Comparable to other ethnicity-related metaphors, I offer the *brown glass ceiling* to describe the constraints that are unique to Samoans as ethnic minorities in a dominant Palagi society. This metaphor encapsulates the phenomenon with conflicting cultural values and institutions that Samoans might encounter at work. More specifically, the brown glass ceiling refers to the misalignment of the Samoan va (spatial relations) with cultural identity as it yields organisational and cultural forms of disadvantage.

The following Table 1 provides an overview of the glass ceiling metaphors for women and ethnic minorities with their corresponding research studies.

Table 1

**Overview of Glass Ceiling Metaphors and Definitions**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1985	(Irons & Moore, 1985)	Invisible Wall	Career barriers that black managers face in the banking industry
1991	(U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) (Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995) (Cotter et al., 2001)	Glass ceiling	A point of difference (race or gender) that occurs despite having the necessary qualifications and experience, and often occurring at senior levels Qualified and suitable groups who are denied equal access to senior level roles by gender, race or ethnicity Occurs for minority groups regardless of their achievements and qualifications at mid and senior levels, worsens throughout their careers, and impacts potential senior roles
1992	(Williams, 1992 & 1995)	Glass Escalators	Men who work in female-dominated roles achieve faster promotions than women in the same roles
1994	(Reski & Padavic, 1994; Bell & Nkomo, 2001)	Concrete Wall	Barriers that imply 'rebounding' only for white and black women
1995	(Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995) (Reichman & Sterling, 2004)	Broken Steps	'Traps' in organisations that are set for women such as institutional processes that are designed for men
1997	(Catalyst, 1999; Davidson, 1997)	Concrete Ceiling	Career barriers for African-Americans
1999	(Abowd et al., 1999; Pendakur & Woodcock, 2010)	Glass Door	Obstacles that block minority groups with access to high-wage firms
1999 2003 2005	(Miller, Kerr & Reid, 1999 & 2003) (Rudman & Heppen 2003) (Ryan & Haslam, 2005)	Glass Wall Glass Slipper effect Glass Cliff	Functional segregation in the high-tech industry for engineers and scientists due to prejudice Women's reduced aspirations for power and management roles based on gendered roles The precariousness of women and ethnic minorities leadership positions
2005 2007	(Hyu, 2005; Leong & Tang, 2008) (Pendakur & Pendakur, 2007; De la Rica et al., 2008; Yap & Conrad, 2009)	Bamboo / Rice Bowl Ceiling Sticky Floor, Mid-level Bottleneck	Glass ceiling barriers for Asian-Americans Inequities for women and ethnic minorities who are crowded at the bottom (floor) and mid-levels of organisational hierarchies
2010	(Bendl & Schmidt, 2010)	Firewall	Discrimination against women and ethnic minorities based on the information technology term 'firewall' that prevents or allows access to hard drives or software
2012	(Longman & La Freniere, 2012)	Stained Glass Ceiling	Glass ceiling barriers for female leaders in religion such as female bishops
2017	(McGirt, 2017)	Black ceiling	Gender and race discrimination unique to African-American women
2018	Ofe-Grant, 2018 (forthcoming)	Brown Glass Ceiling	Samoan cultural barriers based on indigenous values that may yield career disadvantages

## 2.4 Theoretical Explanations of the Glass Ceiling

There are a vast number of competing theories that dominate the academic literature in an attempt to explain the phenomenon of the glass ceiling and identify barriers for women and people of colour (mostly African-American and Asian-American experiences) (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Catalyst, 1999; Chin, 2016; Davidson, 1997; Leong & Tang, 2016; Oguntoyinbo, 2014; Woo, 2000). The theories used in this study provide a guideline for understanding the significance of inequality at work, racism, labour market forces, and systemic pressures that present barriers associated with the glass ceiling. They include Human Capital theory, Self-imposed Barriers, Biculturalism and Dual-value Systems, Gendered Role Socialisation and Ethnic Stereotypes, Labour Market Segregation, Bias, Racism and Discrimination, Tokenism, Cultural Intelligence, and Tall Poppy Attitudes. These theories are potentially founded on the norms and values of the majority, or, dominant culture; thus, forming a pattern of limitation rather than an opportunity.

### 2.4.1 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory has been used to explain the glass ceiling effects for marginalised individuals in organisations (Henry-Brown & Campbell-Lewis, 2005; Newman, 1993; Scholarios & Taylor, 2011). From a labour economics perspective, human capital is the acquisition of competencies and capabilities of the workforce that increase a company's profits. It is desirable and regarded as one measure of success for an individual in an organisation because it contributes to their earning power (Becker, 1975). Human capital assumes that individuals have a choice, and the degree of that choice maintains their

advantaged, or, disadvantaged status (Chafetz, 1990). Therefore, superior skills and qualifications tend to heighten career advancement opportunities in the labour market.

Ethnic minorities are encouraged to improve their human capital if they wish to pursue a better quality of life in another country. According to the argument of some authors, women invest less capital in the form of education, training, qualifications, geographical mobility (less willing to relocate than men), and work experience, and place traditional home-life, that is, children and family, above their careers (Henry-Brown & Campbell-Lewis, 2005; Newman, 1993). In doing so, women and ethnic minorities voluntarily decrease their chances for higher career opportunities because management views them as a risky investment given that they have less investment in themselves.

The debate of the validity of these arguments is controversial. The human capital approach assumes that a woman's relationship to employment is based solely on her domestic life and that women's work, life, and family experiences are homogenous (Broadbridge, 2008). Furthermore, human capital uses a 'blame-the-victim' approach (Newman, 1993): the marginalised positions of women and ethnic minorities are self-created due to their inherent inferiority to their superior counterparts. This perspective is unconvincing given that ethnic minorities and women have little control over their statuses in dominant white, male societies who have the power to employ based on their subjective decisions, rather than objectives of the organisation (Kiaye & Singh, 2013; Newman, 1993). Perhaps the most contradictory evidence of human capital theory is that females outnumber males in higher education participation (post-graduate, or, honours degrees) in nearly all of the OECD countries, for example, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States (Broadbridge, 2008; OECD, 2015; U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). The results of this study may reveal whether

human capital theory enhanced, or, assisted the career progression for Samoans in New Zealand.

#### 2.4.2 Self-Imposed Barriers

The act of self-imposed, or, self-sabotage as the glass ceiling barrier implies that an individual deliberately delays their career advancement through passive behaviour, limited career prospects, and avoiding opportunities for fear of success and failure (Holmes, 2006; Jones & Oppenheim, 2002; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Riger & Galligan, 1980).

Similar to the glass slipper effect, the ‘Cinderella complex’ by Dowling (1981) postulates that women would unconsciously sabotage their careers because of their apprehension and belief in oneself. Dowling (1981) observed that women who came from homes where mothers would focus on marrying their daughters to wealthy, handsome men valued their self-worth from their husbands and established the senseless act of self-sabotage.

Some minority individuals may experience unconscious guilt at having surpassed the social and employment statuses of their family, friends, and others in their ethnic groups (Akhtar, 2014). That is, minorities may choose to forgo opportunities so that they seemingly ‘fit’ with their perceived cultural stereotypes. Poussaint (1987) coined the term ‘survivor guilt’ for African-Americans who felt tension and despair at being successful while knowing that other relatives remain in poor urban and rural communities with little hope and means of getting out. Unconscious guilt is a barrier to career progress for minorities who might internalise negative stereotypes from working in organisations with dominant cultures that could lead them to feel unworthy of success and “inferior” (Holmes, 2006, p.216). As such, minorities might internalise the message that they are inferior and not worthy of success, and feel unentitled to any form of achievement, or, accomplishment.



Other self-imposed barriers include pursuing jobs where there has been a proven track record of achievement, or, ‘safe jobs’ albeit at a lower level despite having the competence and skill of working in senior employment (Akhtar, 2014; Maack & Passet, 1994). In other words, avoiding job opportunities that appear to be more challenging and require advanced managerial skills. Furthermore, it is plausible to assume that some minorities are just not interested in seeking higher roles (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010; Jones & Oppenheim, 2002) or, becoming entrepreneurs (Gill & Ganesh, 2007).

#### 2.4.3 Biculturalism and Dual-value Systems

From an acculturation perspective, the concept of biculturalism concerns individuals (biculturals) who have internalized two cultures: their culture of origin and a host country that is most often their work culture (Berry, 1997; Szapocznik, Kurtines & Fernandez, 1980). Biculturals include ethnic minorities, refugees, immigrants, indigenes, and mixed-ethnic groups (Berry, 2003; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007) and their children who may have been born and raised in the receiving society (Swartz & Unger, 2010). Biculturals speak their language and that of the host nation, have friends from both cultural backgrounds and are fully immersed in dual societies.

The argument of biculturalism as hindrances to career progress proposes that biculturals navigate, or, juggle two separate cultures and values (Szapocznik, Kurtines & Fernandez, 1980) that may lead to tension at work and home, and cultural alienation (Lakshman, 2013; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). In other words, these individuals struggle with accommodating two cultures while attempting to maintain a

positive identity of themselves, or, a ‘revamped’ identity that is moulded from the host society (Baffoe, 2011).

Identity is associated with shared beliefs, values, and common goals about individuals in a given group (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004) and has two main elements: the personal identity of how one sees themselves, and social identity from the world’s perspective. How we view ourselves and how we believe the world sees us, shapes our identity; for example, ethnic minorities continuously contend with the fact that they are the ‘other’ at work and school (Baffoe, 2011). Therefore, they continuously negotiate ethnic boundaries (Nagel, 1994) that may shape and reshape their self-definition, how they see themselves with their community and perceptions of culture.

One perspective from Bell, Nkomo, and Hammond (1994) found that ethnic minorities experienced lower job satisfaction and high turnover because of the psychological stress of having to adapt and function in a Western<sup>8</sup> environment where they received limited support. In this study, African-Americans felt pressured to suppress and diminish part of their identity which includes value systems, political orientation, and interpersonal style to match that of the status quo (usually Anglo-European cultures) to advance into higher careers and receive access to opportunities. The challenge is managing the opposing realities of these cultures while maintaining a favourable view of both *and* performing well at work.

An alternative ‘positive’ view of biculturalism is that bicultural competence (having the prowess of maintaining both cultures) lead to better living, enhanced creativity, and professional success. A study by Tadmoor, Galinsky, and Maddux (2012) proposed that

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<sup>8</sup> ‘Western’ as referred to in this context and research about Samoans refer to the English and/or European culture. Thus, designating a culture as a master race, for example, civilised Europe and the rest of the world, or, ‘exotic others.’

individuals who acknowledged their home and host country cultures experience greater creativity, higher promotion rates, and favourable reputations in comparison to individuals who identified with one culture. The authors highlighted that exposure to new cultures and experiences in another host society stimulated new thoughts from having a more extensive collection of experiences and exposure stemming from both home and host cultures. From their perspective, biculturals are more likely to display advanced reasoning skills from understanding multiple perspectives and contexts.

#### 2.4.4 Gendered Role Socialisation and Ethnic Stereotypes

Research indicates that role socialisation promotes gendered-role differences that create powerful glass ceiling barriers, particularly for women (Henry-Brown & Campbell-Lewis, 2005; Lee & Fiske, 2006; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Newman, 1993; Oakley 2000). Traditionally, womens' roles in society include mother, daughter, wife, and homemaker (Kiaye & Singh, 2013; Newman, 1993) and mostly reflect a gender-stratified nation (patriarchal), and one that is ingrained from early childhood and reinforced at work. Tannen (1994) observed that most young girls are socialised to believe that being smart will make them unpopular with other children and, therefore, are encouraged to downplay their abilities and competencies. Alternatively, boys are expected to behave and communicate in ways that will enhance their abilities and knowledge. These behaviours are perpetuated at work where women are less likely to 'come forward and parade their achievements' (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006, p. 568) whereas, men will freely exercise authority and 'blow their own horn' (Oakley, 2000, p.325).

Cultural traditions where family represents a strong institution may contribute to role socialisation. As an example, the Samoan culture is profoundly patriarchal where women are not expected to be the decision-makers, or, leaders of their household (Evening, 2004; Sahlins, 1971). Their primary responsibilities include domestic duties, child-care, and community work. Therefore, Samoan women may experience discrimination from entrenched hegemonic Samoan cultural traditions that women are expected to follow. The perceived gendered roles in Pacific contexts by Samoan and Pacific males disadvantage women in trying to advance their careers. Gender discrimination may be visible in organisations where Samoan women are found in administration and support roles, rather than supervision and management (Newman 1993).

In addition, when one thinks of a manager, or, leader, it is assumed and envisioned to be a white male (Schein, 1973) and perhaps not a female, or, an ethnic minority. Stone, Stone-Romero, and Lukaszewski (2007) contend that an ideal applicant for high-status 'power' roles in most American organisations, tend to reflect MWasp: **M**ale, **W**hite, **A**nglo, **S**axon, **P**rotestant. As a result, MWASPs potentially mirror the values and ideologies of English and European cultures and their relative levels of power, for example, economic, political and military (Cox, 1993; Stone et al., 2007). Unfortunately, the unintentional (or, perhaps intentional) consequence is the retention of 'elitist' white men in superior occupations. Hence, the possibility of penalising people of colour and women because they diverge from the preferable managerial stereotype.

According to Lee and Fiske (2006), the prevailing stereotype perception of immigrants and ethnic minorities is an untrustworthy and incompetent outsider. As an example, some individuals might perceive Chinese immigrants as passive, subservient 'robots' who will

work long hours for less pay, ostensibly uninterested in seeking management positions (Hossfeld, 1994; Leong & Grand, 2008; Shi, 2008). In a study by Chung-Herrera and Lankau (2005) about Caucasian managerial perceptions of the ‘successful manager prototype’ concerning ethnic groups, Asian-Americans were perceived as being more familiar with the prototype of a successful manager over African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. However, at the same time, the findings revealed that the perceived negative qualities of being more reserved and submissive, and less charismatic characterised the Asian-American group. These attributes are devoid of the charisma, decisiveness, assertiveness, and social poise found in leaders and managers (Leong & Tang, 2016). Asian-Americans may be perceived as having managerial competence alongside technical skill and ability, but viewed as unfit for managerial positions due to their passive attributes. Thus, Asian-Americans may be high achievers, yet, fail to reach the top management roles. The outcomes of this research might reveal the extent of ethnic stereotyping and profiling for Samoan managers in New Zealand.

#### 2.4.5 Labour Market Segregation

Labour market segmentation theories have been offered to explain the glass ceiling for women and ethnic minorities (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Newman, 1993; Spell & Blum, 2000). It is based on the proposition that labour markets are segmented into specific categories (Bonacich, 1973), such as a dual-type relationship that exists in the core and periphery sectors of the economy (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Thurow, 1969) and other institutionalist and radical labour market theories (e.g., Adam Smith’s (1937) internal labour market theories and Piore’s (1979) triple labour market theories). Core organisations seem to offer better lucrative employment, job security, higher wages, and greater opportunities for

promotion and advancement. This primary sector contains skilled and semi-skilled occupations such as managerial, executive, professional, and technical (Dixon, 1994). In these core organisations, white men constructed barriers that excluded minority groups. As an example, white Americans oppressed African-Americans and Chinese-Americans through labour unions, legislation, violence, distributions of power, resources, and practices that resulted in competition for preferred jobs and the construction of a split labour market that encouraged hierarchies of gender, race, and ethnicity (Lee, 2002, p. 697; Yan & Museus, 2013). African-Americans were confined to unskilled occupations in the service industry, or, precarious industries such as coal, iron, steel, and lumber (Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014, p.393) and dirty jobs (Foner & Lewis, 1989). Interestingly, Restifo, Roscigno, and Qian (2013) found that white European immigrants experienced more occupational mobility, inclusion, and incorporation because of their whiteness, despite sharing the same immigrant statuses as other ethnic groups such as African-Americans and Mexican-Americans.

Alternatively, peripheral (or secondary level) segments rely on low-cost labour, consist of temporary jobs (often in the service sector) and are disproportionately represented by women and ethnic minorities (Spell & Blum, 2000). This sector encompasses some semi-skilled and mostly un-skilled occupations that are highly repetitive, hierarchical, and instructional (Dixon, 1994). In this labour segment, job changes and periods of joblessness are common (Schrover, van der Leun & Quispel, 2007). Employees in peripheral firms tend to occupy roles that do not lead to managerial positions, experience poor returns on human capital and less economic rewards (Restifo, Roscigno & Qian, 2013). These types of employment are found in the service sector, medical and health, community and education, and Human Resources (Miller, Kerr & Reid, 1999). However, as more ethnic minorities enter into dominant core organisations as professionals and managers, they continue to experience

exclusion and discrimination because of their immigrant status and history as minorities in the peripheral sector.

#### 2.4.6 Bias, Racism and Discrimination

Racism, bias, and discrimination (used interchangeably) are one of the most profound glass ceiling systemic barriers based on the notion that some individuals (dominant group) perceive that certain people of colour, race, or, gender are unsuitable for management positions and these views are internalized and perpetuated in organisations (Cook & Glass, 2014; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). For instance, the sociological perspective of unconscious bias emphasises that racism may occur from an empowered group seeking control and status, with an involuntary inclination to perceive individuals in stereotypical ways according to different social categories, such as ethnicity and gender (Houkamau & Clarke, 2016). These perceptions result in an affinity for in-group favouritism, or, out-group discrimination (Dovidio et al., 1997; Hofstede, 2001). In other words, one may show partiality to an individual because they are similar to themselves, or, respond negatively because of an affinity to unconscious discrimination. These attitudes impact on marginalised groups where they are withheld, or, barred from participation that influence careers. As an example, HR processes that structure career positions may favour, or, purposefully arrange promotion and pay for white employees from the prejudicial bias that in turn, contribute to illegal institutional discrimination and inequality (Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley, 1990). Unfortunately, despite many laws and policies that attempt to counteract racist attitudes at work, they continue to persist and constrain women and ethnic minorities from career progress.

Race and racism are embedded in society as a function from historical, political, social and economic contexts – permeating all aspects of society that it becomes normalised (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Rocco, Bernier & Bowman, 2014). Glass ceiling barriers based on race are perhaps best understood from African-American research (Bartol, Martin & Kromkowski, 2003; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009; Kern-Foxworth, 1989). As an example, African-Americans have a history of slavery and segregation, working and living in the homes of their white masters where most continued to remain after the emancipation period (circa 1863). Seeking work outside of labour-intensive, or, domestic jobs was nearly impossible not only because they lacked the necessary social capital, education, and training, but more so because direct contact with white Americans was still inconceivable. In addition, of the senior executive positions at the CEO level in the United States, only 3.2 percent are held by African-Americans (Freeman, 2012). They are still perceived as less ambitious, lacking industriousness and actual competence (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005) and less likely to ascend into senior management (Palmer & Johnson-Bailey, 2005; Pompper, 2011; Reuther & Fairhurst, 2000; Veazie, 2016; Wellburn & Pittman, 2012). Accordingly, if the behavioural pattern of a group in an organisation seemingly mirrors that of society, for example, racist assumptions, then evaluations of the dominant group remain unquestioned in the organisation (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

#### 2.4.7 Tokenism

Kanter (1977) argued that tokenism leads to increased performance pressures, for example, token females might experience gender discrimination, lower evaluations and less career success (Schmitt, Spoor, Danaher & Branscombe, 2009). Other research suggests that tokenism is worse for ethnic minorities and particularly those who enter a position that was



formerly held by white individuals (Barreto, Ryan, & Schmitt, 2009; McDonald, Toussaint & Schweiger, 2004; Yoder, 1994). On the one hand, tokenism in managerial occupations provides employment accessibility for ethnic minorities by positioning them into a role of power, which for some, may not ever have had that opportunity. While on the other, tokenism unintentionally promotes exclusion (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010; Cook & Glass, 2014; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990) and more scrutiny against perceived racist ideologies and stereotypes (Kanter, 1977; Riger & Galligan, 1980) because an ethnic minority (usually being the only one of their kind) whose presence may look and sound different (through their appearance, words, accents, and actions) (Akhtar, 2014; Gustafson, 2008; Kanter 1977) and may therefore, be more visible.

In a study by Cianni and Romberger (1995) concerning gender and ethnicity among white, black, Hispanic, and Asian managers, some senior executives refrained from assigning Hispanic managers as presenters at meetings with senior executives because their speech accents that were perceived as a 'deterrent.' As such, Hispanic managers were disadvantaged from access to potential opportunities to showcase their skills and abilities. Thus, indicating that as minority tokens, they are under more pressure than others and must work harder to receive recognition because of their visibility and 'differentness' (Gustafson, 2008). As a result, tokens are excluded from formal and informal networks, experience lack of culture fit, and are withheld from important mentoring relationships (Briggs, Jaramillo & Weeks, 2011; Lyness & Thompson, 2000).

African-Americans are sometimes placed in highly visible positions to meet the race-related objectives of an organisation (e.g., quota, or, diversity initiative) which does not necessarily benefit their careers (Carton & Rosette, 2011; Knight, Hebl, Foster & Mannix, 2003; Ryan &

Haslam, 2007). As a result, minorities may limit their performance output and decline promotions to avoid outperforming the majority (their white counterparts) (Knight et al., 2003). Moreover, these tokens may appear to over-achieve by ‘going above’ their performance expectations to compensate for their high visibility and differentness (Cook & Glass, 2006; Knight et al., 2003; Oakley, 2000).

Ethnic minorities who do break through to higher roles may experience fewer rewards, resources, opportunities, and less job discretion (Cook & Glass, 2006; Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley, 1990; Guest, 2016; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Some may even encounter disparaging treatment by colleagues, or, as Pettigrew and Martin (1987) describe as a ‘triple jeopardy’ where coloured people and ethnic minorities endure; (1) adverse racist stereotyping, (2) being the only coloured ethnic minority at work, and (3) being tokens who have attained their position through mandated initiatives rather than competency-based.

#### 2.4.8 Lack of Cultural Intelligence

Lack of cultural intelligence as a glass ceiling barrier is best understood from studies concerning cultural intelligence (CQ). Schmidt and Hunter (2000) define CQ as the capacity to grasp, reason, and solve abstract concepts and problems in culturally-diverse contexts. Thomas and Inkson (2003) define CQ as constituting knowledge of the essential elements in intercultural communications, cultivating ‘a mindful approach’ and a repertoire of behavioural skills according to different intercultural situations. Sternberg’s (1997) definition is perhaps the most accepted, where intelligence comprises the mental abilities for adapting to, selecting, or, changing to any environmental context, particularly in challenging situations. Based on these three definitions and using a management perspective, an

individual with cultural intelligence can adapt to culturally diverse environments as characterised through adjustment and cross-cultural interactions (Ang et al., 2007; Thomas et al. 2008).

Individuals with higher CQ are consciously aware of cultural differences and preferences and adjust their mental processes, or, question their cultural assumptions (Ang et al. 2007; Triandis, 2006). They recognise the norms, protocols, and conventions from personal experiences having been exposed to different cultures (Triandis, 2005) and understand the similarities and differences of cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001). In addition, individuals with higher CQ cope better in culturally diverse contexts and build higher levels of trust and cooperation (Ang et al., 2007; Kim, Kirkman & Chen, 2009; Thomas & Inkson, 2003; Young, Haffejee & Corsun, 2017).

Alternatively, individuals who lack CQ may experience difficulties adapting to culturally diverse environments, or, question their mental models of cultural norms and are, therefore, ineffective in their performance with culturally-diverse others. We could potentially introduce ethnocentrism as coinciding with lack of CQ (e.g., Barbuto, Beene & Tran, 2015; Young, Haffejee & Corsun, 2017). Ethnocentrism views other groups as inferior in comparison to one's ethnic group (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; Owuamal & Zagefka, 2013), or, as Levinson (1950) describes, an in-group out-group distinction with negative stereotyped imagery and attitudes towards out-groups and positive submissive attitudes for in-groups (p.5). Ethnocentrism destroys cross-cultural interactions and generates negative emotions such as mistrust and discrimination (Young, Haffejee & Corsun, 2017). However, according to Neuliep and McCroskey (1997), everyone is (to some extent) ethnocentric, because it occurs across cultures and contexts, and is perpetuated by observation, learned

behaviour, and communication systems. The lack of cultural intelligence in organisations and management is a glass ceiling barrier for ethnic minorities who are culturally diverse from the dominant in-group and may experience negative stereotyping and fewer opportunities from being perceived as members of the out-group.

#### 2.4.9 'Tall Poppy' Attitudes

A tall poppy, according to the Oxford Dictionary of New Zealandisms (2014), is a “conspicuously successful person whose distinction attracts envy, or, hostility.” Tall poppies are viewed as high-achievers, a ‘tower’ over others derived from fame, wealth, and accomplishments (Peeters, 2004), and scrutinised with jealousy and covetousness (Ceramalus, 1994). The term tall poppy syndrome is based on the concept that the tallest poppy in the field will attract notice and is subsequently chopped. Therefore, to *tall poppy* an individual is to cut them down to size.

The argument of tall poppy syndrome as an obstacle to career advancement is based on the stigmatisation of over-achievers and discouragement of personal success. While most people tend to encourage progress in business and careers, and celebrate achievements, there are studies and media reports of ‘public shaming’ of some individuals of prominence such as politicians, academics, celebrities, and entrepreneurs who experienced major setbacks (e.g., Bowden, 2003; Kirkwood, 2007; Mouly & Sankaran, 2002; Peeters, 2004). The behaviour of vilifying and demonising high-achievers seems to indicate an inclination for some people to pull back and undermine ambitious individuals from succeeding to the upper levels of society. In other words, tall poppy syndrome is the social norm of ‘levelling’ top achievers down to the same status as others beneath them (Feather, 1989).

In a study by Pyke and others (2012) concerning the Tongan diaspora in Australia and links with their homeland, some Tongan entrepreneurs avoided business development and career opportunities, preferring to remain confined to specific areas in Tonga, rather than expand their businesses, for fear of cultural and communal ostracism of individual success through financial wealth. The cultural expectation of sharing with the extended family and community might indicate that “individual achievement is discouraged within the culture” (Pyke et al., 2012, p.8). Therefore, individuals might compromise their personal and business goals in favour of aligning their business practices with indigenous cultural values. The toll of ‘giving up’ certain aspects of the business life cycle (through expansion) and career progress to avoid public attention may be deemed as a loss to one’s self-esteem and sense-of-self.

Similarly, Julien and others (2010) found that North American aboriginal leaders (First Nations, Metis and Inuit of Canada) experienced hostility from their communities when seeking government assistance with social progress and wellbeing to the betterment of their people, citing ‘jealousy’ and a sense of betrayal (from the community) that colonial mindsets were influencing and infiltrating authentic aboriginal cultural values and leadership. One leader noted “if you seem too much in the forefront of things... they’ll try to make sure that you stand back, be part of the ‘circle,’ be part of the community” (Julien et al., 2010, p.123). Hence, these leaders felt racially and culturally challenged and undermined by their community because, in their view, they stood out among the group rather than adhered to the collective value of the circle. Both these studies are important to ethnic minorities and careers because they highlight potential cultural implications when pursuing individualist goals (perceived as Euro-Western orientations) outside of the collective.

Although the studies of ethnic-related tall poppy syndrome are limited, they do, however, seem to imply that some high achievers appear to experience cultural alienation, resistance, and resentment from others within their communities due to perceived individual pursuits of success, beyond the cultural expectations of the immediate communal group, for example, senior managerial careers, where other ethnic individuals are likely to be found in administration and front-line roles. In turn, the effects of tall poppy attitudes may cause certain individuals to refrain from seeking higher careers and hold them back from advancement.

## 2.5 Career Success Facilitators, Initiatives and Mechanisms

Career facilitators are mechanisms, or, enablers that assist and support career progression, for example, education that increases knowledge and abilities. The glass ceiling literature suggests that career facilitators may counteract the glass ceiling effects for women and ethnic minorities as indicated by research concerning African-American and Chinese-American experiences (e.g., Barreto, Ryan & Schmitt, 2009; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; King, 1993; Palmer & Simon, 2008).

Initiatives such as 'Affirmative Action' (AA) helped facilitate minorities and women into higher-paying occupations through changes to recruitment procedures and placement goals. A study by Kurtulus (2012) using longitudinal data of more than 100,000 large private sector firms spanning three decades (1973-2003), found that the careers of white women, black men and women, and Hispanic women were more successful at companies holding federal contracts bound by AA. Despite the controversy that AA places underserved minorities who have advanced through favourable policies (Landau, 1995) and its prohibition in some

American states, Kurtulus (2012) found that government policy played a crucial role in advancing careers for minorities into senior levels of the organisational hierarchy. In addition, other movements such as the 'Women's Rights Movement' of the 70s (Klingner & Nalbandian, 1993) and the continued work of the 'feminist movements' (Humm, 1992) focused on combatting discrimination and improving the status of disadvantaged groups. At its core is the doctrine of equal rights and the public emancipation of women and people of colour.

Primarily, the initiative of removing glass ceiling barriers should start at the top level of the leadership hierarchy. CEOs and Directors have the most significant influence in shattering glass ceiling obstacles through their commitment to workplace diversity policies (Redwood, 1996; Wilson, 2014), such as family-friendly and childcare facilities (Sabattini & Crosby, 2009), fair selection and recruitment procedures (Coyne & Coyne, 2004), equal access to opportunities, and regular monitoring of performance appraisal systems. This commitment indicates management's participation in promoting equality and social justice by respecting gender and cultural differences, values, beliefs, and morals of their diverse employees (Wilson, 2014). Thus, management assists with creating new schemas in the minds of their workers that alter and contest perceived views that only white males aspire to senior career occupations.

Access to mentors (Wilson, 2014) has shown to increase promotability for minorities through organisational support and personal guidance (Lyness & Thompson, 2000; Nguyen, 2013). However, the challenge is finding a suitable mentor among a smaller pool of women, or, ethnic minorities in management. Moreover, mentors may unintentionally gravitate toward those who are like themselves (Bova, 2000), for example, a white senior male manager

mentoring a white younger male mentee. Furthermore, it is suggested that a fellow minority should mentor minorities due to the challenges race can present through different perspectives and experiences (Wilson, 2014). Alternatively, Thomas's (2001) postulates that minorities tend to progress faster if their white mentors acknowledge and understand that race is a potential barrier. Thomas (2001) findings indicate that the most influential characteristics of successful ethnic minorities in management are a network of mentors and corporate sponsors who nurtured their professional development.

Other career facilitators include creating a plan with goals (Roldan & Stern, 2006; Russell, 1994) as it is no longer sufficient to rely on 'dreams of success.' Self-motivation, confidence, and independence in pursuing education, higher qualifications and skills may increase a person's capital that contributes to their profile. However, as previously mentioned under the human capital theory, skills and education are problematic for ethnic minorities because of the subjective nature and unfair selection processes that continue to delay attempts by minorities in securing promotion and access to higher occupations.

Developing a solid history of successful accomplishments (Morrison et al., 1987), networks, and strategic relationships (Thomas, 2001; Wilson, 2014) has shown to assist with overcoming harmful gender and racial stereotypes that some groups may encounter. As an example, Porter and Woo (2015) found that networking for minorities assisted career development through advice, advocacy, and friendship with people of influence in leadership positions. Furthermore, networking illustrates the interpersonal power of the minority in his, or, her capacity in senior roles. However, the lack of access to informal networks limits minorities from finding out what is available regarding promotions, resources, sponsorship, and other work-related matters.



Job mobility (including local and international assignments, special projects and committees) has been identified as a critical success factor for women and ethnic minorities (Catalyst, 1996; Morrison et al., 1987). The traditional concept of working and committing to one or two jobs no longer seems to exist in this century where individuals voluntarily change employment and types of employment (Lam, Ng, & Feldman, 2012). Some of the benefits of job mobility include the expansion of an employee's knowledge and experience base; hence, indicating flexibility and adaptability, such as moving to a new geographical location and modifying personal behaviours and values to that of the host country (Wilson, 2014). As such, individuals with profiles of great job mobility tend to earn considerable salaries (Dreher & Cox, 2000; Lam, Ng, & Feldman, 2012; Murrell, Frieze, & Olson, 1996). Furthermore, it reveals attitudes of willingness and career aspirations to management from seeking roles outside of their comfort zone. In a study by Eby and Johnson (2011), African-American men who were successful in top-tiered management occupations tended to have a history of job mobility (including international work experience), alongside education, and further training and development. High-pressure jobs provide opportunities to showcase advanced reasoning skills and decision-making processes.

Other research indicates that women and minorities are less likely to be chosen for assignments, or, offered less difficult tasks with low risk and nominal skill (Bradley-Geist & Ruscher, 2011; Payne-Pikus, Hagen & Nelson, 2010). Furthermore, Maume (2012) found that white executives deliberately controlled career enhancing roles and provided less challenging managerial positions with minimal discretion and autonomy for ethnic minorities. Consequently, these groups consistently remain under-represented in the senior levels of organisational management.

Self-efficacy, positive self-talk, and resilience are other studied facilitators to career success (Cambridge-Williams et al., 2013; Choi et al., 2012; Wright et al., 2013). According to Bandura's (1982) social cognitive theory, the central element of self-efficacy and outcome expectations enhances human accomplishments and well-being and helps individuals reach their goals (Hackett & Byars, 1996). It is linked to the perception that one has the ability, power, and conviction to control, regulate, and execute events in their lives and the way these events are experienced (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Simply put, it is the drive that some people have with effort and motivation towards a challenging task, or, event while others may sit back, experience self-doubt, and give up any attempts at accomplishing tasks. Therefore, the higher the self-efficacy, the more belief one has in achieving goals and attaining 'designated types of performances' (Bandura, 1986, p.391). Alternatively, the lower the self-efficacy, the less one believes that one is capable of success.

When applied to careers, a person's beliefs about themselves is a powerful determinate of career pursuit and attainment (Carpi et al., 2017). An individual with low self-efficacy might avoid difficult tasks and potential promotions that could be perceived as personal threats. In addition, the individual might have low aspirations and a weak commitment to the role. On the other hand, some people with high self-efficacy might approach new tasks, or, obstacles (e.g., discrimination and negative feedback) they encounter as a challenge to be 'mastered' (Bandura, 1982; Hu, Lei & Xia, 2009) and vicariously through association and observation from teachers, parents, mentors, and role models (Byars-Winston & Fouad, 2008; Rowan-Kenyon, Swan & Creager, 2012).

In a study by Washington (2009) about two African-American women who administered a predominantly white institution for more than thirty years found that in the face of racial and gender discrimination, having peer support and blocking out negative thoughts that would impact on their professional careers and focusing on positive talk and the legacy they wished to leave behind for future generations of people of colour as administrators were coping mechanisms that reframed their minds. They suppressed what they perceived as negative behaviour and developed positive attitudes in the face of oppression and ostracism alongside a supportive network. Therefore, self-control, determination, and the level of efficacy may impact on the goal challenges and the amount of effort put forward in the face of uncertainty. Table 2 outlines the career facilitators, initiatives and coping mechanisms for marginalised groups.

Table 2

**Career Facilitators for Women and Ethnic Minorities**

Individual Level	Organisational Level
Establish a plan, set goals, be prepared	Initiatives for the inclusion of minority groups (e.g., Affirmative action and quotas)
Obtain suitable skills, qualifications and experience	Equal opportunities
Develop a solid history of success accomplishments	CEO commitment to policies, for example, diversity, child-care, wellness, family-life balance, recruitment, training, development, and selection procedures
Network and develop relationships	Access to mentors
Take job assignments that offer mobility (e.g., international assignments)	Regular Monitoring of Performance Appraisal Systems
Modify or enhance behaviours, (e.g., self-efficacy and positive talk)	

## 2.6 Critics of the Glass ceiling

Some studies claim the glass ceiling is a myth, an illusion, and not a reality (e.g., Randle, 1999; Scholarios & Taylor, 2011; Zeng, 2011) and therefore, does not exist for women and ethnic minorities. According to Hilary Devey (2012), a British businesswoman, entrepreneur, and television personality (Dragons Den), the glass ceiling is the ‘worst excuse’ for the under-representation of women in the boardroom because she is ‘living proof that there’s no such thing’ (p.1).

Eagly and Carli (2007) posit that the reasons for the lack of women in senior positions are not about glass ceiling obstacles, but more about the multiple, complex disadvantages they encounter at every stage of their careers. They concluded that once a female enters the senior levels of an organisation, their promotion possibilities are no different from that of men. Using the labyrinth metaphor (Eagly & Carli, 2007) to describe the many expected and unexpected twists and turns in a career pathway, women have to contend with discrimination, family constraints, lack of mentors and other subtle biases that may cause them to leave, particularly during their prime career-building years. Unlike men who may have relatively straight routes to senior careers, Eagly and Carli (2007) suggest that women have to apply more effort and patience to overcome career obstacles.

Brown and Wellman (2005) found that the under-representation of minorities in senior roles can be explained by the ‘competency gap’ rather than glass ceiling barriers in the workplace. Advocates of the competency gap hypothesis contend that leaders, that is, Executives, Directors, Senior Managers, and CEs must exhibit the necessary experience, demeanour, qualifications, and skills that are necessary for leadership positions (Kesner, 1998; Oakley,

2000). These authors assert that employers' selection processes are based solely on competencies and choosing the best candidate for the job, and therefore, the onus is placed on the individual to build capacities. Ethnic minorities are perceived as having fewer qualifications, limited work experiences, and minimal skills than dominant white cultures. As a result, minorities cannot offer leadership prowess and managerial abilities as prescribed in the upper echelons of the organisational hierarchy.

In contrast to the perceived notion that women and ethnic minorities lack managerial and leadership skills and prowess, empirical studies indicate that individuals from these groups in leadership positions increase firms' value (Gyapong, Monem & Hu, 2016) have distinctive human capital (Cartwright & Gale, 1995), display collaborative leadership (Kramer, Konrad, Erkut & Hooper, 2008) and provide alternative perspectives (Barancuk & Dybvik, 2009). As prior mentioned, many women and ethnic minorities are qualified and possess human capital but are prone to subjective selection and discriminatory practices that limit upper movement in management roles; thus, perpetuating the existence of the glass ceiling. As Hillary Clinton declared in her concession speech to President-Elect Donald Trump that '*it is the hardest and highest glass ceiling*' that she was unable to shatter but '*someday, someone will*' (Walker, 2016).

This chapter reviewed existing studies of the glass ceiling and outlined the theoretical explanations of career barriers and facilitators that enhance, or, restrict progress. The next chapter continues examining the literature concerning Samoans and the glass ceiling in New Zealand, followed by a summary of the literature review.

## **CHAPTER 3: STUDIES OF SAMOANS AND CAREERS**

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This chapter reviews the available (although limited) studies that make references to Samoans at work and their careers. These studies tended to focus on work behaviours and the employment experiences of Pacific people as new entrants to New Zealand, with an emphasis on the cultural differences between migrant Polynesian workers and Palagi employers (e.g., Barnes & Jamieson, 1977; Parker, 2005; Pitt & Macpherson, 1974; Spoonley, 1978).

