The dilemma of power relations in Samoa

A study of cultural hegemony in a developing democracy

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
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I do not think that a society can exist without power relations,
if by that one means the strategies by which individuals try to direct
and control the conduct of others. The problem, then, is not to try and dissolve
them in the utopia of completely transparent communication,
but to acquire the rules of law, the management techniques,
and also morality, the ethos, the practice of the self that will allow us
to play these games of power with as little domination as possible

_____ Michel Foucault

E gase toa ae ola pule
The warrior will falter but good governance prevails

_____ Samoan proverb

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Glossary

afioga	salutation of a ceremonial chief; God's word
aga fa'aaloalo	polite customs; etiquette
aga'ifanua	customs which are particular to a village or subgroup
aganu'u	customs or traditions by which a country is known, culture
'āiga	general term for family, blood kins
'āiga lotu	the church as a family of believers
ali'i	the chiefly matai as opposed to orator
ali'i ma faipule	the council of chiefs and orators
alofa	love, compassion; the offering for the pastor
alofa faimeatonu	love based on fairness and justice
a'oga a le faife'au	the pastor's school; the institution
ao o le malo	the head of state
Atua, Le ~	God as the ultimate focus of Christian worship
'auala	right of access to a funeral (custom)
aualuma	association of mature untitled females of a village
'aulotu	church parish, the congregation
'aumaga	the association of mature untitled males of a traditional village
'autalavou	the youth group
ava	respect, honour; gap(s)
ava fatafata	relational principle of mutual deference between people or among groups, used to resolve differences, reciprocal respect
ekalesia	church, congregation, parishioners
epikopo	the bishop
fa'aaloalo	respect, politeness, decorum
fa'afafine	a male who behaves in a range of feminine-gendered ways
fa'afaletui	a private conversation or discussion; study method
fa'afeagaiga	village pastor (salutation), the covenantee.
fa'alavelave	a cultural occasion/event to which all kins contribute e.g. funeral, wedding, birthday, etc
fa'alelotu	relating to the church, religious
fa'alupega	ceremonial salutations; honorifics of a country/place/people
fa'amama avega	easing the burden; a social strategy
fa'amatai	Samoa's traditional system of government; ethos and ethics of the matai system or ways of doing
Fa'apotopotoga	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
fa'aSamoa	the social, cultural, political customs & traditions of Samoa
fa'asinomaga	collective identity, cultural identification
fa'ataualofa	principle/practice of reciprocating a kind act
fa'ataulele'a	band of untitled men in a traditional Samoan village
fa'atofamamao	a social strategy in support of economically deprived families
fa'autaga loloto	deep view of the orator(s)
fa'autauta	prudence, tact

fafine	woman, female
fāiā	relation by kinship or affinity; right of access to a family
faiavā	a man married into the family; brother in law
faife'au	the village pastor, church minister
faigalotu	church politics/governance
faigamalo	government as run by a certain party/group or person
faiganuu	village business/politics
failauga	the matai orator; lay preacher
faimalo	to join the government
fai ma sē e tau i ai	nepotism, to do favours for kins; the spoils system
faipule	member of parliament, politician
faiva o fa'aaloalo	respectful practices/customs
faletua	salutation for wife of a high chief or pastor
faleupolu	orator or group of; aka tulafale
faumalo	to vie for political control, ambitious
feagaiga	title given to a girl in a covenantal pact between sister and brother in relation; in this symbolic pact the sister is accorded sacred status and certain privileges; the covenantee
fono	meeting, council, assembly, parliament, deliberation
fono a matai	the matai/village council
fono faitulafono	the legislative assembly
Katoliko	the (Roman) Catholic church
lafo	reward for making the official (ceremonial) speech
laga le to'ilalo	to restore dignity by avenging a defeat
lāuga	ceremonial speech usually by an orator
lotonuu	patriotic, love of country
lotu	religion, church, church service, denomination
mālō	the conquering party, government; the state
malosi o le nuu	cohort of young men of a village, also called 'aumaga/taulele'a
Mamona	Mormonism; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
mana	a supernatural power or quality, the power of God
manamana i loto	to cherish in the memory
matai	general term for traditional leaders who hold a title. Two types (1) chiefly/ ceremonial (ali'i) and (2) orator matai (tulafale)
matai alii	ceremonial chief, aka tamāli'i
matai tautua	the matai who serves the principal matai
mau	opinion; movement, cause e.g., Samoa's Mau Movement
mauli	inner person comprising mind, spirit and soul
measina	cultural treasures of symbolic significance
Metotisi	the Methodist Church (Wesleyan)
moe	the orator's insight; sleep
nofotane	a woman who married into the family, sister-in-law
nu'u	village polity, country
nu'u o tiakono	council of deacons/deaconesses
nu'ulotu	religious village, church commmunity

