

Exploring intersectional links between culture and gambling: The case of Pacific people in New Zealand

Paper presented at the National Association for Gambling Studies 27th Annual Conference (22-24 November 2017)

Komathi Kolandai-Matchett (Auckland University of Technology), Pesio Ah-Honi Siitia (Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand), Erika Langham (Central Queensland University) & Maria Bellringer (Auckland University of Technology)



GAMBLING & ADDICTIONS RESEARCH CENTRE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

Culture, ethnicity – Risk factors?

SECTION 3

CULTURAL RISK FACTORS

Ethnicity, migration and Aboriginal identity

Cultural background may be a risk factor for problem gambling. Several studies have linked problem gambling and Aboriginal identity (Sproston, Hing & Palankay 2012; Young et al 2006; Office for Problem Gambling 2012; Hare 2009).

For example, Sproston, Hing & Palankay (2012) found 1.7 per cent of people of Aboriginal heritage had gambling problems, compared with 0.8 per cent of the general population.

This increased risk for Aboriginal peoples has also been found in New Zealand (Mason & Arnold 2007; Ministry of Health 2012) and North America (Wardman, el-Guebaly & Hodgins 2001).

The evidence of an association between problem gambling and other cultural backgrounds is less clear. Some studies have found that problem gambling is associated with non-

On the other hand, successful adaptation to a culture which is accepting of gambling may also be associated with risk, as a migrant may be more likely to engage in gambling as a result of this adaptation.

The effect of migration may also be different, depending on the cultural background of the migrant. Further research is therefore required to determine how migration may be linked to problem gambling.

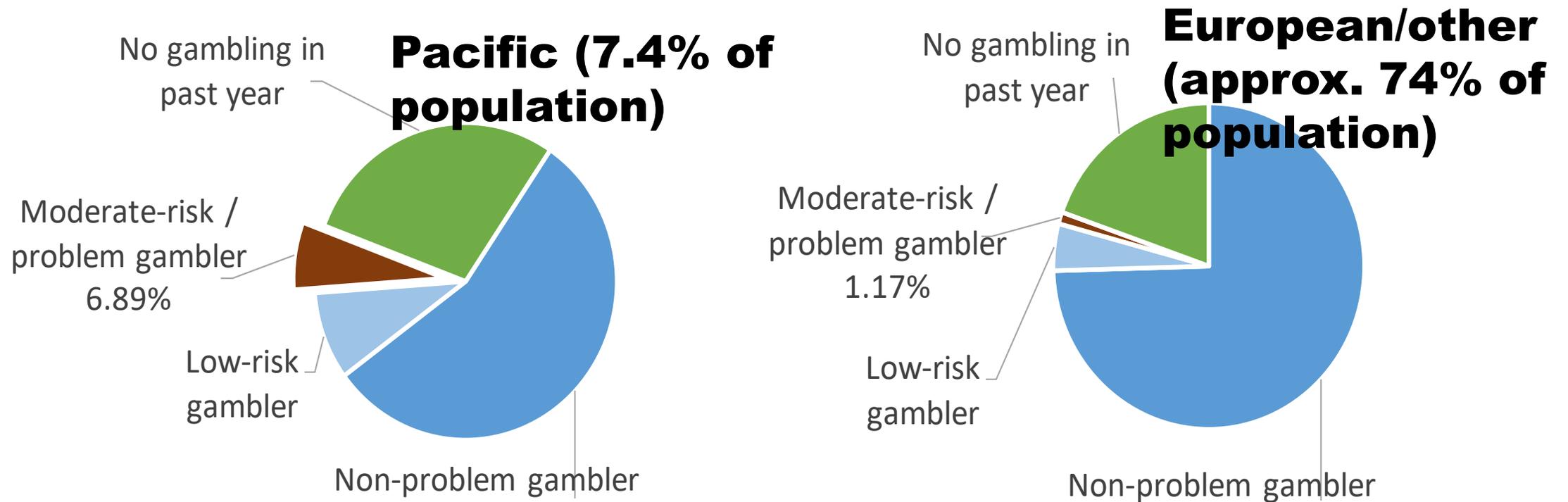
Religious beliefs

International research suggests religious belief may influence problem gambling risk. Spritzer et al (2011) found increased religiosity was associated with a decreased risk of problem gambling in a survey of 3,007 individuals aged over 14 in Brazil.