Although these studies did not directly explore glass ceilings, there is evidence of both career obstacles and facilitators from the public and private sectors that assisted, or, hindered Pacific careers. This chapter ends with a conceptual brown glass ceiling model and a summary of the literature review.

### **3.1 Early Evidence of Bias, Racist Attitudes and Ethnic Stereotypes**

A report by the NZ Department of Labour (1979) about the work experiences of Pacific migrants in Wellington revealed that New Zealand employers would not recognise the qualifications and skills held by Samoans, often keeping them in low-skill jobs despite their proficiencies and know-how in certain areas of the company. In addition, Spoonley's (1978) groundbreaking study of 44 NZ firms and Pacific workers found that employers would not consider hiring Pacific people as managers because it was unthinkable at the time due to 'racial features' (p. 64). Moreover, Spoonley's (1978) study highlighted that promoting Pacific people into managerial positions would lead to the following consequences: (1) the public reaction would be unfavourable, (2) imbalanced 'fit' with the company image, (3) it would produce conflict between Pakeha and Māori, and (4) the perception that Pacific people

were incapable of making managerial decisions. Other lesser results identify language capabilities (English) and perceptions of 'poor hygiene' and 'deceit' (Spoonley, 1978, p.66) as additional reasons for non-hiring of Pacific people as managers (see also Barnes & Jamieson, 1977).

A more in-depth search into the history of Pacific migrants in NZ around the time of the 1970s may shed some light concerning the bias, discrimination and racist attitudes from employers. In this period, the influx of Pacific workers was heavily concentrated in urban employment, that is, unskilled factory work with long 'overtime' hours. Temporary migrant workers were the cheapest alternative source of labour as they were willing to work extra hours for less pay. The arrivals of Pacific migrants constructed new and complicated social relations where many Pacific individuals exceeded their permit requirements. However, the government turned a 'blind eye to Samoans and other Pacific Islanders' to satisfy the shortage of unskilled labourers (Macdonald, 1986, p.73; Spoonley, 2005). Immigration seemed to proceed freely, and there was a growing perception among Pacific migrants that NZ approved the upsurge of Pacific migration and exceeded permits (New Zealand Coalition for Trade and Development, 1982).

Young Pacific men and women immigrated to NZ for better lifestyles, asset accumulation *and* generating financial remittances back to their island nations for family and kin (Khonje, 2015; Muliaiana, 2001; Spoonley, 2006). Pirie (1960) estimated that the Samoan remittances from NZ in 1960 amounted to \$15 million (US); thus, contributing to the Western Samoan national income. Recent figures show that remittances to Samoa in 2015 amounted to 18 percent of Samoa's GDP (World Bank, 2017). Fundamentally, remittances improved the socio-economic statuses of many Samoans as evidenced in the modernisation of fale

(houses), money for business start-ups and other small entrepreneurial activities such as market stores. New Zealand offered higher wages, better sophisticated medical treatment, homes, and a variety of consumer goods that benefited and improved the lives of many Samoans and Pacific people; thus, supporting the mythological notion of NZ as the 'land of milk and honey' for Pacific migrants.

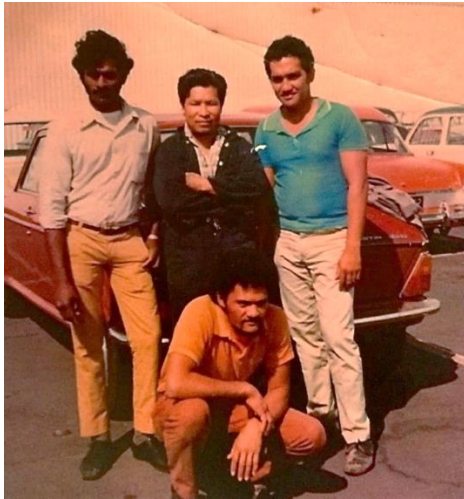
The increase of Pacific migration continued into the 1960s and 70s from Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau<sup>9</sup> (Statistics NZ, 2002). Greater waves of Tongans and Fijians arrived later (mid-80s and 90s) (Poot, 1983). The upsurge of Pacific migrants further exacerbated housing shortages and congested homes. Furthermore, securing seasonal work was difficult especially during the winter season when many Pacific people had not experienced cold weather, frost, and the New Zealand flu. To alleviate migration pressures, new policies of temporary (three months, or, less) and longer permits allowed Samoans entry into New Zealand with the proviso of employment guarantees, sponsorship, adequate housing accommodation, and good character.

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<sup>9</sup> Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands have New Zealand citizenship and were able to easily migrate during this time of Pacific migrant flux.



Figure 3 Hygrade Packaging Manufacturers on 'Smoko-break'



Pacific factory workers from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the Cook Islands.

This period of free-flowing migration ended quickly with the recession<sup>10</sup> (1975-1985) that brought high unemployment, increased crime, poverty and other social issues that disproportionately affected the Pacific people. In an act of desperation, the government turned to their immigration policy – targeting the Pacific migrants. The label ‘Pacific Islander’ was used synonymously with ‘overstayer’ and markedly associated with Pacific individuals who had remained longer than the required period as stipulated in their permits; hence, overstaying their time in New Zealand. Pacific Islander was attached to a negative stereotype and was a derogatory characterisation of the people to whom it referred, that is, notably Samoans (see Anae, 1997; Earle, 1995; Macpherson, 1996; NZ Race Relations, 1986). As quoted by the Offices of the Race Relations Conciliator (1986) ‘...overstaying was considered to be primarily a Pacific Island problem and that the stereotype of the Pacific Islander as overstayer was established’ (p.8).

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<sup>10</sup> Three major international developments fuelled the recession; a decline in international wool prices (1966), the oil crisis (1973) and Britain joining the European Economic Community (also 1973) thus reducing the exports of NZ dairy products.

Society viewed Polynesians as ‘thieves’ and ‘bludgers’ overloading the NZ social services, and a threat to law and order (Anae, 1997; Grainger, 2009). The state and the media fuelled the debacle and blamed Samoans as contributors to the recession – coining them overstayers and ‘unwelcome’ (Anae, 1997). Many New Zealanders formed an intense aversion towards the Pacific people (Field, 2006). In NZ’s eyes, Pacific people had overstayed their welcome, were now a ‘racial problem,’ and the least favoured ethnic group (Brosnanm 1988; Spoonley, 2005).

A growing disharmony between some Māori and Pacific prevailed over citizenship rights, employment, housing, materialism, and Christianity. Maori viewed ‘multiculturalism’ as diluting the bicultural Māori-Pakeha partnership and Treaty obligations (Earle, 1995; Pearson, 1990; Walker, 1987). Furthermore, according to Awatere (1984), Māori perceived Polynesians as being ‘ravaged by a desperate need to get white education, material goodies, and white status...and are not at this moment prepared to ally themselves with us’ (cited in McIntosh, 2001, p.149). At the time, Māori were fighting for recognition of Rangatiratanga (Māori: Chieftainship), empowerment, and equality and did not feel that the Pacific people were aligned to their cause. However, a major shift in the nature of the relationship between Māori and Pacific communities began from the shared perception of a racist and colonial NZ government and similar socio-economic marginalization (Pulotu-Endemann & Spoonley, 1992). Additionally, Māori and Pacific have a common view of progress and development for their communities established from ancestral ties to the Pacific.

To add further layers of bias and hatred, during an election campaign in 1975, the National Party screened a controversial television electoral advertisement cartoon about the threat of immigrants taking NZ jobs and housing (Figure 4). It featured dark-skinned people with flat

noses and black curly afro hair who were very angry and violent (and bigger in body mass than everyone else), presumably Pacific Islanders.<sup>11</sup> Newspaper articles, radio commentaries, and societal perceptions cemented and fuelled the stigma that Pacific Islanders were a threat to good society, stealing jobs, and should return to their home nations.

Figure 4 National Party Advertisement Targeting Immigration and Pacific Islanders



Controversial political television advert screened on national TV channels (Phillips, 2006).

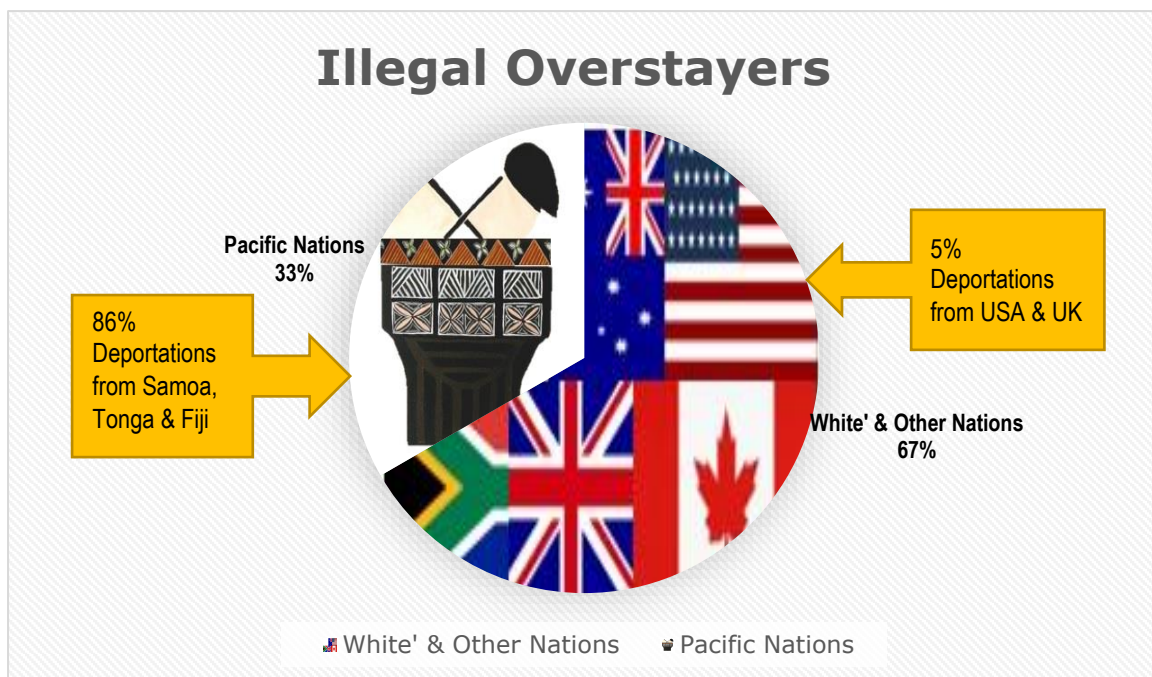
The Dawn Raids began in 1974 and then intensified in 1976 (to the early 80s) while under the leadership of Robert Muldoon. The NZ Police, Immigration officers, and police dogs combined forces and arrested thousands of Pacific overstayers, initially targeting Samoans (Farmer, 1979). These groups were uplifted from their homes at ‘dawn’ where most of them were still sleeping, or while working in factories and walking in the streets where they were subsequently deported to their Island nations (de Bres and Campbell, 1976; Farmer, 1979). Anyone who had brown skin, including people from the Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue (who are NZ citizens by right) and Māori, were randomly checked and had to provide evidence of their residential status. This period was a time of unease, terror, and suspicion for Samoans and Pacific people in New Zealand.

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<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/video/2158/national-party-advertisement>

The immigration prosecutions and deportations were discriminatory and racially motivated. USA, United Kingdom and ‘Others’<sup>12</sup> overstayers (combined) represented 66.5 percent while Pacific people (Samoans, Tongans, and Fijians) represented 33.5 percent of the estimated 10,000 overstayers (NZ Race Relations, 1986, p.41). However, 86 percent of the deportations were Pacific people (mostly Samoan) in comparison to 5 percent of USA and UK deportations (NZ Race Relations Office, 1986, p. 43). British, North American and European visitors comprised the majority of overstayers but were not actively sought, or, heavily prosecuted (see Figure 5). NZ officials favoured and showed leniency to overstayers from traditional source countries, or, ‘white Commonwealth nations’ (Spoonley, 1988, p.15).<sup>13</sup>

Figure 5 Distribution of Deportations for Illegal Overstayers by Nationality 1985-1986



Pacific people constituted a minority of the total over-stayers in NZ, yet, comprised a profound majority of the deportation prosecutions.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Others’ are individuals from the following nations: Bangladesh, China, Denmark, France, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Kiribati, Malaysia, Philippines, Switzerland and Vanuatu. (NZ Race Relations Office, 1986, p.42).

<sup>13</sup> May be seen as a residue of the ‘White New Zealand’ policy

In response to growing resentment and discrimination of Pacific people and the draconian actions by the state, protests began by anti-racist groups, workers' unions, employers, the opposition Labour Party and others; thus, making their stand against the targeted racial interrogations (de Bres & Campbell, 1976). Many of the deported immigrants worked in the factories and hospitals and their absences impacted on available labour and production outputs. Resistance groups such as the *Polynesian Panthers* (Anae, Iuli & Tamu, 2015) aligned themselves with other indigenous activist movements, for example, the *Black Panthers* (USA), the *Australian Black Panthers* (Brisbane), and *Nga Tamatoa* (Māori activist group) who provided legal aid and financial assistance to Samoan detainees and their families (Hill, 2010; Stastny & Orr, 2014). Māori, the Australian Aboriginal people, and Pacific people share profound symmetries of experience from decades of European colonialism, injustices, land wars, racism, and oppression.

A Privy Council ruling for the classic 'Lesa' case (a Western Samoan female illegal overstayer) was that all Samoans born between 1923 and 1948 (about 67 percent of the Samoan population, or, 100,000 Samoans) and while under the NZ administered territory were in fact; *Natural-born British subjects and therefore automatically became New Zealand citizens.*<sup>14</sup> (see Macdonald, 1986; Spoonley, Bedford & Macpherson, 2003; Tagupa, 1994; Wendt, 1970). The legal and political implications of this new status, or, as Jim McLay (then NZ's Attorney-General and Minister of Justice) described them as a 'constitutional bombshell' (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012, p.135) led to swift actions by the NZ government in overturning this legislation, particularly in light of the Samoans that were already living in NZ, the implementation of the illegal Dawn Raids, and deportation of Samoan-NZ citizens. The introduction of the 'NZ Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act of 1982' (as an adjunct to the

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<sup>14</sup> Falemai Lesa claimed New Zealand citizenship by birth using the 'British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act, 1928, Section 7 (1) that its terms 'shall apply to the Cook Islands and to Western Samoa in all respects as if those territories were for all purposes part of New Zealand.'

‘Treaty of Friendship’) stripped 100,000 Western Samoans of their legitimate NZ citizenship rights. However, all Western Samoans who were in NZ on 14 September 1982 including those with permanent residence became legal NZ citizens with an allowance of an annual quota of 1,100 Samoan applications for permanent residency (Spoonley, Bedford & Macpherson, 2003). Despite protests in Wellington, Christchurch, and Western Samoa for the repeal of the Citizenship Act - this legislation remains in force today.

The legacy of the 1970s illegal Dawn Raids and the removal of legitimate NZ-Samoan citizenships paints a foreboding shadow of discrimination and explicit public racism on Samoans and Pacific migrants, and their treatment from the NZ government and society. Harmful perceptions of Pacific Islanders filtered into every societal aspect of NZ including work and organisations (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012; Anae, 2001). Furthermore, the Dawn Raids intensified the damaged relationship of NZ’s former Pacific territories and generated criticism that is reminiscent of the colonial tragedies that occurred in Samoa, inflicted by its former NZ administration. It is unsurprising that its consequences to the Pacific people still upset and disturb many who remember it and even those who never knew about it.

It is fair to say that there are some similarities relating to the careers of Pacific people and African-Americans who are perceived as lacking competence, industriousness (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005) and less likely to ascend to senior management (Palmer & Johnson-Bailey, 2005; Reuther & Fairhurst, 2000). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the dominant behavioural patterns of a group in an organisation may mirror that of the prevailing society. As such, racist assumptions and stereotyping can potentially permeate the culture of a company (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989) and create barriers for ethnic minorities in accessing senior managerial positions.

## 3.2 Lack of Cultural Intelligence

As previously discussed, cultural intelligence is an individual's ability to adapt to culturally diverse environments as characterised through adjustment and cross-cultural interactions (Ang et al., 2007; Sternberg, 1997; Thomas et al. 2008). There is evidence from some authors that NZ employers had limited knowledge of the heterogeneity of Pacific people, often treating them as coming from a single homogeneous ethnic group. Therefore, these employers applied a 'blanket' approach to work issues regarding Pacific people (Pitt & Macpherson, 1974; Spoonley, 1978). As an example, Lee (1974) observed that NZ employers would generalise and lump together the work behaviours of Pacific people with Māori. Thus, the (false) assumptions that Māori were 'good with their hands' in mechanical jobs, often late, and absent from work was applied to Pacific migrants (Pierce, 1969). In addition, Spoonley (1978) found that NZ employers did not distinguish any difference between Melanesians and Polynesians, citing that Rarotongans and Cook Islanders are two separate island cultures, and did not know about Niueans as a Pacific nation. These early studies indicated a lack of cultural intelligence among NZ organisations that may have added further hindrances for career progression.

Pitt & Macpherson's (1971, 1974) research highlighted the difficulties that Samoans experienced with the concept of supervision. That is, Samoans were reluctant to supervise older Samoans and refused promotions to avoid jealousy among fellow Samoans. Furthermore, in the hopes of securing work for an additional family member, Samoans would try to negotiate two positions at a lower rate, or, leave their current job and work elsewhere; thus, infuriating their NZ employers with their perceived laziness and lack of commitment to the job.

Pitt and Macpherson (1974) observed that these Samoan attitudes towards supervision were based on cultural obligations to the family. In Samoa, supervision is kin-based and hierarchical where everyone is connected through bloodlines, decisions are top-down and shared with all members in the village. Whereas in NZ, supervisory decisions are more likely characterised as a 'need-to-know basis' without explanations, and the supervisor is more than likely to have a disassociated external relationship with their employees. The outcomes of this thesis may provide a fresh outlook on the occupational position of Pacific employees in the NZ workforce, and further insight relating to the degree of cultural intelligence in NZ organisations.

### 3.3 Labour Market Segregation

The selective nature of the immigration policies that allowed Pacific people entry and access to low-skilled labour (e.g., plant and machinery operators and assemblers) secured their position in the bottom tiers; thus, ensuring the Pacific occupational concentration in specific industries, namely manufacturing and construction, and located in prime industrial districts (e.g., Auckland). As mentioned by Restifo, Roscigno and Qian (2013) employees in peripheral firms tend to work in jobs that do not lead to managerial positions, experience poor returns on human capital, and less economic rewards. These types of work are often low to semi-skilled, highly repetitive, hierarchical, and instructional (Dixon, 1994).

NZ employers viewed Pacific people as a reliable source of secondary workers, and little attention was given to their constraints as disadvantaged minorities in their occupational jobs (Spoonley, 1978). Additionally, when major companies closed their doors, or, the NZ



economy restructured with redundancies that contracted the size of the sectors, for example, manufacturing, it impacted on mass groups of Pacific families and support networks.

Women and ethnic minorities are often used as a 'reserve army' in times of high employment, and the first employees to be made redundant in recessions (McAllister, 1995). Hence, the loss of jobs for Pacific people incurred new forms of debt and loans to repay financial obligations and to meet cultural expectations (remittances). In turn, the perceived association of Pacific people with low-skilled jobs, as overstayers, beneficiaries, and loan debtors became inescapable and continued to the present day.

### 3.4 Career Facilitators

Interestingly, there are indications of early career mechanisms that seemingly supported Pacific careers. However, these mechanisms did not enhance access, or, opportunities for management occupations. While Spoonley's (1978) study of the multicultural workforce in NZ painted a dismal portrayal of discrimination towards the Pacific people, there were, however, encouraging results. Spoonley (1978) noted that six of the 44 companies had specialised training and career promotions for Pacific people; where there was 'one Polynesian worker to every three Europeans' (p.67) concerning trades and apprentices. While this is an encouraging outcome, all companies admitted that Pacific people were not found in senior executive roles.

In addition, Spoonley (1978) observed that a small number of the larger companies had prior experience with Pacific people and instituted diversity policies that included targeted training, multilingual signage, and allowances for cultural observances, for example, White Sunday.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> White Sunday is a Samoan annual event that celebrates childhood and is traditionally observed by diasporic Samoans.

Moreover, the personnel staff recognized the cultural differences between the Pacific groups and had some experience with cultural intelligence. These types of firms were 'ahead of their time' in promoting cultural awareness, diversity and inclusivity in NZ organisations (Brosnan et al., 1991; Spoonley, 1978, 1981).

Other researchers found that Pacific employees were punctual and committed to their jobs (McCreary, 1965; Pitt & Macpherson, 1971, 1974). Admittedly, it is likely that Samoans were keen on overtime and shift work and receiving instant weekly pay that would contribute to family commitments and remittances to their *aiga* (family) in Samoa (Feldman, Ah Sam, McDonald & Bechtel, 1980; Pitt & Macpherson, 1971, 1974).

### 3.5 NZ Public Sector Initiatives

In the mid-1980s, the NZ government noticed the low levels of Pacific representation in management positions in the Public Sector (State Services Commission, 2004). In response, (and spanning over the next twenty years), specialist groups, committees, initiatives, and conferences investigated Pacific employment aspirations and attempted to tackle career barriers for Pacific people (see Table 3). In 1997, the promulgation of the EEO Policy to 2010 set milestones and targets for Pacific people (as a designated EEO group); thus, reinforcing the need for increased representation in leadership positions in the public service (State Services Commission, 1997). The primary objectives of this policy included procedural fairness in HR strategies, systems and practices, inclusiveness, respectful and responsive work environments and organisational cultures, and employing EEO groups in all departments.

In the year 2000, a 'Career Progression & Development Survey' targeted Pacific people in expressing views of their careers and work environment. Work-life balance and career opportunities rated as 'highly important' to Pacific people. Career barriers included lack of qualifications and work experience, racism and discrimination, and limited access to training, development, and opportunities.

The 'Pathway to Leadership Goal Conference' in 2004 identified that the obstacles mentioned earlier; still existed. Additionally, 'family' and 'cultural observances' were designated as 'highly important' to Pacific people and impacted on career progression and work-life balance. However, these particular outcomes were not investigated further.

Table 3 Public Sector Initiatives for Pacific People

Year	Group	Strategy / Initiative	Outcomes
1984	SSC	Employment Summit Conference	State Services Commission (SSC) assigned to assist and increase Pacific Public Servant representation
1987	SSC	Pacific Islands Management Development Programme	Working group established
1993	SSC	'Pacific Islands Participation Handbook'	Strategy: Increase participation of Pacific Public Servants
1995	SSC	'Growing a Difference' Conference Report	Investigate career barriers for Pacific people
1997	SSC	EEO Policy to 2010: Future directions of EEO in the New Zealand Public Service	EEO initiative: All forms of discrimination will be eliminated by 2010
1999	Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA)	Pacific Vision International Conference	'Pacific Directions Report
2000	SSC	'Career Progression and Development Survey'	Cultural, religious or community obligations ranked as 'highly important' for Pacific people
2001	SSC	'EEO Opportunities: Progress in the Public Service Report'	Signs of improvement for Pacific people into professional and managerial roles
2004	SSC	'Special Report on Pacific People in the NZ Public Service'	
2004	MPIA	Pathways to Leadership: Goal 2010 Conference	Barriers from 1995 and 2000 continue for Pacific people. Culture and family responsibilities recognized as profound priorities for Pacific people
2009	SSC	Unpublished research about recruitment and selection of CEs for Pacific people (and other targeted groups)	The potential for indirect or unintentional bias
2010	SSC	2010 Equality and Diversity Report: Diversity in the Senior Management of the Public Service	The increase of Pacific people as Public Servants (7%) but a decrease of senior management representation (1.5%)

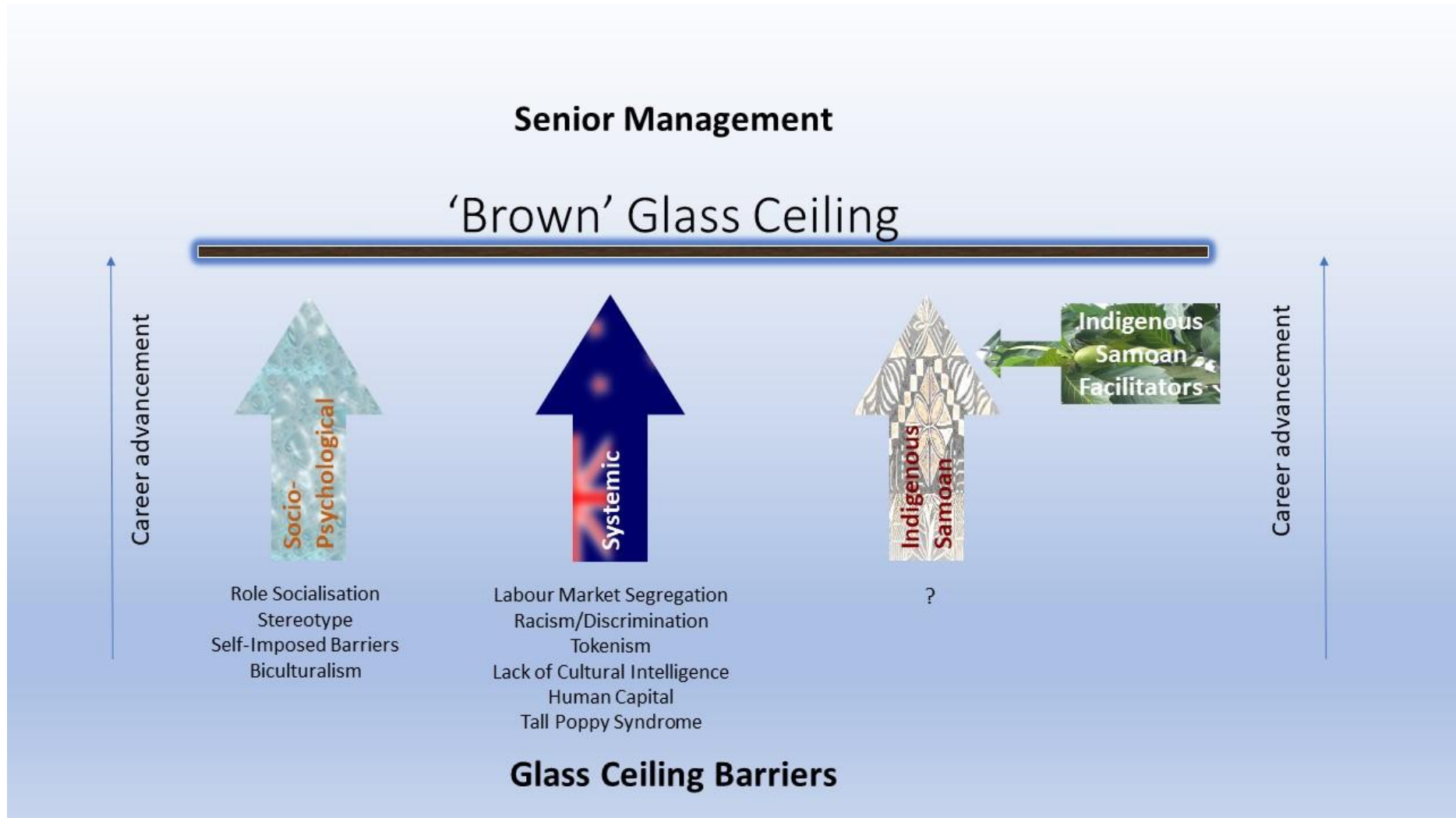
Prior Public Sector initiatives to improve the proportion of Pacific people in senior management (particularly CE appointments and representation) failed with statistics showing a slight decrease from 1.5 percent representation in 2010 in comparison to 1.9 percent in 2001 (State Services Commission, 2010). However, Pacific representation as managers increased from 3.2 percent (2001) to 4.4 percent (2010). As at November 2015, Pacific public servants remain under-represented in all management and policy roles, and over-represented in front-line occupations, for example, corrections officers and customer service clerks. They continue to experience the barriers previously mentioned, notably the lack of recognition from management for Pacific cultural values as essential skills at work, fewer opportunities for decision-making and professional development opportunities for Pacific public servants (State Services Commission, 2015). These data underscore Samoans' (and Pacific people's) marginal socio-economic and employment statuses and the lowest 'manager' type occupations across all of the main ethnic groups in NZ.

The review of the literature about Pacific people and the glass ceiling in NZ is limited and outdated. Despite various initiatives from both sectors targeted toward increasing Pacific representation in senior management positions, there has been little improvement. While these studies acknowledge 'culture' and 'family' as significant to Pacific people (potential career barriers and facilitators), there is a gap in the research that delves deep into cultural institutions and its implications for Samoans who make up the largest Pacific ethnic group of employees in NZ at work, and a potential 10 percent (Pacific people) of the overall NZ working population by 2026 (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2017). Hence, Samoans and the Pacific people will occupy a large segment of the next generation of workers and contribute a significant role in the NZ economy (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

### 3.6 Conceptual Model

Drawing from these outcomes and the glass ceiling theories from Chapter 2, Figure 6 (next page) is the conceptual model used in this research study. This model depicts the direction of the career advancement path for Samoans and the 'brown' glass ceiling barriers that prevent them from accessing senior management roles. These obstacles are delineated to theories of 'Socio-psychological,' 'Systemic,' and 'Indigenous Samoan' (indicated by arrows) and will be used as the primary focus of this research project. Socio-psychological theories include gender-role socialisation, stereotypes, self-imposed barriers, and biculturalism. The Systemic Model posits labour market segregation, racism bias and discrimination, tokenism, tall poppy attitudes and the lack of cultural intelligence in organisations as explanations of the glass ceiling. Presently, we do not know the current situation of the indigenous glass ceiling obstacles for Samoans. Hence, the question-mark symbol in the model. The Samoan barriers are this study's significant contribution to the glass ceiling literature and represent the hindrances that inhibit Samoans from reaching top management positions. This model will be revisited at the end of the thesis.

Figure 6 Conceptual Model of the 'Brown' Glass Ceiling



### 3.7 Summary of the Literature Review

In Chapters 2 and 3, I discussed and analysed theories, studies, and literature that pertain to the glass ceiling barriers for peripheral groups, namely women and people of colour. Chapter 2 provided a historical overview of the glass ceiling and the obstacles that seemed to surround inequity, unfairness, and systemic discrimination concerning access to senior careers. The cited studies reveal a multidimensional view of the different types of glass ceilings that emerged from various disciplines and contexts that strengthened the existence of the phenomenon. These metaphors revealed the evolutionary stages of the glass ceiling and the various authors' (including minority researchers) endeavours in seeking resolution and preventative actions to neutralise the glass ceiling effects. The efficacy of glass ceiling metaphors lies in their ability to draw out systemic practices that expose hidden forms of discrimination and privilege. Some of the career hindrances mentioned included self-imposed barriers, lack of human capital, biculturalism, tokenism, discrimination, labour market segregation, lack of cultural intelligence and tall poppy attitudes. The impact of these barriers severely restricts certain groups so that their ascension to the senior levels is limited.

A review of the literature concerning Samoans and career advancement in Chapter 3 highlighted the limited attempts that focused on improving the managerial statistics and representation for Samoans and the Pacific people that had some commendable potential. Biased attitudes, lack of cultural intelligence, and over-representation in secondary labour were some of the early indicators of career limitations. It is disconcerting, however, that the outcomes of culture and family as significant values to Pacific public servants was not investigated further to capture their impact on career progression and work-life balance. So, on the one hand, the findings acknowledged cultural values as potential deterrents to



progress, alongside unfair systems and practices, yet, appeared to dismiss the depth of these cultural hindrances by underreporting their true disadvantage from a Samoan perspective.

The cited studies of the glass ceiling have focused mainly on the experiences of white women and African-Americans (e.g., Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Davidson, 1997; Irons & Moore, 1985) which may not necessarily reflect the experiences and challenges of other indigenous groups. Factors such as cultural ideologies, spirituality, colonial legacies, socio-political conditions and relationships, and socio-cultural diasporas can influence the experiences of some minorities resulting in dissimilarities in their career path experiences in comparison to other minority groups, yet, are not entirely reported in the literature. In other words, the career obstacles for some groups and their corresponding mechanisms may be inapplicable and inappropriate for others.

Admittedly, locating the studies of indigenes working in Western organisations and glass ceilings was problematic, given that most of the cited studies seemed to refer to African-American research as perhaps the ‘benchmark’ of glass ceiling minority experiences.

Although there may be a few similarities with career challenges, African-Americans and Samoans are two distinct separate cultures from opposing continents with different environments, histories, and relationships. For example, African-American glass ceiling studies appear to begin with an acknowledgement of historical oppression through forced slavery, migration, and racist ideologies (Bartol, Martin & Kromkowski, 2003; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009; Kern-Foxworth, 1989) that continue to limit senior career movement.

On the other hand, Samoans were invited to migrate to New Zealand to fill labour shortage demands from import substitutions,<sup>16</sup> that in turn, heightened the migration patterns (Pacific

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<sup>16</sup> Expanding manufacturing and service industries, such as food, textiles, metals, machinery, vehicles and electrical appliances required significant supplies of NZ workers (Ichikawa, 1971; Gibson, 1983). Domestic labour supplies were limited from low pre-war population growth and post-war losses

to New Zealand) from the prospect of better living for their families. As mentioned earlier, Samoans had a colonial relationship with NZ albeit with controversy. As such, a socio-political relationship existed between these nations that may have impacted on the progress of Samoans living in NZ.

This pre-existing relationship formulated between a Western country and a developing island nation (and former NZ territory) provides an unusual setting for exploring the glass ceiling phenomenon that may encounter ‘twists’ in the theoretical offerings and provide new insights for future explorations. Therefore, this study provides a timely and alternative perspective from the previous research that may unintentionally undermine cultural inclusivity and highlight the non-traditional indigenous strategies that are unique and appropriate to Samoan culture. Thus, capturing a more focused and relevant representation of how indigenous cultural values and other factors might exacerbate, or, lessen the effects of the glass ceiling phenomenon. This perspective could contribute a distinctly unconventional evaluation of the glass ceiling experience for Samoans.

This research extends the literature with the employment of a Pacific Research Paradigm and Samoan methodology, rather than utilising traditional quantitative and qualitative methods for exploring glass ceiling obstacles and career mechanisms (e.g., quantitative methods of ANOVA, chi-square, hierarchical regression, and qualitative ethnographic interviews) (see Boone et al., 2013; Foley, Kidder & Powell, 2002; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009; Kiaye & Singh, 2013; Lee, 2002). Hence, this study builds on the current literature by adding an Oceanic-Pacific perspective of Samoan challenges to upward career progression that includes ethnic-specific values and institutions that are not yet elucidated in the careers academic

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(Ongley, 1991). Therefore, NZ turned their attention to Britain and Western Europe for skilled occupations, and its former Pacific territories for the unskilled professions (Brosnan, Rea & Wilson, 1995; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009).

library. Drawing from these chapters, I now begin a discussion of the paradigm, epistemology, and methodology used in this study.

## CHAPTER 4: PACIFIC RESEARCH PARADIGM

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*'The Samoans are more conservative than other branches of their race and their satisfaction with themselves and their own institutions makes them less inclined to accept the change that foreign governments consider to be of benefit to them. Their viewpoint is bounded by their own immediate horizon. The Samoans are self-contained.'*

*Te Rangi Hiroa - Sir Peter Henry Buck, 1930*

I begin this chapter with an emphasis that this part of the malaga (journey) was never a straightforward, linear, academic textbook process, but similar to Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran's (2001) description of research, an intricate and complex process. Adopting a Pacific Research paradigm is not commonplace in the extensive body of glass ceiling studies that follow the traditional positivist, or, interpretivist orientations, for example, studies using quantitative methods of ANOVA (Boone et al., 2013), chi-square (Foley, Kidder, Powell, 2002), hierarchical regression (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009), and qualitative ethnographic interviews (Kiaye & Singh, 2013; Lee, 2002). Embracing a Pacific paradigm and Samoan methodology contributes to the growing interest and advancement of Indigenous paradigms (Grant & Giddings 2002) as found in scholarly work from Australia, Canada, and the United States (e.g., Miller 2009; Pidgeon, 2018; Wilson, 2003). Indigenous paradigms promote what Martin (2003) terms as 'Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being, and Ways of Doing' according to indigenous beliefs or assumptions that guide indigenous communities, researchers and research. The development of culturally-informed methods is a united attempt by Indigenous Pacific researchers to enhance indigenous worldviews and forms of knowledge by introducing an Oceanic perspective as an alternative to Anglo-European forms of research, reasoning, and paradigms (Anae et al., 2001; Bennett et al., 2013; Halapua, 2002; Hau'ofa, 1993; Huffer & Qalo, 2004; Quanchi, 2004).

There are, however, similar dimensions of the Pacific Research paradigm that are situated in the interpretivist approach. More specifically, the interpretivist intention of understanding reality in different ways through social interactions such as words, symbols, and behaviours of the participants (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1992, p.133). In addition, the interpretivist researcher is fully immersed in the research to uncover socially constructed meanings and provide a rich and elaborate description of how people think, feel and react in context-specific situations (Cavana et al., 2001; Creswell, 2003). Therefore, interpretivism empowers the participants by providing a channel of ‘voice’ to bring forth their realities and world-views (Birks, 2014; Neuman, 2011). These intentions recognise the “participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2003, p.9) and the impact of one’s background and experience on the research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

According to Anae et al., (2001) Pacific research projects should ‘incorporate appropriate Pacific epistemologies into the methodological fabric of the research process’ (p. 2). Similarly, Benham (2006) asserts that studies involving Pacific and other indigenes must ‘honour the wisdom of native/local traditional knowledge’ (p. 3). Furthermore, the outcomes of Pacific research should contribute to the improvement and well-being of Pacific people. Hence, this thesis’ methodology and design honours and celebrates Pacific worldviews and cultural traditions.

This chapter discusses the philosophical assumptions, epistemology, and methodology used in this study. I begin with an elaboration of the visionary development of Pacific research endeavours that culminated to an emerging field of ‘Pacific ways of knowing’ that influenced my research choices. I discuss the fundamental assumptions of a Pacific Research Paradigm

that explains the Pacific way of understanding using their ‘lens,’ such as proverbs and metaphors, followed by an overview of other Pacific Frameworks and Models. I introduce a Samoan epistemology underpinned with fa’asamoa institutions and values. Finally, I unpack *Teu le va* methodology to its native form as a Samoan cultural reference and consider the limitations of the Pacific Research Paradigm.

#### 4.1 Pacific Diaspora of Emerging Ethnic-Specific Thought

Pacific people continue to move and travel across the globe, no longer confined to the South Pacific hemisphere (Hau’ofa, 1993). As such, the growth of diasporic Pacific societies has produced increasing diversity within Pacific populations (Macpherson, Spoonley & Anae 2001), that is, inter and intra-ethnic variations of Pacific cultures rather than a Pan-Pacific homogenous group. As more qualified Pacific people enter the academic arena of knowledge, new challenges to Western thought appear resulting in alternative types of research, theories, models, and approaches that endeavour to reclaim some of that primary research space.