palagi	European; white person; *short form of* papālagi
palemene	parliament, legislative assembly
palemia	prime minister; the office of
patele	Catholic priest
pule	power, authority, governance
pule a alii ma faipule	collective authority of matai (ceremonial chiefs and orators)
pule faaletulafono	rule of law recognized under democracy
pule faasa'o	the authority of the principal matai
pule faasuli	the authority/rights of an heir
pulega	government – secular or religious, authority; district
pulega a matai	matai authority/government
pulega lelei	good governance; practice/principle of
pulenu'u	old term for the village mayor
salelesi	special cohort of matai who scavenge for food during cultural ceremonies (e.g., funeral)
sa'o	the principal matai of a Samoan family
sa'o'aumaga	son of leading chief and his party of untitled men
sa'otama'ita'i	daughter of a leading chief
soālaupule	to rule by consensus, to deliberate as equals
so'otaga	kin-based relations, genealogical ties
suafa	matai title, name (polite)
Suafa	pronoun for a titular ceremonial chief.
su'emalo	to find a government by peaceful means
sui o le nuu	village mayor (aka pulenu'u)
suli	heir of a Samoan family
Susuga	salutation for pastor, officer or any adult person
tamaʻāiga	sons and daughters of noble bloodlines, or specifically from Samoa's traditional clans having claims to royal lineage
tamafafine	matrilineal line; the female siblings
tama'ita'i	general reference to all women; polite term for fafine;
tamālii	chiefly matai; ceremonial chief(s)
tamāliiaga	human dignity, nobleness
tapa'au	leading or titular chief(s) of village/district; aka alii ta'i
tapu	sacred according to culture/religion; prohibited as to be set aside, decree or any form of legislation to protect or control
tapua'iga	the act of worshipping God; ritual of lending support spiritually; moral support
taulaga	monetary gift to church, donation to church or village
taulaitu	the Samoan pre-Christian priests; aka taulasea
tāuleleʻa	untitled men of the village; tauleʻaleʻa ~ (singular)
taupou	the maiden who plays a cultural role in the village
tausi mamalu	maintaining the dignity of a title/office
tautua	server, service, to render service to family, etc
tautua lotu	in service of the church, to serve the church keenly
teu le va	tending to social/ kinship/human relationships

ti'akono	deacon, deaconess
tofa	a tamalii's insight, aka the long view
tofa liuliu	deep contemplation in search of consensus
tofa mamao	long view of titular/ceremonial chiefs
tofa sa'ili	deep contemplation in search of wisdom/insight
tofi	heritage, a God-given right, right of succession
tofiga	a cultural appointment
tua'oi	boundary both literal and symbolic
tulafale	the orator matai; speaker on behalf of ceremonial chiefs
tulafono	law, the rule of law, code of conduct
Tumua ma Pule	the eleven principal orator groups of Upolu and Savaii
ua sa'ausi le tofa	the deliberations have been thorough among peers
ulumatāfale	sponsor of the church, a family that contributes to the church's upkeep; s.f. matāfale
va	in the Samoan culture, the symbolic space in which mutual relations between people or entities are observed; the symbolic space in which power is situated/acknowledged/executed according to this study
va fealoa'i	cordial relations between people

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Map 1. A descriptive political map of Samoa. (Source – worldometer)

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Ua mautu atu le sini o lenei sailiga. O se tilotilo toto'a i le uiga o le pule ma ona so'otaga ma fāiā i totonu o le sosaiete o le igoa Samoa. Ua matauina ma le toto'a le laufetoa'i i lea taimi ma lea taimi e mafua i le mau eseese i lona faamatalaina, e le gata i pulega ma fa'atinoga a o aafiaga o sootaga i le va o tagata, va o le malo ma le lotu, ma soo se va e aofia i le li'o o pulega faaSamoa. I le tula'i mai o nisi o mataupu fita, ua lagalaga ai ni fesili e fesoota'i tonu ma lea mau eseese.