Specific religious beliefs may also be associated with gambling behaviour. In a US study, Welte et al (2006) found Catholics are more likely to gamble than people of other faiths. However, being

Gambling among Pacific people

- Less likely to gamble but those who gamble have increased risk



2012 National Gambling Study (Abbott et al. 2015)

Gambling among Pacific people

- The statistics show that a higher proportion of individuals among the Pacific population in New Zealand experience gambling harm
- Being Pacific is NOT a precursor for problem gambling

Our study

- We analysed data from a subset of 4 focus groups conducted for a broader study of gambling harms in New Zealand.
- Groups comprised individuals knowledgeable about Pacific peoples' gambling behaviours and staff from Pacific problem gambling treatment services.

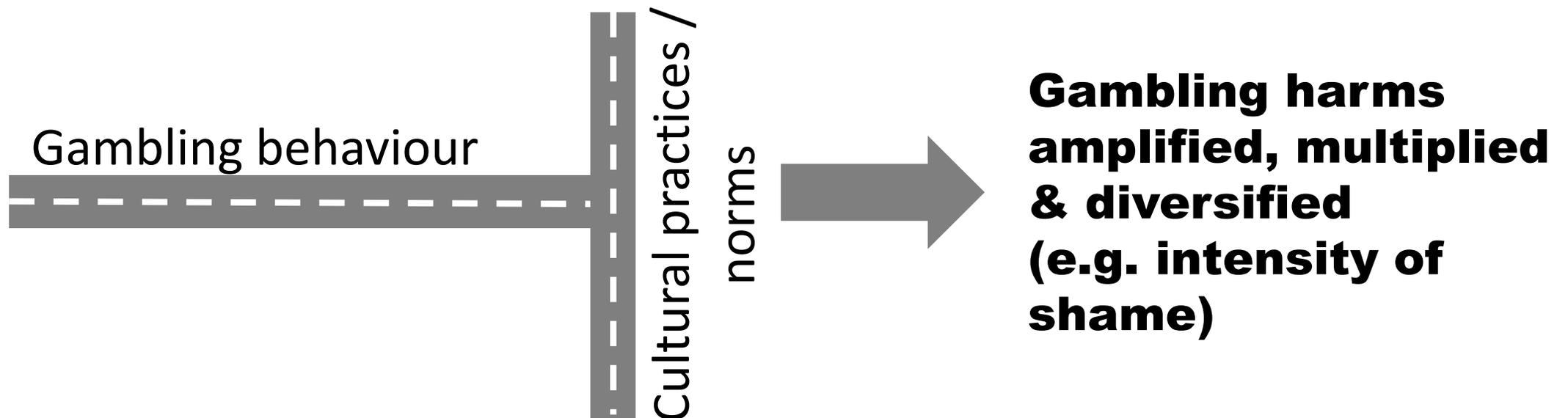
Intersectionality – theoretical framework

- Originated as a feminist identify-focused framework – how different identity dimensions interdependently influence experiences.
- Framework has broadened in scope – includes more dimensions, and been applied to other minority groups.
- We used the framework to explore culture-gambling links and how they influence experiences of gambling harm.