Although the bibliography of Pacific research is broad, (and not the particular focus of this chapter), its genesis of development began in the mid-1970s from the works of Tongan writer Epele Hau’ofa (1975) and Samoan poet Albert Wendt (1976). Both authors assert Pacific values and the articulation of indigenous-based research methods. Other significant Pacific thinkers include Malama Meleisea (1987) and her discourse about Samoan and other Pacific ideologies, and Konai Helu Thaman (1988) on education and how Tongans seek and create knowledge.

David Gegeo (1998), Sitiveni Halapua (2002), and Robert Underwood (1989) provide insights on identity, empowerment, and knowledge-creation from rural developments in the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Guam. Anthropologist Melanie Anae's (1997, 1998, 2002) extensive research on Samoan identity and cultural protocol records an exciting perspective from NZ-born Samoans. Manulani Meyer (1998, 2001) acknowledges the strength of indigenous Hawaiian values within research that invigorates credible, efficient, and culturally safe methods and outcomes that liberate the Hawaiian people. Additionally, Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) profound research regarding Māori ways of knowing, and Kaupapa Māori research methodology in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* continues to inspire Pacific researchers to seek appropriate methods and protocols that meet the needs of Pacific communities and as such, lead to productive outcomes.

## 4.2 Fundamental Assumptions of a Pacific Research Paradigm

From a Pacific standpoint, the world is holistically viewed as one that is intangible, spiritual and internal to their cognition (Anae et al., 2001; Tamasese et al., 2014). Pacific societies communicate their view and understanding of the world through language and the telling of stories. Therefore, a Pacific approach commences with identifying ethnic-specific values and their way of constructing meaning, institutions, and reality (Anae et al., 2001). Social, spiritual, and cultural experiences are used to identify and explain reality through contextual concepts and names (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014; Tamasese et al., 2004). It is this feature that distinguishes the Pacific paradigm from conventional research orientations: Pacific frameworks focus on the holistic and collective wellness, that is, balancing spiritual, communal, and cultural needs as part of the total Pacific 'psyche' (Anae et al., 2001; Efi, 2003; Gegeo; 1998).

Another Pacific assumption concerns the use of specific interrelated contextual criteria with multiple perspectives. That is, the *Collective* to discuss, explain and understand reality. Pacific frameworks view their social reality as inseparable from the context and its people. In other words, they are the same. This viewpoint contrasts with the conventional belief that scientific inquiry is neutral, objective, and based on an individual (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010). As an example, the Samoan 'self' is described as having a meaning and purpose only in relationships with other people (Efi, 2003), rather than an individualistic sense of being. René Descartes' famous formulation '*Cogito ergo sum*' (I think therefore I am) proposed that the mind and body are two distinct entities. That is to say, one's ability to think is possible and independent of experience obtained by the senses such as perception, thoughts, ideas, and emotions (McMahon & Patton, 2002). However, from a Samoan mafaufau (mind), one could suggest '*I am because we (the collective) are*' concerning the relationship of the individual with the collective. Primarily, Samoans see themselves as part of a larger communal group that holistically works together towards a common goal. In this way, identifying the fundamental and holistic perception that people are deeply entrenched in family, communalism, history, tua'ā (ancestors), the environment, and the cosmos.

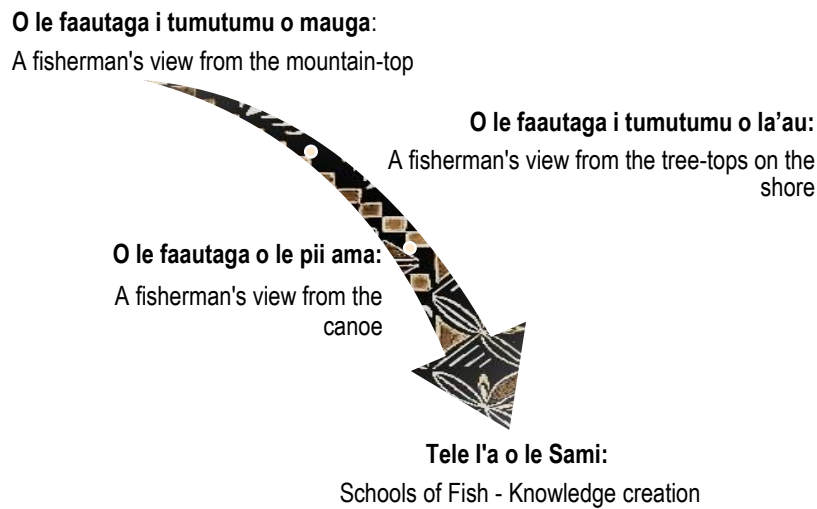
Tupua Tamasese Efi<sup>17</sup> (2003) refers to this collective view in his profound analogy of the three fishermen and their perspectives in catching a copious amount of fish, that is, *o le faautaga i tumutumu o mauga* - the view from the mountain-top, *o le faautaga i tumutumu o la'au* - the view from the tree-tops on the shore, and *le faautaga o le pii ama* - the view of the fisherman in the canoe.

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<sup>17</sup> His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi is Samoa's Head of State, known as 'O le Ao o le Malo' and is the descendant of the paramount family Sa Tupua.



Figure 7 Le Tautai ma le l'a (Samoan Analogy of Collective Perspectives)



Each perspective of the fisherman has a place of value in leading them to the schools of fish: the mountain view signals the distance and travel of schools of fish, the tree-top perspective monitors the distance of the fishing boats, and the fish are viewed by the fisherman in the canoe. All three views provide a range of opinions, and everyone has a valid contribution toward a common goal.<sup>18</sup> Efi's analogy is typical of the Samoan worldview where multiple realities exist (interlinked with the spiritual and cosmos) rather than a single dimensional view.

The symbolic importance and placement of family (hierarchy and gerontocracy), the notion of respect, land, and spirituality including the indigenisation of Christianity (Anae, 2003), reciprocity (gift-exchange), communalism and kin (extended families), and the generous sharing of food and hospitality are commonalities shared among the regions of the South Pacific, that is, Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia (Anae et al., 2001; Crocombe, 1975).

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<sup>18</sup> This analogy forms the basis of the Samoan methodology 'Talanoa I le l'a' that is used to inform social work practice (Faleolo, 2013).

As such, the hierarchy in a Pacific setting is a framework of status that separates villagers according to ‘their place’ and therein, social order.

A useful example of knowing one’s place from a Pacific worldview is the hierarchy of fa’amatai (chieftainship). Matai is the head of a Samoan village and automatically assigned as having the most knowledge and ability to impart knowledge. Hence, this position commands the highest respect from everyone, the best of crops, and assets as the supreme decision-maker and holder of knowledge (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009). In addition, Pacific societies adhere to gerontocracy, that is, the concept of the elderly, or, older people dominating leadership positions, insofar as it is rare to see Pacific residents in rest-homes, or, retirement villages.<sup>19</sup> Given the hierarchical and gerontocratic nature of Pacific societies, the sharing of knowledge is not automatically received (Schoeffel et al., 1994). As such, access to Pacific knowledge is potentially restricted according to status, authority, and privilege.

The Pacific method of explaining, or, expressing their ‘lens’ uses constructs, frames, metaphors, descriptions, imagery, and proverbs (Sanga, 2004; Schultz, 1985). Pacific epistemology, in reality, is the ‘Pacific way’ of doing, seeing, and understanding things, and one that shapes their biography, worldview, and daily decisions on topics such as ceremony, food, respect, and land (Quanchi, 2004). The term Pacific Way is a convenient broad generalisation used to characterise the way Pacific people do things. It is a flexible term that is embedded in the reality of a particular time, place, or, context so that ‘almost any activity can be classified as a manifestation of the Pacific Way (Crocombe, 1975, p.3). Table 3 surmises the Pacific research assumptions.

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<sup>19</sup> As a side note, Pacific people represent 1.5% of the total population (aged 65 and over) in NZ rest-homes and residential care (Census New Zealand, 2013).

Table 4

**Assumptions of a Pacific Research Paradigm**

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**Shared perspectives among the South Pacific regions: Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia**

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The World is intangible

Reality is inseparable from context & people

Explicitly value-laden

Collective perspectives and interpretations

Contextualism: Social, spiritual, cultural experiences explain reality

Symbolic importance and placement of family, communalism, hierarchy, gerontocracy (elderly are revered for their knowledge), spirituality, reciprocity, land, and food

Uses constructs, frames, metaphors, descriptions, imagery or proverbs

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### 4.3 Pacific Models and Methodologies

Employing culturally appropriate models in academic research is likely to enhance our understanding of Samoans and the challenges they confront at work (Faletolu, 2010; McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Tupuola, 2000). Respect and mindfulness of their cultural context, knowledge, and participation should always be at the front of Pacific research. Table 4 lists other noteworthy Pacific research frameworks and models that are currently used by Pacific researchers. They include the Tongan philosophy and methodology of *Talanoa*, (Halapua, 2002; Vaioleti, 2006) and the metaphor of the *Kakala* (Thaman, 1997). *Talanoa* methodology is based on Tongan perspectives and is ‘an open dialogue where people can speak from their hearts, and where there are no preconceptions’ (Halapua, 2003, p.18). People can ‘talk about nothing in particular’ (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 23) and without any distinct structure within the discussion (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2012). *Kakala* (Thaman, 1997) is the Tongan cultural process of gathering knowledge and applying it through gift-giving, for example, a metaphorical Tongan garland through *kumi* (searching), *tui* (plaiting together) and *luva* (giving).

The Cook Island research metaphor of *Tivaevae* (Maua-Hodges, 2000) is founded on the traditional quilt-making patterns that are unique to the Cook Islands. When applied to research, its focus surrounds the idea of ‘quilting together’ various facts and perspectives, leading to beautiful, rich, colourful, in-depth outcomes.

*Fonofale* (Pulotu-Endermann & Bush, 2000) and *Fa’afaletui* (Tamasese et al. 2007) are Samoan models that are metaphorically based on the traditional Samoan fale (house). These models are often used in Pacific studies of health and well-being (e.g., Pulotu-Endermann & Bush, 2000; Robinson et al., 2006), founded on the Samoan beliefs and value system. The

*Ula Model of Engagement* (Sauni, 2011) is a holistic Samoan method used in pedagogy that addresses the power relationships between the researcher and the researched. It is underpinned by fa'asamoa values and metaphorically represented by the Ula (the lei or garland flower necklace found throughout the Pacific). These models, methodologies, and philosophies represent some of the more emerging alternative forms of Pacific research currently used in academic studies (Table 5).

Table 5

**Pacific Methodologies, Methods, Models and Metaphors**

Name	Definition	Research Studies
Fonofale Model (Samoa) (Pulotu-Endermann & Bush, 2000)	From the Samoan metaphor <i>fale</i> , where the construction designs such as the floor foundation, pillars, and roof symbolize the holistic wellbeing of Pacific people	(Cammock, Derrett, & Sopoaga, 2014; Pulotu-Endermann & Bush, 2000; Robinson et al., 2006)
Teu le Va philosophy and methodology (Samoa) (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001; Anae, 2010)	A methodology committed to forming, maintaining and upholding relationships, viewed as sacred through conduct, behaviour with purposeful and positive solutions as the key focus.	(Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001).
Talanoa philosophy and methodology (Tonga) (Halapua, 2002; Vaioleti, 2006)	Comprises cultural information, stories, emotions, and theorising for producing knowledge in Pacific research. Tongan concepts and cultural values underpin Talanoa, and potentially aligned with other Pacific cultures and worldviews.	(Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afai, Taleni & O'Regan, 2009; Gordon, Sauni, & Tuagalu, 2013; Prescott & Hooper, 2009; Otunuku, 2011).
Fa'afaletui methodology (Samoa) Tamasese et al. 2007 Pacific Research Team Wellington Family Centre	A methodology that facilitates the gathering of valuable knowledge within the houses of relational arrangements for enhancing and contributing to the Samoan worldview	(Ete-Rasch & Nelson, 2013; McCarthy, Shaban, & Stone, 2011; Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005).
Kakala metaphor (Tonga) Thaman (1997)	Based on the Tongan metaphor of the Kakala, that is, fragrant garland-making derived from Tongan values and principles and described the process of gathering knowledge, analyses, and arrangement and applying it through gift-giving.	(Ete-Rasch & Nelson, 2013; Thaman, 2010)
Tivaevae metaphor (Cook Islands) Maua-Hodges (2000)	Derived from the Cook Island tivaevae pattern (traditional quilt patchwork) to demonstrate the processes involved in research on critical mental health for Pacific people	(Koloto & Sharma, 2005)
Ula Model of Engagement (Samoa) (Sauni, 2011)	Represented by a lei or garland necklace that symbolizes a platform of honest and genuine dialogue between researcher-participant regardless of gender, institutional and cultural status.	(Sauni, 2011)

#### 4.4 Samoan Epistemology

Samoan epistemology is their way of theorising knowledge from a collective perspective and one that is firmly anchored in Samoan values with the intentions of positive change and progress (Gegeo, 2001; Tamasese et al., 2004). Like other Pacific epistemologies, it includes a historical and spiritual perspective that is pre-colonial. Samoans had an existing body of *aitu* (gods) and imaginary deities (birds, animals, and trees) who lived on earth, in heaven, and the spiritual world, whom they worshipped and feared (Turner, 1983). Some Samoans still practise and respect protocols of old spiritual teachings, for example, avoiding geographical areas on the island that are *tapu* (sacred), and not wearing red clothing so as not to provoke the wrath of unwanted spirits.

Samoan knowledge is socially communicated, shared through *gagana* (language), the telling of stories (Tamasese et al., 1997), and not confined to written records, or, text. Before first contact introduced the English writing system of pencil and paper, Samoan knowledge, traditions, beliefs, and values were tattooed on the *tino* (body) shared as verbal stories such as *fagogo* (mythical tales told before sleep), *pese* (songs), symbols on idols, and in memories (Quanchi, 2004). Furthermore, Samoan ideas, concepts, and solutions are profoundly camouflaged in metaphors, riddles, stories, and proverbs (Efi, 2003; Schultz, 1985).

An old Samoan proverb summarises this concept: *Ai lava le tagata i le mama a lona matua – One's substance and direction is entrenched from the mama of your elderly* (Efi, 2003).

‘Mama’ in this context refers to a feeding practice of pre-chewing food and feeding it to babies (assists with easier and faster digestion). Here, *mama* metaphorically describes the imparting of knowledge from parent to child. In other words, knowledge was acquired through relationships between *Matai* and the village elders, grandparents, and parents. In

time, ‘notebooks locked in boxes, Matai briefcases, or, with their precious mats under mattresses’ became one of the methods of transferring and keeping Samoan knowledge (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1987, p.181).

#### 4.4.1 Fa’asamoa: Samoan way of doing things

Samoan epistemology is institutional and value-laden, and one that surrounds the concept of fa’asamoa that loosely translates as the Samoan way of doing and understanding according to the customs of Samoan society. It is not an idea that is fixed in time. Several authors describe fa’asamoa as ‘fluid’ and capable of transitioning through periodic changes that reflect different countries (Ah-Siu-Maliko, 2016; Anae, 2002; Liliomaiava-Doktor, 2004). As an example, Macpherson’s (1997) fa’aaukilani (Auckland-Samoan way) (p. 93) describes the fa’asamoa of Auckland-Samoans while Va’a (2001) discussed another variation of fa’asamoa for Samoan migrants in Australia based on their political, social, and economic contexts. The different forms of fa’asamoa illustrate that it is open to interpretation and change, although still retaining and maintaining its ‘Samoanness’ or, Samoan values and institutions.

According to Mulitalo-Lauta (1998), Samoan research that incorporates fa’asamoa is one that is culturally safe for the research. That is, the research project is constructed according to Samoan customs regarding an appropriate design that accurately reflects the voice and needs of Samoans. Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) observed that outsider researchers who conduct indigenous research tend to reflect their interpretation which may not necessarily embody an indigenous account of the culture studied (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001) and potentially viewed as culturally ‘unsafe’ (Bennett et al., 2013). Moreover, Graham



Hingangaroa Smith<sup>20</sup> (1992) warns of ‘outside researchers’ interpreting and gathering indigenes’ stories stating:

They may interpret it within an overt theoretical framework, but also in terms of a covert ideological framework. They have the power to distort, make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions based, not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgments and often downright misunderstandings (p. 53).

As researchers, we must fundamentally assign dignity and respect in our conduct to the researched (Wilson & Neville, 2009). In doing so, we may avoid compromising research outcomes due to misconduct and the drawing of conclusions that erroneously depict the experiences of the researched (Smith, 1999; Wilson & Neville, 2009).

I now turn to those institutions and values that assisted with establishing an authentic and respectful way of meaningful engagement with the Samoan participants, while I was working as a Samoan researcher.

#### 4.4.2 Samoan Institutions and Values

##### **Aiga (Family) Institution: There is no ‘I’ but ‘We’**

Traditionally, aiga (family, or, kin group) is the nucleus of the Samoan society. Aiga includes the immediate family but also extends to aigapotopoto, that is, Uncles and Aunts, cousins, relatives, adopted members, and in-laws from other villages (Janes & Pawson, 1986; Pitt &

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<sup>20</sup> Professor Graham Hingangaroa Smith (University of Auckland) is the creator of the indigenous Māori philosophy and methodology *Kaupapa Māori*

Macpherson, 1974) (Figure 8). Aiga live within proximity of a village but can extend across spatial boundaries, for example, to New Zealand and Australia. Children will often address all females in their mother's family line as tina (mother) and may on occasion sleep in the house of another in the aiga group (Ochs, 1988). Hence, one aiga might amount to the kinship of 100+ people.

Figure 8 Photograph of Utaile Wong King Ofe Aiga, Apia Samoa. (ca. 1950).



A portrait of a traditional Samoan aiga consisting of a Matai (far left) holding a to'oto'o (staff) and fu'e (fly-whisk) on his shoulder) indicating status and chieftainship. The eldest son seen far right wearing tapa mat, adult nephews and nieces (back and 3<sup>rd</sup> row), immediate children and young relatives (first and second rows).

Everyone in the aiga has assigned, or, conferred roles and responsibilities that include the obligations to serve respected leaders, the elderly, and vulnerable groups. As mentioned, the elderly are revered and held in positions of authority and responsibility in Samoan society (Autagavaia, 2001; Bell, 1998). Therefore, Samoans live with their elderly parents, otherwise

it would contradict the institution of aiga. (Rumbach & Foley, 2014; Ta'ele, 2001). Aiga provides accountability and a haven for the family.

### **Fa'amatai Institution: Chieftainship and Hierarchy**

Overseeing the aiga is the Matai (chief) who is the head and controller of assets, villages, land, sea, and property within a confined area (Gilson, 1963). Matai are part of the village fono, or, council, and carry the rights and prestige for decision-making and solutions to village affairs (Duranti & Ochs, 1986). However, within this political structure is a complex hierarchy of titled chiefs and lower ranking Matai (Chappell, 2000). Matai and the aigapotopoto (extended family network) confer titles to individuals which provide the holder with considerable power and respect. Untitled Samoans are called taulele'a and divided into gendered groups: auamauga (untitled and often single men) and aualuma (untitled women).

The notion of knowing one's 'post' or, 'cultural rank' for Samoans is perhaps difficult to conceptualise in Western societies. Samoa is socially stratified as displayed in the division of labour within the aiga (Franco, 1991). Matai and the elderly have 'stationary' responsibilities, for example, supervising, controlling, and observing work duties in the village. The expectation is that the 'commoners' (untitled Samoans and younger people) will serve and accommodate the needs of those with a higher rank, who in turn, redistribute resources within the aiga, thereby enhancing its material and socio-political wealth (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009). The division of labour and their roles, enforce and internalise the hierarchical and traditional structure and collective responsibility of the Samoan aiga.

## Lotu (Church) Institution

As previously stated, spirituality and religion prominently feature in Samoan and Pacific worldviews. While the history of the gods and their relationships with Samoans is beyond the scope of this research, historically, every Samoan village had a god, and new births were children of that god (Turner, 1983). Therefore, all Samoans have ancestral, genealogical ties to a god.

Samoans are deeply spiritual and accepted Christianity (colonial introduction) wholeheartedly. The ‘new faith’ seemed to coincide with the fulfillment of the prophecy of ‘power coming from heaven’ (Meleisea, 1987). Elderly Samoans speak of the period of ‘*aso o le malamalama*’ (spiritual enlightenment) that ended the period of ‘*aso o le pouliuli*’ (spiritual darkness) (Gill, 1894). The association of a new monotheistic Christian religion with (metaphorical) ‘light’ signaled the end of ‘darkness’ that supposedly trapped Samoans and their polytheistic beliefs. Consequently, Christianity, or, as Anae (2010) terms ‘the indigenisation of Christianity’ (p. 14) was inducted into Samoan culture while still retaining a distinctive Samoan worldview.

Tourists in Samoa will notice the abundance of churches and figurative idols lining the main streets of Apia and other religious nuances.<sup>21</sup> This observation is reflected in the NZ-Samoan statistics where 83.4 percent of the total Samoan population is religious and mostly Catholic (Census NZ, 2013). The historical, cosmos, and spiritual platforms, and the observance of Church suggest that the Samoan context contains deeply religious and spiritual underpinnings that need to be fully considered and reflected in this research design (Anae et al., 2001).

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<sup>21</sup> Samoans observe the daily ritual of ‘Sa’a’ which is an hour of sacred prayers performed indoors between 6-7pm. No-one can walk outside during this time, or, make any disturbance that could arouse the spirits.

The institutions of aiga (family), Matai (Chieftainship) and Lotu (church) are important to Samoans as displayed by the values discussed in the following sub-section.

### **Samoan Values: Fa'aaloalo, Alofa and Tautua**

Fa'aaloalo (respect) is known as the 'signature mark of fa'asamoa' (Mageo, 2001, p.3) and most Samoans are aware of the implications of respect and disrespect. The profound emphasis on respectful behaviour has attracted comments from other Pacific cultures such as the Fijians, Tongans, and Cook Islanders that 'Samoans have too much pride' (Mageo, 2001, p.56). Respect is shown in one's conduct and behaviour toward Matai and anyone with status. Younger and untitled Samoans would never consider giving advice and counsel to the elderly and titled individuals – that would be disrespectful, and could lead to 'shame' and expulsion not only at the individual level but for the entire village.

Samoans convey their alofa (love and compassion) through hospitality and generosity, and particularly in the presence of titled individuals. Interestingly, alofa is the base word for the Samoan word talofa (hello), thereby, defining its true meaning as 'we have love for you.' The 'we' denotes pluralism, or, a collective and is not to be confused with personal romantic love and passion. In contrast to fa'aaloalo (respect) that acknowledges status and prestige through behaviour, alofa is displayed in the form of gifts and acts of fesoa'aiga (reciprocity). The va (relationship space) binds the institutions and values, and maintains the harmony and peace between all things, that is, man and the cosmos (lagi the heavens); the environment (eleele fanua earth, plants, land and animal life), and one's self (tino body, mafaufau mind

and agaga soul in alignment to divinity). Further discussions of the va follow in the next section.

Another key Samoan value is tautua that is physically shown in acts of ‘service’ through their duties of labour and assistance to their Matai and families (Autagavaia, 2001; Bell, 1998).

Tautua is best understood from a Samoan context. In addition, tautua is not to be confused with the Western definition of service that describes “the action of helping, doing work for someone,” or, as a service provider (for example, utilities and customer service). In fact, the word service originates from the French *servise* and Latin *servitium* denoting ‘slavery’ and ‘slave’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). From that perspective, service may be viewed as an association between a servant and master/lord, or, a slave-owner relationship (Latu, 2017). However, tautua is associated with Samoan acts of honour such as the reward of matai title for services from Samoan individuals to their families and matai (Apulu, 2010; Ma’ilo, 2016). Tautua depicts acts that show integrity, love, and respect to their community that advances the interests of the collective and ultimately the harmonious spiritual flow of the va. In this way, the definition of tautua expands the Western meaning of service by containing a spiritual element that is linked to the wellbeing of the living and the dead.

An individual (including matai) who avoids tautua can incite shame, ridicule, and dishonour to one’s village, spirituality, and self. Therefore, Samoans take great pride in displaying tautua. Well-known examples of tautua for contemporary Samoans in NZ include domestic duties such as mowing lawns and cleaning for elderly Samoans and the Church. Similarly, tautua may involve community-type roles and charitable work, for example, as councillors and board members, and childcare assistance for extended families. It is accepted that tautua

is an extension of one's love and commitment to fa'asamoa, and therefore, tautua, fa'aaloalo and alofa are interrelated values.

A notable example of the Samoan values of respect, love, and service in acknowledging status is a personal account concerning a Samoan Loans Supervisor for an Auckland City Bank, who would regularly wipe the windows and desk in her office, and empty the contents of her work rubbish bin. Essentially, this Samoan supervisor voluntarily took on cleaning duties as part of her employment role. Although this act may seem strange to the reader, as it is a cleaner's responsibility to tidy and remove litter from the department, what is not known is that the cleaner for this particular bank was an elderly Samoan woman. The (younger) Samoan Loans Supervisor did not wish to offend, or, disrespect the older Samoan cleaner with the assignment of lowly, tedious duties of 'cleaning up her mess.'

The point here is that Samoans do not wish to transgress through disrespectful behaviour to their elderly and anyone with status, and the Loans Manager displayed *loto fa'amauualalo* (lowering one's position before others). The emphasis of *loto fa'amauualalo* for Samoans is humility, or, as Efi (2007) defines as the 'mental and emotional acceptance of a lower status...to that of Tagaloa' (p.10). The often-used Samoan spatial metaphor *Tū i lou tūlaga* (Stand at your post) is a reminder for Samoans to behave respectfully, and according to one's cultural status.

This discussion has introduced the key assumptions of Samoan epistemology (Table 6) that theorise the Samoan way of knowledge from a collective view, and one that is firmly anchored in the Samoan institutions of *aiga* (family), *fa'amatai* (chieftainship), and *lotu* (religion or church), and the prominent values of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *alofa* (love), and *tautua*

(service). The centrality of Samoan relationships directly reflects a Samoan perspective with the intentions of positive change and progress (Gegeo, 2001; Tamasese et al., 2004). In other words, the Samoan epistemology encases the way Samoans comprehend the world, their way of social order, and the outcomes they pursue.

Table 6

**An Overview of the Samoan Epistemology**

<b>Samoan Epistemology</b>	<b>Spiritual</b>	Gods, Cosmos, Spirituality and Religion
	<b>Social</b>	<p>Knowledge is communicated through: language, relationships, story-telling (metaphors, riddles, proverbs), tattoos, memories, songs, imagery and text</p> <p>Knowledge is collectively owned</p>
	<b>Institutional &amp; Value-based</b>	<p>Fa'asamoa: Aiga (centrality of extended family), Lotu (Church) and Fa'amatai (Chiefly system)</p> <p>Fa'aaloalo (respect), alofa (to love), tautua (to serve) and fa'alavelave (Samoan commitments involving money, food, time, resources, and service)</p>
	<b>Spatial</b>	<p>Relational self, not I but 'we' the 'collective'</p> <p>Va fealoaloa'i (spaces between relationship arrangements)</p> <p>Va Tapuia (sacred relational space)</p> <p>Teu le va (to value, nurture and act on the sacred and secular spaces of relationships)</p>

I now elaborate on the meaning of the va as a philosophy and Teu le va methodology for this study.



## 4.5 Unpacking 'Teu le Va' Methodology

This research uses the Samoan *Teu le va* methodology (Anae et al., 2009) that is based on the cultural reference concerning the concept of the Samoan 'va.'<sup>22</sup> Before unpacking this methodology, it is vital to understand the va, what it means to Samoans, and its application in this study. Albert Wendt (1999) wrote:

Important to the Samoan view of reality is the concept of the *va* or *wa* in Māori and Japanese. *Va* is the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the unity-that-is-all, the space that is context, giving meaning to the things (p.402).

Wendt's (1999) description of the *va* articulates a particular world view that has meaning and context for Samoans. The *va* or 'space between' is fundamentally different from the Western notion of space as a gap or empty space that needs to be filled or closed (Clayton, 2007; Ka'ili, 2005). Rather, it is the relational space between people, objects and entities that bind them together (Tuagalu, 2008). In other words, the space designating two points of a relationship, be it human, animate, inanimate (mythical gods and beings), or, cosmological and spiritual (Efi, 2007; Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009; Pratt, 1911). Therefore, the *va* connects and unites relationships through mutual respect and may change as relationships and contexts are modified or transformed (Anae, 1999; Tuagalu, 2008; Wendt, 1991). In addition, the *va* is crucial in communal cultures that value group unity more than individualism indicating that relationships and socio-political arrangements of the collective are nurtured through the concept of the *va*. The word *teu* means to preserve, keep, or look

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<sup>22</sup> Other non-Western cultures such as Hindu (Baharati, 1985) and Chinese (Dien, 1983) have collective views of self

after, and with that in mind, *Teu le va* refers to the negotiating and mediating of positive relationships between Samoans and non-Samoans, material and the spiritual, and other forms of knowledge (Efi, 2007).

The space to which the *va* refers implies that there are many types of *va* relationships that warrant particular protocols, communication styles, behaviour and actions (Tuagalu, 2007). *Va tapuia* (sacred spaces and taboo relationships) and *va fealoalo'i* (mutual respect between people and their environment) influence appropriate etiquette, responsibilities, conduct, and respect towards socio-political and spiritual arrangements (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009). Its purpose is maintaining the well-being and *va* of relationships. Sacred relationships include *va tapuia* with Matai (chiefs), *va fealofani* of brother and sister, *va o tagata* of people and the environment, husband and wife, and children and parents (Efi, 2007; Tamasese et al., 2004). Each relationship is a metaphor for harmony on a larger scale, for example, *va* between parent and child symbolises the harmonious relationship between family heads, Matai, and their community. A lack of responsibility from a parent to child is a communal shame. Thus, harmonious relationships between a parent and child tend to produce harmony and peace in the larger society (Efi, 2007). From here, it is reasonable to suggest that the *va* is multifaceted given the various types of *va* relationships and terms that illuminate and clarify the space to which they refer.

The *va* is important to Samoans because of their view of the Samoan sense of 'self,' which has a relational, or, communal orientation, rather than an individualistic view (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009). As mentioned earlier, the Samoan self is described as having a meaning and purpose only in relationships with other people (Efi, 2007). The 'self' in this sense is best understood from a spiritual and cosmological perspective.

The impact of the Samoan va is well-documented in mental health studies (Anae, Moewaka, McCreanor & Watson, 2002; Faleafa & Lui, 2006; Samu & Suaalii-Sauni, 2009; Tutty & Goodyear, 2014). Tamasese and others (2004) observed that Samoan perspectives of mental illness occur as the result of serious wrongdoings of a family, or, village rather than a medical condition. In other words, mental illness is a direct consequence of desecrating sacred relationship protocols resulting in malaaumatua, or, a curse. Furthermore, the effects of a disrupted va have a bearing on the individual's spiritual and physical well-being to the point where they may be unable to sleep (S. Wendt-Moore, personal communication, March 19, 2015). The process of rejuvenating and re-establishing the va necessitates an investigation for the reason of the curse (Gunther et al., 2009), and then seeking reconciliation, for example, Samoan rituals.<sup>23</sup> These cultural understandings are part of the Samoan psyche (Table 6) and should not be dismissed as superstition, folklore, or, 'backwardness.' Rather, they must be integrated into research (or, other inter-ethnic Pacific culture where appropriate) as part of a holistic (i.e., cultural, social, spiritual, physical, mental and emotional) analysis and treatment.

The use of the va in this study refers to the work relationships between Samoans and management in the NZ labour-force, and how these relationships are conducted according to one's place in Samoan society. More specifically, how Samoans nurture and maintain their relationships given one's job description, expectations, obligations, and status in the organisation. The va in this space arises from the organisation and stresses the spiritual, physical and contractual justification for that organisation. In turn, the va articulates the relations in which Samoans engage and their interactions with others "as something sacred

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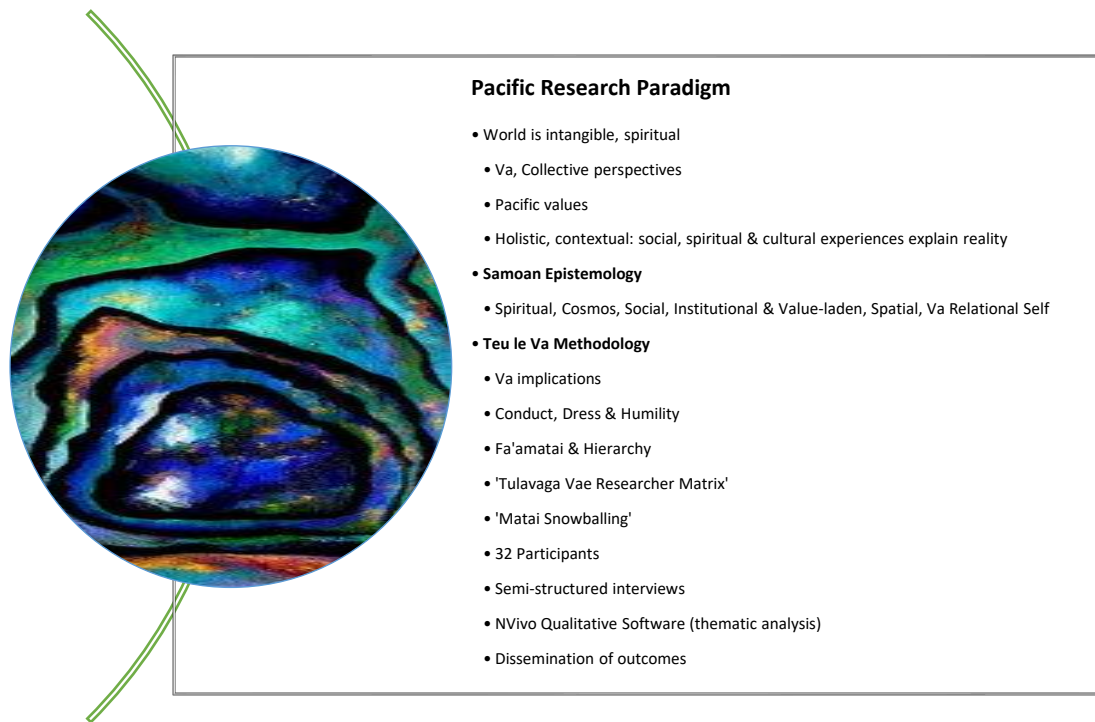
<sup>23</sup> *Ifoga* is a traditional Samoan ritual of seeking forgiveness through public humiliation, elaborate speeches or gifting of food or other assets (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2005).

and not to be desecrated and imposed upon by displaying bad behaviours” in the organisation (Autagavaia, 2001, p.77). As an example, false rumours at work may lead to a Samoan employee taking excessive leave (because of shame) or limiting their work output. When this occurs, it is *malepe le va* or the va has deteriorated which requires a remedial action to rectify the transgression (Efi, 2007). In this situation, it is likely that management or the employer should investigate the rumour and mediate the process of removing shame. The va is fully attained where there are peaceful and harmonious relationships between the two parties. Therefore, the va links a Samoan employee to one’s supervisor or manager and is ideally expressed in positive behaviours that cherish the va of work relations with balance and harmony.

Teu le va (Anae et al., 2009) as the cultural reference and methodology, is the guiding framework for this research (Figure 9). It is encoded with the Samoan institutions of aiga (family), fa’amatai (Chieftainship) and Lotu (Spirituality), and values of fa’aaloalo (respect), tautua (service) and feso’ava (reciprocity) that should be displayed in any conduct, thought processes, objectives, and behaviour. Above all else, the va promotes peace and harmony and balances all things. As quoted by Efi (2007) *“To respect nature is to respect man; to respect one’s fellow men is to respect one’s self: respecting the soul is to respect the body and mind; respecting life is to respect death”* (p.11).

I now outline the delivery of Teu le va in this research design.

Figure 9 My Pacific Research Paradigm



### **Conduct, Dress, and Fa'amauualalo (humility)**

Before the interviews, I reflected on the delivery of Teu le va in my behaviour and conduct. As mentioned, research projects studying indigenous and vulnerable populations should be carried out appropriately by aligning one's conduct and endeavours to those being researched (Anae et al., 2009; Efi, 2003; Smith, 1999; Wilson & Neville, 2009). For this study, I am mindful of my seating and standing positions, dress code, tone of voice, word selection, and eye contact as a mark of respect to the participants, but also in keeping with the va. Samoans adhere to the practice of loto fa'amauualalo which is lowering one's position before others as a sign of humility (Ochs, 1988; Mageo, 2001; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996; Va'a, 2001). Therefore, I am mindful of sitting appropriately, not slouching but with a small lean forward. As commented to me by one of the female Matai: *"You must keep your legs together and slightly tilted to the right, or, left, but have your toes pointed outwards and elbows tightly*

*located near your ribs – never open.*” This position indicates respect to the Samoan participants by avoiding postures of ‘pointing’ legs, toes, and elbows. Furthermore, a puletasi (traditional Samoan two-piece suit for women) was recommended as a suitable attire to wear occasionally. Like other Samoan researchers, I decided to minimise my appearance and simplify my conversation style so that the emphasis and position of the participants were at the forefront (Filipo, 2004; Fonua, 2004). In addition, I refrained from using academic jargon or words that had little relevance to the Samoan culture.

### **Adhering to Fa’amatai and Hierarchical Relationships**

In keeping with the hierarchical nature of Samoan society, cherishing the va commenced at the initial consultation process, that is, meeting with Matai and leaders in the Samoan community to talk about my research, its implications for Samoans, and to get advice on where to locate potential participants. Asking someone else for assistance rather than doing it myself may seem odd to the reader. However, this is one of the Samoan ways of acknowledging status in socio-political relations by approaching key leaders in the community rather than venturing into the field alone (Anae et al., 2001).

Nurturing relationships with the participants through ethical and appropriate conduct is a reminder of the sensitive data obtained from the interviews with confidentiality. I may expect to see a range of emotions from the participants given that they are sharing their historical experiences of potential obstacles and facilitators in the interviews. In addition, they are contributing their time and resources, and therefore, as a sign of feso’aiga (reciprocity) and nurturing the va, I should provide a small token of appreciation. Shopping vouchers and cakes were offered to the participants.

## **Research Outcomes and Dissemination**

The participants will be kept up-to-date as this research progresses so that they are aware of the development. The dissemination of the results to the participants retains the va status as underpinned by the Samoan ideology of harmonious relationships by keeping them informed. Furthermore, I intend to present my outcomes at the Pacific Studies Centres at the University of Auckland and Otago University. If possible, I would like to return to the Netherlands and visit Professor Geert Hofstede, to highlight the unique indigenous Samoan barriers that prevented Samoans from accessing jobs and the cultural institutions that enhanced career advancement. Finally, I will revisit the journalist from the TV3 segment that allowed my research to air with the initial proposal for this study.