E iai su'esu'ega na muamua. O lenei sailiga o se fa'aopoopo e ala i se tasi foi tioata faalesu'esu'e e faamatala ai. E iai ona 'aulape, e pei o lenei, ia tausisia le mea amiotonu. La lea e le o se va'ai pitotasi, a o se iloiloga tuto'atasi i le uiga o le pule ma lona liutino mai e ala ia tatou faiganuu, faigamalo ma faigalotu. Afai e aogā i le fa'apupulaga atili o le autu, fa'afetai. Afai foi e taua se faatupu manatu auā faiva malo, fa'afetai. E malosi le taofi ua ao Samoa, ua matua le tofa saili e talanoa ai se autu maaleale i le faapalepale ma le agaga fetāla'i. Pei ona tomua le upu e fai i le tama'ita'i sa topule malo, E gase toa ae ola pule. O lea agaga sa lautua i lenei fe'au, o iai i le pule le mafaia e fa'aea ai nuu, aiga, malo ma ekalesia. O le pule o se mana e faatupu moemoe ola i lē ua mafatia.

I le toe tepa i tua, e ui sa fa'apopo o ni aso uaga ae sa itea foi ni aso folau; o se mautinoaga fa'atautai o le vasa. A ua iloa foi e leai se faiva e atoa; pe poto le tautai ae se lana atu. E moni tatou te tausisi i le potomasani ma tulafono fa'aletagata, a o le upu moni e gata mai, o se mea tauilo o tatou ala. Auā e leai se malosi e sili a'e, se va'ai mamao e tu ma iloa atu, se'i vaganā le Tautai Sili; o le pule i matagi ma le vasa. O lenei folauga faalesu'esu'e sa faia i le talitonuga ua lava fa'ailoilo e fa'avae ai se mautinoaga; ua iloga fa'aiteite e tu'ula ai i se taunuuga ae le mailoa. Ae ona ua taunuu manuia, ona saga viia lea lana faasoa lelei. La lea e silisili ma tutasi pea le fa'afetai i lē e ana le pule uma lava. O ia le fa'asino malaga lelei i so'o se folauga e fa'amoemoe ia te ia.

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Abstract

This thesis sought to explore the dilemma of power relations in Samoa from a holistic perspective, focusing largely on power's major stakeholders that include the political state, traditional culture, and the church. The thesis argues that Samoa's power relations are the works of multiple players, differing discourses and a predominant ideology, and should be studied on the basis of this understanding. While previous research on Samoan politics have focused on the conventional dual relationship between state power and traditional authority (*pulega faamatai*), this thesis reviewed the search to include the church and civil society organizations. Technically the Samoan society is governed under a plural system; comprising Western based law and democratic ideals, the village government under the *faamatai*, and church government with at least twenty practising denominations, each with own system of political control. The outcome is a syncretic mix which manifest in dilemmas of power contestations, political situations, and human choices. The major challenge for the Samoan leadership has been that of trying to clarify its statehood in this context of contradictions, or the search for balance and harmony. In studying the problem, the thesis adopted a critical conceptual approach, mainly in the works of Antonio Gramsci, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel Foucault.

The thesis makes the assertion that firstly, Samoa's power relations are complex because they involve a set of multiple narratives, of which the most powerful support the status quo. Secondly, the emergence of a strong state in the ruling party, the Human Rights Protection Party, has demonstrated how the new configuration and diffusion of power impacted modern leadership in the way they use power productively or otherwise. Central to the findings is the role of a reconfigured culture, in the situation, recognition, and exercise of power, served as the ideological underpinning in the Samoan society. Critical theory has managed to address these concerns much more effectively than any other approach.