(Bowleg 2012; Carbado et al. 2013; Collins 2015; Kolandai-Matchett et al., 2017; Roberts & Jesudason 2013)

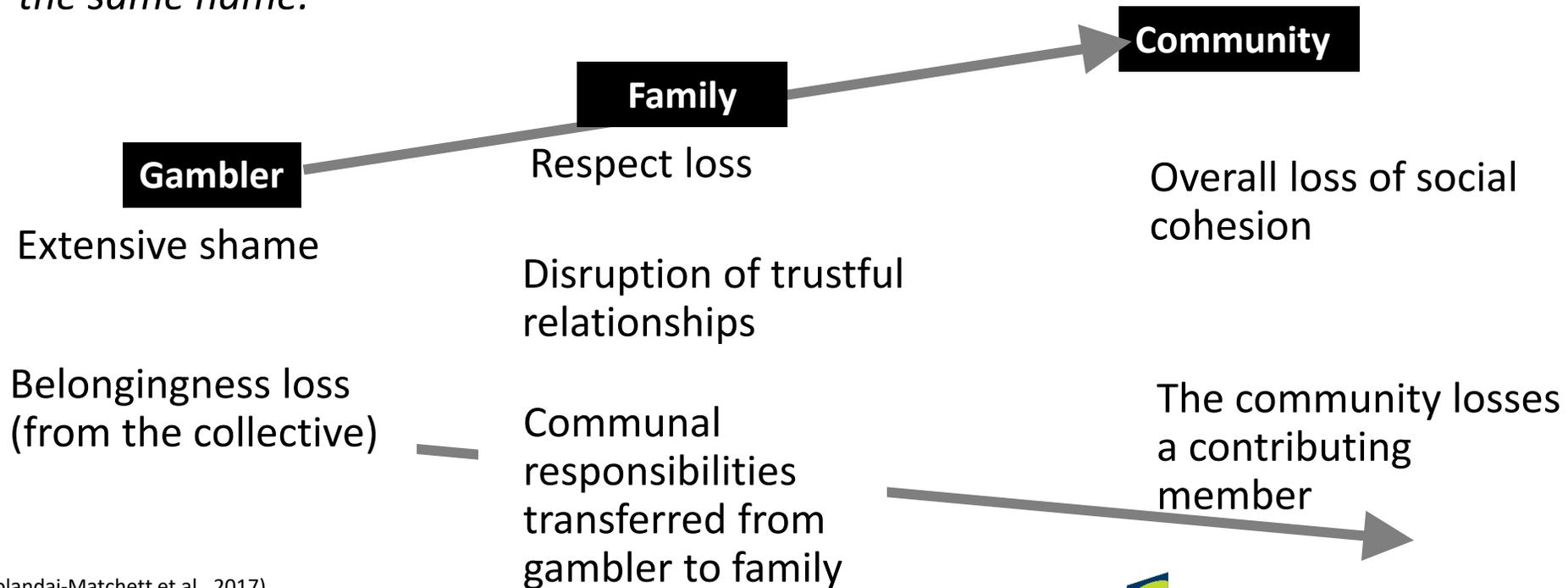
When gambling intersects with culture

- Culture -- an intersectional factor in gambling harm manifestation
- Culture -- NOT presumed (or proposed) to be a risk or causal factor
- This distinction is important - cultural practices contribute to community cohesiveness (social sustainability) and offer social protective factors.



(1) Maintaining collectivism

“So for a problem gambler, one of the largest harms ... is when it impacts ... their families and communities. ...for the individual there’s the risk of isolating one’s self from that unit and that connectedness, that defines who that person is. ...this person can’t contribute to the ... collective. So those pressures to contribute fall on other family members. ...there’s also ...a sense of a loss of respect ...That loss of respect reflects not only on that individual, but on their family who all have the same name.”



(Kolandai-Matchett et al., 2017)

(2) Gift-giving (*fa'alavelave* / *fetokoni'aki*)

"... they are all pressured to give... even if they don't have anything they would sell whatever they have, or gamble in order to have that to maintain the relationship."

"... Often it's not questioned when people come along and ask ...for some monetary support. So for a problem gambler not being asked why you want money, has again huge implications for that individual, their family."