### **4.6 Rationale of Teu le Va Methodology**

There were several reasons for choosing Teu le va over other Pacific frameworks and models. Firstly, a review of the Pacific approaches (Table 5) exposed a few duplications and disjointed development, hence, highlighting the necessity for ‘sophisticated’ and ‘coordinated’ methodologies (Anae, 2010, p.3). Some approaches are ethnic-specific while espousing Pan-Pacific use. By way of illustration, a speaker at a Pacific-themed conference referred to Talanoa as having a multi-purpose fit for Pacific research. Talanoa is arguably the most widely used methodology for Pacific studies (Farely & Nabobo-Baba, 2012); however, it is based on a Tongan worldview that may not capture the Samoan context and meanings. Samoa and Tonga are two separate islands. Although there are many similarities between the cultures; there are ethnic-specific nuances that set them apart.

Other Pacific frameworks tend to base their models on an island lifestyle that may not apply in the NZ context, or, meet the changing complexities of the multi-ethnic makeup of Pacific populations (Anae et al., 2001). In addition, there is the assumption of acculturation and familiarity with the 'New Zealand way of knowing and doing things.' According to recent statistics (Census, 2013), about 63 percent of Samoans are NZ-born. Therefore, there is the likelihood that some Samoans may follow Palagi values due to acculturation and their length of time in NZ. The island lifestyle and way of doing things may not echo the perspectives and values of NZ-born Samoans.

Another motive for selecting Teu le va methodology is based on the creator, Melanie Anae, a NZ-born Samoan academic and anthropologist raised in Auckland, whose parents were part of the first wave of Pacific migrants to NZ. Anae (1997, 1998, 2001, 2002; Anae et al., 2001) has written extensively about the challenges for NZ-born Samoans regarding ethnic identity and labels from opposing cultural fronts, that is, Samoan and Pacific versus Palagi perspectives. As the author of this study, there were familiar experiences and links between my orientation and upbringing and Anae's background. Therefore, I felt a familial interrelatedness and spiritual connection that aligned some of my reflective thinking about fa'asamoa and its position in the research with Anae's worldview.

Accordingly, Anae's orientation of the Samoan culture and customs emphasises the va which is not found in other Samoan frameworks. As discussed, the Samoan va sustains relationships and perpetuates the holistic and collective consciousness of Samoans, and essentially anchors Samoan institutions and values. Teu le va methodology allows the va to flow through the entire process of the study and centralises the participants, Samoan people, as most critical to the research, thus, proffering them a channel of voice, for improvement and



well-being. As such *teu le va* re-emphasizes Benham's (2006) words of honouring 'the wisdom of native/local traditional knowledge' (p. 3), and infusing appropriate Pacific epistemologies into the methodological structure of the study (Anae et al., 2001). In my opinion, *Teu le va* is an accurate representation of the Samoan culture, appropriately designed for academic use in the New Zealand research and field context.

#### 4.7 Limits of a Pacific Research Paradigm

All research is subject to limitations and critique. In this study, one of the limitations is the ethnocentric assumption that an ethnic-specific framework is suitable for exploring the phenomenon of a glass ceiling for Samoans. The preconception that all Samoans recognise cultural protocol, values, and sociopolitical arrangements within the traditional Samoan orientation must be treated with a degree of caution. Not all Samoans adhere to *fa'asamoa*, and there may be a few participants who are unfamiliar with, or, have abandoned aspects of *fa'asamoa* culture and protocol for various reasons. Diasporic Samoan populations (including displaced and migrant) challenge the notion of culture and expand the definitions of *fa'asamoa*, such as the (previously indicated) Auckland and Australian versions of *fa'asamoa* way of doing things (Macpherson, 1997; Va'a, 2001). Therefore, this Pacific framework and *Teu le va* methodology are limited to Samoans who are familiar with, or, adhere to, *fa'asamoa* - Samoan cultural customs.

In addition, *Teu le va* is framed with a NZ-born Samoan orientation given that its creator, Melanie Anae, is NZ-born and raised. Participants may point out the differences between postcolonial, historical, and traditional, versus contemporary NZ-Samoan knowledge.

Therefore, this research is limited to NZ-born Samoans, and Samoans raised in NZ from early

childhood. On that note, I acknowledge that I too, do not profess to know all of the multifaceted dimensions of the Samoan culture, or, have a fluent grasp of the gagana (language). As mentioned by Neuman (2011), personal experience, language proficiency, and researcher interpretations influence the observations and outcomes related to the research phenomenon. Therefore, my interpretation of their career barriers (individual, indigenous and organisational) may differ from others. In other words, my version of the 'brown glass ceiling' for Samoans is contestable by other interpretations.

I assert these limitations as a reminder to be cautious in my writing, interviews, and findings as the author of this research in the context of discovery. I have considered and incorporated a Pacific Research Paradigm and the ethnic-specific Teu le va that is framed with Samoan institutions and values so that it is culturally appropriate and ethically safe for the participants (Mulitalo-Lauta, 1998). Respect was highlighted in my conduct, language, and engagement at the beginning of the research process, by consulting with the major Samoan leaders to gain and garner information about potential participants and their needs, the interview process, and analysis, through to the anticipated dissemination of the results (Anae et al., 2001).

I continue the Pacific Research Paradigm and methodology with the next chapter that discusses the design, methods, and analysis used in this study.



## CHAPTER 5: DESIGN, METHODS AND ANALYSIS

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In this chapter, I discuss the methods used in the research process. I provide a Samoan matrix that describes the dimensions and actions used to establish my role in the study as an authentic Samoan researcher. I outline the ethical considerations, unit of analysis and sampling procedures that guide the cultural aspects of the participant selection method. I provide an overview of the interview process, questions, field notes, *meaalofa* (gifts of reciprocity), and the transcribed recordings of the participant interviews. The data analysis section discusses the employing of, and rationale for, NVivo qualitative software for thematic analysis, that is, making sense of the data. I provide the limitations of this design and end with a summary of the Pacific Research Paradigm, methodology, and methods.

### 5.1 My Role as a 'Samoan Researcher'

When considering my position in the research, some issues appeared. I realised that being a researcher undertaking a Samoan study would require additional homework beyond the academic expectation. My supervisors and examiners may not expect to read about a personal excursion that forms a crucial part of a Phd, because it is perhaps not something that is taught or practised. However, as a Samoan researcher, it is implicitly implied; *Know who you are as a Samoan and reflect on your personal experiences.*

Other indigenous academics encourage this detour of reconciling 'intellectually and spiritually' with ourselves *first* before we can mentally move forth into research (Colburg, 2007, p.78; Nabobo-Baba, 2004, p.18; Smith, 1999; p.137). Being an 'insider' does not

inevitably mean that my research malaga (journey) will be easier just because I am of Samoan descent. Rather, I believe that being an insider Samoan researcher makes the research journey more ‘intense.’ Research can be fun and exciting but at the same time it is disruptive and one that reshapes (among others) self-identity and personal values (Neuman, 2011). As Smith (1999) argues, the insider, their family, and community are left with dealing with the outcomes of their processes, whereas, “other outsiders do not (p.137).”

Figure 10 is a ‘Samoan Researcher Identity and Reflexivity Matrix’ that positions my role in this research study. On the left-hand side are the academic researcher assumptions that include the topic, purpose, objectives, and methods of study, whereas the right-hand side outlines the Samoan researcher assumptions based on *Tulaga vae*, that is, the cultural footprint of knowing who you are regarding status, ethnicity, village, and heritage. These elements reconcile who I am as a Samoan researcher studying Samoans in an academic setting.

Figure 10 *Tulaga Vae Matrix: Samoan Researcher Identity and Reflexivity*



### 5.1.1 Know Thy Self: My Cultural Footprint

Firstly, my work background is extensively placed in Human Resources which was unplanned, because my destiny was in the capacities of the Pacific Performing Arts. I was a Polynesian dancer (Samoan and Cook Island dance groups), a Professional Contemporary Artist and Tutor, a Church Congregation pianist, and a music band keyboardist for several years. However, my initial full-time jobs in the public sector influenced my view and stance towards minorities' issues such as inequality, poverty, and unfair processes and systems. Moreover, the years where I temped in roles of marketing, administration, banking, Human Resources, Occupational Safety and Health, and manufacturing, all played their part in providing an overview of different workplaces, ethical and unethical leadership, organisational cultures, the division of labour, and unequal power distribution at work. These occupational experiences gave me some confidence in being able to build rapport, relate, and converse with corporate management about different work contexts, and issues concerning the research topic and participants.

As for my academic malaga (journey), my life as a student began nine years ago completing a TESOL qualification, Bachelor of Business, and Master of Human Resources and Organisational Development. The emphasis and motivation in my formative assignments and assessments have always been to promote ethnic minorities, the Treaty of Waitangi, and Pacific people issues at work. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, my purpose for pursuing brown glass ceilings stems from personal experience, observations, and conversations with other Pacific people at work, and family members who talked about blockages that stopped them from progressing and for reasons that included dimensions of the Samoan culture. It is my legacy to pursue topics that promote vulnerable populations

with the objectives of successful outcomes. I know who I am regarding my academic and working background, and this alone has limited and negotiable authority and power, but little knowledge of my Samoan heritage.

As discussed, the Samoan culture is hierarchical, and therefore contains socio-political spatial relations. This means that there is an expectation of recognising participants with status and appropriating proper behaviour according to the *va*. Furthermore, participants will be curious about my biography, Samoan rank, village, island, and family Matai. As the researcher, I was obligated to know ‘who I am’ before I could enter the domain of Samoan research. Once more I mention the proverb *Tū i lou tūlaga – Stand at your post* - as a prompt for acknowledging class distinctions in Samoan society.

I began researching my parents’ lineage at online genealogical sites with the sole purpose of articulating my Samoan family trees with poise; thus, acknowledging my inherent authentic rights as a Samoan researcher to pursue a Samoan PhD thesis. I am of Samoan descent from two villages on separate islands. Both parents belong to families of Matai (chieftainship), and I am an untitled Samoan woman of mixed heritage.

### 5.1.2 Know Thy People: Do not throw coconuts at my fale!

Another stage of personal reflection from the matrix entitled ‘Know thy people’ concerns the awareness and knowledge of historical stories and present-day information of Samoa and Samoans. In other words, knowing who-is-who, what happened, when, and why. To gain an understanding of my cultural heritage, I attended many Samoan fono (conferences) and consumed a generous mass of Samoan literature to establish my historical knowledge of

Samoa, malaga (migration to NZ) and vital statistical information. Additionally, I learned more of the cultural nuances and traditional pese (songs) and increased my gagana (Samoan language) proficiency through conversations and study. I held meetings with a few of the major leaders in the Samoan community in NZ. Moreover, I was fortunate to have a brief conversation with the Samoan Head of State, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Tupuola Tufuga Efi. On an emotional level, I suppose I was seeking ‘unofficial’ confirmation and approval to go ahead with the research by ‘testing the Pacific waters.’ The conversations with the Samoan leaders were rewarding and highlighted the long overdue necessities that this study attempts to answer for Samoan employees.

I did wonder about social desirability bias (Fowler, 1995) during the interviews and whether the participants would share what they thought I wanted to hear, and perhaps not the truth of how they felt, or, their genuine experiences so that I could view them as favourable and their responses as socially acceptable. Social desirability concerns the tendency of seeking social approval through acceptable behaviours, desirable responses and good impressions (Krumpal, 2013). If this was the case in the Samoan interviews, it could lead to a false impression and therefore incorrect conclusions.

I am well aware of perhaps, the most profound research study that negatively impacted and compromised the emotional, spiritual well-being, and reputation of Samoans. Margaret Mead’s (1928) investigation of Samoan adolescent ‘casual’ attitudes to sex concerning a small group of Samoans from the island of Ta’u failed to comprehend and recognise the intricacies and nuances of Samoan protocol in her framework and approach to the Samoan people (Coté, 1992; Crocombe, 1989). According to some researchers, Mead’s findings were distorted and fundamentally flawed due to deliberate acts of misinformation by the Samoan



participants who were distressed with the incongruent methods used by Mead during the interviews, and the portrayal of unhelpful stereotypes and denigration of Samoans (Freeman, 1986; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1983; Shore, 1983; Vaioleti, 2006). As the author of this research and navigator of this journey, I am reminded to have tact and sensitivity in my writing so that I do not unwittingly throw ‘coconuts’ at the Samoan participants and people due to reckless research construction and inconsiderate conduct.

Going into interviews knowing who I am and reflecting on my personal experiences, having an awareness of the history and present-day stories of Samoans, and employment experience in the NZ work context are layers of ‘armour’ that I earned, and now wear, so that I am potentially prepared for personal ambiguities and questions. As Van Maanen (1982) remarked about research involving ‘loyalty and betrayal, both openness and secrecy and most likely, love and hate’ (p.139). Critically reflecting on my position as the researcher is a vital step towards understanding personal values and beliefs, and how it may impact on the socio-political realities of those being researched.

## 5.2 Ethical Considerations

Prior to commencing the study, ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Reference number 013512). Cultural considerations of being inclusive, respectful and mindful of the Samoan relationships that are formed, the inherent socio-political spatial relations, (Anae et al., 2001) and seeking purposeful outcomes both acknowledge and support the Samoan epistemology and the *va*, and ‘Indigenous Ways of Knowing’ (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Furthermore, seeking counsel and advice with Samoan community leaders and presenting

them with updates on the research through informal and formal visits enhanced the transparency and integrity of this investigation, so that all stakeholders were aware of the topic of the study, requirements, and purpose.

The participants were given information sheets (see Appendix A and B) detailing the aim of this research, their voluntary participation, the procedures, consent, and confidentiality. I spoke to them (either on the phone or personally) about this information and advised on their rights to withdraw or refrain from answering questions at any time. They were informed about being digitally recorded and had the option to decline. Furthermore, they had the right to extract their data from the research up until three weeks after the interview. A few participants who were not interested in any of the ethical protocols, or, signing consent forms, as verbal agreements were considered sufficient. Four participants expressed these verbal agreements during telephone conversations.

### 5.3 Unit of Analysis

The level of analysis for this study are Samoans employed in senior roles such as CEOs, Directors, and Managers in NZ, thereby excluding entry to mid-level positions. Like other glass ceiling studies, this research contends that interviewing Samoans in senior management administers the best insight into career barriers based on their experiences, mobility, and work history in the NZ labour-force (e.g., Li-Liang, 2009; Upadhyay, 2014; Witherspoon, 2009). In addition, a ‘manager’ is someone who performs common management tasks such as planning, organising, staff responsibilities and coordinating activities (ANZSCO, 2013, p.3). Given that there is little information about the influence of cultural values and social systems on careers, interviewing senior managers may yield Samoan reflections of past

experiences concerning the obstacles to career advancement, and the strategies used to overcome them.

The criteria for selecting the participants were as follows: a successful management career and track record of employment, senior levels of autonomy, and staff responsibility. It is most likely that the participants will be mature, middle-aged Samoans (35+) given that a ‘career’ and ‘track record’ is not something that is developed over a few years, although, there may be a few younger participants. My goal was to have an even spread among the sexes, sectors, and the North and South islands. I did not include relatives or friends to reduce personal bias. Therefore, I have no prior and present relationships with any of the participants in this research.

## 5.4 Sampling Methods

This study used purposive sampling on the assumption that the selection of the participants is purposefully chosen for discovering, understanding, and learning about issues of central importance to the research (Merriam, 1998; Zikmund et al., 2010). These participants are not entirely representative but may be in the best position to deliver expert knowledge and access to key individuals (McMahon & Patton, 2002). Snowball sampling (Neuman, 2011) suggests that the further one progresses, the higher the accumulation of people along the way. For these reasons, ‘Matai’ snowball sampling was used to source individuals based on the recommendations of Matai. I approached prominent Samoan leaders in the community, (most of whom are Matai), for assistance with networks and names of Samoans in senior management positions. Matai are not necessarily the participants although a few were included, however, all of them have connections through direct, or, indirect linkages.

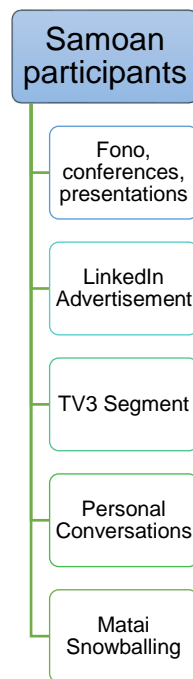
In addition, I attended and presented at fono (Pacific-themed conferences) and held personal conversations with potential Samoans whom I felt met the criteria. A recruitment advertisement posted in the LinkedIn ‘Samoan Business’ forum (Appendix D) initiated the call for Samoa mo Samoa<sup>24</sup> and generated interest from other Samoans, particularly in the South Island.

I was further contacted by other Samoans (and Pacific individuals) who wished to partake in the research after seeing my interview on TV3 in the Sunday news segment entitled ‘Unique Challenges for Samoans in Senior Management.’<sup>25</sup> In this news piece, I discussed the features of my research and its intentions alongside two other Samoans (a Business Entrepreneur and a HR Recruitment Consultant) who noted that Samoans and Pacific people experienced specific difficulties at work. Figure 11 provides an overview of the methods used in recruiting participants.

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<sup>24</sup> ‘Samoa mo Samoa’ is a cultural reference that loosely translates as ‘self-government’ particularly surrounding the historic *Mau* in opposition to New Zealand rule (1927 – 1933) thus encouraging Samoans to support and assist Samoan interventions.

<sup>25</sup> See <http://www.newshub.co.nz/business/unique-challenges-for-samoans-in-senior-management-2015011816#axzz3P9vQrVcF>



Securing names of potential participants from various industries throughout NZ was quickly achieved. Confirmed respondents shared networks of other possible participants. In the end, I had more applicants than expected, and could not keep up with the interests that were coming from both NZ islands, and the queries from international diasporic Samoans, for example, in Australia and Hawai'i.

Purposive and Matai snowballing methods assisted with gaining access to the Samoan population particularly in untapped locations such as North Canterbury and Dunedin. In doing so they adhered to the Samoan protocol of the va and fa'aaloalo, that is, being respectful by accessing Samoan information through the proper hierarchical channels.

## 5.5 Samoan Participants

The final list consisted of 31 Samoans (n=31, 16 females and 15 males) employed as CEOs, Directors, and Senior Managers. Their employment industries included Agriculture and Forestry, Business & Finance, Construction, Education, Energy, Engineering, Food and Beverage, Healthcare and Social Services, Information Technology and Infrastructure, and were spread between the private and public sectors (Table 7). More than half of the participants worked in multiple roles and with a community focus, for example, CEO/Pacific Strategy advisor, Politician /Lawyer/Pacific consultant, and Manager/Pacific consultant/Rugby coach-mentor. I noticed that these ‘other’ roles were often unpaid occupations.

The Samoan participants provided narrative data, 23 located in the North Island and eight from the South Island. I obtained their ages online, or, were expressed to me during the interviews. The average age bracket was 46 to 55, with one individual who was 30 and the oldest 82 years. Surprisingly, almost a third of the final list were Matai. Furthermore, there were more participants employed in the public sector (21) and NZ-born (20), with 22 identified as ‘full Samoan.’

Table 7

**Participant Demographics**

<b>31 Participants:</b> Female, 16 Male, 15 Auckland, 19 Waikato, 1 Wellington, 4 Christchurch, 3 Dunedin, 5	<b>Age brackets:</b> 26-35, 1 36-45, 10 46-55, 16 56-65, 2 66-71, 1 76-85, 1	<b>Nationality/Ethnicity:</b> NZ-born, 20 Samoan-born, 10 Other, 1 Samoan, 22 Afa-kasi (half-caste), 9
<b>Industries:</b> Business & Finance, 6 Construction, 3 Education, 8 Energy, 1 Engineering, 1 Food, 1 Healthcare & Social Services, 9 Information Technology, 1 Infrastructure, 1	<b>Job Titles:</b> CEO, 4 Director, 3 Manager, 14 Lawyer, 3 Engineer, 1 Politician, 3 School Principal, 2 Associate Professor, 1	<b>Sector:</b> Public, 21 Private, 10

Thirty-one participants in total is a small number in comparison to the overall Samoan population in NZ (144,138) and to that end, limits the generalisability of this study.

Nonetheless, the findings have the possibility of being mirrored in the lives of some Samoans.

## 5.6 Semi-structured Interviews

This study used semi-structured interviews (SSI) with open-ended questions to understand the lived experiences of Samoans and how they made sense of their glass ceiling experiences (Seidman, 2006; Van Manen, 2006). SSI does not demand a single correct answer but stimulates a variety of replies that overall fosters a deeper breadth of learning (Seidman, 2006). SSI utilises an interview structure and may be used where there is ample objective knowledge about a phenomenon, but less is known about the subjective knowledge (Richards

& Morse, 2007). In this study, the glass ceiling literature is well-documented in studies concerning African-American and Asian-American cultures in the United States. However, there is scant information about indigenous and Pacific cultures and their glass ceiling experiences. Thus, SSI is relevant and appropriate because it provides the topic (glass ceiling) while remaining open and receptive to the participants' subjective experiences and reflections (Bartholomew, Henderson & Marcia, 2000).

Badger (1992) suggests that open-ended questions require complex thinking in generating richer responses. If the questions are unclear, they can cause problems such as confusion and animosity (Husain, Bais, Hussain & Samad, 2011), and an abundance of irrelevant and unstructured texts (Popping, 2015). To assist with misdirected interviews, a guideline of questions (Appendix C) was given to the participants before the meetings. This guideline was not to be used as the questions for the actual interviews, but as prompts to allow the participants to reflect and remember their past experiences before they shared in the interviews. Locke, Silverman, and Spirduso (2000) describe this method as laying an unofficial context of groundwork so that meeting the participants did not tread on 'thin contextual ice.' Other benefits of offering them an outline in advance include transparency in my methods and alignment of the va in showing respect to the participants. Furthermore, they entered the interviews with some idea of the topic and a chance to prepare and gather their thoughts. Thus, they did not suffer from shame, loss of dignity, or, the well-known Samoan term *ulu valea* (appearing as a 'stupid head').

The interviews occurred at various places such as the participants' work, nearby cafes, and private homes. Ideally, the meetings were aimed at 40 minutes; however, given the traditional oral and dialogic nature of Samoan people (Efi, 2003), I did expect that the



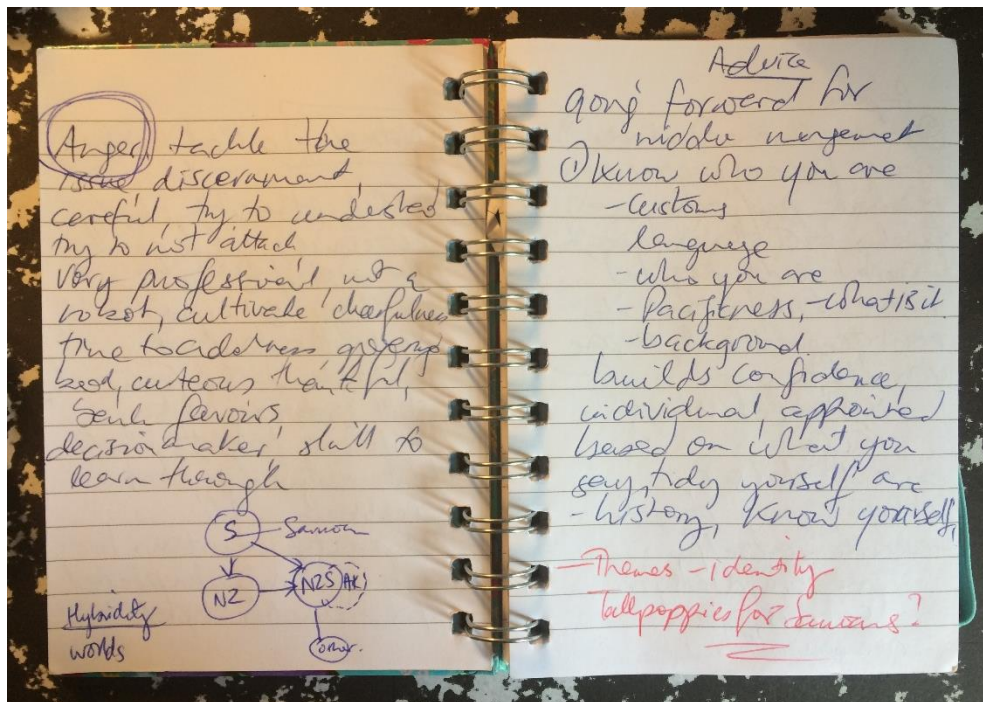
interviews would exceed this time-limit. In the end, only one was within that time frame, while the other interviews averaged about two hours. As a token of my appreciation, and in support of the Samoan orientation of *fesoa'aiga* (reciprocity), participants received food and shopping vouchers at the end of the interviews, or, a later date.

#### 5.6.1 Field notes

During the recording of the interviews, I wrote notes in English, Samoan, and Teeline Shorthand, and drew diagrams to capture my thoughts and feelings about the participant narratives and the topic of glass ceilings. The participants were advised at the beginning of the interview about note-taking and did not appear uncomfortable with it. Furthermore, I wrote down casual observations of their behaviour, for example, vocal intonations, physical expressions, and emotions that might not be audible in the recordings (Figure 12). At a later stage during the analysis, these notes were incorporated into the typed transcripts to assist with recalling the interview session.

Figure 12

Example of field notes taken during an interview



### 5.6.2 Interview Questions

Designing the actual interview questions was not a clear-cut process. Samoans and other indigenes do not get ‘straight to the point’ in conversations, rather, they start at the beginning (Popat & Dinnage, 2005; Scott, 2010; Smith, 2012). Furthermore, one of the Samoan methods of communicating is through storytelling (Efi, 2003; Schultz, 1985). Therefore, I might expect participants to talk about their past lives, for example, home in Samoa, family, school and work experience, before leading into the conversation about careers. Therefore, the first question “*How did you come to be a manager in your organisation*” allowed the participants to recall their past lives up until the time they entered management roles. Its purpose is to place the participant back into the context and set the scene for them to share their story.

The next question “*What helped your career progress?*” focuses on the specific career facilitators, for example, access to mentors, personal development, and may (or not) include detailed cultural institutions and values. Participants might also mention the obstacles and challenges that held them back from accessing senior roles.

The final question empowered the participants through sharing advice based on their experiences, thereby ‘giving back’ to their community; “*Given your experiences of careers, what advice would you give to the next generation of Samoans seeking higher employment?*” Ending the interviews on a ‘high note’ and providing career facilitators and strategies is the objective of this question so that the participants can leave knowing that they contributed in imparting knowledge from their experiences to the next generation of Samoans, thus, acknowledging the Samoan epistemology where knowledge is shared through story-telling and camouflaged in metaphors such as imparting knowledge from parent to child (Efi, 2003; Tamasese et al., 1997).

### 5.6.3 Meaalofa (Gifts, meals)

During the interviews, some of the participants provided refreshments and catered meals at their workplaces and homes. Furthermore, a few ‘shouted’ meals for me at various restaurants and cafes. As a token of feso’ava (reciprocity) to the participants, I too offered large Mud cakes to different offices. Samoans and Pacific people are well-known for their generous food and hospitality (Anae et al., 2001; Crocombe, 1975). Knowing that I might have to eat during the interviews, I starved myself on the day of the interviews so that I did not appear rude for eating less, or, not at all.

On a few occasions, prayers were shared, and family members joined in the conversation. When this happened, we did not discuss the topic. However, it was fascinating and yet humbling to see that the entire family felt that they had something to contribute to my visit and purpose. As mentioned earlier, Samoans are deeply ensconced in family and communalism rather than in an individualistic sense of being. Moreover, as described in Efi's (2003) analogy of the three perspectives of the fishermen, everyone has a valid contribution towards a common goal.

#### 5.6.4 Transcribed Recordings

A voice application on my mobile phone recorded the interviews and stored them on a separate removable SD disk. I transcribed the recordings after every third interview session so that the typing of the interviews, matching notes, and recalling of the events were still fresh. Transcribing verbatim data required four to six hours for a 90-minute interview and almost two days for a three+ hour interview. The skills of Teeline shorthand and touch-typing proved to be an advantage with this part of the data collection. The interviews were spoken in English, although the participants did occasionally use Samoan metaphors and proverbs in their dialogue and were earlier given the option to converse in Samoan.

One of the advantages for researchers transcribing their recordings is that they come to know the transcripts better (Seidman, 2006), for example, for data manipulation and refinements for later interviews. The transcripts were typed, emailed, or posted to the participants for verification of authenticity, and they were given the option to withdraw from the study. Participants usually responded through email if their transcripts required editing. Only one participant had hesitations with their transcript, and, subsequently removed themselves from

the research. All participants' names on the final transcripts were renamed to characters from the book '*The birth and death of the Miracle Man and other stories*' by the Samoan writer Albert Wendt (1999) so that they were not easily identifiable. In total, the typed transcripts (including original, edited and final) filled one foolscap-sized filing box.

## 5.7 Thematic Analysis

The analysis began during transcription where I could hear potential themes from repetitive cues coming from the participant discussions. In addition, I started noticing 'codes' in distinct contexts and circled these texts in colour to distinguish patterns of codes and themes to assist with the analysis. Codes are specific and encapsulate a single idea, or, concept (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It is a repetitive process of changing, combining, and comparing codes throughout the stages of data analysis (Mills, 2014). With the amount of paperwork that was generated during the interview process (31 lengthy transcripts, numerous recordings, confidential participant demographics, academic literature articles, and other useful resources), it made sense to use software to organise, manage, and code raw data that generates themes.

### 5.7.1 NVivo Qualitative Software

NVivo Qualitative software (version 11) is ideal as a data management system for organising, analysing and querying options. This is not to say that NVivo does all the work; rather, someone must generate the codes, categorize, and make sense of the themes. NVivo assists with the mechanical process, and my human brain does the rest.

Before coding, I placed a cut-out of the research questions in front of my laptop screen to help organise and fine-tune my search for promising themes. I coded each interview transcript by reading through them and selecting ‘attention-grabbing’ comments and key concepts (for example, cultural barriers, institutions, and values), and putting them into NVivo containers called ‘nodes’ (means codes) (Figure 13). In time, a list was generated for each node, and clicking on it reveals all the references (from the transcript) that have been grouped into this node. Emerging themes (sub-nodes) were consolidated.

Generating ‘nodes’ using NVivo is time-consuming and requires consistency. This is because node duplications frequently happen, and affect the final number of references (Bazeley & Jackson, 2014). Therefore, at regular intervals, I stopped to check and tidy the nodes to see if there were any irrelevant references, or, perhaps a need for a new node. As an example of duplication, Figure 13 shows specific nodes such as ‘*Cultural barrier*’ (Node) and ‘*Navigating world, identity*’ (sub-code) with their total sum of sources (14 individual transcripts) and references (35). However, upon reviewing further transcripts, the sub-node ‘*No voice – Instructional obedience*’ references could have relevance with ‘*Navigating world, identity*.’ Therefore, these two sub-codes for a particular transcript could mean the same thing and should be counted as one, rather than two separate references. When this occurred, I had to analyse the context of the node to find its meaning or return the query to the participant.

Figure 13

Example of NVivo Nodes (codes) for Thematic Analysis

The screenshot shows a table of NVivo nodes. A blue callout bubble with the text 'Related themes' points to the 'Related themes' column header. The table lists various nodes with their respective source, reference, and creation data.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Career Barrier	0	0	8/01/2016 6:06 p.m.	BLOG
Career facilitator	0	0	8/01/2016 6:07 p.m.	BLOG
Cultural barrier	0	0	8/01/2016 6:09 p.m.	BLOG
Navigating world, identity	14	35	8/01/2016 5:05 p.m.	BLOG
Respect	14	29	8/01/2016 6:01 p.m.	BLOG
No voice - Instructional obedience	11	21	8/01/2016 5:59 p.m.	BLOG
hierarchy matai position and power	4	15	8/01/2016 8:00 p.m.	BLOG
tall poppy samoans	12	13	9/01/2016 1:49 p.m.	BLOG
fa'a lave lave	3	7	8/01/2016 6:32 p.m.	BLOG
va - keeping the peace	4	7	8/01/2016 8:03 p.m.	BLOG
age	2	4	8/01/2016 5:53 p.m.	BLOG
Tautua	2	2	9/01/2016 1:30 p.m.	BLOG
reciprocity	1	1	9/01/2016 2:28 p.m.	BLOG
gender	1	1	11/01/2016 11:07 a.m.	BLOG

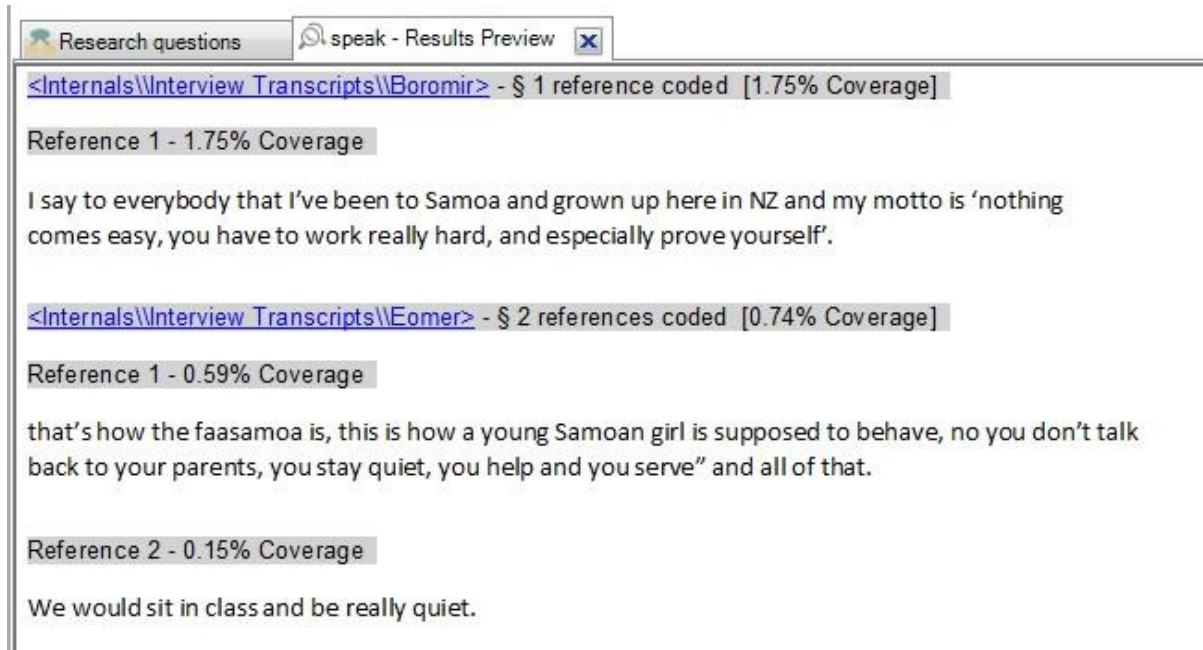
Each node required a standard so that all references were consistent and had the same meaning. The process of employing consistency with context and cultural references strengthens the accuracy and trustworthiness of the results (Bazeley & Jackson, 2014). Hence, reviewing and rechecking each transcript and reference was essential for consistency and promoting integrity (Boyatzis, 1998). From here, the highest number of sources and references generate the final themes.

Another feature of NVivo that I used is the ‘Word Frequency query’ that can deliver early insight into emerging themes. (Figure 14). This feature creates a ‘word cloud’ that shows the most frequently used words of the participants (up to 1,000).<sup>26</sup> It has a ‘Finding matches’ slider in the query for grouping words, synonyms and other related words (from the results column). Visually, I found the word cloud to be quite useful and a refreshing, colourful change from monochromatic colour (from black and white typed text) in matching sub-nodes with duplicated notes.

<sup>26</sup> The Word Frequency count excludes my interview questions and words.







Note: The above 'Text Search' query example does not display the full results

Overall, NVivo data software provided an organised method for thematic analysis through data coding and various automated queries that generated the final list of themes.

### 5.7.2 Rationale for NVivo Thematic Analysis

Some readers may question my choice of using NVivo in a Pacific Research Paradigm, given that it is a Western software application, and therefore, seems to contravene the notion of using 'indigenous ways of knowing and doing' (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008), or, the wisdom of native/local traditional knowledge (Benham, 2006). Samoans (and most of NZ society and the interconnected world) do not live in a vacuum by themselves. Samoans use technological devices whether at home for personal use and work. Furthermore, they are members of NZ society and live in diverse communities of numerous homogeneous and

heterogeneous (includes intra-ethnic) economic, political and social relationships, for example, Palagi, European, Māori, Pacific ethnic groups, and Asian and Middle Eastern societies. They are dependent on others just like others depend on them. The glass ceiling barriers that prevented them from senior jobs did not materialise in a vacuum. As such, the facilitators that assisted their entry to higher levels did not emerge in a vacuum.

We live in a modern society and using NVivo makes sense, and does not disregard local, traditional knowledge; rather, it enhances the data analysis process. An example of modern applications that assist with knowledge-building is the use of Microsoft Word software that ‘writes’ this thesis rather than the traditional method of using sharpened whalebone immersed in octopus ink for drawing symbols on a tapa bark cloth.

Furthermore, fa’asamoa (Samoan way of doing and understanding) is not fixed. As discussed, numerous authors depict fa’asamoa as being flexible or fluid, and having the ability to transform through periodic changes, much like the induction of Christianity from Samoan paganism, and the shift from subsistence living to the transaction of money, labour and vehicles (Ah-Siu-Maliko, 2016; Anae, 2002; Liliomaiava-Doktor, 2004; Mageo, 1998). Like fa’asamoa, this thesis retains and maintains its’ ‘Samoanness’ while using NVivo to assist and enhance the mechanical process of analysis. In the end, the human brain (mine) attempts to make sense of the data for this research.

### 5.7.3 ‘Doing it by hand’ – Iterative Analysis

For triangulation reasons, the transcripts went through the traditional process of painstakingly ‘doing-it-by-hand,’ that is, using fluoro highlighters and coloured post-it notes to code and

develop themes, and Excel spreadsheets to organise the data and arrange into the highest (count) order. This method re-examined and checked previous codes that were already administered by NVivo. This process is necessary because NVivo does not locate Samoan contextual cues, institutions, values, phrases, and terminology that only an experienced researcher of this culture might identify in the transcripts. Thus, figuring out the transcripts one-by-one tended to be more suitable for discovering missed cultural references in context, and errors in the meanings for some participant conversations. Therefore, it made sense to recode the transcripts manually. Once all of the transcripts were coded and checked, the final totals generated the main themes for this study.

Periodically, the transcripts contained cultural references that were unclear. As an example, a participant discussed decision-making and reverting to *fa'aaloalo* (respect) and 'keeping the peace' (referring to the *va*). Arguably, *fa'aaloalo* and keeping the peace (*va*) are two separate Samoan values, but the participant has merged their meanings into a single value. In this situation, I contacted the participant for clarification about her sentence. She realised that it should have been about '*keeping the peace*,' that is, maintaining the *va*, and therefore harmonious relationships. Thus, the coding process of 'doing it by hand' was invaluable in refining key cultural concepts and revisiting with clarity (Bazeley & Jackson, 2014). Hence, highlighting the methods used in this study assisted with promoting accuracy and the trustworthiness of the data.