Key words: *power, power relations, cultural hegemony, government, democracy, ideology, state, church, balance of power, culture, traditional authority, civil society*

Abbreviations

ADB	Asia Development Bank
AOG	Assembly of God
CEV	Contemporary English Version (The Bible Society)
CRE	Children's Rights Education
CT	Critical Theory
CTS	Concurrent Triangulation Strategy
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano I Samoa
FAP	Fairclough's Analytic Procedure
FAST	Faatuatua i le Atua Samoa ua Tasi Party
FDA	Foucaultian Discourse Analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRPP	Human Rights Protection Party
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LDS	Latter Day Saints (Mormon Church)
LMS	London Missionary Society
LTC	Land and Titles Court
MESC	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture
MICL	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Labour
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
MP	Member of Parliament
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NHRI	National Human Rights Institute
NUS	National University of Samoa
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
P	Participant (of the study)
PIC	Pacific Island Church aka Pacific Island Presbyterian Church
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
SDA	Seventh Day Adventists (church)
SDS	Samoa Development Strategy
SNCC	Samoa National Council of Churches
SNCW	Samoa National Committee of Women
SNDP	Samoa National Development Party
SOO	Samoa Office of the Ombudsman
SSIG	The Samoa International Solidarity Group
TAT	Thematic Analysis Technique
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

This research offers a critical review of the dilemma of power relations in post Independent Samoa. It sets out to unpack the complexity of this dilemma from a critical theory perspective, not previously documented in former research. The general aim is to get an in-depth understanding of how this dilemma, brought about by the contradictory and accommodating relations among multiple systems of governance; for example, state and democracy, village and *faamatai*, church and a mix of both, impact a community, and hopefully through the findings, contributes to the knowledge of Pacific government and politics. In context it seeks to understand the nature of such relations in a modern political environment that revolves more around the political state.

For this thesis, the term dilemma is defined as, "any difficult or perplexing situation or problem" (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary).[1] In politics where multiple systems inform decisions, there is a dilemma of political inertia for example, described as lack of action or response, due to the difficult or confusing nature of such a situation (Spragens, 1973; Rosa, 2013; Zantvoort, 2017). Viewed therefore from this perspective, the dilemma of power relations refers to this unresolved situation which can be explained by critical theory much more effectively.

As in many modern democracies, or those that had emerged from a post-colonial dawn, political power has orbited more around the state, appropriated through democratic instruments such as political parties, ideals and the election process (Fukuyama, 2014). The HRPP for example has been influential in Samoan politics for more than 30 years, particularly its role in positioning the state as a powerful agent of change and influence in the relations (So'o, 2008). Under its tenure, Samoa has been politically stable as well as economically sustained despite enormous challenges. In focusing on Samoa, we intend to get a better understanding of this dilemma of modern power relations.

Samoa provides a fitting example of the dilemma as stated. First, its culture is very much intact, and through its *fa'amatai* has pervaded every level of society. By the same institution it has joined its citizens across geographical borders and continents,

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[1] This definition is used in a specific context. See Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary Online: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/.

binding them globally as a people (Anae, 2020). The relationship between 'the land of birth' and its diasporic citizenry is strong to say the least. The latter are as much concerned about matters at home as they are with the politics of their adopted countries (ibid.).

Secondly, Samoa has undergone massive changes in its political system without causing much unrest[2] apparently (So'o, 2006). Under the watch of the HRPP, 38 years in the making, Samoa is arguably the most stable democracy in the region. Both the state and the matai system (*fa'amatai*) have shown resilience against the challenges. However, Samoa's democracy has begun to show signs of strain under the present circumstances. Social indicators have pointed to a very unequal distribution of power (UNDP Report 2015).[3] Sectors of the community complain. The average citizen will implicate culture now and then as an accomplice in acts of political hegemony.[4] The government is accused of breaching traditional *tapu*. Still, it is business as usual. The majority continue to take politics as it comes. The voters still favour the present government.

With government commanding almost full majority of parliament, and having the power to do as it pleases, it places Samoa's democracy in a predicament for the first time.[5] For example, its latest move to push ahead three pieces of legislation, one facilitating the split of the Judiciary, is considered a bold move. But being bold has become the norm for the HRPP all these years, in the face of strong resistance from the public at times. For the government and its supporters there is the rationale to empower *faamatai* on its own merits (Samoa Observer, Issue May 1, 2020). For the advocates of the constitution, what is at stake is the future of democracy and fundamental rights of a citizen under the constitution.

The concern for a group of local scholars like Toleafoa is the turning of a traditional system *(fa'amatai)* into a state *tautua* to become a tool of repression and control (Toleafoa, 2017). So, when the culture is blamed for Samoa's social problems, when the church is implicated in people's hardships, when the government is accused of meddling in the culture, it is not easy to pinpoint a particular cause. In other words, there is more to tell than what is presented at face level.

