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YOU BET YOUR LIFE...AND MINE!

**Contemporary Samoan Gambling
In New Zealand**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Behavioural Science**

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Pacific peoples in New Zealand are identified as having the highest risk and prevalence of problem and pathological gambling behaviours. Despite increasing awareness of gambling related harms in New Zealand there is a dearth of research on Pacific gambling, the reasons for problem gambling and the risks gambling poses for these populations.

This thesis examines contemporary Samoan gambling and problem gambling through the perceptions and in-depth understandings of thirty-two Samoan participants. Pacific research methodologies premised on Pacific epistemologies, practices and protocols provide the cultural framework that supports the qualitative methods used in this research. These cultural methodologies also provide the context within which data gathered is analysed, interpreted and discussed. The method used within this thesis is an amalgam of Pacific and grounded theory approaches.

The research identifies Samoan cultural factors that play a major role in understanding contemporary Samoan gambling. It links the deep-rooted cultural understandings of *va/teu le va* that are associated with early Samoan games and sports with contemporary Samoan gambling behaviours and practices. The research provides cultural understandings of the complex conditions and processes within which contemporary Samoan gambling and problem gambling are embedded, constituted and differentiated for Samoan people in New Zealand. These understandings are used to explore the extent to which gambling impacts harm Samoan individuals, families and communities.

The research also describes cultural factors that are associated with motivations for contemporary Samoan gambling. It demonstrates that concepts such as ‘winning’, ‘fundraising’ and ‘socialising’ act as primary motivations for engagement and explores ways in which these drivers challenge the *va* and *teu le va* that are inherent within *fa’aSamoa*. The potency of these new motivations is illustrated through consideration of cultural practices such as *fa’alavelave*, status acquisition, religion and hospitality. These factors are not only complex but they also play an important role in the initiation, development and maintenance of Samoan gambling.

This thesis articulates a broad knowledge base of cultural factors, practices, influences and understandings that are associated with contemporary Samoan gambling in New Zealand. It highlights how Samoan (problem) gambling while often rationalised in terms of *aiga* enhancing precepts is in reality most often undermining and eroding of *aiga* values and practices.

In light of these findings, contextually effective Samoan solutions incorporated into Public Health interventions are recommended as a means of addressing the alarming gambling-related issues facing Samoan people in New Zealand. A greater emphasis on *aiga*/familial interventions rather than focusing on individuals is crucial since *aiga* and close social networks are identified as playing an important role in the development and maintenance of gambling behaviour and can also be effective catalysts and supports for behavioural change. Further research is indicated to better understand and develop the knowledge-base on contemporary Samoan gambling with specific relevance to Samoan youth and adult populations in New Zealand.

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Lastly, to my fellow PhD colleagues and friends who continue their journey, I share with you a quote from the Greek playwright, Aeschylus which was sent to me by a good friend, Fuimaono Tuiasau, in a time of need:

He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the two people who gave me life
and taught me to live it to the fullest.

My late father
Fred Perese
who passed away early in my PhD journey,
and My mother,
Moana Perese
who continues to be my tower of strength.

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GLOSSARY

<i>aiga</i>	Family, extended family, descent group or kinship in all its dimensions; transnational corporation of kin
<i>aitalafu</i>	Borrow. Borrowing
<i>ali'i</i>	One of two orders of <i>matai</i> , a 'high chief' as opposed to an 'orator' chief, also polite word for men – 'gentleman/men'
<i>alofa</i>	Love
<i>aualuma</i>	Society of unmarried/widowed/separated girls and women belonging to a village by birth, attendants to the <i>taupou</i>
<i>auamaga</i>	Society of untitled men, an institution in every <i>nu'u</i>
<i>ava</i>	A ceremonial drink made from root of piper methisticum, called <i>kava</i> outside of Samoa
<i>faa'aaloalo</i>	Respect, deference
<i>fa'alavelave</i>	A ceremonial occasion (weddings, funerals, etc.) requiring the exchange of gifts, anything which interferes with 'normal' life and calls for special activity
<i>fa'alupega</i>	A formal expression of recognition associated with a <i>matai</i> title. Each village and district has a set <i>fa'alupega</i> which acts as a constitution by expressing the rank and by the alluding to the historical/genealogical origins of the senior titles
<i>fa'aSamoa</i>	In the manner of Samoans, the Samoan way; according to Samoan customs and traditions
<i>fa'asinomaga</i>	Direction, the right path
<i>fagogo</i>	Tale (N.B. This kind of tale is only told at night and the exclamation 'aue is used by the audience to punctuate the story and assure the speaker that they are still awake and interested
<i>faife'au</i>	Pastor, minister
<i>fale</i>	House, traditional house
<i>fale tele</i>	Guest house
<i>faletua ma tausi</i>	Wives of <i>matai</i>
<i>fanau</i>	(Be) born
<i>fono</i>	Governing council, a council of chiefs, a meeting
<i>i'e toga</i>	Fine mat (the most valuable and significant object in Samoan custom), finely woven cloth of bleached pandanus fibres bordered with coloured features – usually red. Varieties of 'ie toga are graded and named according to size/quality/appearance/purpose

<i>kuka</i>	Kitchen, cookhouse (esp. in a European-style house)
<i>lafoga tupe</i>	Traditional chiefly game played with a set of concave disks (cut out of coconut shells and polished)
<i>lagi</i>	Sky, heaven
<i>mafutaga</i>	Companionship, fellowship
<i>malaga</i>	To visit, a visiting party, visiting <i>aiga</i> , ceremonial visit paid according to Samoan custom; journey
<i>mamalu</i>	Dignity, majesty, honour, prestige, influence
<i>masoa</i>	Herb, the Polynesian arrow-root, the root of which provides an edible starch and a paste for making bark-cloth
<i>matai</i>	Political representative of <i>aiga</i> who holds a title bestowed by <i>aiga</i> , custodian of <i>aiga</i> land and property
<i>matua</i>	(be) mature (but not fully ripe), adult, grown-up, older, elder, be loyal to, parent, root core of a sermon/speech
<i>meaalofa</i>	Present, charity
<i>mealelei</i>	Favour
<i>nu'u</i>	A polity or village, also <i>gu'u</i>
<i>palagi</i>	Also <i>papalagi</i> sky-breaker (lit.), white man, Europeans, foreigner
<i>pisupo</i>	Corned beef, salted beef
<i>siva</i>	Samoan dance
<i>tala</i>	Dollar/dollars
<i>taulaga</i>	Offering to church, sacrifice by priest (trad.)
<i>taule'ale'a</i>	Untitled man (plural: <i>taulelea</i>)
<i>tautala</i>	Speak, talk
<i>tautua</i>	(of untitled men and other dependents) serve a <i>matai</i> , carry out orders of; those who stand behind those in authority
<i>taupou</i>	High ranking maiden
<i>teu le va</i>	Take care of the relationship
<i>toea'ina</i>	Elder (referring to men)
<i>tofiga</i>	An appointment/position, council of pastors and deacons who control <i>pulega</i> , <i>tofiga tele</i> = district representative body; a profession/occupation
<i>tulafale</i>	Orator, talking chief
<i>tupuaga</i>	Origin, descent ancestors
<i>va</i>	Referring to the distance/position of two people/places/things in

	relation to each other/their relationship, separate yet closely connected
<i>va fealoaloa'i</i>	The relationships of mutual respect in socio-political and spiritual arrangements
<i>va tapuia</i>	The sacred relationships in the socio-political and spiritual arrangements