Using NVivo for organising and coding rich data, combined with the traditional method of 'doing it by hand' strengthened the accuracy of the results. NVivo stores, organises and categorises numerous sources that are easily retrievable with the click of a mouse. Furthermore, the added queries were a bonus in providing early insights into themes.

However, where it failed was data relating to Samoan cultural nuances. I had to spend a considerable amount of time going through each transcript, reading, analysing and comparing contexts, and contacting participants for further information to make genuine sense of their conversations that assisted with generating codes that led to themes. In this way, I could identify, highlight, and determine the number of references that related to the Samoan context, for example, institutions of aiga (family), lotu (religion or church) and fa'amatai (chieftainship), the prominent values such as fa'aaloalo (respect), alofa (love), tautua (service) and the va.

## 5.8 Limitations

Further to the limits mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, there were some additional limitations to the research design, methods, and analysis. Firstly, my presence as an educated, English-speaking, NZ-born, Samoan female researcher of mixed ethnicities might have affected some participants' responses, moods, and answers during data gathering. The hierarchical and gerontocratic nature of Samoan society may place untitled women at a disadvantage in socio-political relations. According to a few of the participants, I was "*not old enough*" to be in a position of interviewing, especially in discussions with Matai. In addition, my Chinese heritage and being an Aucklander seemed to bother a few of the participants. One Samoan (who 'gate-crashed' during a separate interview) asked whether the respondents were "*NZ-born Samoan women*" because I had not interviewed him, or, other "*famous*"<sup>27</sup> Samoans.

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<sup>27</sup> The participant list does include sports celebrities, politicians, councillors, and major leaders in the Samoan community

Accusations of unreliability are common in qualitative research as findings may vary due to participant and researcher bias, subjectivity and unpredictability (Bowne, 2006; Neuman, 2011; Zikmun et al., 2010). I did wonder whether I had unintentionally interviewed NZ-born Samoan women (inherent built-in bias), but the final participant list showed a marginal difference: 16 women and 15 men. Furthermore, I contemplated whether the replies could have been different had an older male, or, a titled female Samoan conducted the interviews that might signal further research concerning cultural gender bias and ageism in Samoan interviews.

Another limitation concerned the amount of time taken for interviewing participants (Bowen, 2006), recovery-time from travelling the North and South islands, and pouring over volumes of data (Elo & Kynagas, 2008; Zikmund et al., 2010). In addition, the costs associated with travel (domestic and international), accommodation, petrol, meaalofa (gifts), and other unexpected expenses exceeded the limit allocated to my student 'PrEsS' account. In other words, the scope of this 'nationwide' study and cultural commitments were costly and limited my abilities. Future research would warrant a more concise breakdown of the funds needed to support the cultural obligations of fa'alavelave (Samoan commitments involving money, food, and service) and meaalofa (gifts) as integrated into this Pacific framework design.

Although the saturation point was reached at 31 interviews, I did speculate whether there were enough results given the small sample size in comparison to the total Samoan population, and to that end limited the generalisability of this study. One suggestion for potentially overcoming the issue of sample size could include access to more resources, for example, two researchers to share coverage of interviews between the North and South Islands. Overall, despite these limitations, the findings of this research have the possibility of

being mirrored in the lives of some Samoans living and working in New Zealand.

Furthermore, this study provides an alternative perspective of the glass ceiling barriers and its implications for Samoans that is not yet found in the literature.

## 5.9 Summary of Pacific Research Paradigm, Design, Methods and Analysis

With the emergence of (ethnic-specific) Pacific research and methodologies spanning the last two decades, much debate has transpired in the South Pacific hemisphere concerning the impact of Pacific ontological and epistemological knowledge, protocol, positionality and relevance in academia (Anae, 1998; Faleolo, 2013; Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014; Tamasese et al., 1997). Knowledge is culturally situated: Euro-Western, Eastern and Pacific approaches are located within epistemologically distinct cultural orientations. Euro-Western frameworks tend to begin with a concern for ‘universal knowledge’ (Neuman, 2011) rather than the Pacific approach, that seeks ‘ethnic-specific knowledge’ and the mindful protection of indigenous heritage.

The predilection for employing a Pacific Research Paradigm and ethnic-specific epistemology *Teu le va* is my response to Samoans who are tired of Western methods that are unsuitable in meeting Samoan and Pacific cultural protocol, participant sensitivity, and better outcomes. However, these methods continue to be employed in research, surveys, and objectives. Concerning the use of inappropriate research methods, Savaiinaea Pita Williams, president of Tama Samoa Otara stated: ‘They send in people who know nothing about Otara; they try and use methods that they believe work in the slums of London, but they will never work in Otara’ (cited in Kara, 2003, p.1). The point being, there are other offerings available

for Pacific people that must be considered and accepted as credible, legitimate, and valued contributions (Faleolo, 2013; Tuafuti, 2011).

I was mindful of the construction and fundamental assumptions of academic research, and respect for the Samoan people by infusing a Samoan framework *Teu le va* in my design (Smith, 1999). I expressed my *alofa* (love) and *tautua* (service) through the value of *fesoa'aiga* (reciprocity) (Anae et al., 2001) to nurture and cherish the spiritual *va* that flows and protects spatial relationships. Furthermore, I acknowledged cultural protocol and etiquette in my clothing attire, observance of prayer and Bible proverbs during the interviews, respecting personal space, status, and reciprocation with the participants.

There were several sources of information that gave more insight into the glass ceiling barriers for Samoans in New Zealand. These types of collected data included; participant interviews, recordings, field notes (including informal observations, for example, vocal intonation and emotions), and participant-checking. That is, allowing interviewees to edit and add a further discussion to their transcripts or elaborate on areas that were unclear in the analysis. A closer look at the cultural dimensions and their meanings for participants from the transcripts recognised a few inconsistencies, and thus, they were corrected.

Conducting interviews at different locations throughout NZ and considering the various interviewee occupations, demographics, and their industries cross verified the same information. Yin (1984) states that using multiple sources to gather data such as at different times and places is the 'development of converging lines of inquiry' (p.91). Therefore, employing various methods might lead to more reliable and valid constructions of realities.

For this research, triangulation methods were used to improve the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the findings (Cresswell, 1994). There were two types of thematic analysis: (1) NVivo software for coding the transcripts, then categorizing codes that led to themes, and (2) analysing individual transcripts by hand, using highlighted codes and chunks of text, and written comments. For each method, the participants assisted with clarification and authenticity of their words and meanings. An Excel spreadsheet tallied the results of the second method that generated the themes. Comparing both results (from NVivo and personal analysis) led to a synthesis of the final themes. This chapter ends the discussion of the Pacific Research Paradigm and Methodology. A summary of the main findings, together with the career facilitators, strategies, and coping mechanisms are provided in the next two chapters.





## CHAPTER 6: CAREER CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

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*“I’ve spent my life trying to break down glass ceilings to prove that I can be as good as them, if not, better.”*

*Samoan Politician*

This chapter reveals the findings of the analysis obtained from the interviews with Samoan participants according to the first research question and structured in their order of importance as per the NVivo results. As a reminder, the research questions are: *What are the barriers and challenges to senior career advancement for Samoans in New Zealand? What strategies and facilitators assisted with achieving successful higher careers for Samoans?*

This chapter is partitioned into two sections: ‘Challenge 1: Negotiating Palagi and Samoan values at work’ and ‘Barriers: Discrimination and Tokenism in Organisations’ and subsequently unpacked according to the main emerging themes. The first section begins with identifying the challenges of navigating conflicting value systems using quotes and examples from the participants’ transcripts. Section two provides examples of systemic barriers, labels, and experiences that seemed to deter and discourage Samoans from seeking senior careers. Numerous Samoan voices and interesting narratives provide an array of rich perspectives concerning their interpretations of barriers that offer an alternative view of the glass ceiling that is, perhaps, unlike other views in Western and Eastern societies cited in previous chapters. This chapter ends with a detailed table of a summary of career obstacles and challenges, highlighting the themes, subthemes, representative participant quotes and implications for career advancement.

## 6.1 Challenge 1: Negotiating Palagi and Samoan values at work

The findings indicated that the theme 'Living in two worlds' that is, the Samoan and New Zealand value systems, created career hurdles for Samoans. In other words, negotiating one's Samoan cultural identity in a dominant Palagi host society seemed to cause inner conflict, indecision, and apprehension, for example not knowing which values to use in conversations and team meetings. From the data, it is evident that Samoans place a high premium on cultural values as the foundation of who they are as an ethnic group. For some participants, it was a tough balancing act of straddling competing and opposing cultural values. The dilemmas of cultural clash and cultural alienation (from their heritage) resonated throughout the interviews. Furthermore, it seemed that Samoans were unsure of how to define themselves and struggled with 'fitting in' with their work colleagues. Although they did seem to indicate being part of each world, they were not entirely immersed in either. This theme is unpacked to the cultural dimensions that caused friction between the two value systems.

### 6.1.1 Communicating Respect with limited eye-contact and silence

*“The Palagi doesn't understand fa'aaloalo [respect], and they regard our fa'aaloalo as a weakness [...] So because we were like that in everything that we did, they looked at us as if we're weak because we don't stand up and fight back, and things like that.”*

Muga, Politician

The findings indicated that communicating the Samoan value fa'aaloalo (respect) was perceived as a cultural barrier for Samoans, or, as one participant expressed “*Fa'aaloalo can work for and against you.*” NVivo revealed 134 occurrences of the word respect and

fa'aaloalo (used interchangeably) from the transcripts – more than any of the other Samoan values.' Here, respect pertained to the behavioural aspects of communication with Palagi colleagues and particularly senior management, with less eye contact and limited talk, or, silence, that was more problematic and noticeable during one-on-one interactions such as job interviews and performance appraisals.

*“For me, it was having an interview with the inspector, and I have the utmost respect for him by looking down [...] that still happens today. How do you overcome that?”*

Salepa, Councillor

Salepa highlighted that ‘looking down’ during his interview was his way of showing respect to the inspector and perceived that it negatively influenced the direction of the meeting because he was unsuccessful, and perhaps, viewed as weak and lacking initiative. As a councillor, Salepa recognised this cultural behaviour of averting and limiting one’s eye contact during discussions with Pacific people, and that it could be misinterpreted as lazy and uninterested behaviour during interviews. Learning to negotiate the cultural space of eye contact with his Palagi colleagues became *“easier with time and experience.”* However, other participants indicated that they consistently struggled with maintaining eye contact.

*“By telling our bosses that just because a Pacific, or, Samoan man is having an interview, and they are not looking you in the eye is how humble we are.”*

Filifili, CEO

Similarly, Filifili’s comment confirms Salepa’s excerpt that limiting eye contact is a sign of respect and humility. She talked about experiencing *“pain”* at having to sit opposite her

superior during an appraisal meeting and physically “*sweating*” from nerves and looking at someone in authority.

The NVivo sub-nodes ‘silence’ and ‘less talk’ arose as a response to the varying lengths and quantity of talk-time between Samoans and Palagi managers. That is, the participants noticed that Palagi tend to talk frequently and in volume, while Samoans say very little, or, nothing at all. According to some participants, saying nothing during conversations and meetings was not about “*knowing nothing*,” but more about waiting for their colleagues to finish speaking, or, turn-taking, before adding their comments, thus, showing respect. They indicated that “*quietly sitting and saying nothing*” that would interrupt their managers’ words was demonstrating respect to a superior. However, it was not perceived as such.

Numerous respondents shared the same story concerning the Samoan version of exhibiting respect with limited talk and silence at work that appeared to irritate and annoy their NZ counterparts. Simi (Director) recalled an earlier experience where another colleague confronted him about not contributing to the conversation by saying “*Don’t you have an opinion, or, are you filtering? How about you say something and not wait for everyone else?*” Similarly, Pepe (Manager) remembered an incident where a fellow manager hinted at his silence by saying “*People who sit at the table and don’t say anything are only there for show and should go out the door that they came from.*” Pepe remembered the emotional hurt from misinterpreted respectful behaviour but felt compelled to continue adhering to the Samoan orientation of showing respect until such time where he was able to speak his words without the fear of disrespecting colleagues. Tai’fau’s (School Principal/Coach) comments echoed other similar statements concerning respect stating: “*Sometimes we ignore the topic on hand so that we don’t hurt anybody [...], but once we leave a meeting, we have that*

*integrity intact, that they're not hurt in any way.*" Tai'fau stressed that saying less was deemed as being respectful and more important than sharing his opinions for fear of emotional upsets. From these comments, it appeared that showing respect with less talk and silence from a Samoan worldview was misinterpreted as deviant behaviour and weak leadership, rather than promoting collegiality and collaboration at work.

While it was common to hear participants discussing their conundrums with negotiating eye contact and talk with superiors at work, nearly all dialogues were associated with memories of juvenile performances between parents, themselves, and the value of respect. That is, they recalled past events where they (as children) had to look away and avoid eye contact while their parents were speaking to them. These experiences suggested that childhood observances of maintaining respect by looking elsewhere are used to remind children of their place in the social hierarchy of Samoan society, whereby looking at people with power is disrespectful (Mageo, 1989).<sup>28</sup> The cultural custom of looking away during conversations with titled individuals (or managers) seem to continue as Samoans enter adulthood and into the workplace.

The data suggested that some Samoans do not accentuate Western customs of communicating respect, that is, with eye contact, engagement in dialogues, and speaking rituals (Munter, 1993). Furthermore, it is evident that some Samoans tended to highlight contradictory proactive behaviours from the ideal Western expectations, for example, self-starting, forward-thinking, goal-oriented and a willingness to contribute (Schmitt, Den Hartog & Belschak, 2016). Proactive workers voice their opinions and suggestions for enhancing or changing work processes, environments, and projects that are advantageous for the individual

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<sup>28</sup> Avoiding eye-contact across cultures is not an unusual phenomenon. African, East Asia, and Māori have a similar orientation about evading eye-stares (Thomas & Inkson, 2004; Thomas, 2008).

and organisation (Grant & Ashford, 2008). They collaborate and contribute to organisational goals and voice their concerns and recommendations. However, from the participants' stories, there is a cultural clash of communication styles and behaviours between Palagi and Samoan. From here, it is reasonable to suggest that the Samoan view of communicating respect at work for some Samoans is a disadvantage and a potential obstacle to career progress.

### 6.1.2 Hierarchy: Inequality of Power Relations

*“If [Samoan manager with Matai title] speaks before me, then I don't talk. He has a title [...] I haven't, so if he speaks first, then I don't [...] Culturally, you don't speak after the chief has spoken [...] In some cases, I don't speak at all because he is there.”*

Simi, Director

According to the findings, acknowledging one's place in the social organisation of Samoan society constrained some Samoans from career progress. Several transcripts referred to the phrase *“know your place”* regarding Samoan etiquette and behaviour according to one's rank, which limited their 'voice' by restraining their opinions, actions, and decisions, as a form of respect to someone with a high title and regardless of the 'titled' person's ethnicity. Like Simi's statement (above), untitled Samoans might not speak until *after* a titled person (or manager). In this example, the cultural value of fa'aaloalo (respect) is enforced, whereby a Samoan would acknowledge the va (spatial relations) and remain quiet until it is their time to speak. As an example, Gabriel (Manager) stated, *“...in the Matai system, you don't have a voice [...] You are only given a voice when you are asked, and so they bring that mentality of not having a voice with them to work.”* Therefore, it appears that waiting for an invite to speak recognises status and conforms to the va of appropriating acceptable and respectful conduct.

Matai and senior Samoans have the authority to make decisions and prioritise collective interests over personal orientations (Joseph, 2015). High ranking people have more choices and better access to the best resources, power, and opportunities, and tend to provide instructions for low ranking individuals. Therefore, the commoners or ‘untitled’ conform to their station and obey the commands of higher ranked persons (Duranti & Ochs, 1986). As mentioned, the adherence to hierarchy is enforced from infancy and preserves the social stratification of Samoans (Anae et al., 1997).

Some Samoans recalled events where they deliberately acted “*dumb*” because of their lower rank and did not want to appear more intelligent when speaking to titled individuals and their superiors at work. As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, Samoan chiefs and the elderly are the knowledge keepers. Therefore, untitled individuals and perhaps females should not outwardly show their intelligence as it may be perceived as a challenge of power and an act of fa’a fiapoto (showing off, or, acting intelligent). The following participants’ statements are quite revealing:

*“But what we as Samoans do, we play it down so well so that we don’t show our intelligence [...] but I think that from a Samoan cultural perspective that we don’t allow our children to have a perspective that allows them to voice their opinions later and have discussions.”*

Simi, Director

*“We’re at a time when people say to us that you have to be open and honest and show the best of our skills [...], but sometimes in our culture, it’s tough [...] because of having ‘no voice’ from knowing your place.”*

Tupu, Politician



In this context, ‘voice’ is not to be confused with the vocal voice of performing artists, that is, acting and singing. It may, however, refer to the author’s voice as found in poetry and fictional and academic writing style (Potgieter & Smit, 2009). The voice in this thesis concerns the journey of the self and having something to say that comes from knowledge and self-confidence that is blended into one’s identity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Potgieter & Smit, 2009). However, this voice is limited in Samoan protocol. As mentioned earlier, untitled individuals voice their opinions when prompted by a titled speaker. Having a voice without entitlement is frowned upon in Samoan society and could lead to humiliation and shame (Gershon, 2012) and is a reminder of one’s place in the hierarchical structure.

Alternatively, there were conversations where untitled Samoans voiced their opinions in Pacific-themed organisations that had adverse outcomes. As an example, Tauilo pepe (Director) recalled an earlier incident where he spoke of his concerns during a work meeting and received a “*telling off*” for being “*ulu valea*” (a stupid person) by the older Samoans in the room. He expressed his “*regret and anger*” in having to learn “*how to be strategic and having fa’aaloalo [respect] in getting your message across [in Pacific-themed organisations].*” He further stated “*I had to revert to fa’aaloalo [respect] and do things the Samoan way. That kept me down.*”

In a similar vein, Sieni (CEO) experienced hostility from other Samoans when she “*spoke out of turn during Fono [conference]*” and was humiliated because she “*...challenged the status quo and was really pushing for change [...] there was pressure from the top to do things a certain way – the fa’asamoa way [...] It was the worst experience where I was really challenged as to my Samoanness.*”

The evidence further indicated that some untitled Samoans experienced internal guilt in seeking higher positions that would place them on a level outside of their rank, or worse, above a titled and older Samoan. There were indications of purposeful sabotage and delayed careers from some Samoans to evade conflict with titled Samoans. Here are some examples:

*“Three years into my position there was a senior role available, and I was eager to go for it. I let the other team members know that I was keen. But because another Samoan colleague who is older and experienced told me she was applying, well I couldn’t go up against her [...] So I pulled out and made up an excuse that I changed my mind. But what could I do? [...] I couldn’t go up against someone older than me, and I really respect her? That felt like a cultural dilemma. I never forget it.”*

Sieni, CEO

*“If we’re talking about the Samoan way which is the respectful way and doing the best job that we do, I can’t go for jobs if I know there’s an older Samoan, for example [...] years ago I was going to go for this position but found out that [older Samoan] had put his stamp on it. So what I did was – I withdrew and encouraged the team to put [older Samoan] forward. Inside I was hurting, but outside I was being fa’asamoa. I can say that I did this, but that was a long time ago.”*

Pepe, Manager

*“A staff member was having difficulty with a senior colleague [Samoan] who wouldn’t take a higher promotion; they couldn’t understand why she wouldn’t. So I talked to her and found out if [name] she does take it, she would be in charge of women who are in her family and church; it looks bad.”*

Elena, CEO

Pepe, Elena and Sieni’s views are similar to Akhtar’s findings (2015) where some ethnic minorities deliberately held back from pursuing top jobs to avoid exceeding the social status of their kin. As highlighted in Chapter 2, ‘survivor guilt’ describes the stress and anguish that some ethnic minorities experience from having successful careers while knowing that their

relatives are stationed beneath them (Poussaint, 1987). Seeking higher occupations that involve managing titled or older Samoans was viewed as a career barrier for some Samoans at work.

### 6.1.3 Gender Bias and Intra-ethnic Prejudice

*“I think one of the biggest barriers in our Pacific community is gender. [...] which limit women from successfully moving forward. I think there are very few open and progressive senior Pacific men.”*

Elena, CEO

*“What I have noticed is that even in communities where they accept it [female leadership] I was always welcomed because I was the official leader [...] so the position and having the title [matai] definitely helped. But, in my engagement probably more in the professional setting, there were some men, particularly Samoan men, who struggled, and then excluded me.”*

Sieni, CEO

There is evidence from the data that some female Samoans experienced gender discrimination from Samoan males at work, for example, an older male Samoan manager in the same company where the CEO is a younger Samoan woman. From the data, Samoan men tended to assume superiority over Samoan women regardless of their occupations and level in the organisation. In addition, the findings revealed that Samoan males would deliberately interfere, or, impair Samoan female efforts at work to remind them of their inferior place within Samoan socio-political relationships, as Elena experienced:

*“What he did is shut me down [...] He was relying on me to behave in a Samoan way, which would not involve challenging him in front of the whole board because that is not a very good thing [...] he was the Chair, and I am disrespecting him. I think he expected me to not do things that way because of the cultural stuff. Had I been a 60-year-old man with a title running that organisation he wouldn't have treated me like that. He would have considered himself as my equal.”*

Elena, CEO

In this example, the male Samoan expected Elena to ‘humble’ herself by refraining from speaking (during meetings) and thereby, ‘bequeathing’ him with the superior voice. He ‘shut her down,’ that is, he talked ‘over’ her so that his voice was louder which diminished her status as per the Samoan orientation. When asked if it made a difference to her career progression, Elena replied that it influenced her choices of avoiding situations where she knew certain males would be present. In doing so, it excluded her from strategic meetings and networking, that for someone in her position (CEO) would be ill-advised. In a similar situation, Moamoa shared her experience of facing barriers from male Samoans in her field of expertise (education) saying:

*“When I come across boards who are predominantly male and Samoan males, I get that sense that women won’t be adding their opinions, that they’ll be keeping a low profile. Not just because of the Western bias, but Samoan men will be a lot harder on the Samoan women [...] I just feel that it’s hard for women.”*

Moamoa, Board Member

Moamoa expressed her disappointment with what she felt was gender bias from Samoan males. For example, she talked about Samoan male colleagues discussing school matters among themselves and seeking advice from a senior Samoan rather than approaching her as the senior board member. She mentioned feeling “*undermined*” and “*sick of Samoan custom.*” The scrutiny of targeting female Samoans in leadership positions by male Samoans is a form of bullying and discrimination and is illegal.<sup>29</sup> It created dilemmas for these females that deterred or delayed them from pursuing senior occupations.

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<sup>29</sup> As per NZ legislations; Human Rights Act 1993, Section 7(1a) and Employment Relations Act, 2000 Section 104(1a).

The findings further suggested that it is a triple dilemma for untitled, female, afa-kasi Samoans (half-caste: one parent indigenous and the other English, European, Chinese or Māori). In an emotionally-charged conversation, afa-kasi Filifili (CEO) felt compelled to “*validate*” herself to other Samoans at work with random Samoan speech and adherence to Samoan protocol as physical proof of her Samoan ethnicity and identity.<sup>30</sup> She further stated:

*“When I am in some Pacific setting, they just don’t see me as ‘Pacific-enough,’ but that’s about them and not about me. I think it’s about feeling insecure and threatened where suddenly [...] their pureness [...] and whether this person is going to challenge them, and they are not pure blood as them.”*

Filifili, CEO

Further analysis of this specific cohort revealed that they experienced three strands of discrimination: gender (female), race (Samoan half-castes and mixed-bloods), and status (lack of honorific titles) from their Samoan colleagues. They expressed feelings of hurt, humiliation, cultural alienation and confusion in that they saw themselves as progressive Samoans assisting Pacific people, while on the other hand, were branded as “*fake, plastic*” Samoans lacking racial purity and authority. For these female Samoans, gender bias and intra-ethnic prejudice from other Samoans were career deterrents in the workplace.

#### 6.1.4 U’u Coconut Crab Syndrome

*“We [Samoans] are our own worst enemy. Instead of building each other up we rip them down [...], so there’s the glass ceiling that we use to destroy ourselves.”*

Muga, Politician

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<sup>30</sup> Filifili is of German and Samoan descent, raised in Samoa with fair skin and hazel coloured eyes.

The data revealed that some Samoans in senior positions experienced the effects of what I term the ‘U’u Coconut Crab Syndrome’ that may have stalled their careers. This syndrome is based on the desperate survival acts of native Samoan Coconut crabs that when caged, will clamber towards the exit point and tear the limbs of other crabs that are nearest to the top. In other words, crabs that block the exit will be torn apart. The metaphor of the U’u coconut crab seemingly reflects the accounts described by the participants, where other Samoans attacked, vilified, and demonised upcoming high achievers of Samoan descent because of their prominence in public, new entrepreneurial businesses, amassed wealth, or stardom. As Elena (CEO) mentioned, “...*if you do something good that goes against what other Samoans do, then you stick out, and so they think you see yourself as better than them.*” While I did expect to hear conversations about obstacles mirroring other experiences cited in the glass ceiling literature, I had not anticipated Samoans blaming other Samoans as hindrances to career progress. As such, this finding uncovers a disturbing occurrence and an alternative form of intra-ethnic challenges.

An example of this syndrome was evidenced in Tavita’s (Manager) experience where he stated, “*Samoans will do anything to ruin your reputation and bring you down if you are a Samoan rising through the ranks.*” Here, Tavita talked about other Samoans who willfully rallied against him, rather than support his programme aimed at lifting the profile of Pacific youth. They interpreted his actions as *fia manaia*, or, ‘showing off,’ leaving him (and his wife and children) feeling hurt, confused and angry. When asked if it affected his career, Tavita expressed that he had to learn to be “*cautious and careful*” by toning down, or ‘softening’ his approach with *fa’aaloalo* (respect) when other Samoan colleagues were present.

Similarly, Salepa (Councillor) received a backlash of derogatory comments posted on social media from other Samoans because he was promoted to a senior government role. The Samoan terms ‘fa’a fia palagi’ (aspiring to whiteness) and ‘fia potu’ (acting intelligent) was attached to his reputation, family, and village. He commented, “*We are the most prejudiced people when it comes to other Pacific cultures [...] I guess we compete against ourselves and others.*”

Seeking higher aspirations outside of one’s post in the Samoan hierarchy is potentially fraught with cultural dilemmas for Samoans due to fracturing the peace and harmony of the va, while crossing the stigma of fia potu (acting intelligent). Although Samoans are a collectivist society, they will band together to exclude and humiliate Samoans whom they perceive are behaving in non-Samoan ways. A few of the respondents referred to a well-known story (with media notoriety) concerning a NZ-born Samoan entrepreneur who attempted to start a business importing ‘used vehicles’ to Samoa without the consent of the local Matai. While he obtained the necessary legal administrative papers from the Samoan authority to proceed, he did not consult with Matai for operating a business on his land. Matai would expect a portion of the profits from any business within their vicinity. Although the details of this story differ slightly in the transcripts, it is alleged that Matai physically assaulted the NZ-Samoan for overstepping his rank (he had none). The point of this story and the above examples highlighted the potential cultural repercussions of stepping outside of one’s rank without regard to the hierarchical socio-political structure of Samoan society. The findings indicated that these Samoans (mostly untitled and female) were discredited, disparaged, alienated, and humiliated because of their successes, which discouraged them

from pursuing higher positions or roles that attracted public attention, for fear of Samoan ridicule and harmful consequences.

#### 6.1.5 Va: Concern for the Collective rather than the Individual

*“The Western corporate world is all about the ‘I,’ but the Pacific way is about the ‘we’ as a unit. There’s a real tension between us as individuals versus the collective.”*

Tavita, Manager

There is evidence that keeping the peace (or team spirit) at work is vital to sustaining harmony as a group rather than pursuing individualistic ideas and goals. Tavita remarked that maintaining relationships is *“very hard when you want to do other things but can’t because we put others before us and put ourselves last.”* This incident concerned a team decision that did not sit well with Tavita. However, he refrained from commenting to avoid *“upsetting the vibe of the team.”* Similarly, Elena admitted to siding with colleagues but inevitably did not feel that way. She stated:

*“I think one of the cultural challenges we have being Samoan, is that we have been brought up to really value and respect the other person, [...] and the ‘va’ becomes more important than necessarily speaking the truth all the time [...] we are more interested in protecting the relationship and keeping other people happy, and that means that disagreeing with somebody is disrespectful.”*

Elena, CEO

Drawing from these examples, it appears that the concept of the va and maintaining peace is more valuable than perhaps truth and honesty. Elena described the concern for the collective as a ‘cultural challenge’ because it involved navigating Samoan customs of respect and harmonious relationships and how she feels about her role and job expectations. It became a



career obstacle where Elena felt that her commitment to the va of team spirit prevented honest opinions to circumvent disruptions. Other participants cited the following excerpts:

*“I feel like you’ve got to go over and above how you really feel [...] that held me back in my business for a long time, and other projects that were a bit riskier.”*

Tauilo pepe, Director

*“Culturally, we tend to check the atmosphere in the room [...] This is because I did care about everyone in the room [...] I do think initially that it might have slowed me down, or, held me back.*

Elena, CEO

Tauilo pepe and Elena conceded going ‘over and above how they felt’ and ‘checking the atmosphere in the room’ as indicators of following the va. From their view, keeping the va restrained or limited their careers because of their concerns about their colleagues, and evading the potential upsets should they disagree with the consensus. It becomes a disadvantage when one’s efficacy is stalled. Other conversations reported that participants behaved, spoke or responded in ways that were incongruent with their thoughts and feelings.

The participants agreed that “*keeping the peace*” restricted their ability to “*say what they mean and mean what they say.*” Therefore, the findings revealed that ‘concern for the collective’ was a hindrance for Samoans because they seemed to focus on accommodating fellow team members rather than explicitly voicing their real opinions.

#### 6.1.6 Acting White like Palagi

*“It’s a shame that we do, but, we have to act like [...] I know it’s a bad word, but we have to act like Pakehas, Palagis.”*

Salepa, Councillor

There is evidence that some Samoans confessed to ‘acting white’ or mimicking the habits of white people that caused internal conflict and exhaustion from altering their conduct and performance to resemble Palagi mannerisms at work – then adjusting to themselves as Samoans at home. Tauilo pepe (Director) expressed that he had to “*switch personalities*” by modifying his behaviour and language to suit Western environments and felt disloyal by concealing aspects of his personality that he perceived as Samoan. For example, he recalled an earlier incident where he and other Palagi colleagues were on a work excursion on a boat cruise, where a few of the crew members were Samoans. In private, and where none of his Palagi colleagues were present, he expressed that he could be “*himself, relax and joke around*” but felt compelled to act white when his colleagues were present. Furthermore, he was aware of his behavioural adjustments between the two cultures and stated that he felt like a “*criminal*” from switching cultures.

There is evidence that some Samoans felt obligated to “*give up, sacrifice and compromise*” aspects of the Samoan culture and themselves, to fit and blend into the Palagi orientation found in most NZ organisations. I sensed that the participants who confessed to acting white were embarrassed about discussing this topic. For example, Ta’ifau (School Principal/Coach) acknowledged and laughed about being an actor, while at the same time, declared a “*betrayal of sorts*” to himself, the culture, and Samoans for behaving as Palagi. What was noticeable is that their reasons for acting appeared to centre on assimilation and were driven on survival or endurance in a challenging environment. Unlike performers on stage who are perhaps motivated by a passion for the arts or money, these participants seemed to act out of necessity, and as a way of connecting to the NZ working environment.

Some Samoans were critical of other Samoan actors, naming them “*Kinder Surprises*” (egg-shaped chocolate with white cream inside) and “*Plastic Black Barbies*” because “*they don’t act like a Pacific person, maybe the colour of their skin but nothing else.*” While the majority of participants knew of Samoans who acted white, (including themselves), a small number felt that acting white had more to do with a lack of confidence and being embarrassed by their ethnicity. As Mautu (Councillor) exclaimed of another Samoan actor, “*...he acts white because he might not want to identify as a Samoan, so they don’t even admit they’re Samoans.*” Overall, acting white was perceived as a career barrier for Samoans from having to adjust and accommodate one’s conduct and performance [...] to blend in the Palagi environment. At the same time, acting white may lead to cultural alienation from other Samoans who perceive actors as betraying and concealing their true Samoan identity and heritage.

## 6.2 Barriers: Discrimination and Tokenism in Organisations

*“I remember my Supervisor saying very quietly [...] this in another room [...] ‘Yeah, we just hired another fucken coconut [...] man those fucking Samoans.’ So, what I said was [...] ‘Yeah man, I just interviewed this white arsehole,’ and they told me ‘[participant’s name] Hey you can’t speak like that!’ I remember saying ‘Eh? [...] Hold on...what did you guys just finish saying? Did you think I can’t hear?’ They got the point.”*

Maluelue, Manager

*“I found ‘racism’ in my accent. I do a lot of presentations and get asked ‘what nationality are you because your surname is not English’ ‘you don’t sound Samoan’ ‘your English is really good.’ It made me aware of the bigger world, perceptions versus reality, the reality is that yes, you are a minority. So, I think for me, that I always had to prove a point. I was a minority, there weren’t a lot of brown faces.”*

Pepe, Manager

*“Sometimes I think that underneath it is about racism and discrimination. I’ve often said to Māori colleagues whether they feel they’re keeping you there in that spot because it suits them, or, we ‘tick a box’. [...] I think that is what is lacking in people in organisations and institutions. They really don’t have the empathy for other cultures. [...] It’s about that whole thing of feeling threatened by a Pacific person who is well-educated.”*

Tavita, Manager

Similar to other glass ceiling studies where people of colour experienced bias and discrimination based on the ideologies of inferior and superior cultures (e.g., Cook & Glass, 2014; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990), the evidence exposed racist attitudes from some Palagi employees to Samoans. NVivo revealed explicit experiences of racially-offensive jokes and expletives, or, implicitly hidden racism in undertones and semantics (Houkamau & Clarke, 2016). Being the recipients of racism led to feelings of resentment, discouragement, and isolation, and were perceived as inhibitors to career advancement.

Iosua recalled former colleagues excluding him from work meetings because of his being the only ‘brown person’ in management. He stated:

*“I always had that feeling that when they looked at me, they would be looking through me. For example, rather than coming to me to talk about something, they would go to someone else [...] which grated me a little bit.”*

Iosua, Director / Coach

In the above statement, Iosua did not know that members of his staff were meeting in private without him. He indicated feeling “down” concerning exclusion from the other managerial team. While racist statements were not directly expressed to him, it was in secret or in the way staff disregarded him in meetings, while walking down the corridor, and omitting him

from emails. I asked whether this could have been a one-off situation because it seemed that there was more to the story than what I was hearing, but Iosua disagreed. According to him, there was an incident where Iosua was in a room of senior managers where each one contributed their yearly projections. While all the cohort elaborated on their positions and received questions, Iosua yielded little responses and queries. Later, Iosua found out that his superior confided with a lower-level manager about his figures rather than directly talking to Iosua. He remarked that his manager's action made "*a case in point*" whereby everyone else seemed to discount him and ask another member of his team because he was "*not part of the white man's club.*" The attrition that Iosua experienced caused him to leave that position rather than confront his colleagues. He expressed sadness for the Pacific staff that remained at that company and vowed never to return to that industry.

Maluelue's experience (opening vignette) is perhaps the most disheartening example of discrimination. It was uncomfortable hearing it and then having to relive the story through a typed transcript. It does, however, paint a dark foreboding picture of unease for brown-skinned professional Pacific people in NZ. 'Coconuts' is a derogatory term for Pacific Islanders and made famous during the time of the Dawn Raids in the 70s. In this study, there were 12 occurrences of the word coconuts by four participants. This result might suggest that the word is still being used in this present day despite cultural awareness and other diversity programmes offered in the NZ workplace. As mentioned previously, the colour of one's skin; black, brown or yellow, is one of the primary glass ceiling obstacles that have a significant effect on the chances of career success for ethnic minorities and people of colour on a global scale (Gottschlich, 2011; Hosoda et al., 2012; Huang, Frideger & Pearce, 2013).

The data revealed some interesting ‘labels’ that Palagi managers used to address Samoans at work. For example, Elena’s label “*Pacific Princess*” was frequently used by her manager in dialogue, team meetings, and emails. She described the label as ‘condescending and patronising’ because it could have been interpreted in several ways. She said it reminded her of being a ‘special’ or ‘spoilt’ child originating, or, symbolising the Pacific and felt humiliated because other colleagues started using Pacific Princess in place of Elena’s designation (then Sales manager, now CEO). When asked if she saw it as a joke with good intentions, to her it had dark undertones. She mentioned, “*Nobody else was referred to by their race so why me?*”

Table 8

**Racial slurs for Samoans**

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Coconuts / White Coconut  
 Pacific Islanders / Islanders / Educated Islander / White Islander / Island Novelty / Island Pearl  
 Brown Sugar / Brownie / Brown Elephant  
 One of the 'nice ones' / She's 'different' / He's not like 'them'  
 Pacific Princess / Pacific Hero / Pacific Superwoman / Samoan Avenger / Samoan Superstar  
 Samoan Underdogs / Second class citizens

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NVivo Subcode: Samoan labels

Table 8 is quite revealing in some ways. Firstly, it shows an overview of racist slurs derived from NVivo (category Samoan labels) that vary from being ‘*white or brown*’ and a ‘*nicer*’ Samoan as opposed to ‘other Samoans.’ It is reasonable to assume that the other Samoans referred to in this context are ‘horrible Samoans.’ In addition, the other ‘Super Hero’ labels might suggest that if a Samoan is a high-performance achiever, then she is an anomaly that is found at the upper end of the Super Star spectrum, like Elena the Pacific Princess.

Alternatively, Samoans who are not special are located at the lower end as ‘underdogs’ and ‘second-class citizens’ or, perhaps inanimate objects, as per Maluelue’s label: coconuts.

There is evidence that some of the jokes were said in jest, “*they’re just kidding...having fun...taking the piss.*” Maluelue remarked that his colleagues changed their racist vibe because he “*got bigger*” (body mass) and was promoted to Regional Manager. Perhaps his expanding size and the senior position were enough to silence discriminatory abuse.