Easy source of
funding for
gamblers

Feeds problem
gambling behaviour

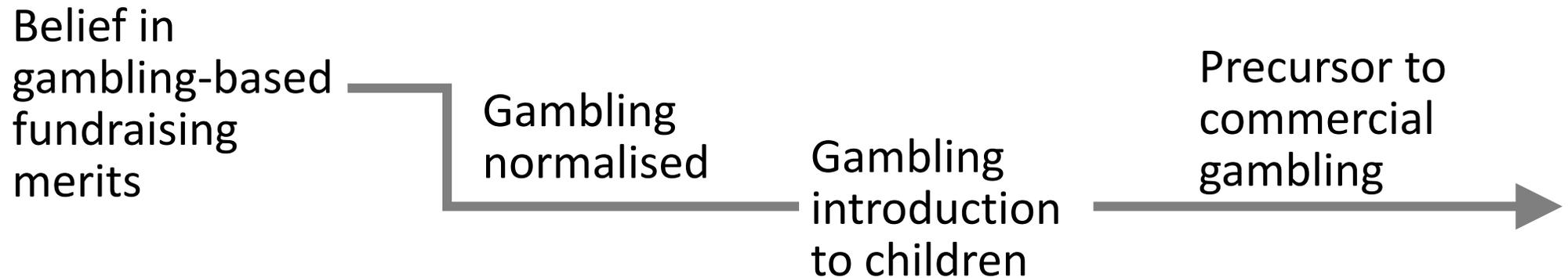
Problem remains
unnoticed

Delayed help-
seeking

(3) Gambling-based fundraising

“Pacific gambling is not really seen as gambling. Because for years ...we've practised it as fundraising, so it's become normalised ...how we've raised money for our needs, for our functions....”

“Many of our people go to housie [bingo], they take their children along,it is considered acceptable because of the relationship between the minister of the church and God.”



(4) Beliefs about blessings

“...So a lot of Tongan people, they look at gambling, they use the other word like moniua ... meaning blessing. ...if I win four hundred they'll say it's a moniua it's a blessing from God. ... but they don't count on losing, whether it's a blessing from God you see...”

Belief that
gambling wins
are a blessing

Focus on only
gambling wins

Increased
gambling risk

(5) Elements of patriarchy

"...the husband ...is the gambler, because he's the one with the money, ...the wife... her role is mainly domestic, looking after the kids, there is no voice at all."

"...the father is the head of the family, ...[children] ...they can't speak up to their father – so ...they go through their mum. ...when mum is unable to speak up on their behalf so again, it ruins them internally and how they see their mum ..."

Culturally defined gender roles

Male as provider and household head

Gambling reduces ability to fulfil responsibility

Excessive feelings of shame

Hiding gambling problems

Relationship breakdown

Women unable to comment on gambling behaviours of male family members

prolongation and/or exacerbation of gambling harms

Impacts on family and children

(6) Idolising sports celebrities

“They are idolised and the community themselves will idolise them too because they've done well and then they can come back - can give back to their culture”

“... the use of our celebrity sportsmen - so our Pacific men who are in the All Blacks speaking on behalf of...I suppose the casino because they're a sponsor. ...using our Pacific sports players can send a very negative message to our up and coming young sports players.”

Pacific sports icons used
in gambling advertising

Gambling
endorsed

Risk of increased gambling
behaviour among youth

Considerations for public health programmes

1 *Matakāinga* (treating others like family)

- reflect a collective identity (focusing on family and community rather than on individuals)
- mutually inclusive family-like relationships - bridges gaps between public health workers and Pacific people.

2 Stigma associated with the term 'problem gambling'

- public health messages framed positively, emphasising health and wellbeing.

Considerations for public health programmes

3 Indirect communication to build rapport – starts with a common interest subject before bringing up the actual issue

- values Pacific relational philosophies (i.e. acknowledging a person's status and/or hospitality prior to entering their space)
- enables identification of potential barriers to working relationships.