### 6.2.1 Negative Stereotypes and Occupational Segregation

The data revealed evidence of racial stereotyping and profiling of Samoans. The following excerpt illustrates an occupational stereotype that is attached to Samoans and Pacific people, that is, cleaners:

*“I remember I went with another colleague with a proposal that needed tweaking [...] and so we met the Marketing person [...] who gave me her rubbish bin [laughs] she gave me her fucking rubbish! She realized her mistake [...] I laughed it off [...] but [...] seeing the way that person spoke to me was as if I was an idiot. She saw my brown skin and thought I was the cleaner. I saw that arrogance in her tone and didn’t like that.”*

Mautu, Councillor

Mautu’s experience of being mistaken as the company cleaner is not an unusual scenario for Samoans in New Zealand. Moamoa (Board member) talked about a misunderstanding at a government department that she visited and was told at the front reception “*catering staff have to enter through the side door.*” Similarly, Gabriel (Manager) mentioned being misidentified as the “*air conditioner guy*” by a visiting executive who pointed to his air conditioner unit that was leaking water. The respondents recalled other recent media public stories about Pacific people who were mistaken as orderly staff, cleaners, uninvited guests,

and events-crashers (see Ministry for the Pacific Peoples, 2018; Orsman, 2016; Tupou, 2017).<sup>31</sup> Ethnic minorities are perceived as ‘out of place’ and a ‘poor fit’ in roles such as a manager or any level of authority that is often regarded as whites-only positions (Hill, Upadhyay, Beekun, 2015, p. 1117). These views are internalized and perpetuated in organisations and society (Cook & Glass, 2014; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). Therefore, the idea of a Samoan in the position of CEO or public figure violates the general expectation and is perceived as ‘less natural and unusual’ in that role because they diverge from the preferable and acceptable manager or leader stereotype.

Filifili (CEO) shared an example where she overheard the University Student Counsellor advise a Pacific student to seek work in the Hospitality and Retail Industry “*because there are lots of Pacific Islanders there, you’ll feel right at home.*” Similarly, Elena (CEO) noted that there seemed to be a trend for consultants to advise young Pacific youth to take up jobs as construction workers, flight cabin crew or hotel staff, rather than seek executive careers. She further stated, “*We get lots of kids coming out with qualifications for Travel and Tourism but where do they end up?*” This example perhaps reminds us of the initial jobs that segregated Pacific people into the secondary labour-force of manual-type work and low-skilled employment of the 50s and 60s.

However, a few Samoans viewed occupational segregation as a positive stereotype claiming that labour-intensive work, cleaning, and packing was “*easy money*” because Samoans are naturally and physically strong. As an example, Faito’aga (who started his career as a power-pole digger, then Sales Manager, and now retired CEO) indicated that it took “*two Samoans to do the same job as three, or, four kiwi men. I was young and fit, so I was able to do*

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<sup>31</sup> Parallel to black and ethnic minority managers in the United Kingdom and Latina testimonies where they were mistaken for janitors and had to prove their qualifications and credentials (e.g., Davidson, 1997; Schulte, 2015).



*physical jobs like digging holes and putting in [Company] poles [...] I just dug the hole, put the pole in – and that was that. Simple.”*

Overall, the findings highlighted the anger, hurt, and dismay that Samoans felt concerning negative stereotypes and occupational segregation that were perceived as career barriers to advancement.

### 6.2.2 Tokenism: “Only one of our ‘kind’”

*“We knew that we had to do better in terms of our Kiwi counterparts [...] that we always had to prove a point to the Palagi. This is because we are most likely the only one of our ‘kind.’”*

Fiasola, Manager

The data findings showed that tokenism is another obstacle for some Samoans. Participants referred to themselves as being the only “*one of their kind*” “*put into a box*” and having to “*prove more of themselves*” in the NZ setting in comparison to their Palagi colleagues.

They experienced frustration, exhaustion, and discouragement from being placed in token positions and sensed more expectations and scrutiny for them to perform at work. Fiasola’s comment about being the only manager of Samoan descent is typical of other remarks in the transcripts:

*“I realised for the first time in my life what it felt like to be the ‘other’ [...] to be different, to be a minority, to be special, to be classed and grouped with this other group of people who were different from everyone else.”*

Elena, CEO

*“When I got into the workplace, I would be the only Pacific, or, Samoan there [...], and you got to learn how to get on with people and understand the different backgrounds [...] how they think differently and express themselves differently when they’re angry, or, in conflict.*

*[...] That's what I really noticed straight away – the differentness of how we Samoans are."*

Sieni, CEO

Due to their increased visibility, Samoans felt compelled to work longer hours with more effort. Here, the participants conveyed a common sentiment echoed by other ethnic minorities in the glass ceiling studies, that is, 'you've got to work twice as hard to get half as far' (DeSante, 2013, p. 342). In this sense, working twice as hard refers to over-achieving to meet excessive performance pressures (Spangler, Gordon & Pipkin, 1978).

*"You've got to keep working hard. You have to realise that in life that whatever we do, we're two steps behind the Palagi."*

Muga, Politician

*"You're working twice as hard because you feel that being Pasifika in the NZ society that you have to work twice as hard to prove critics wrong."*

Ta'ifau, School Principal/Coach

The participants conveyed their feelings of having to do more than their role entails to prove their worth and value from being the only Samoan in their position. They felt burdened with pressure to over-achieve because they were more visible in the company or as Moamoa (Board member) stated: *"I felt watched."* Muga (Politician) said that he was always *"two steps behind the Palagi"* meaning that he could never reach the levels of his Kiwi counterparts, and if he did obtain that level *"...there's still that acceptance where they still think that they are superior to you."* As such, Fiasola (Manager) talked about the difficulties of connecting with other colleagues and felt that he was continuously attempting to prove a point to his counterparts that he *"deserved to be there."* Not only did he find it tiresome

having to sustain his efforts, but also unfair that other colleagues did not seem to feel that they had to ‘prove’ their point. Other participants made similar remarks:

*“Nothing comes easy; you have to work really hard and prove yourself more than you know.”*

Pepe, Manager

*“We knew that we had to do better, in terms of our European counterparts that we always had to prove a point. I hope that there will be generations that don’t have to prove a point, but at that time, that’s how I felt. I was a minority; there weren’t a lot of brown faces.”*

Gabriel, Manager

*“I think for many like me, we’ve struggled because even today I get battered. I get put into a box when I am in some Pacific setting.”*

Mamafa, Manager

The data indicated that Samoans felt disappointed with token positions based on their ethnicity and irrespective of their qualifications, profession, and experience. Ta’ifau recalled an early experience where his new role met the “*requirements of the Pacific quota*” rather than meritocracy. He said:

*“The underlying theme is [...] whether it has been directly said to me or hasn’t been [...] ‘You got this role because you’re Pasifika and because you’re a male.’ And that line was thrown to me when I won the appointment here from an ex-colleague.”*

Ta’ifau, School Principal/Coach

Tokenism is an unintentional by-product of equality programmes that can lead to oppression, greater scrutiny, and heightened group stereotypes. When asked how Ta’ifau felt about meeting the Pacific percentage quota, he replied with mixed emotions, that is, on the one hand, he was happy and appreciative of the appointment, while on the other, disillusioned as to the appointment’s true intentions.

There seemed to be a premise of caution and suspicion from Samoan tokens where they perceived that some senior managers in their organisations had an agenda for keeping them in roles without mobility and career trajectories. According to Pettigrew and Martin (1987) tokens are perceived as a threat to traditional white job holders, as echoed by the following participant statement:

*“I tend to think that my superiors are trying to keep me where they think I should be [...] It’s like you put your finger on them, so they don’t rise past you, which is very unfair.”*

Tavita, Manager

When asked why Tavita felt that way, he replied that there were numerous occasions where his job applications within the department were unsuccessful. Tavita further stated, *“I guess it’s kind of an institutional thing like it depends on the numbers, but when I talk to other staff, that conversation does confirm to me that it’s not just me that thinks that.”*

### 6.3 Summary of Career Barriers and Challenges

Chapter 6 presented the thematic findings that were perceived as obstacles and challenges for Samoans stemming from negotiating different worlds at work that in turn, may have impacted on their career progress. It answered the research question (one) by providing the obstacles that created career dilemmas for Samoans during interactions at work such as job and performance appraisal interviews. The evidence highlighted that sustaining eye contact is awkward and problematic for Samoans. In addition, Samoans acknowledged hierarchy by refraining from ‘talking about themselves,’ thus, limiting the communication interaction with less talk and silence. These experiences suggested that Samoans tend to accentuate the

*opposite* of what Western cultures highlight as proactive behaviours, engagement, and speaking rituals. According to the findings, communicating respect from a Samoan orientation led to mistranslation, confusion, and lost opportunities for Samoans and Palagi employers.

Hierarchy, gender, and intra-ethnic biases are career hindrances for Samoans and a triple dilemma for female afa-kasi (half-caste) Samoans. Several transcripts referred to the phrase “*know your place*” regarding Samoan customs according to one’s cultural rank that restrained their opinions, actions, and decisions, as a form of respect to someone with a high title. In addition, some Samoans purposefully acted dumb because of the Samoan value of fa’aaloalo (respect). That is, they did not want to appear more intelligent than titled individuals or their managers at work.

The findings from the female Samoan senior managers revealed gender discrimination where Samoan male colleagues deliberately interfered or impaired Samoan female efforts at work to belittle and remind them of their inferior place within the Samoan socio-political relationships, that is, gender, racial ranking and issues of pure-blood identity. As a result, Samoan females intentionally avoided strategic meetings and networking that attracted public attention where certain Samoan males could be present. The metaphorical U’u Coconut Crab Syndrome described the unfair and often hostile acts that some Samoans experienced (from other Samoans) as upcoming high achievers in the New Zealand context.

It appeared that concern for the collective overwhelmed Samoans who refrained from speaking their minds for fear of breaking the harmonious flow of the va and upsetting the dynamic of the team. Samoans encountered cultural ambiguities from traversing the Palagi

versus Samoan crossings and faced cultural alienation and stigmas, such as fa'a fia palagi (aspiring to whiteness) and fia poto (showing off/acting intelligent), thus, highlighting the cultural ramifications of stepping outside of one's rank without regard to the hierarchical socio-political structure of Samoan society.

Racism and racist attitudes from Palagi employers and colleagues continued to haunt Samoans. A table of racist slurs provided insight into some of the occurrences these participants experienced or observed in their working careers. As such, racism led to feelings of anger, resentment, and hurt where some participants withdrew from their positions and sought work elsewhere. Furthermore, Samoans felt obligated to prove themselves by over-achieving or working twice as hard to throw light on inaccurate perceptions about Pacific people, and their value at work. They experienced frustration, exhaustion, and discouragement, and at times, questioned whether their appointments were merit-based or attributed to the colour of their skin and ethnicity. Table 9 summarises these obstacles according to the participant themes and its implications for Samoans.

Table 9

## Thematic findings: Negotiating Palagi and Samoan values at work

Theme and Subthemes	Representative Participant quotes	Implication
<i>Living in Two Worlds: A Cultural Disadvantage</i>	"There is the sense of feeling like you don't belong, that you're caught between two value systems, two societies, and two different cultures."	Isolation, exclusion, confusion, split personalities. Work complications Bicultural stress and conflict, Loss of identity
<i>Fa'aaloalo (respect)</i>	"The Palagi doesn't understand fa'aaloalo, and they regard our fa'aaloalo as a weakness...because we're like that in everything that we did, they looked at us as if we're weak because we don't stand up and fight back."	Perceived as submissive, lazy, disrespectful, rude, deceitful, disengaged, unintelligent, weak leadership Missed opportunities Less Talk, Shy, Avoids Eye contact
<i>Hierarchy (fa'amatai): Inequality of power relations</i>	"Know your place in Samoan society."	Lack of voice and confidence. Perceived lack of assertive and unproductive behaviour. Bullying, harassment, exclusion, and isolation
<i>Gender Bias</i>	"He shut me down...he was relying on me to behave in a Samoan way which would not involve challenging him."	Oppression, sabotage, and illegal acts
<i>Intra-ethnic Prejudice</i>	"Being afa-kasi in a Pacific department was the worst thing I ever experienced."	Intra-ethnic racism, hostility, oppression, and exclusion
<i>U'u Coconut Crab Syndrome</i>	"There are Samoans out there who will do anything to ruin your reputation and bring you down if you are a Samoan rising through the ranks."	Hostility, competition, sabotage. Discouragement and withdrawal Hiding Successes, violent, and hostile acts
<i>Va: Concern for the Collective</i>	"I do care about everyone else." "It (va) becomes more important than necessarily speaking the truth all the time."	Deceit, not necessarily speaking the truth. Withholds opinions, Ingratiation Perceived weakness and submissiveness
<i>Acting White</i>	"Kinder surprises." "Acts white because he might not want to identify as a Samoan." "Fa'a fia palagi" (aspiring to whiteness).	Assimilation and acculturation to conflicting cultural workspaces concerning values and institutions. Way of connecting to white co-workers.
<i>NZ Organisational Barriers</i>		
<i>Racism, Discrimination</i>	"...rather than coming to me to talk about something, they would go to someone else." "My manager would call me the 'Pacific Princess'..."	Exclusion, isolation, Anger, resentment Reduced performance, Lost opportunities
<i>Tokenism, Tokens, Solo status</i>	"Only one of my kind." "Working twice as hard for the Palagi."	Increased scrutiny, or, reduced visibility Social isolation, exclusion. Over-achievement, performance pressures

## CHAPTER 7: STRATEGIES, FACILITATORS AND COPING MECHANISMS

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The previous chapter answered the first question of this research by highlighting the career barriers and challenges for Samoans. This chapter addresses the second research question: *what strategies and cultural experiences facilitated career advancement for Samoans in NZ?* I use excerpts from the participants' transcripts as themes to outline the career facilitators used for overcoming the career hindrances mentioned earlier. While these facilitators worked for this cohort, it is not a 'means to an end' for all Samoans. However, what it does provide is an informed foundation of approaches that could be used to formulate other personal strategies to empower Samoans. At the same time, the facilitators may enlighten HR practitioners and organisations of systemic processes that may clash with Samoan cultural values, concepts, and institutions. Moreover, understanding the facilitators for Samoans is important in deepening and broadening career development within management careers in Palagi contexts. These facilitators are structured in their order of importance in terms of prevalence in the data.

### 7.1 Strategy 1: Finding one's Voice and Authentic Self

*"It took me a number of years to find my voice, to speak up." [...] I attended this leadership programme, and it made me realize that I had to speak up, not just for me, but for everyone that I represented [...] and I found my voice, a strong voice within. That's what I am trying to teach to others; that their voices are so important to be heard."*

Simi, Director

*"I was encouraged and enabled by the people around me to use my voice, 'bring it' and that I had to be responsible for that. In a Palagi system, people want to know what you think, they want you to present*



*your views, and especially in organisations that are looking to change, and grow are wanting different opinions.”*

Elena, CEO

*“I didn’t want to give up my authenticity. It’s part of your identity - who you are as a person. It’s a fundamental foundation of where you should lead from.”*

Gabriel, Manager

The data indicated that the most successful career facilitator for Samoans related to finding one’s voice. In this context, voice relates to knowing the self, that is, one’s cultural footprint that is blended into one’s identity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). For Samoans and other indigenes, having a voice comes from knowledge and self-confidence, and the malaga (journey) of reconnecting spiritually with ourselves (Colburg, 2007; Nabobo-Baba, 2004; Potgieter & Smit, 2009). In other words, one’s ‘authentic self’ is knowing who you are as a Samoan individual, and where you have come from, for example, one’s island, village, aiga and family history. This personal, cultural knowledge provides the confidence that entitles one to a voice. It is this voice that the respondents describe as *“reconnecting with themselves and their Samoan roots.”*

Participants talked about having to ‘grow’ their voice because it was not something that most of them had upon entry into the workforce. In this sense, growing one’s voice is about building confidence in having the ‘guts’ to ask for assistance and express opinions without fear of judgement. Filifili (CEO) observed that *“...a number of Pacific people that make it to the middle realms of management, whether in the public sector or, private ... don’t go any further because they’re afraid to ask for help. They don’t necessarily ask the people that are around them, and that’s because they are quite often going into that ‘space’ for the first time and don’t know how to ask.”* It seemed that Samoans recognised their hesitations and

insecurities surrounding unknown and new working environments and responded with silence and asking the wrong type of questions.

The data revealed that ‘voicelessness’ appeared to be a by-product of the Samoan culture regarding the institutions of fa’amatai (chieftainship) and aiga (family) that promote hierarchy and gerontocracy. As mentioned earlier by Gabriel (Manager): *“in the Matai system, you don’t have a voice; you are only given a voice when asked.”* As for the dimension of ‘family’ contributing to voicelessness, Moamoa, Maluelue, and Fiasola commented:

*“My conversations at home with my parents were all instructional [...] not once did my dad come home from work and say this to me ‘how was your day love.’ He only talked to me when he wanted me to do something [...] That’s not saying that it was a dysfunctional household; it was that way for all of us.”*

Moamoa, Board member

*“So, I think it starts from the home, and how parents need to encourage and listen to their kids more instead of just ordering them around and giving instructions.”*

Maluelue, Manager

*“We are part of that lost generation where culture didn’t really matter, but English was pushed. You would think that our parents had gone to the school of discipline [...] of how to whack your child, beat them to a pulp sometimes [...] We need to be able to reconnect with ourselves at that level and talk from that level.”*

Fiasola, Manager

Physical punishment, prayers, and discipline were used to enforce compliance with the desired standards of behaviour according to the Samoan culture. Participants stated that parents were their voices and that mentality of having someone in authority (through

hierarchy and titles) speaking on their behalf is taken with them to work. Gabriel (Manager) reasoned that some Samoans continued to see themselves as the “*obedient child*” that could have disadvantaged them from being assertive, proactive and voicing their opinions at work. Therefore, Samoans could have cultivated the mindset of not having any rights to speak after being silenced for nearly all of their childhood and youth. However, the participants recognised that articulating their ideas was not easily obtainable in a short working period, but as per the opening statement “*a number of years*” in development.

It was suggested that Samoans take ownership of their ethnicity that seemed to enhance self-confidence and impacted on their external demeanor and progress. Participants talked about “*being proud of your Pacificness*” and “*Samoan heritage and values.*” As previously highlighted (Chapter 4) by other academic indigenes, we must reconcile ‘intellectually and spiritually’ with ourselves *first* before moving forward (Colburg, 2007, p.78; Nabobo-Baba, 2004, p.18; Smith, 1999; p.137). The following comments indicated the importance of self-discovery and cultural ownership for Samoans as a facilitator to their journey in the corporate world:

*“My view of Pacific and Samoans is that you’ve got to know who you are because you can’t navigate yourself in this complex world unless you know who you are [...] by that I mean what are your values, what is important to you.”*

Uili, Education

*“So, I advise to go back to your core values, your culture, and see if that can add core value to your leadership [...] That’s from a cultural perspective [...] also from Aristotle’s saying of ‘know thyself.’”*

Gabriel, Manager

*“I see fa’asamoa as being a huge asset for me because I know without a doubt who I am [...] I know what my parents taught me, the values,*

*and the next generation of students and young people need support to navigate that space and move forward.”*

Tavita, Manager

*“I’m glad to say that a lot of those Pacific islanders started to rise in their roles. I made a point of telling them when I had the one-on-one to ‘never lose their Samoanness’ [...] I encouraged them to bring that into their own work. There is a part of you that is Samoan, acknowledge it. It’s all about that authentic talk, being true to oneself. True greatness comes from a platform of vulnerability and a level of truth.”*

Fiasola, Manager

Overall, the Samoan participants found their voice because they had developed self-confidence in knowing who they are, and their place of origin. They recognised that their voices are critical and should be heard rather than being ‘self-silenced’ at the workplace. Furthermore, they cultivated courage and self-determination by asking for assistance and seeking advice rather than waiting and doing nothing to help themselves. The facilitator of finding one’s voice through reconnecting with themselves is a career strategy that seemed to support career progress for Samoans in the NZ workplace. Returning to one’s origin assisted with developing and strengthening self-assurance and poise for Samoans at work from knowing who they are and their cultural heritage.

## 7.2 Coping Mechanisms: Self-efficacy, Positive Self-talk, and Enduring Legacies

*“Be courageous, be positive, do what’s right, be transparent and take charge of things.”*

Tupu, Politician

*“My advice for Pacific students is to be really proud and own being a Pacific person. When they go into their management roles, ignore the racism crap [...] they should always remember that they are a Pacific person and that is their edge. So, every time you have an issue; try to find an answer and get involved.”*

Simi, Director

*“I get up every day not thinking about the negative stuff that brings me down, but that I go to work to make this organisation do its job, and at the same time I get paid, and I can sustain myself as an individual and for my family.”*

Elena, CEO

*“I kind of learned the hard way through blood, sweat, and tears. I had a reality check when I worked in a factory and thought ‘this is not me’. I couldn’t see myself doing this for the rest of my life. I went back to school to try and better myself. I’m the eldest in my family. There is that responsibility of being the eldest, leading [...] so that your siblings, nieces, and nephews can be inspired. I feel quite honoured about that. It kind of makes everything worthwhile.”*

Tauilo pepe, Director

There is evidence from the data that some Samoans use the approach of ‘rising above’ difficult situations by controlling their thoughts and having the conviction and belief that they can accomplish tasks in the face of discrimination and adversity. This orientation is similar to Bandura’s (1982) theory of self-efficacy where one has the ability and power of regulating and executing events and the way these events are experienced. Simi (Director) stated in his above excerpt that ignoring racism and focusing on the job assisted with his daily responsibilities, by not allowing racist attitudes to stop him from reaching personal and professional goals. In this way, lifting his sights ‘beyond’ the present struggle of discrimination. Interestingly, Simi’s comment about Pacific cultural ownership being a beneficial “*edge*” suggests a special vantage point that marginalised individuals have by creating a counter-hegemony to take action against gender and racist stereotyping and other dilemmas. Tauilo pepe (Director) touched on this perspective in his above comment where he was resolute in his actions (e.g., “*blood, sweat, and tears*”) of succeeding outside the life of factory work, where Samoans and Pacific people are mostly found (labour market

segregation and stereotypes). His belief that he could do “*better*” seemed to be a powerful determinate of career pursuit and attainment, and perhaps as an agent of ‘change’ at work.

In a similar vein, both Elena (CEO) and Tupu (Politician) encouraged Samoans to develop resilience with positivity, for example, “*be positive*” and “*not think about the negative stuff.*” Other participants’ phrases such as “*I knew I could do it*” “*I reminded myself about what’s more important*” and “*I remembered my goals*” were mentioned as positive self-talk that helped the respondents to psychologically remain resilient and consider the ‘bigger picture’ concerning their careers and overcoming challenges to their roles.

Another coping mechanism that emerged from the data is the focus of legacies that Samoans wanted to leave behind to “*inspire*” the next generations of Samoans, as Tauilo pepe (Director) indicated in his above comment. In this way, focusing on legacies assisted with overcoming negative thoughts, building resilience and maintaining higher levels of self-efficacy. Tauilo pepe had the “*responsibility*” of being the “*eldest*” to inspire his siblings, nieces, and nephews towards greater accomplishments. He viewed this position with “*honour*” and that he saw himself as a role model for other Samoans to follow.

Interestingly, all the transcripts began with a familial tribute to “*my parents*” “*Mum and Dad*” “*my family*” “*my Auntie*” or “*my Grandmother*” where family members set the pattern for these respondents to model for their children and relatives. A few participants were moved to tears when they described memories of their parents working several jobs (e.g., factory worker by day and cleaner at night) to support them and their families back at home. Parents and family members (first Samoan migrants to New Zealand) worked several jobs to

support their aiga, thereby, installing the legacy for their children of *“hard work to support the aiga.”*

### 7.3 Strategy 2: The Roles of Va and Tautua

*“The key to my success goes back to my Samoan background and the ability to build relationships – genuine relationships and not just surface level relationships. When I see that people need help, I will help them genuinely. If I get some reward later down the track, that’s not what motivates me, it’s more about helping someone in need.”*

Malama, Manager

*“Build a personal rapport with your employer, or, boss, so that they understand you better, and help your development with job opportunities.”*

Uili, Education

*“I found that what works is my relationship with my line manager and director [...] they don’t know me, so you’ve got to build that relationship if you’re sitting in that context at the table. My advice? If you want to get that top job: building relationships is the only way.”*

Mamafa, Manager

The findings indicated that *teu le va* (philosophy), that is, building and maintaining ongoing relationships strengthened the career management habits that contributed to successful outcomes. As mentioned in Chapter 2, developing relationships (through networking and mentoring) has shown to increase career opportunities for marginalised groups (Thomas, 2001; Wilson, 2014). In a similar vein, Mautu (Councillor) stated: *“What we can utilise is our strong va of relational skills – we’re very good at that. So, we need to focus on layering our business relationships with the right people because those people are the ones that are going to help you.”* Therefore, it seemed that reaching out through networking with strategic people in the organisations and building relationships is an antecedent of career advancement leading to senior positions. In addition, the data indicated that several respondents worked in

customer facing and community-oriented occupations that involved customer-care, pastoral services, and staff support. Hence, seeking feedback, having consultations and collaboration, and requesting assistance from other managers, or, leaders were some of the expressed methods used to build relationships and better performance. These actions reinforced positive work behaviours where some Samoans felt more engaged and supported at work.

*“We were in an organisation where the culture was really strong at giving people feedback, leading in technology, people management. I was lucky that I felt like I was being encouraged, that people were out to help me and not to shut me down.”*

Tavita, Manager

*“So, getting really honest feedback and being open to that feedback from people you trust is really important.”*

Tupu, Politician

*“Getting feedback is important. The further up you go - the more responsibilities you take on. People are more likely to tell you what they think you want to know, and what they want you to know, and not what you need to know, and they are two different things. Be up front with me about things that we need to do differently, or, better because that’s what’s more interesting to me so that we can make sure that we are improving.”*

Simi, Director

*“I think that you’ve got to be unafraid of asking for advice and help from others. This really only comes with maturity, you don’t learn it from day one, you learn it from making many mistakes yourself.”*

Muga, Politician

The data further indicated that diversifying one’s network, that is, building relationships with people outside of one’s immediate network supported career advancement. The respondents talked about connecting with people who were not Samoans and learning and taking an interest in other cultures that assisted with understanding new orientations whether at work or



personal life. They also spoke about reaching out to people whom they did not like, but learned from, as mentioned below:

*“I always draw on a wide range of advisors and perspectives and include people who I am not comfortable with.”*

Elena, CEO

*“We all have a preference of the kinds of people that we get along with and it’s the people that we might not always find that we get along with who are the ones that offer the most insight.”*

Mamafa, Manager

*“When I got into the workplace, particularly the areas where I worked, I would be the only Pacific, or, Samoan there, and you got to learn how to get on with people and understand the different backgrounds. How people think differently about things, how they express themselves differently when they’re angry, or, in conflict, not happy, and affirmation. All of that is a learning curve and builds character.”*

Sieni, CEO

*“You do need to learn about getting on with people of other cultures. I didn’t really get that until I went to university because we started with people who came from completely different backgrounds.”*

Gabriel, Manager

These comments tend to suggest that connecting to others outside of one’s immediate circle, learning about other cultures, and perhaps reaching out to people that we may not like are positive steps for extending and nurturing necessary relationships that support career advancement, personal development, and successful outcomes.

*“When I look at what I did at my first job, I didn’t know what I was going to do, but I knew that with job satisfaction, it has to be around something where I am helping people. That’s about serving others – tautua.”*

Tavita, Manager

*“‘Tautua’ is who I am and how I live my life. It’s why I became a lawyer, do my volunteer and community work so that they are safe. The things that I did for the kids; I didn’t get paid for any of that. It is a lot of my time and holidays serving the community.”*

Tupu, Politician

According to the data, several respondents talked about tautua, that is, services, or, acts that reinforce the aiga (family) institution and fa'asamoa as Samoan strategies that supported career progress. In other words, strengthening one's orientation of tautua at work enhances the ability to focus and inspires individuals to assist through acts of service based on altruistic motives in doing 'good' for the collective or the organisation. As mentioned in Chapter 4, tautua is not to be confused with the concept of servant-master relationships. Rather, tautua is best understood from a Samoan orientation that is entrenched in honour, integrity, and love towards supporting the hierarchical structure of Samoan society and fa'asamoa.

A text search query from NVivo revealed 111 occurrences where Samoans mentioned the words 'serving, working, helping, and lobbying' for family, community, Church, customers, work, students, and colleagues. The aiga (family) institution, the cultural concept of the va, and value tautua (service) complement the people-centred nature of relationship-building. These attributes of a 'serving culture' are similar to the findings of other 'service' research, where servant leadership enhances employee service performance because of the self-reflective, empathy-driven orientation (Carter & Baghurst, 2014; Chen, Zhu, & Zhou, 2015; Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014, p.1435). From the data, it appeared that some of the respondents displayed an altruistic orientation regarding tautua and its function at work that contributed to successful outcomes.

Interestingly, the transcripts exposed another well-used Samoan proverb that perhaps sums up the servant leadership style of Samoans: "*O le ala i le pule o le tautua – In order to lead, one must serve.*" The evidence proposed that with the notion of serving the community and customers, their occupational roles be aligned to the va of building and strengthening relationships that involve a deeper level of altruism attached to spirituality and harmony.

These Samoans were passionate about serving their communities, and for some, this work was unpaid and carried out in their spare time *in addition* to working full-time positions and caring for large families and the community. However, there is a downside to taking the position of ‘excessively’ helping and serving the community, as Sieni (CEO) stated: *“I think we overdo the tautua, we don’t balance it. We do so much at the risk of ourselves. We put others before us and put ourselves last. It’s very hard to learn to be a little bit selfish with yourself especially when people come to me for help and advice. It’s not until something happens that you have to reassess everything and focus on what’s important.”* In addition, there were a few stories concerning Samoans going over and above the general expectation of community service that led to a distorted view of power and responsibility. For example, one Samoan participant would apportion a percentage of her income in assisting youth, organising meals, and fun-runs to the detriment of her health and marital relationship. Benefit fraud, corruption, and loan debts are other repercussions. Hence, based on past experiences, some Samoans might take a radical standpoint of over-committing to community projects or worse; execute illegal practices to justify cultural obligations of *‘serving the community.’*

Overall, the findings revealed the important role of the va in building relationships alongside tautua, where the mentality of serving is attached with honourable intentions of furthering progress whether at home, work, Church, and the community.

#### 7.4 Facilitator 1: Mentors, Influencers and Role-Models

*“Building networks and relationships with people that you hold in high regard, and people that you are not afraid to contact and use as sounding boards for life, career decisions, etc [...] They are hugely valuable in where you want to go and how to deliver things. In*

*management, it can be a lonely spot, and so having people that you can talk to can be quite comforting.”*

Sieni, CEO

*“I did have a mentor, in terms of being a Pacific woman and being new to Pasifika. She was so graceful and strategic. She took me under her wings.”*

Elena, CEO

*“My teachers were probably the biggest influencers on me aiming high. In a way, there were my early mentors [...] I definitely had a good start to my career because of them.”*

Tavita, Manager

The evidence revealed that almost half of the participants mentioned mentoring (either as a mentee, or, mentor), role-models, people who inspired and influenced their careers as part of their personal development and growth at work. Mentors included senior managers in the organisations, parents, grandparents, former school teachers, Matai or an elderly leader in the Samoan/Pacific community. In addition, a few of the participants indicated having the same mentor for several years, and more than one mentor. In turn, the participant mentees became mentors to others, for example mentoring girls in low decile schools, ‘leader mentor’ in leadership initiatives (where the CEO is the mentor for the incumbents) and upcoming rugby players. Moreover, the participants highlighted that having mentors connected them with other strategic people who supported their progress and assisted with access to significant information and opportunities, as Sieni (CEO) mentioned in the opening vignette.

Networking and forming important business relationships has been shown to improve the outcomes for marginalised groups and overcome negative racial stereotypes (Thomas, 2001; Wilson, 2014).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the glass ceiling studies recommend that a fellow minority should mentor mentees due to the challenges race can present through different perspectives and

experiences (Wilson, 2014). In other words, Samoans should seek mentors of Samoan descent. However, it was surprising to discover that the data revealed a particular bias in the race of the mentor in this study; Samoans preferred Palagi over same-race mentors.

*“I don’t agree that only Pacific people can mentor, or, coach Pacific students [...] In fact if you look at our world, it’s very Western [...] These are the people that come from corporate worlds, who are going to be hiring and building teams that will have Pacific in them.”*

Mamafa, Manager

*“I’ve had some fantastic, superb mentors who are not Pacific, but have been open to learning my worldview and can see that I bring value into their context.”*

Uili, Education

*“When I look back at the people that inspired me, there were several, and they were NZ/European. My first guide, or, mentor was [name] who is still there to this day. He put me right up there and promoted me to a team leader in my third year of teaching, which was a bit uncommon and raised a few eyebrows being a brown Samoan with some experienced teachers who were overlooked.”*

Tavita, Manager

The findings showed that Samoans seemed to gravitate more towards Palagi mentors as facilitators who assisted with their careers and visibility in the New Zealand working context. As Elena (CEO) stated; *“The more responsibility - the more important those networks and relationships are. They are not networks among the Samoan community; it’s actually important to network among your peers in the industry.”* It appeared that the respondents viewed their Palagi (and others) mentors as ‘open’ to their Samoan worldview and encouraged their ‘Samoanness’ as part of their leadership and management attributes. These mentors were described as having *“a certain type of personality”* *“leaders without judgement”* and *“street-smart”* in that they had prior cultural experience with Samoans, or, other cultures, for example, Māori and Chinese.

However, not all participants had mentors that assisted with their careers. Muga (Politician) for example, stated that he was “*resilient*” with pursuing and supporting his career, describing this method as “*hard work, studying in certain areas, and a bit of luck*” as some of the main drivers for his success without the need of a mentoring relationship. Similarly, Mautu (Councillor) commented that he did not have a mentor but learned through “*trial and error.*” Furthermore, mentoring was not always amicable for Samoans. Ta’ifau (School Principal/Coach) talked about his mentor (an older-aged sports coach) who “*rubbed him up the wrong way with irritating nonsense about fitness and Pacific players.*” In the same vein, Fiasola (Manager) said: “*there was this one person who I really disliked and every time I saw [name] I had angry thoughts in my head because he didn’t know anything about Samoan culture.*” These two respondents recalled experiences with mentoring relationships that were strained and awkward, perhaps due to cultural differences. Overall, the participants felt that mentoring significantly assisted and supported senior career advancement and preferred Palagi over heritage.

## 7.5 Facilitator 2: Education, Work Experience, and Mobility

*“Education was absolutely about getting a degree and a qualification. My university education helped me figure out how to live in New Zealand, that whole transition from another country.”*

Elena, CEO

*“Formal education was a major priority in my house while growing up; it’s something that my parents really pushed [...] I definitely had a good start to my career because of my education.”*

Tauilo pepe, Director

As previously noted in Chapter 2, superior skills and qualifications heighten an individual's chances of career progress in labour markets. Therefore, ethnic minorities are encouraged to improve their human capital if they wish to pursue a better quality of life in another country. The findings of this research supported education and skills given that all participants in this study were educated Samoans with qualifications and higher degrees. They received their education here as NZ-born Samoans or gained NZ scholarships that supported their move from Samoa to NZ. In addition, the participants insisted that education was one of the reasons for their achievements in business and careers, for example, problem-solving and better organisational communication skills.

As for mobility, the following statements admonished and encouraged Samoans to “*move*” and “*work somewhere else*” as a career facilitator to gain a higher level of corporate understanding and work experience with exposures to different organisational cultures and better pay.

*“You have to move to get experience. I’ve moved sectors [...] I think part of the challenge for Pacific people is to work outside of their comfort zone. I look at my team here, and I keep saying to them ‘we need to develop you so that you can go up and go out and be a champion.’”*

Elena, CEO

*“One thing I have noticed is that Pacific people become so comfortable that they become complacent. They get into a role and then they think that’s it. I’ve helped a couple of Pacific people progress out. Pacific people tend to stay too long, then they become bitter, so they start to moan about pay and conditions. I say to them ‘they are not in a position to make changes for certain things, but they can take themselves elsewhere – go work somewhere else.’”*

Malama, Manager

*“By staying in one place, they are less likely to be exposed to different kinds of perspective, different sectors, and components of the business, so they don’t know how it all fits together. That is definitely a barrier to advancing.”*

Fiasola, Manager

These statements proposed that some Samoans tend to remain in the same job, whereas, seeking occupations outside of one's comfort zone, for example in another sector or industry, exposed Samoans to new orientations that added layers to their career profiles and development. As mentioned in Chapter 2, job mobility is identified as a critical success indicator for women and ethnic minorities (Catalyst, 1996; Wilson, 2014).

Furthermore, it was apparent that the participants had support and encouragement from their parents and family members who were also educated and owned small businesses in Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, or New Zealand. The business background of the participant's family seemed to have a significant influence on the participants' education. Overall, these comments suggested that education, work experience, and mobility strengthened their employment profile in New Zealand.

## 7.6 Summary of Strategies, Facilitators, and Coping mechanisms

In this chapter, I outlined the findings that contributed to career progression. These findings have been offered to counteract, eliminate, or lessen barriers that stalled careers for Samoans. This chapter began with a discussion about finding one's voice and authentic self, that is, the self-discovery of reconnecting with one's roots, knowing 'who you are' and 'where you have come from' that builds confidence and the strength to speak up and voice one's concerns, opinions, and issues at the workplace. From the participants' perspectives, finding one's voice at work is a facilitator to career progression.



The Samoan values of tautua (service) and va (relational spaces) are recommended as contributors to enhanced performances and better outcomes from feedback, consultations and collaboration, and requesting assistance from other managers. These actions appeared to reinforce positive work behaviours because they are aligned with two fundamental values that are akin to fa'asamoa. From the data, some Samoans felt more engaged and supported at work when using tautua and va in their approach.

In line with other glass ceiling facilitators, the data suggested that mentorship, role models and people of influence assisted with senior careers. The respondents talked about mentors from within and outside of the organisations as having influenced and impacted on their career trajectories through connections and management counsel. In addition, the data indicated that Samoans preferred Palagi mentors over heritage and described them as having prior cultural experience with Samoans and a specific type of personality that is conducive to productive work behaviours.

All the participants were educated Samoans and agreed that qualifications and work experience assisted with career advancement. Furthermore, moving out of Auckland, or the North and South Islands, and other sectors expanded their organisational experience and management careers. As such, their development improved with new working experiences through mobility.

Finally, the coping mechanisms of self-efficacy, positive self-talk and focusing on legacies for the next generation of Samoans were powerful career determinants for these participants. In addition, sometimes their adverse experiences were reasons to remain resilient and

overcome challenges at work. Table 9 summarises the career facilitators as offered by the participants' discussions.

Table 10

**Career Facilitators, Strategies, and Coping Mechanisms**

Career Facilitators	Theme	Representative Participant quotes	Implication
	Finding one's voice and Authentic Self	"I was encouraged and enabled by the people around me to use my voice, 'bring it' and that I had to be responsible for that.  "It took me a number of years to find my voice, to speak up." [...] I attended this leadership programme, and it made me realise that I had to speak up, not just for me, but for everyone that I represented [...] and I found my voice, a strong voice within."	Builds confidence and courage to speak up, voice their opinions and ask for assistance when needed.  Forms part of the personal malaga (journey) in search of the self. Recognises that their voices are important and should be heard rather than being 'self-silenced' at the workplace.
	Self-Efficacy, Positive Self-talk, and enduring legacies	"Be courageous, be positive, do what's right, be transparent and take charge of things."	Samoans have the choice to control their thoughts with positive self-talk, rising above challenges and focusing on future legacies for the next generation of Samoans.
	Roles of Va and Tautua	"Build a personal rapport with your employer or boss, so that they understand you better, and help your development with job opportunities."  "I knew that with job satisfaction, it has to be around something where I am helping people. That's about serving others – tautua."	Va and tautua are strong Samoans values that complement relationship-building and honourable service among peers and customers.
	Mentors, Role Models and Influences	"I don't think I could have coped if I didn't have those mentors. They helped me understand how to communicate in a different work context, talk, and have an appropriate behaviour..."	Samoans have role models and mentors who assist with knowledge, capital, and opportunities. Mentors are not always based on heritage. In this study Samoans preferred Palagi mentors.
	Education, work experience, and mobility	"I wouldn't have got to where I am without a degree."	Education is important for career success as is mobility (get out of Auckland).

Having outlined the empirical findings, I now present a discussion of the findings and the implications of the research.

## **CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

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The previous two chapters provided the career challenges and facilitators that created obstacles and mechanisms that assisted careers to senior managerial levels. This chapter extends the conversation with a discussion of these themes and integrates current theory and relevant cultural concepts to compare and elucidate the data findings and their relationship to Samoan careers. I begin with an elaboration of the career barriers that are delineated to the sections ‘Socio-psychological’ ‘Systemic and Organisational’ and ‘Indigenous Samoan.’ The sub-sections unpack these levels according to the most significant findings and how this study both supports and extends the existing glass ceiling literature and Samoan research. In addition, I discuss the career strategies, coping mechanisms and facilitators reinforced with examples and theory from the literature review and available Samoan studies. Finally, this chapter ends with a summary of the themes discussed.

### **8.1 Socio-Psychological Barriers: Competing Dual Value Systems**

This section discusses three dimensions where competing dual value systems created socio-psychological barriers for Samoans. They include cross-cultural communication, the role of *va* in decision-making concerning collective versus individual orientations, and *fa’a fia palagi*, that is, acting white.

### 8.1.1 Cross-cultural Communication

Eye contact and the use of silence is problematic for some Samoans. From a fa'asamoa perspective, saying less and limiting one's eye contact is highly valued in individuals because it portrays the value of fa'aaloalo (respect) to another person during social interactions. However, it becomes an issue when communication styles of opposing value systems differ at work. For instance, Westerners perceive eye contact during social interactions as an essential principle (Rauthmann et al., 2012), where people look at each other and converse for various reasons, such as sharing information, team solidarity, and cohesiveness. In addition, Westerners are more acute to direct forms of communication, valuing words, expressions, and the emotional context of the situation (Thomas & Inkson, 2004). Alternatively, Westerners may view individuals who avoid eye contact as being evasive, manipulative, or, 'shady.' This interpretation supports the outcomes observed in a global study of 75 countries where individuals expressed their views concerning the question "How can you tell when people are lying?" (Aavik et al., 2006). The results of that research revealed that the number one overriding stereotype common to most cultures is that liars will deflect their gaze. Thus, it is likely that limiting eye contact and communicating silence for Samoans is in complete contrast to acceptable forms of direct communication in the Western context (Thomas & Inkson, 2004; Uono & Hietanen, 2015). Hence, these two communication dimensions are diametrically opposed, and therefore, in conflict.

This finding is important to Samoans because it highlights the difficulties and misconceptions that could arise from cross-cultural differences in communication and the lack of cultural intelligence (Thomas & Inkson, 2004; Munter, 1993). Cultural assumptions could lead to problems and misunderstandings. Thus, this finding further reveals the challenges that HR

practitioners and managers might face in diverse organisational settings (Munter, 1993) such as interviews and meetings with Pacific people. The responsibility is reciprocal: Samoans might identify issues and challenges associated with cross-cultural communication and consider reconciling opposites with their contributions in speaking more and making appropriate eye contact.

This balanced perspective encourages Samoans to accept ironic contradictions given the nature of the circumstances of being at work in New Zealand society. In addition, management could develop a mindful approach as characterised through cross-cultural interactions and understanding, or, recognise the cultural idiosyncrasies of their diverse staff (Ang et al., 2007; Munter, 1993; Thomas et al., 2008). There is, however, a silver lining to this finding. The Samoans in this study who formerly endured quandaries negotiating respect and silence in work relationships found that time, exposure to different forms of social interactions through various industries and location, and experience in the NZ labour-force eased the tensions and clashes associated with conflicting socio-political behaviours.

#### 8.1.2 Collective versus Individual: Va and Decision-making

The va (spatial relations based on group peace and harmony) poses challenges for Samoans at work, particularly with decision-making. From the data, some Samoans may acquiesce to a group consensus to maintain congruous relationships with their colleagues, thereby relinquishing their true feelings and opinions. In other words, some Samoans might say ‘yes’ (to keep the peace) when they mean ‘no.’ This act was described as ‘having to lie’ or, ‘deceive’ where these participants felt that conceding to the group to maintain the va (spatial relations) held them back from career progress. This finding is important to Samoans

because it identifies a value that may be in direct opposition to Western concepts of individuality, forward-thinkers, and goal-oriented employees.

This result may be partially explained from the Samoan view of the collective that is more important than pursuing individualistic ideas and goals because of its spiritual underpinnings, that is, the relationships with living, dead, animate, and inanimate objects (Efi, 2007). In a collectivist culture, the goals, needs, and beliefs of the group are the primary motivators of an individual's behaviour (Triandis, 1986). This viewpoint contrasts with individualistic concepts of emotional independence from those of the group (Hofstede, 1984).

Individualistic people tend to look out for themselves, whereas, collective individuals look out for their in-group. Thus, Samoans are predisposed to define themselves regarding their sacred obligations to the collective, that is, family, the broader community, *and* the organisation.

Interestingly, this finding seems to be consistent with other (limited) cross-cultural research concerning the 'acceptability of deception' and collectivistic cultures, for example, Chinese and Koreans are more likely to deceive when the deception is advantageous to a collective group or to please an authority figure (see Lewis & George, 2008; Seiter, Bruschke & Bai, 2002). These studies revealed that deceptive acts are socially permissible and appropriate in specific cultural contexts. Similarly, in a study by Aune and Waters (1994) of North Americans and American-Samoans, they obtained that Samoans were more apt to deceive to support the group, or, family affairs. However, Americans were more likely to deceive for personal reasons or to avoid delicate offense. From these studies, it is apparent that some cultures perceive deception from another dimension that may be contrary to Western thinking.

This finding may help management, academia, and Samoans understand that certain behaviours based on cultural values are viewed from a Samoan orientation and does not signify that Samoans are deceivers. This difference is an important issue for further developing research in determining the relationship between Oceanic-Pacific cultures, the va, and group consensus in Western organisations.

### 8.1.3 Fa'a fia Palagi (Acting White)

Some Samoans might attempt to balance opposing values by 'acting white,' that is, mimicking the mannerisms and attitudes of other (white) colleagues to maintain social order within the team (and organisation) while hiding the real characteristics of their Samoan cultural identity. In other words, Samoans appear to 'mask' themselves to others so that they can 'fit in' thereby identifying with one of the two conflicting value systems. Acting white involves a great deal of effort and can overwhelm an individual's thought pattern that in turn might impact on positive thoughts and produce higher levels of stress. This finding is important to Samoans because it highlights the complexities of adjusting preconceived ideas of how one might behave according to dual values.

Interestingly, the phenomenon of acting white by non-Western individuals is not new. In fact, the theory of acting white is best explained through the perspectives of African-Americans who 'cross' into domains that are traditionally held, established, and controlled by white Americans. In this context, blacks will imitate and perform the perceived habits of whites, for example, English proficiency and learned behaviours aimed at achieving good grades and successful outcomes (Andrews & Swinton, 2014; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986), thus,



concealing, or, 'passing' their ethnic origin to escape racial oppression from other colleagues in the organisation. However, the flip side is that these individuals might experience humiliation and cultural alienation from their cultural community because they have seemingly traversed into forbidden territories that white people attain. As Barack Obama stated (cited in Wildhagen, 2011, p.403) concerning the negative slander accredited to African-Americans and education: 'a black youth with a book is acting white.'

Samoans (and other Pacific cultures) have a cultural expression about acting white, known as 'fa'a fia palagi' that loosely translates as 'aspiring to whiteness' or, acting like white people (Schoeffel et al., 1994; Tukuitonga & Starks, 2016; Whimp, 2009). According to Gershon (2007), the cultural term fa'a fia palagi is a double-edged sword in that (1) the user accuses Samoans of rejecting one's cultural heritage through white assimilation, and (2) it offers the possibility of cultural choice, that is, preferring Palagi values over fa'asamoa. Fia palagi Samoans are perceived as embracing Palagi characteristics rather than maintaining traditional cultural ideas that perpetuate the 'real Samoan' identity (Keddell, 2006; Schoeffel et al., 1994). In other words, if a Samoan behaves like a white person in the way one dresses, behaves, and speaks; they are, perceived as fa'a fia palagi.

For Samoans, fia palagi is a derogatory term used derisively to alter individualistic attitudes found in Samoans that are perceived as upholding Palagi characteristics (Schoeffel et al., 1994). Samoans will avoid and shame fia palagi individuals with cultural alienation and isolation. Thus, it could be assumed that Samoans do not like the social repercussions of fa'a fia palagi and might hold back from seeking senior careers for fear of exclusion alienation and mockery from other Samoans. Additional studies will need to be undertaken to develop a full picture of fa'a fia palagi and the implications for senior managers.

## 8.2 Systemic and Organisational Barriers

As cited in the literature, social media, world events, and personal communications, many obstacles exist that prevent some individuals from reaching their real potential. The previous subsection discussed socio-psychological barriers that are remarkably personal and perhaps dictated by what others or one's culture reveal to us. Samoans and Pacific people are highly likely to experience similar organisational issues that delayed career progress as those encountered by people of colour, ethnic minorities, and indigenes in the glass ceiling literature (Landau, 1995). 'Labour market segregation' and 'discrimination and tokenism' are discussed in the following sub-sections with explanations and theory.

### 8.2.1 Labour Market Segregation

As mentioned in chapter 3, the selective nature of the immigration policies that allowed Pacific people entry (commencing in the 1950s) and access to low-skilled labour (e.g., plant and machinery operators and assemblers) fortified their position in the bottom tiers. Thus, ensuring the Pacific occupational concentration in particular industries, namely Manufacturing and Construction in prime industrial districts (e.g., Auckland). Labour markets tend to replicate social inequality from intersecting sets of policies, institutions and practices (e.g., labour unions and political processes) that potentially led to the concentrated entrapment of women and ethnic minorities in job sectors with low status, pay, prestige and power (Bauder, 2001; Wang & Pandit, 2007).

There is evidence from the findings to suggest that some New Zealand HR practitioners and employment consultants encourage Samoans and Pacific youth to take up jobs as construction

workers, flight cabin crew, or hotel staff, rather than pursuing corporate roles in the core sector. These types of manual and low-skilled occupations are a reminder of the initial jobs that segregated Pacific people into the secondary labour-force of the 50s and 60s. At that time, Samoan men (alongside Māori) dominated the lower paid and unskilled jobs found in the Production, Transportation, and Construction industries (NZ Department of Statistics, 1976), while Pacific women over-represented the Service sector as hospital and domestic workers (Gibson, 1983). The concentration of Pacific people in low skill and low paid jobs perpetuates the occupational stereotype of Samoans as cleaners, bouncers, and kitchen staff, and the overall economic marginalisation of working-class women and minorities.

Although labour market segregation has been found to be an obstacle to career advancement, there is the questionable assumption that certain attributes of minorities could reserve a sector for them in a more positive light (Schrover, Leun & Quispel, 2007). Hence, specific immigrants could dominate a sector where the host society associates a link between an indigenous group and a specialisation (Schrover, 2001). As an example, Larsen (cited in Schrover, Leun & Quispel, 2007, p. 535) found that Italian migrants in the Netherlands were socially perceived as successful pizza shop owners which made it difficult for other migrants (e.g., Turkish immigrants) to set up similar operations. As such, new migrant pizza vendors masqueraded as Italians by wearing striped T-shirts and using Italian phrases to ‘pass’ as Italian pizza vendors given that they were immigrants in Holland.

In a similar vein, a few Samoan respondents (e.g., Faito’aga the power-pole digger now retired CEO) commented that the stereotype of Pacific people as labourers and manufacturers in the Construction, Production and Transportation industries was a “*positive thing*” because it offered plenty of work for him and his relatives, and was “*easy money*” for Samoans

because they were perceived as physically strong, thereby completing labourious tasks in less time (with minimal effort) and incurring fewer costs for companies.

Admittedly, this stereotype is observed in the sports industry where Samoans (also Fijians and Tongans) are deliberately targeted as potential players by foreign talent scouts because of their physicality, size, and strength that might suggest an association between a specialisation (e.g., rugby, rugby league, NFL football, and boxing) and ethnic group (McDonald, 2014; Scheider, 2014). However, this does not mean that Samoans should seek these types of job (or sports) because they seemingly require less effort and are viewed as a pathway out of poverty (see Rodriguez & McDonald, 2014). Instead, it does add to the continued stereotype of Samoans in labour-intensive, physical work as labourers, construction workers, cleaners, and rugby players. Hence, the difficulty in disaffiliating from perpetuated typecasts. Moreover, the Samoan and Pacific people paradox of potentially monopolising a sector, while on the same hand, this particular sector is arguably beneficial for them.

### 8.2.2 Discrimination and Tokenism

The outcomes of this research supported the theoretical offerings of the glass ceiling where the colour of one's skin impacted on the chances of success and failure for people of colour, ethnic minorities and indigenes (e.g., Cook & Glass, 2014; Hill, Upadhyay & Beekun, 2015; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014). Shades of black, brown, and yellow skin and other ethnic features appear to be controversial determinants of race, racial domination and racial exploitation that are hindrances to career progress and exclusively experienced by these groups. Race as a social construct continues to thwart efforts for some individuals in accessing higher roles in organisations around the

globe. Interestingly, Dubois (1903) proclaimed that the problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was that of the colour-line. Now, more than 100 years later, skin colour continues to dominate and divide nations, organisations, people, religion, and social class.

The Samoan respondents in this study experienced discrimination from their Palagi colleagues in the form of tokenism, racial slurs, and jokes hidden in undertones and semantics. In addition, they felt resentment, anger, discouragement and excluded from formal peer networks and career opportunities, and these racist attitudes were perceived as barriers that held them back or led to exiting the organisations. Sadly, institutional racism and monoculturalistic injustices and behaviours appear to be ingrained within the NZ landscape as ‘normal’ features of this society and restricted to those individuals who do not ‘fit in’ with mainstream culture and ideologies (see Came, Doole, McKenna & McCreanor, 2018; Houkamau & Boxall, 2015; Houkamau, Stronge & Sibley, 2017). Although there are many initiatives, national human rights plans and a variety of ad hoc strategies that aim to promote diversity, cultural inclusivity and workplace equity by law, there are numerous incidents of injustices that continue without legal actions<sup>32</sup> such as those mentioned by the respondents.

It appeared that some Samoans tolerated and perhaps, unconsciously encouraged discrimination through subordination. That is, by treating racism and racist attitudes at work as ‘ordinary’ and ‘natural,’ without consequence or confrontation (e.g., Iosua, Director / Coach) (Williams, 2014). Although, other Samoans did challenge discriminatory behaviour citing “*meeting it head-on*” and “*fight back.*” The notion that Samoans have to exact justice, retaliate, or, “*rise above*” institutional racism is arguably polarising, unfair, and can

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<sup>32</sup> For example, see ‘Committee on the Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination shadow report: Aotearoa New Zealand’ (2017).

overwhelm one's management style, levels of concentration and socialisation practices at work. It requires utilising mental and physical efforts that could be used elsewhere. Moreover, the data suggested that there are potentially three viable options available regarding the course of action against workplace discrimination. Firstly, endure and ignore the discriminatory behaviour, or, simply put, do nothing; hence, supporting the superior position of Palagi and the oppressed status of minorities. Secondly, leave one's current position and work elsewhere, thus resolving the issue in the interim, but not addressing the problem, or future discrimination at the next place of employment. The final option included the brave stance of exacting justice with confrontation or legal action. Although the literature suggests that minorities should consider becoming agents of change and rise above marginalisation with positive action at work (e.g., Simmons-Massenburg, 2011; Washington, 2009, Williams, 2014), it is still demoralising to consider that this is what the current and next generation of Samoans and Pacific workers have to expect, that is, until such time as racism can be 'stamped out' permanently (Gulland, 2001; Osborne, 2015).

### 8.3 Indigenous Samoan Barriers

There were unanticipated findings in this study relating to indigenous Samoan barriers that highlighted the inequalities that some Samoans encounter in the workplace. These barriers are exclusive to Samoans because they stem from cultural protocol regarding socio-political relationships and the hierarchy of individuals. As a result, 'intra-ethnic racism' and 'gender bias' was prevalent as career hindrances for half-caste female Samoans. In addition, I discuss the 'U'u Coconut Crab Syndrome' and its implications for some Samoans in senior careers with high public profiles. This section is important to Samoans and the glass ceiling

literature because it reveals the cultural underpinnings that seem to deter some Samoans from seeking higher careers.

### 8.3.1 Intra-ethnic Racism and Gender Bias

Somewhat surprisingly, some Samoans experienced intra-ethnic racism and bias because of being female, afakasi (half-caste), and in a leadership position. Participants in this group were ostracised, humiliated, and segregated from other Samoans because of racial ranking and issues of pure-blood identity, that is, their noticeable fair or darker skin colour, and other features distinguishing another race. While the topic of intra-ethnic racism does confirm other Pacific-themed research concerning identity and purity of the race, and the dilemma for Pacific people (e.g., Agee & Culbertson, 2013; Berking et al., 2007; Fozdar & McGavin, 2017), the influence of intersecting strands (Crenshaw, 1991), that is, intra-ethnic race, gender, and ‘indigenous class’ is scarce in the literature. These overlapping identities trigger intersectional forms of discrimination, thus making certain individuals more vulnerable. Moreover, research concerning intra-ethnic conflict with half-caste female Samoans in leadership positions in the workplace is scant. These female Samoans felt oppressed, excluded, and isolated from other Samoans in the workplace. To them, the career barriers emanated from their people.

Historically, the term ‘half-caste’ was rooted in British colonialism in the late half of the nineteenth century and described a segment of a population as ‘the poorest, most disadvantaged and most voiceless in society’ made up of half-bloods, hybrids, and other colourful terms (Aspinall, 2013, p.518). Essentially, half-castes were unwelcome in good society. Similarly, afa-kasi and mixed-blood Samoans were viewed as ‘troublesome,

mischievous people with bad heredity' and faced prejudice, antagonism, and imprisonment during and post-colonisation (Salesa, 2000, p. 111). Overall, Samoans regarded afa-kasi as diluting the purity of the Samoan blood. Likewise, NZ officials considered half-caste Samoans as a threat to the English and European races (NZ Ministry of Culture & Heritage, 2014). It seems that past views of mixed-heritage for Samoans continue to this present day.

Another possible explanation might relate to the patriarchal system of fa'asamoa, where men are the decision-makers and leaders of their household (Evening, 2004) and reinforced by Christianity that enacted the subjugation and subordination of women (Anae, 2010). Thus, socially constructed cultural norms strengthen the quintessential role of Samoan women that fundamentally encircle the home and aiga (family), hospitality, and community service. As a result, Samoan women might encounter challenges from embedded hegemonic cultural expectations to maintain their traditional roles alongside their employment positions. These cultural expectations are a significant obstacle to career advancement for females in Turkey (Neale & Ozkanli, 2010) and Asian-American Pacific Islanders in the United States (Chen & Hune, 2011).<sup>33</sup> As a result, entrenched cultural traditions place Samoan women in a disadvantaged position in comparison to Samoan men and career progress.

Fortunately, the roles of women in the Western context have advanced to reflect the global changes in the world and the power of the female voice. Similarly, the numbers of female Matai have slightly increased giving more credence to the shifting positional power of women and fa'asamoa. However, that perspective was not evident in this study, or, perhaps has not yet caught up with Samoans working in some New Zealand organisations.

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<sup>33</sup> While this article mentions 'Pacific Island' women as experiencing career barriers, it does not indicate the Pacific nations to whom it refers other than 'Asian-American Pacific Islander.'



What is apparent, is that some Samoans may experience the effects of ‘double-barrelled’ discrimination. That is, they might encounter discrimination from some of their Palagi counterparts, and on the other hand, are shunned by other Samoans for being afakasi, female, and untitled. If that is the case, (and indeed it was for these participants), then it may explain some of the low representation of Samoans in management occupations. There is abundant room for further studies to determine the extent of this phenomenon of intersecting strands of intra-ethnic racism, gender bias, and class for Samoan afakasi females in CEO, or, senior leadership positions in New Zealand.

### 8.3.2 U’u Coconut Crab Syndrome: Rip them down or raise them up?

One of the more disturbing outcomes is that some Samoans will engage in hostile behaviours and sabotage the careers of senior ranking Samoans in New Zealand organisations. As indicated in the data, these acts represented the effects of the U’u Coconut Crab Syndrome, that is, a socio-cultural dynamic that leads lower-stationed Samoans to vilify and undermine high-achieving Samoans, and mainly target afa-kasi (half-caste) and female Samoans in CEO or senior management positions. As mentioned in the literature review, one would expect to find comparisons of this dynamic with New Zealand’s culture of the Tall Poppy Syndrome, where egalitarianism is maintained, and individuals are subject to heavy criticism and scrutiny (Kirkwood, 2007). The tallest poppy in the field, (or, in this study the biggest crab in the cage) will attract notice and is subsequently chopped or levelled. Therefore, in an organisation, to *coconut crab* a Samoan is to break and shame them down to the same size as others below them. Similarly, Muga (Politician) stated the following about Samoans; “*We are our own worst enemy. Instead of building each other up we rip them down...so there’s the glass ceiling that we use to destroy ourselves.*”

The intensity of the negative attention that it generates is cruel, bigoted, and illegal. Some participants felt reluctant and fearful of attending conferences and other work events where other Samoans might attend. This finding is somewhat disappointing given that there are few opportunities for Samoans to reach senior management positions in New Zealand.

Furthermore, it raises the paradoxical question: Why would Samoans, who fiercely support collectivism and family values, turn their backs on other Samoans in high-status positions who are evidently helping their family and wider communities in the New Zealand labour force? It seemingly contradicts the fundamental cultural values of alofa (love), tautua (serve), fa'aaloalo (respect) and the harmonious relationships of the va.

One possible explanation for this finding might be that Samoans are using a cultural lens to construct leadership and power, and its worthy recipients based on the cultural framework of fa'asamoa and fa'amatai (Chieftainship) that situates Samoans in relation to their station, or, status within the family, village, and aigapotopoto (extended family network). In other words, Samoans might unintentionally attempt to force a Samoan socio-political structure on another Samoan in a New Zealand professional setting. As mentioned earlier, the meaning of leadership and power for Samoans is best understood in relation to positions and roles within fa'asamoa and fa'amatai (Stewart-Withers, 2007). Therefore, Samoans may feel justified in reminding other Samoans of 'one's place' in the Samoan socio-political structure, albeit with unpleasantness. Admittedly, it does seem to suggest that some Samoans experienced cultural alienation, resistance, and resentment from other Samoans because they were perceived as pursuing Palagi individualistic goals rather than being part of the community. However, this finding is limited by the number of participants in this study who claimed that other Samoans unjustifiably mistreated them because of their gender, race, and class at work.

## 8.4 Samoan Career Strategies, Coping Mechanisms, and Facilitators

This section discusses the career facilitators that were success mechanisms for Samoans in their trajectories to senior occupations. What makes this section captivating is that the evidence pointed to alternative and perhaps unconventional options as critical indicators for better outcomes. While it may appear unusual in comparison to other glass ceiling studies, we are reminded that most Samoans do not follow Euro-Western ideologies. For example, the respondents in this study maintained a Samoan worldview that encapsulated fa'asamoa.

This section begins with a discussion about the 'journey of the self' that is recommended by Samoans for Samoans, followed by 'Self-efficacy and Future Legacies' that describe the convictions and beliefs that lead to regulating and controlling thoughts, behaviours, and motivations for Samoans in the workplace. Interestingly, 'cross-race mentoring' provides a discussion that refutes current glass ceiling theories and studies. Finally, the sub-section 'va and tautua' present cultural values as effective facilitators that enrich career trajectories.

### 8.4.1 Know who you are: Journey of the Self

Up to this point of the discussion chapter, it is evident that value systems have a profound effect on the ambiguities and conflicts that are entrenched in one's cultural orientation. Throughout the data, the participants spoke of having dual value systems and mixed identities, that is, 'not knowing who they were at work' from fa'asamoa at home, and the

Palagi values operating in the New Zealand working context. In addition, we have learned thus far that one's work environment does not let us make easy choices, and there is no single way of formulating an appropriate solution. However, what we do know is that the overruling endorsement seemed to support career advancement for Samoans related to 'the journey of the self,' and returning to one's ancestral cultural context. In other words, finding out who you are (as a Samoan), and where you have come from (the origin). As discussed in Chapter 4, other indigenous academics encourage this detour of reconciling cultural ownership and self-discovery as a precursor to moving forward, whether at work, research, and in our daily lives (Colburg, 2007, p.78; Nabobo-Baba, 2004; Seiuli, 2013).

The journey of the self is about personal growth, by reawakening the depths of the self (Henderson, 2016) that were perhaps unconsciously ignored or 'asleep.' It is a cultural exploration that reconnects with the origin of one's lineage or blood-ties, thus, re-establishing the Samoan genealogical roots. As commented in Chapter 4 by Tui Atua Efi (2007), the essence of the Samoan self is relational and shared by the collective, tua'ā (ancestors), cosmos, and the land (Henderson, 2016; Williams & Setijadi-Dunn, 2011). In other words, there is a sense of sacredness linked to family and the homeland that forms part of the Samoan self (Ihara & Vakalahi, 2011). Therefore, one must live it through participation, fesoa'aiga (reciprocity), and obligation, whether here in New Zealand or Samoa (Young, 1998) and identify as a Samoan and part of an aiga and collective. However, if the va is not maintained or communicated through tautua (service) and fesoa'aiga (reciprocity), the aiga institution loses its authenticity, and the va (spatial relations) is ruptured (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009).

This journey is important because of how Samoans perceive their identities within their culturally-framed conceptualisations that might be different from those of the first Samoan migrants (their parents and grandparents) and the memories of their working experiences. No doubt, the NZ-Samoan experiences and destinies are entirely different to those of the first migrants back in the 1950s who travelled to New Zealand for a better quality of life. This orientation might suggest a generational psychological disconnection or, a diminished emotional, physical, cultural and spiritual awareness between the present and the past, and identity issues for some Samoans.

So, how is this journey performed? How do Samoans reconnect and embark on this journey of self-discovery? Tracing one's heritage is a starting point for diasporic Samoans to reconnect with their ancestral homeland, their tua'ā (ancestors) and fa'asamoa values. It is within the aiga (family) and collective that Samoans can validate their status and the totality of the self while addressing their spiritual, physical, psychological, and social needs that are embedded in the fa'asamoa cultural context (Ihara & Vakalahi, 2011; Seiuli, 2013). This pathway potentially relinks the disrupted va (spatial relations) so that fragmented identities are renegotiated and restored. Like other indigenous cultures (Young, 1998; Gesino, 2001), once the spiritual life is balanced, all other aspects of one's mafaufau (mind), health, and wellness (including work) seem to fall into place and are harmonious (Ihara & Vakalahi, 2011). In this way, the malaga (journey) may be described as a 'pilgrimage' to heal the gap between the present and the past by evoking a consciousness that Samoans are a part of each place, that is, Samoa and New Zealand.

It is fair to suggest that reconnecting with one's cultural heritage is a step towards personal development and stabilizing one's identity. It assists with building inner confidence and the

courage to voice one's opinions based on the supportive framework of the aiga and the knowledge of cultural entitlement. Hence, the search for knowledge and understanding of one's identity leads to the discovery of one's space, cultural ownership, and voice (Potgieter & Smit 2009; Williams & Setijadi-Dunn, 2011). As indicated by the participants' excerpts 'finding their voice' at work assisted with career progression because it gave them a platform of confidence to speak up, form an opinion, and ask for assistance without fear of judgement. This recommendation was by far, the most outstanding career facilitator that supported Samoan careers. This group of Samoans rediscovered their cultural identities and restored the harmonious stream of the va. Moreover, from that vantage point, their self-confidence strengthened their abilities to express their concerns, have opinions, and remain fixed to their convictions. Although the topic of identity and self is beyond the scope of this thesis, it does, however, highlight the intricate mélange of elements that comprise the identities of Samoans.

#### 8.4.2 Self-efficacy and Future Legacies

As mentioned in the literature review, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982) as a contributing career facilitator is a formidable antecedent for marginalised individuals in the face of challenging circumstances and setbacks, for example, discrimination (Hu, Lei & Xia, 2009; Simmons-Massenburg, 2011; Tran, 2013; Washington, 2009). Individuals with high self-efficacy might view career barriers as challenges to be 'mastered' (Bandura, 1982), and learn by observation and association from other ethnic minorities, family members, role models and mentors (Washington, 2009). Therefore, strong efficacious beliefs could produce more positive outcome expectations (Hackett & Byers, 1996). Alternatively, individuals with low self-efficacy might view career obstacles as personal threats and evade opportunities or 'give up' any attempts at accomplishing new tasks and challenges.

The current study found that some Samoans displayed high levels of self-efficacy enacted in self-control, determination, and beliefs. They perceived their capabilities in controlling and regulating the way certain events were experienced (Bandura & Locked, 2003) by lifting their sights ‘beyond’ the present struggles in the workplace, for example, social isolation as brown tokens “*being the only one of their kind.*” Having a job-focus with ambition (Washington, 2009) assisted with aligning their thoughts from straying into ‘negative’ territory that might have consumed valuable efforts and energy away from professionalism and work goals. As Elena (CEO) mentioned “*not thinking about the negative stuff that brings me down*” and Tupu (Politician) “*be courageous, be positive.*” Thus, some of the respondents developed positive attitudes and outcome expectations and suppressed unproductive behaviours (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994) that could have weakened their aspirations and commitment to their roles.

In addition, some Samoans expressed that their adverse experiences alone were the impetus for pursuing work accomplishments and maintaining resiliency, as a counter-hegemony against negative social identity and ethnic stereotypes. As Simi (Director) referred to in his statement, Samoans have an “*edge*” because of their Pacific ethnicity and marginalised status that may provide a special vantage point to act against the perceived negative social stereotypes of Samoans and Pacific people.

Self-efficacy is important for Samoans and Pacific people as some experiences are common among Polynesians and minorities in general, and may affect outcome expectations and perceived abilities. As an example, the findings revealed workplace discrimination as an organisational barrier for Samoans experiencing overt and subtle forms of racism. However,

higher and stronger levels of efficacy are likely to assist Samoans in assigning the situation to discrimination and illegal practices rather than inaccurate personal performance attributions or skill deficits. That is, Samoans with high efficacy might recognise situations underpinned by discrimination instead of attributing to a personal limitation. Weakened efficacy leads to lowered motivation (Hackett & Byers, 1996) and potential negative outcomes from one's behaviour, hence, supporting the theory of self-efficacy in which one feels efficacious and resilient despite obstacles in their career trajectories.

Another possible explanation for high efficacy might be the notion of future legacies that some of the respondents expressed in their current roles as mentors and role models to other Samoans. Tauilopepe (Director) touched on this aspect when he commented about having the 'eldest sibling' responsibility and being a source of 'inspiration' to his younger siblings, nieces, and nephews, viewing this position as "*honourable*." The legacy of leaving something behind for future generations is perceived as a privilege (Washington, 2009) with the intention of making life easier from one generation to the next, thereby, leaving an indelible impression on the lives of younger Samoans and Pacific people, for example, aspiring to senior careers.

In a similar vein, some Samoans felt that they were modelling a legacy just as their parents did for them upon leaving their homeland for New Zealand and working several jobs to support their families in New Zealand and Samoa, thus, adhering to the collective spirit of *va*, *aiga* (family) values, and *tautua* (service). As mentioned in Chapter 3, many young Pacific people immigrated to New Zealand to pursue better lifestyles for their families. Their financial remittances (from working two or more jobs, for example, in hospitals, and on factory floors) to Samoa improved and modernised homes and small businesses in Samoa



(Konje, 2015; Muliaiana, 2001; Spoonley, 2006). As such, these respondents' view of continued legacies resembled the passing of the 'mantle' across generations as a testament to their struggles, survival, goals and better living for their families. Further studies that focus on the intersections of gender, cultural status, and intra-race influences on career self-efficacy could provide an interesting perspective regarding Samoans, discrimination and the application of efficacy.

#### 8.4.3 Va and Tautua: Relationship-building and Honourable Service

Another theme to emerge from this study concerned the roles of the values va and tautua as a Samoan strategy for enhancing career advancement. Some of the respondents expressed that their career accomplishments surrounded the ability to build "*genuine*" relationships with organisational peers, customers, and networks. The methods included feedback, consultation, collaboration, and requesting assistance when needed. As an example, the respondents talked about "*being upfront*" "*asking for advice*" and "*reaching out to people outside of their comfort zone,*" thus, suggesting that nourishing relationships, or *teu le va*, requires effort, some courage, and long-term vision. In doing so, some Samoans felt better supported and more engaged in their duties at work. Hence, this viewpoint supported other glass ceiling studies where networking and developing strategic relationships has shown to increase career opportunities for women and ethnic minorities (Thomas, 2001; Wilson, 2014).

In addition, this theme may be explained using Samoan protocol. As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, Samoan relationships and socio-political arrangements are nurtured and maintained through the concept of the va (Wendt, 1999). As such, the va connects and unites relationships through mutual respect (Anae, 1999; Wendt 1991) between Samoans and non-

Samoans (e.g., the respondents, Palagi colleagues, and the organisation), material and spiritual, and other forms of knowledge (Efi, 2007). The va is important to Samoans because of their indigenous view of the 'self' which has a communal orientation, rather than an individualistic perspective (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009). In other words, the Samoan self can only be understood within relationships from a spiritual and cosmological perspective.

If we apply the logic of the Samoan va in career advancement, then one would expect that Samoans value that space between the employer (or other people) and themselves with regular maintenance. That is, they would ideally show fa'aaloalo (respect) and tautua (service) in their behaviour, motivation, and actions within the parameters of the job description, one's contractual obligation, and their relationship expectations with their peers. As a reminder, each relationship (from a Samoan perspective) is a metaphor for peace and harmony on a larger scale (Efi, 2007). For example, congruent and healthy relationships between an employer and employee may be viewed as the direct consequence of teu le va because each party has mediated positive actions and steps in nourishing relationships, such as reciprocal feedback on performance. Alternatively, the va is disrupted, or, deteriorated where there has been a break-down in the relationship, for instance, disengaged behaviour from a work dispute. As earlier mentioned, a ruptured va may be viewed as malaaumatua (a curse) and impact on a Samoans' spiritual and physical health (e.g., Tamasese et al., 2004). Therefore, it is fair to say that taking job ownership and responsibility based on the Samoan va could lead to better opportunities, healthy work relationships, effective management habits, and overall, a peaceful, harmonious relationship contributing to successful outcomes, as noted by this study's respondents.

Another result of this study indicated that some of the respondents viewed the value tautua (service) as an additional Samoan strategy that positively strengthens one's motivation and focus toward better job performance that could enrich career progress and development. The participants displayed an altruistic orientation when helping their peers at work, customers, and students, that seemed to enhance their employee performance with empathy, drive, and passion. As mentioned in Chapter 4, tautua is embedded with acts of honour, integrity, and love towards task accomplishments that support and further the interests and well-being of the collective, and thereby, reinforce the va (Autagavaia, 2001; Bell, 1998). In this way, tautua may be defined as honourable services in support of the aiga (family) and the spiritual dimension of the va that includes the living and the dead. From a careers perspective, Samoans could consider the organisation as their collective. Therefore, one's tautua, or service of employment might include honour and integrity that shows commitment and devotion to the job and strategic vision of the organisation.

Although this theme is very encouraging, the findings further revealed a cautionary oversight attached to tautua, as indicated by a few participants who were concerned about other Samoans "*overdoing the tautua at the risk of ourselves.*" In other words, the drive and passion that one might have with tautua could lead to an inaccurate view of power and responsibility with damaging consequences.<sup>34</sup> Hence, Samoans might consider balancing their view of tautua so that their preconceived ideas of service (e.g., over-committing to projects, family fa'alavelave (financial obligations), charitable events and other community schemes) do not impinge on illegal activities, and ultimately, dishonourable services. To

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<sup>34</sup> For examples of media notoriety of Samoans displaying a distorted view of tautua, see <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/99440907/christchurch-benefit-cheat-ventured-into-forgery>  
<http://www.hrdevelopment.co.nz/2013/08/winz-manager-gets-home-detention-for-194k-fraud/>  
<http://www.samoanews.com/samoan-travel-agent-sentenced-mandatory-five-years-fraud>

develop a full picture of the influences of va and tautua as attributes that enhances career progress for Samoans, additional study will be needed.

#### 8.4.4 Cross-Race Mentoring

Prior studies have noted the importance of access to mentorship as a facilitator that enhances career ascension through organisational support and personal guidance (Lyness & Thompson, 2000; Nguyen, 2013; Wilson, 2014). Minorities tend to progress faster with mentors who nurture their professional development (Thomas, 2001). Although this thesis supports prior mentorship studies, it is surprising, however, that the outcomes further revealed that some of the respondents preferred Palagi over same-race mentors, that is, cross-race (or cross-cultural) mentoring. While these participants did declare that mentors and role models included having same-race seasoned Samoans, such as Matai, elderly parents, and community leaders, there were more comments favouring Palagi mentors as having a significant influence in propelling Samoans forward to top jobs.

This somewhat contradictory result may be explained using the respondents' perspectives.

They reasoned that the NZ labour market dwells and operates in a Western context, and

*"...the people who are hiring are most often Palagi with non-Pacific worldviews."* Thus, having a Palagi mentor might provide insight that could enhance their career profiles.

Furthermore, these Samoans felt that having a Palagi mentor also assisted with confidential matters concerning organisational experiences and other racial conflicts. Therefore, these Samoans felt that it made sense to have a Palagi mentor who could bring leadership value, provide strategic connections, and career guidance of how to reach and survive in the upper tiers of the New Zealand organisations. This finding contradicts other studies that advocate

ethnically-matched mentors, where similarities in values, expectations, psychosocial support, and ethnic background enriched the mentoring relationship and were associated with career success (e.g., Campbell & Campbell, 2007; Graham, 1983; Santos & Reigadas, 2002; Wilson, 2014).