4 Reverence / respect towards elders

- public health workers could work collaboratively with community elders/leaders community.

Considerations for public health programmes

- 5 Appropriate communication channels
 - church-based programmes, ethnic-specific radio channels communicating messages in different Pacific languages suitable for reaching Islands-born people,
 - electronic media more suitable for reaching New Zealand-born people as less are familiar with their native languages or attend church

(Agnew et al., 2004; Bathgate & Pulotu-Endemann, 1997; Kolandai-Matchett, Bellringer, Landon & Abbott, 2015; Perese & Faleafa, 2000; Ryan, Beckford, & Fitzsimons)

Conclusive statements

- When there is an intersection with culture – the experience of gambling harm is bigger for Pacific people
- A mainstream standardised public health approach may not be as effective.
- Culturally appropriate gambling harm prevention interventions need to as diverse as the community needing protection.
- Important that Pacific people (both New Zealand-born and Islands-born) are involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of harm prevention interventions.

We thank

- the New Zealand Ministry of Health for funding the Burden of Gambling Harm in New Zealand study
- our focus group participants for their time and the valuable knowledge they shared
- the conference organisers for providing the opportunity and arena to share our findings
- the audience here today for your presence and interest

References

- Abbott, M., Bellringer, M., Garrett, N., & Mundy-McPherson, S. (2015). New Zealand 2012 National Gambling Study: Wave 2 (2013). Report number 4. Prepared for Ministry of Health. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology, Gambling and Addictions Research Centre.
- Agnew, F., Pulotu-Endemann, F.K., Robinson, G., Suaalii-Sauni, T., Warren, H., Wheeler, A., ...Schmidt,-Sopoaga, H. (2004). *Pacific models of mental health service delivery in New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Health Research Council of New Zealand.
- Bathgate, M. & Pulotu-Endemann, F.K. (1997) Pacific People in New Zealand. In P.M., Ellis & S.C.D. Collings (Eds.) *Mental Health in New Zealand from a Public Health Perspective*. (pp. 104-135) Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Health.
- Bowleg, L. (2012). The problem with the phrase women and minorities: Intersectionality—An important theoretical framework for public health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102(7), 1267–1273.
- Carbado, D.W., Crenshaw, K.W., Mays, V.M., & Tomlinson, B. (2013). Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2), 303-312.
- Collins, P. H. (2015). Intersectionality’s definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41, 1–20.
- Kolandai-Matchett, K., Langham, E., Bellringer, M., & Siitia, P. A. (2017). How gambling harms experienced by Pacific people in New Zealand amplify when they are culture-related. *Asian Journal of Gambling Issues and Public Health*, 7(5). doi:10.1186/s40405-017-0026-3
- Mafiléo, T. (2006). Matakäinga (behaving like family): The social worker-client relationship in Pasifika social work. *Social Work Review*, 18(1), 31-36.
- Miller, H. (2015) *Background Paper: Risk Factors for Problem Gambling: Environmental, Geographic, Social, Cultural, Demographic, Socio-Economic, Family and Household*. Australia: Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation.
- Perese, L., & Faleafa, M. (2000). *The impact of gambling on some Samoan people’s lives in Auckland*. The Compulsive Gambling Society of New Zealand. https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/assets/fmhs/faculty/Centre%20for%20Gambling%20Studies/documents/2000perese_samoan_people.pdf. Accessed 21 Feb 2017.
- Roberts, D., & Jesudason, S. (2013). Movement intersectionality: The case of race, gender, disability, and genetic technologies. *Du Bois review: social science research on race*, 10(2), 313-328.
- Ryan, D., Beckford, N., & Fitzsimons, M. (2010). *Lalaga: Pacific providers making a difference*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Health.
- Urale, P.W.B., Bellringer, M., Landon, J. & Abbott, M. (2015). God, family and money: Pacific people and gambling in New Zealand, *International Gambling Studies*. doi: 10.1080/14459795.2014.998252