The debate of whether same-race mentorship is more effective than cross-race is controversial, with more studies that seemingly support the former suggestion over the latter. Some studies indicate that cross-race mentoring may unintentionally promote white supremacist ideals that may lower the esteem and confidence of the minority mentee (e.g., Rhodes et al. 2002; Thomas, 2001; Wilson, 2014). In addition, adopting the values of a cross-race mentor may have the reverse effect than its original intention. For instance, a white mentor encouraged a black mentee to become more 'assertive' in his leadership style but was branded "an angry black man" when he attempted to emulate assertiveness (Thomas, 2001, p.105).

Additionally, having a cross-race mentor may lead a minority to question the value of their identity when they are matched with someone who may have very little knowledge of cross-cultural differences and the challenges that minorities face at work. This perception was evident in the study from a few Samoans who experienced anger towards their mentors whom they claimed had limited experience and knowledge of Pacific cultures, yet were placed in mentorship capacities.

According to some authors, one of the first steps in cross-cultural mentoring is acknowledging that racism does exist and has detrimental effects on career development and

advancement for minorities (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004, p.18; Remedios & Snyder, 2015; Thomas, 2001). Only then can the relationship between the mentor and mentee move forward with genuine trust based on the foundation of understanding how ethnic minorities, indigenes, and people of colour tend to advance in organisations.

Alternatively, there are several benefits of cross-race mentoring such as increased social-contact for the ‘other,’ thereby enhancing social capital and alternative networks (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Woods et al., 2013). Studies have suggested that cross-race differences broadened the perspective and frames of reference and challenged preconceived ideas of individuals who were more likely to be better managers and leaders (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Thomas, 2001). This information is vital for ethnic minorities as lack of privilege, isolation, and exclusion are known to be career barriers that continue to frustrate their efforts to career advancement (Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Griffin, Ward & Phillips, 2014; Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014). Furthermore, the Samoan participants valued their relationships with their Palagi mentors as more constructive over Samoans.

Ideally, one must return to their initial reasons for seeking mentors, that is, it was not about race or ethnicity that assists with organisational and career development. Instead, it concerned having someone deemed an expert with professional experience who could provide counsel, advice, and support for less-experienced mentees. Perhaps the most significant advantage of cross-race mentorship is the reduction of racial barriers because of the relationship that is developed between two individuals of separate cultures (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004). This outcome concerning cross-race mentorship for Samoans might highlight a flexible shift from traditional fa’asamoa (Samoa mo Samoa) to an adaptive,

inclusive, contemporary thinking and understanding of leadership and knowledge. Further work could be undertaken to investigate the efficacy of cross-race and cross-gender mentors for Pacific people in New Zealand organisations.

#### 8.4.5 Higher Education and Job Mobility

This study is consistent with other glass ceiling studies concerning human capital theory as a career mechanism to senior roles (Becker, 1975; Broadbridge, 2008; Newman, 1993; Salaff, Greve & Ping, 2003). Human capital factors such as education, qualification, and superior skills increase an individual's chances of better opportunities and access to higher occupations. For instance, Scholarios and Taylor (2011) found that higher human capital for women in call centres influenced their job promotions with successful outcomes. Likewise, Eby & Johnson (2011) found that education, training, and development was a critical indicator of work accomplishments that had a profound effect on the likelihood of senior promotions for African-Americans.

The results of this study further supported prior research that job mobility (e.g., local and international assignments and special projects) enhances career advancement potential. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the ability to adapt to new working environments and industries with high visibility assignments may suggest flexibility and adaptability as well as advanced reasoning skills in unknown cultural and industrial contexts, and valuable attributes to potential employers (Morrison et al., 1987; Payne-Pikus et al., 2010; Wilson, 2014). In this study, job mobility was a more salient feature of the respondents' career paths where some had worked in different sectors, geographical locations, and industries and experienced higher salaries. Due to working in multiple organisations, there were numerous opportunities

to establish social and strategic links with others in their industry, thereby developing highly networked employees from building copious work relationships, thus, supporting the studies that showed greater job mobility tends to lead to superior earnings and greater visibility for advanced career opportunities (Dreher & Cox, 2000; Lam, Ng & Feldman, 2012; Williams, 2014). Human capital and job mobility both supported senior career progression for these respondents.

Alternatively, this research has been unable to demonstrate that inferior human capital and job mobility are less likely to lead to senior roles. One possible explanation is that all respondents in this study were educated Samoans working in mid to senior roles, thus, defending the pivotal position human capital plays in career progression and ‘opening doors’ to corporate opportunities. In addition, none of the respondents worked in the same job, as evidenced by their transcripts of working in multiple roles and locations, for example, Samoa and New Zealand, and the public to private sectors. Furthermore, it is important to point out that the average age bracket of the participants was 46-55, in mid to late stages of their careers. Therefore, age and experiential capital may have yielded different results had the respondents been younger and less experienced. Overall, these findings have significant implications because they deliver a message to other Samoans, Pacific people, and ethnic minorities that educational attainment and a willingness to take risks moving to other companies and destinations outside of one’s comfort zone are starting points for successful career outcomes. As such, it may assist with lessening the over-representation of Pacific people in low-skilled and labour-intensive roles.



## 8.5 Summary of Discussion of the Findings

This chapter discussed the key findings concerning the brown glass ceiling barriers that stalled career progress and the facilitators, coping mechanisms and strategies that enhanced personal attributes that strengthened career profiles and led to managerial job opportunities. The findings provided exclusive insights into the world of Samoan values and the oppositions operating within dual value systems that frequently negate each other. Samoans juggle two separate cultures and values side-by-side, and in some cases, are in direct conflict with one's belief system and identity. So, Samoans grapple with reconciling contraries, for example, cross-cultural issues regarding acceptable eye contact and limited talk-time in conversations, or ultimately accept a host of other liabilities that may have disadvantageous outcomes, for example, conceding one's individual opinions and decisions to accommodate the congruous vibe of the team (collective) and the *va*, that is, peaceful and harmonious relationships.

In addition, when threatened by circumstance, some Samoans resorted to masking their cultural identities with *fa'a fia palagi* (acting white) to screen their 'differentness' and avoid the heightened visibility of being the 'other.' As such, the recommendations of this study pointed to resolving opposites such as speaking more (as appropriate to the situation) and suitable eye contact given the Western orientation of the New Zealand working environment. Furthermore, cross-cultural intelligence could assist with recognising the cultural idiosyncrasies of a diverse staff.

Regrettably, despite various incentives, laws, and policies to promote equality, cultural awareness and diversity, it appears that Samoans continue to experience institutional barriers similar to those found in glass ceiling studies regarding people of colour and career

advancement. Racist attitudes, discrimination, labour market segregation, and tokenism persist and impede efforts at improving careers for Samoans. Admittedly, the respondents recognised the contradictions within these elements, for example, a potential positive monopoly for Samoans in certain industries and sectors (construction, manufacturing, and sports) where their physicality tends to advantage their potential for continuous employment with various levels of pay and skills. Surprisingly, however, some Samoans preferred Palagi mentors over same-race because of the Western insights and orientations in the NZ working environment that may support senior careers.

The indigenous Samoan barriers exposed the cultural underpinnings of hierarchy and stratification that prevented some Samoans from pursuing top jobs or compelled others to leave their senior positions because of stigmatisation and cultural alienation concerning success outside of one's class (e.g., gender and afa-kasi) and rupturing the va. However, several strategies highlighted the coping mechanisms that could assist with moving beyond cultural and institutional hindrances, such as regulating and controlling thoughts, self-confidence, higher levels of efficacy, education and job mobility. In addition, these respondents had altruistic and spiritual intentions by implementing future legacies as role models for the next generation of Samoans that seemingly derived from observing their parents making the transitional move to NZ and working several jobs to support the aiga and the collective, thus strengthening the va, the values of alofa and fa'aaloalo and commitment to tautua that heightened and enriched the efforts of these respondents towards successful career advancement.

The next chapter concludes this study by reviewing the key findings with a revised conceptual model, the theoretical contributions, and practical implications, followed by limitations and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

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This chapter marks the conclusion of the study by providing a summary of the key findings and a revised conceptual model that answered the research questions: *What are the barriers and challenges to senior career advancement for Samoans in New Zealand? What strategies and facilitators assisted with achieving successful higher careers for Samoans?* In addition, I provide the main theoretical contributions to literature, practice, and cultural concepts, as well as the limitations of this thesis, and areas for future research. This thesis concludes with a personal reflection on the entire malaga (journey) and a closing statement.

### 9.1 Key Findings of the Study

This study has identified the career barriers that delayed Samoans from ascending to higher occupations, and the organisational, cultural and personal facilitators that supported managerial progress. In addition, the study has revealed the cultural strategies and coping mechanisms that are unique to fa'asamoa and, therefore, extend the glass ceiling literature concerning indigenous minorities of Oceanic-Pacific descent, and their career experiences in New Zealand.

The most significant career barrier for Samoans concerned competing dual value systems, where cross-cultural differences in communication (e.g., eye contact and the use of silence in conversations) was problematic and led to misunderstandings and missed career opportunities. In addition, the va posed challenges for Samoans regarding decision-making where some conceded to group consensus (to maintain the va) rather than state their true

feelings and opinions, thereby, diminishing proactive behaviour that indicates an individual's willingness and desire to contribute to strategic organisational objectives that are advantageous to senior careers. Simply put, Samoans will openly agree to support the collective team decision, but might internally disagree. Therefore, they forfeit opportunities to showcase advanced reasoning and decision-making skills that could potentially lift their career prospects. Moreover, some Samoans might attempt to resolve conflicting values with *fa'a fia palagi* (acting white) to mask characteristics of the Samoan cultural identity to fit in with Palagi colleagues. These respondents risked cultural alienation and stigmatisation by other Samoans from perceived behaviours and attitudes akin to white cultures as a form of betrayal to their heritage.

Other organisational career barriers included racism, discrimination and negative stereotypes displayed as racial slurs, jokes, and exclusion based on perceived ideologies that position Samoans as inferior to their Palagi colleagues. These obstacles led to feelings of resentment, anger, exhaustion, isolation and reduced performance that hurt Samoans in their attempts to access senior occupations. Some Samoans resorted to over-achieving, and "*working twice as hard*" to compensate for their skin colour, ethnicity and being the "*only one of their kind.*" Moreover, they felt obligated and determined to disprove inaccurate perceptions about Samoans and Pacific people rather than focusing and utilising their efforts on the task at hand.

Aspects of the Samoan culture itself added further hindrances to career progress based on power inequalities from the hierarchical socio-political structure of Samoan society. Bias and intra-ethnic racism from intersecting strands of cultural status, *afa-kasi*, and gender limited some Samoans from pursuing higher career achievements. For example, some male Samoans

would deliberately interfere and sabotage female Samoan CEOs' (and afa-kasi) endeavours at work, or, *coconut crab* them down to the levels of other untitled individuals. As a result, some Samoans avoided strategic meetings and crucial networking events that attracted public attention, and where other male Samoans would be present, thus, highlighting the cultural ramifications of stepping outside of one's rank without regard to the socio-political structure of fa'asamoa.

This study uncovered five career mechanisms that contributed to senior occupations. The most prominent career strategy that strengthened confidence and the desire to speak up and voice one's opinions related to the 'journey of the self.' That is, finding the authentic voice from reconnecting with one's Samoan heritage. Knowing who you are and where you have come from reconciles cultural ownership and reconnects the va for Samoans in New Zealand who may have lost their ancestral cultural connections of origin and place. This strategy was recommended by all Samoan respondents as a precursor to confidence that enriches one's attributes, contributing to career development.

In addition, the current study found that higher levels of efficacy enacted in self-control, determination, and beliefs were antecedents to career progress. That is, they were able to regulate and control the way certain events were experienced at work by aligning their thoughts from negative to positive that otherwise might have consumed wasted energies, time and effort away from professionalism and work goals. Moreover, the participants focused on building legacies of positive careers as a role model to their siblings, other aiga and the next generation of Samoans that will enter the workplace. These future legacies are inspired by the former pathways of their parents (first generational migrants).

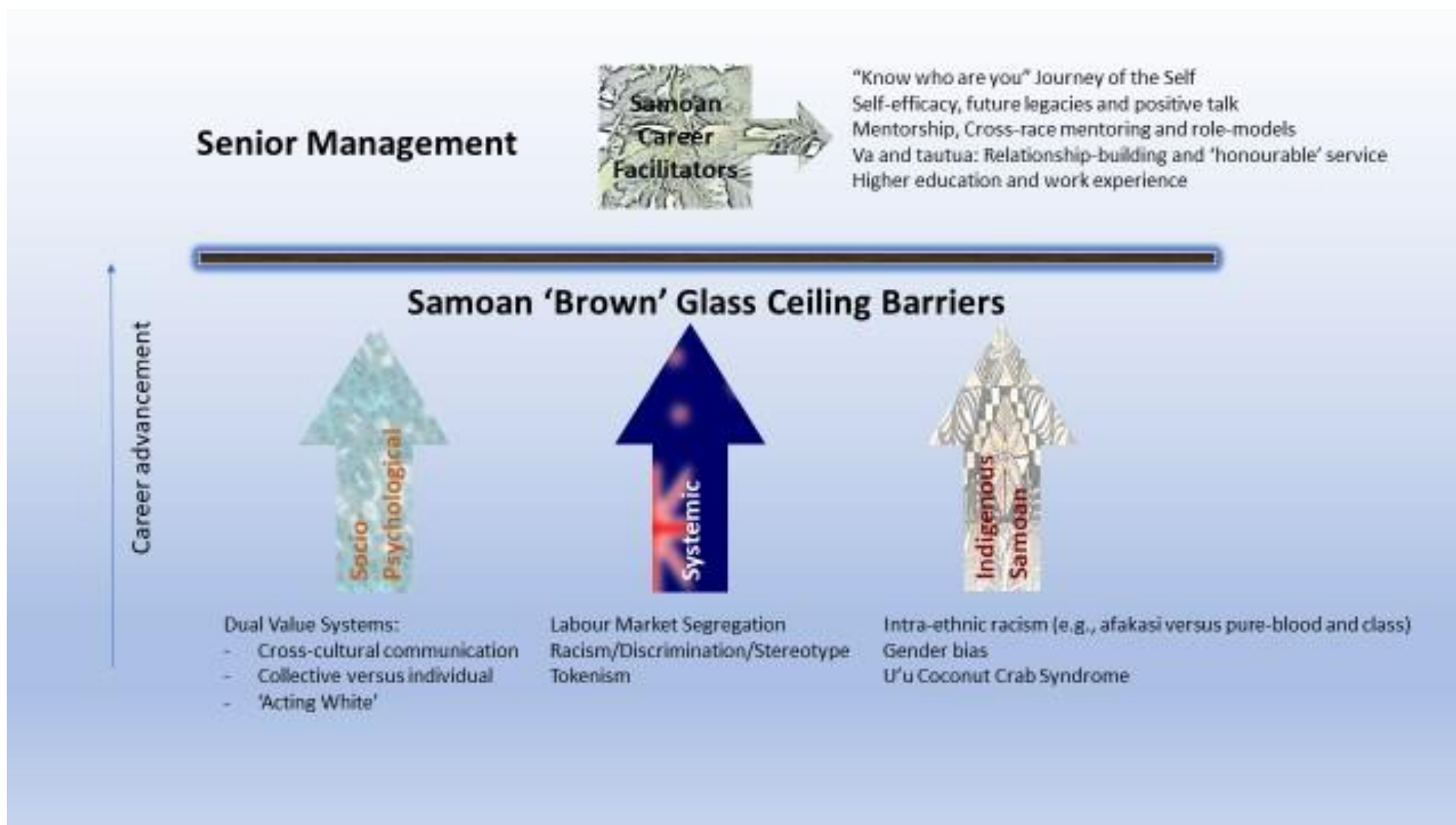
The application of the values *va* and *tautua* are additional Samoan career strategies that are akin to relationship-building with altruism and a genuine concern for assisting others. It is recommended that Samoans apply the *va* in their careers through networking, feedback, and collaborations that nourish the *va* concerning relationships. In addition, having *tautua* that is entrenched with acts of honour and integrity towards task accomplishments that further the interests of the collective or the organisation seemed to enhance work performances with empathy, drive, and passion that shows commitment and devotion to the job or service.

Another career facilitator pointed to mentorship and more specifically, Palagi mentors as having a significant influence in propelling Samoans forward to top jobs. Although these respondents did express having Samoan mentors and role models that included Matai, senior Samoans and older relatives, they were more inclined to favour Palagi because of their experience and insights of Western contexts. Finally, higher education and job mobility demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in unknown cultural and industrial contexts that are valuable attributes to potential employers.

Earlier in Chapter 3, I provided a conceptual model that highlighted the theories that may be present in the findings. On the following page is an updated conceptual model that includes this study's findings and contribution to the glass ceiling literature (Figure 16).

Figure 16

Updated Samoan Brown Glass Ceiling Conceptual Model





## 9.2 Theoretical Contributions

This research provided a distinctive orientation regarding glass ceiling barriers and its impact on Samoans. Most of the ethnic-based glass ceiling studies tend to focus on the experiences of African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-American minorities derived from an American context (e.g., Bartol, Martin & Kromkowski, 2003; Chin, 2016; Cook & Glass, 2014; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Leong & Tang, 2016; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Oguntoyinbo, 2014). However, this study offered an in-depth insight of Samoans living and working in the Palagi environment and their career experiences of negotiating cultural values and organisational processes. Therefore, this study expands the glass ceiling literature by exploring this topic from a Samoan perspective. This contribution is important because Samoans experienced the glass ceiling from a Palagi environment and where other Samoans were present.

In addition, this study used a Pacific Research Paradigm, Samoan Teu le va methodology, and Matai snowball sampling that is unlike any of the more popular research methods utilised in the glass ceiling (e.g., quantitative methods of ANOVA, chi-square, hierarchical regression, and qualitative ethnographic interviews) (see Boone et al., 2013; Foley, Kidder, Powell, 2002; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Kiaye & Singh, 2013; Lee, 2002). Hence, this research contributed to the academy by supporting the growing articulation of indigenous-based research by indigenous Pacific researchers that began in the mid-1970s, thus empowering the voice of the minorities with inclusivity and broadening the knowledge base of the academic literature with Oceanic-Pacific worldviews.

An additional theoretical contribution concerns mentorship. In previous glass ceiling studies, mentorship is a career facilitator that led to successful outcomes for ethnic minorities and women, where the mentor is ethnically-matched (e.g., Campbell & Campbell, 2007; Graham, 1983; Santon & Reigadas, 2002; Wilson, 2014). Although the findings did indicate that mentorship does indeed assist with career advancement, this study further suggested that cross-race mentorship was more effective and favoured by Samoans. Therefore, this thesis revealed an unexpected outcome that challenged previous glass ceiling research about same-race versus cross-race mentorship. This finding and contribution might suggest a shift from traditional thinking to a more contemporary adjustment as aligned to changes in the global environment concerning equality, lifestyles, and culture.

There are data from this thesis that extends the scholarly conversation of Biculturalism in Pacific Studies concerning NZ-born identities and Pacific well-being (e.g., Anae, 1997, 1998, 2002; Berking et al., 2007; Culbertson, Agee & Ofa, 2007; Macpherson, Spoonley & Anae, 2001; Manuela & Anae, 2017; Seiuli, 2016) from a NZ-born researcher and the responses of twenty NZ-born participants in senior positions. More specifically, it underscores the perpetual state of identity confusion for some Samoan CEOs and senior managers. Thus, leading to the paradoxical identity question: *What does it mean to be a NZ-born Samoan CEO or Senior Manager at work?* The competing dual value systems as indicated in cross-cultural communication, the role of *va* in decision-making and its implications for Samoans at work highlight the intricacies of navigating predetermined cultural behaviours, that is, from home to the NZ-Western culture in organisations. The findings revealed that some Samoans would overcome identity confusion by identifying with one of the conflicting value systems and display *fa'a fia palagi*, that is, 'act white.'

In examining the experiences of Samoan CEOs and senior managers in NZ organisations, this study emphasised the significance of fa'asamoa cultural particularities and specifics concerned with Organisational Behaviour. More importantly, contemporary Samoan views on motivation, team dynamics, control, power, and conflict. As an example, some Samoans in a group setting or a position of authority might behave differently from other team members during performance appraisals and interviews that could prompt some managers to wonder *Why did they do that?* The cultural underpinnings that influence some Samoans' behaviour, attitude, personality, and learning are crucial for understanding and awareness so that management might be able to explain why some Samoans engage in certain behaviours (e.g., communicating respect with silence) and, therefore, manage or influence these behaviours (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg & Coulter, 2009).

This study highlighted experiences that support arguments from the feminist theory of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), where multiple forms of social differences such as race, class, and gender construct interlocking systems of oppression and inequality for ethnic minorities and women (Berger & Guidroz, 2009; Weber, 2006). Therefore, this thesis contributes to the growing body of extant Pacific research that examines the applicability of intersectionality theory for Samoans in other fields such as Religion (e.g., Hardin, 2015; Kremer, 2009) and Gambling (Kolandai-Matchett, Langham, Bellringer & Siitia, 2017) and now with a focus in Human Resource Management. The intersecting strands of Samoan race (afa-kasi half-caste), gender, and class (untitled or titled individuals such as matai) and the level of seniority in organisations for the female Samoans in this study illuminates the complex nature of social inequality in Samoan society and the NZ workplace.

Perhaps the most significant theoretical contribution that this study offered was a synopsis of fa'asamoa values and its impact on career advancement for Samoans working in the Palagi environment. As the researcher, I was surprised at some of the cultural nuances that were present in the data that have not yet been explored in a business management context, or, openly discussed in forums concerning Samoan-themed research, for example, the intra-ethnic racism and hostility towards Samoan female leaders based on one's gender, ethnicity (that is, half-caste), and class (untitled Samoan). These led to the introduction and contribution of the 'U'u Coconut Crab Syndrome' that may be experienced not only in the Samoan culture, but other pan-Pacific nations that adhere to hierarchy, patriarchy, and gerontocracy.

### 9.3 Practical Implications

One of the practical implications of this research for Samoans and management in NZ organisations concerns cross-cultural management and, in particular, communicating the Samoan value of fa'aaloalo (respect) with limited eye-contact, less talk or silence. It is reasonable to suggest that this communication style might be perceived as disinterest, disengagement, and lazy behaviours. Therefore, given the serious implications of misinterpretation and prejudice, managers must make a conscious effort not to be intolerant in their perceptions and interactions with Samoans or people from other cultural backgrounds. Management should want to improve the organisational environment by developing an understanding of cultural differences from conflicting values and its implications for some employees (Robbins et al., 2009).

Incorporating cross-cultural training programmes designed by *Pacific people* is an effective start for HR practitioners in addressing potential mishaps and misinterpretation from conflicting communication styles at work. This contribution is important given that Pacific people (of whom half of the population are Samoans) are one of the fastest growing minority groups and will form a significant portion of the next generation of workers that will contribute a major role in the New Zealand economy (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). A commitment to learning about other cultures at work might improve communication in business and work relationships with Pacific staff. Thus, it is in HR's best interests to seek cultural training and awareness programmes created by Pacific people that address multi-cultural value systems and communication processes in the workplace.

From an individual perspective, Samoans might consider evaluating their communication styles and modify any behaviours that could be misinterpreted and further intensify miscommunication. More specifically, in work situations such as performance appraisals, team meetings and interviews where non-verbal cues such as silence and avoiding eye contact are socially acceptable in Samoan society but are viewed as undesirable in Western cultures. The suggestion of flexibility in one's communication style does not imply nor encourage Samoans to give up a segment of their cultural orientation. Instead, it encourages Samoans to negotiate their interactions and communication style to avoid potential confusion and inaccuracies. The goal is to seek behaviours that enhance performance that ultimately lead to senior careers in New Zealand organisations. Understanding the communication process between Samoans and the Palagi environment is a solid starting point to realign incompatible styles that may reflect unwanted behaviours.

## 9.4 Limitations and Future Research

There were various limitations to this research that must be acknowledged and considered.

Firstly, this study used a qualitative Pacific Research paradigm, a Samoan epistemology, and methodology that might not be suitable for other Pacific cultures. The goal of this study was to explore the phenomenon of a glass ceiling for Samoans. Therefore, the findings represented the views and experiences of Samoans, rather than Pacific people. However, there might be areas where some parts of this thesis are transferable to other Pacific nations, particularly those cultures that adhere to patriarchy, hierarchy, gerontocracy, and the family institution.

As the researcher, I acknowledge that I might have unintentionally limited the quality of the data from some of the participants, due to my demographic characteristics: age, gender, ethnicities, and education. A few participants might have felt intimidated that a female Samoan from the University of Auckland had researched their past career experiences, as highlighted by Nyberg and Delaney (2014) about the researcher's identity that shifts and is shaped by the conflicting expectations of the respondents, gatekeepers (includes Matai), and research institution. Moreover, while I saw myself as a 'mature and experienced' Samoan woman, to some of the participants, I was perhaps viewed as immature and inferior given my cultural status (I am untitled), and ethnicity (I am of mixed Samoan heritage) was discussed at the beginning of nearly every interview. A few comments were more explicit that mocked my Chinese facial features and NZ-born status. Given that my demographic characteristics are fixed and a part of my identity, I did, however, endeavour to behave with the utmost respect during social interactions with the participants. For example, I wore traditional Samoan clothing, downplayed my enthusiasm, avoided using any academic-jargon words,

and provided meals for some of the participants during the interviews. Furthermore, I made sure that the participants were satisfied with the contents of their transcripts to lessen any impact of potential shame. This did, however, raise the question of whether the participants would have felt more comfortable had I been a Samoan male, born and raised in Samoa.

As the researcher, I acknowledge that the findings might be subjective given that my beliefs and interpretations as the researcher are entrenched in the research process. To minimise this limitation, two types of thematic analysis were used in this study: (1) NVivo software for coding the transcripts, then categorizing codes that led to themes, and (2) analysing individual transcripts by hand, using highlighted codes, chunks of text, and written comments. For each method, the participants assisted with clarification and authenticity of their words and meanings by confirming that the transcripts were accurate. Furthermore, my station as the researcher was explicitly stated to position the interpreted data, and my supervisors further reviewed the analysis process to lessen this limitation.

This research study has initiated several avenues for future research. For instance, it appears that one of the side effects of a patriarchal culture, where hierarchy is highly valued, may lead to the U'u Coconut Crab Syndrome for some individuals. As a reminder, this syndrome differs from the Western Tall Poppy Syndrome (Kirkwood, 2007) because it has spiritual connotations that are linked to the va. Some Samoans may be perceived as fragmenting the va by disrespecting one's class (and titled Samoans) because of their New Zealand managerial employment status. Moreover, it appeared to be more harmful and disadvantageous for NZ-born Samoans than individuals from Samoa. This issue is an area that has great potential for delving deep into the antecedents of this socio-cultural dynamic and further development of this syndrome.

Group consensus, the va, and deceit emerged as another conflicting challenge for Samoans where they might compromise their beliefs and views to maintain the status quo (based on the va). It might also imply that Samoans deliberately conceal their true opinions and feelings to accommodate the congruous vibe of the team. This outcome does raise an important question of whether Samoans are being deceitful or enacting something else? Given that the va is a pan-Pacific dimension, there is an opportunity to investigate the experiences of other Pacific cultures concerning the relationship between the va and group consensus in New Zealand organisations.

As mentioned earlier, one of the surprising outcomes concerned Samoans favouring Palagi mentors over same-race mentors. What this does seem to indicate is a transitional shift of cultural norms, whereby the acquisition and sharing of knowledge (or mentors) were formerly sourced from senior and experienced Samoans (Schoeffel et al., 1994), is now moving to non-traditional sources, for example, Palagi mentors (work context). Therefore, it does warrant further exploration of whether the preference for Palagi mentors (over same-race) is a pan-Pacific experience for some individuals in New Zealand. Additionally, it would be interesting to research the efficacy of cross-race mentors for Samoans and Pacific people in New Zealand organisations.

From the data, there seems to be a fair share of quiet murmurs and whispers among the community about unfairness and hostility towards female, half-caste, untitled Samoans in leadership positions. Given that I now have a growing mindfulness of this phenomenon, I would like to further explore the impact of cultural ‘untitledness’ and other intersecting strands of race, gender, and employment status for Samoan women in leadership and



managerial positions in New Zealand. Drawing on the promising changes of the new and contemporary woman-led government of New Zealand, and the power and solidarity of the female voice in standing up for social justice, I believe it is an appropriate time for Samoan women to talk about gender, equality, and fa'asamoa in the New Zealand landscape.

## 9.5 Personal Reflections and Closing Statement

Undertaking this study over the past years has been a treasured time of learning, unlearning, and relearning things that I thought I understood; views that I sensed were similar and dissimilar; and the fragility and randomness of what life presents to us. I have gained some understanding of the characteristics of research. I have accepted that academic frameworks and processes are sometimes chaotic, and yet - exhilarating. Moreover, I learned that culture could not be categorised into a fixed reality; rather, it is fluid (Ah-Siu-Maliko, 2016; Anae, 2002; Liliomaiava-Doktor, 2004) and highly contextualised.

This study further provided some important points for me to consider regarding ethnic minority identities, vulnerabilities, and their survival mechanisms at work. I now question my past work experiences and wonder if cross-cultural miscommunication potentially impacted my career trajectory. Was there ever a time when I appeared overly respectful based on my upbringing and values (a mix of Samoan and Confucianism) and was my behaviour misperceived by colleagues and management as 'weak' and 'submissive'? In addition, did I unintentionally misinterpret Western behaviours based on my cultural lens and react unfavourably? This aspect of the research has challenged my assumptions and the way I communicate, where I am more alert to how I converse, and careful of misconstruing the

actions of others from different cultures. I have found this revelation to be immensely rewarding, yet, frustrating.

Now that I am at the end of writing this thesis, I openly confess my sadness at the death of my father that had a profound effect on my approach and purpose. Prior to his passing, I believed that my prose about Samoans and fa'asamoa lacked grit and true empathy of their plight as Pacific minorities employed in a principally Palagi working environment, and the impact of their susceptibility and motivation to do better based on the aiga (family) institution. At my father's funeral, I witnessed the power of the va, the collective spirit of Samoans, and fa'asamoa values on the sanctity of the procession, and the compassion and alofa shown to us, where the aigapotopoto (extended family network) arrived and took over nearly every aspect of the ceremony so that we were able to grieve without disruption. I also acknowledge that some of the respondents who knew my father expressed their sadness and respect on this occasion. These acts are what I perceive to be some of the paramount strengths of fa'asamoa: the collective spirit of the aiga during times of crisis. I, therefore, encourage Samoans to return to their values, find out who they are, and draw out their inner strength from reconciling the past with their present that informs their future. Finally, I say *tōfā soifua* (farewell) and close with the words of Tui Atua Efi (2007) that aptly define, perhaps, the totality of the Samoan psyche, values, and institutions:

*'I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos.  
I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas, and the skies.  
I belong to my family...a village...my nation.  
This is the essence of my sense of belonging.'*



# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A: Participation Information Form

Project Title: Smashing through the 'brown glass ceiling': Exploring perceived barriers to career advancement for Sāmoans working in Aotearoa, New Zealand

Project Researcher: Betty Ofe-Grant

Project Supervisor: Professor Nigel Haworth

### Introduction:

I am a Sāmoan PhD student from The Department of Management and International Business at The University of Auckland in NZ. As a requirement of my degree, I am undertaking field work that will lead to a doctoral thesis.

### Project Aim:

The aim of this research is to explore and gain new in-depth information about a potential glass ceiling and its effects (perceived as barriers) that exist for Sāmoans at work in the NZ environment. These barriers may restrict access to higher senior positions in the NZ organisations, and stem from labour market forces, organisational systemic barriers, and societal perceptions. For this research, I have coined the term 'brown glass ceiling' to describe the perceived barriers that Sāmoans encounter as they navigate through Western-NZ working environments while negotiating their cultural heritage, values, and traditions.

### Voluntary Participation:

You are invited to participate in this research as a Sāmoan manager who has a successful management career and currently working in a senior position in an organisation in NZ. You will have had a successful track record of employment, senior levels of autonomy, management discretion, and staff responsibility. Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why this research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask questions. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you have the right to stop participating at any time. Should you choose to do so, you have the right to extract the data you contributed from the research up until three weeks after the interview. Should you decide to withdraw from this research, my contact details are provided at the end of this form.

### Research Procedures:

Qualitative interviews will be used to generate new information from Sāmoan managers that have overcome career barriers and achieved management success. These managers may potentially provide new perspectives to the glass ceiling and its barriers particularly with an indigenous perspective that is unlike the traditional Eurocentric view of work. Their stories may assist Sāmoans and Tagata Pasifika who are not yet in management positions and inform current HR practitioners, policy makers and the NZ working industry of an indigenous perspective on potential barriers and challenges that may delay progress into senior management roles.

I will digitally record the interview, but you have the option to decline being recorded. This process should take approximately 40 minutes, or longer should you wish to continue with the interview. I will transcribe the digital recordings and check the transcripts with you so that the information is accurate. There are no anticipated risks involved in this process or with your participation in this research.

### Data storage/retention/destruction/future use:

Any information that you provide is for the purpose of this research study and locked in a cabinet of which the location is only known to me and my supervisor. After a period of 6 years, the digital recordings, electronic data, and transcripts are destroyed (paper shredder) and erased from all electronic storage devices.

The results of this research study can be made available to you upon request. You can make your request to me through the contact information provided at the end of this document.

Confidentiality:

We are unable to provide anonymity for those that we interview but will do our utmost to ensure the confidentiality of the names of the participants. You will not be named in any report, subsequent presentations or publications.

Your identity as a participant in this study will be kept strictly confidential and is unlikely to be recognisable. This is due to several reasons: (1) at least 60 Sāmoan managers will be interviewed (2) these managers are demographically scattered in the major cities Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin and (3) are employed in different industries and sectors.

Please note that I intend to publish the results of this study in this thesis and will send a summary of the findings to you upon request.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this research study. If you wish to take part in it, please sign the attached consent form. This information sheet is for you to keep for future references.

Contact Details:

Betty Ofe-Grant

Email: [b.ofe-grant@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:b.ofe-grant@auckland.ac.nz)

Mobile: 64 9 923 3300

Researcher

Professor Nigel Haworth

[n.haworth@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:n.haworth@auckland.ac.nz)

Telephone: 64 9 373 7599 extn 85235

Primary Supervisor

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext 83711. Email [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 12 April 2015 for 3 years, Reference Number 013512.

## APPENDIX B: Consent Form

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

**Project Title:** Smashing through the 'brown glass ceiling': Exploring perceived barriers to career advancement for Sāmoans working in Aotearoa, New Zealand

**Project Researcher:** Betty Ofe-Grant

This form is to gather your consent to participate in this research project. Any information you supply during the interview and research is confidential, and your name will not appear in any report, presentation or publication of the research.

Your identity as a participant in this study will be kept strictly confidential and is unlikely to be recognisable. This is due to several reasons: (1) at least 60 Sāmoan managers will be interviewed (2) these managers are demographically scattered in the major cities Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin and (3) are employed in different industries and sectors. We are unable to provide anonymity for those that we interview but will do our utmost to ensure the confidentiality of the names of the participants. You will not be named in any report, subsequent presentations or publications.

My supervisor and I are the only people who will have knowledge of this information. All data are stored safely in a locked cabinet of which my supervisor and I know of its location, and I have the key. Apart from this form, all other identifying information will be removed at the completion of this research.

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, understand the nature of the research, and why I am selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to the following:

- Participate in this research study conducted by Betty Ofe-Grant
- Partake in an interview for approximately 40 minutes or longer (at my discretion)

I understand the following:

- I have the option to refuse digital recording, and at any time of my interview without any explanation
- My participation is for the purpose of this research study only
- Digital recordings, transcripts and electronic data used in this study are isolated from other information, kept in a locked cabinet and destroyed after a period of six years following the completion of the research study
- Upon request, the results of this study are available to me at the completion of the study
- I have the right to withdraw my data up to three weeks after the interview
- My identity as a participant in this research is strictly confidential
- My participation and data results are unlikely to be recognisable or traced back to me, and will be published in a way that would protect my confidentiality

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Details:**

Betty Ofe-Grant  
Email: [b.ofe-grant@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:b.ofe-grant@auckland.ac.nz)  
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Primary Supervisor

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext 83711. Email [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 12 April 2015 for 3 years, Reference Number 013512.

## APPENDIX C: Questions for 'open-ended' interviews with Samoans participants

These interviews are a 'voice of carriage' for Sāmoan managers to narrate their experiences, challenges, potential barriers, and successes, while navigating the NZ working environment and negotiating their cultural heritage.

These interviews are semi-structured. This procedure is appropriate given that there are well-documented studies of the glass ceiling, however, limited subjective knowledge of Samoan career experiences in the NZ work-force. The following question may be used to help you prepare your thoughts, memories and experiences before the interview.

1. As a Samoan, what were the career challenges, barriers, and success facilitators that you experienced in the NZ working environment?
2. How did you negotiate indigenous culture e.g., fa'asamoa with career advancement?





## APPENDIX D: LinkedIn Advertisement for Recruiting Samoan Managers

**Researcher:** Betty Ofe-Grant, The University of Auckland, New Zealand

**Introduction:** Sāmoan Research of the 'Brown Glass ceiling'

I am a Sāmoan PhD student from The University of Auckland. As a requirement of my degree, I am undertaking field research leading to a doctoral thesis.

I am exploring the possibility of a 'brown glass ceiling' that prevents Sāmoans from accessing top management positions. A glass ceiling is a phenomenon that describes barriers that prevent particular groups (notably women and ethnic minorities) from reaching senior roles. These barriers stem from labour market forces, internally from the organisation as systemic barriers, and externally from societal perceptions. Very little is known about the glass ceiling in NZ and its effects on Sāmoans or Pacific people.

Recent statistics indicate that Sāmoans lag behind their Māori and European counterparts in leadership and management positions, despite government interventions and Human Resource industrial attempts to increase and enhance Pacific representation at senior levels. The NZ working industry is extremely diverse in cultures, and yet most of the HR management processes and procedures are still predominantly Eurocentric in practice and for this reason outdated.

Sāmoan managers in NZ are invited to participate in this research. You will have had a successful track record of employment, senior levels of autonomy, management discretion and staff responsibility. Further explanation and documentation will be provided.

If you are a suitable candidate or would like to know more about this research project, please send a message by clicking on my LinkedIn name.

### Contact Details:

Betty Ofe-Grant

Email: [b.ofe-grant@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:b.ofe-grant@auckland.ac.nz)

Mobile: 64 9 923 3300

Researcher

Professor Nigel Haworth

[n.haworth@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:n.haworth@auckland.ac.nz)

Telephone: 64 9 373 7599 extn 85235

Primary Supervisor

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext 83711. Email [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 12 April 2015 for 3 years, Reference Number 013512.



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