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[2] One former parliamentarian was quoted, that the changes that the HRPP wrought would have changed overseas government overnight, weren't it for the strength of the culture to accommodate (So'o, 2006).
[3] A UNDP Report 2015 stated that inequaltiy is on the rise and has reached alarming levels, and vulnerability has increased. Meleisea, et al. (2015); AusAid (2012); Glass (2012). Locally, Samoa Observer Editorial commenting on social inequality is commonplace, based on its Street Talk survey, etc.
[4] Public complaint against cultural obligations is all too commonplace, much part of the public discourse.
[5] Some sectors of the civil society have stood up against government due to lack of opposition.

1.1   Broad aim of study

The broad aim of this study is to explore the dilemma of Samoa's power relations from the perspective of critical theory. The dilemma is borne out of the contested and complex nature of Samoa's political environment, which literature acknowledged (Meleisea, 1987, 2012; So'o, 2008; Iati, 2017; Toleafoa, 2017, Va'a, 2007; Va'ai, 1999). The term dilemma here refers to how power manifests itself in multiple relations through and among diverse players such as the state, matai system, communal culture, church and civil society, resulting in tension or accommodation or both at the same time.

1.2   Specific objectives

a. To critically explore the plural power relationship between the state, *fa'aSamoa* and church in the context of Samoa's post Independent politics.

b. To examine the implications of such an environment on the people's perception of power and aspirations pertaining to, through interviews.

c. To examine how the state leverages power through traditional culture, laws, state institutions, and other mechanisms as means of maintaining its control.

d. To assess the wider implications of power relations on current and future political stability and development of Samoa's democracy.

1.3   Rationale

While there have been a number of studies made in reference to Samoa's power relations in general, the gap is evident from the viewpoint of a critical framework. While snippets of critical reference are made here and there, an in-depth look into the intricate nature of such relations using critical approaches, has not been offered. First, the rationale behind taking such approach is moral as it is necessary, that is to offer a detailed analysis of power for the purpose of describing the dilemmas faced by those who do the governance as well as the so-called 'governed.'

These dilemmas are manifested outwardly in the emerging ruptures of relations between and among the major players of power. The choice of critical theory was considered for its efficacy to unpacking the problem. The emergence of a party such as the HRPP as a staying power of influence in Samoan politics, or in the backdrop of a region still rife with political uneasiness, is worth studying. This will benefit research into our own political development and the way Pacific Island states have assimilated Western ideals/systems to suit own styles of government.

The Human Rights Protection Party is perhaps the best example of a Pacific ruling party that has done so by legitimate means; its achievements continued to win global acclaim (AusAid, 2011; Samoa Observer, Issue May 23, 2017). Most notably, its ability to sustain and consolidate its hold on power or in Foucaultian understanding, its own 'moral truth' as Samoa's preferred government for such a long time (Foucault, 1997). This is self-evident in the way the party handles relations with an assertiveness no other government has done before. For that reason alone, there is a need to elaborate much more deeply than what is offered at face level. Which is why the people's perception is important in the validation of theory/assertion (Neubauer, 2019).

Since political independence, the Samoan society has undergone some sweeping changes politically and economically, which impact on the social fabric of its traditions and mores has been profound, particularly under the HRPP rule. For the past 30 years, the HRPP government has exerted more control on Samoa's power relations. The strains of governance versus the governed have begun to show as well as impact the nation's political consciousness gradually but surely in many ways.

Public opinion, especially from among the young and educated, has been vocal against several government initiatives. They are representative of the argument that the voters have not been consulted (Samoa Observer, Issue May 23, 2020). The growing resentment has become articulated in the social media much more freely than traditional media. All of these are tied to the unresolved issue of pluralism wherein different systems sometimes serve the whim of power politics and subsequently create dilemmas.

Finally, the research ponders on the question that is on the minds of many Samoans locally and abroad - political continuity of the Samoan state. There's a price to pay for Samoa's political stability (Iati, 1998; Toleafoa, 2013); the vulnerability of small island nations to dominant forces such as globalization, the market and corporate capitalism, is compounded by a moral uncertainty, fuelled by social media over certain issues of vital interest to the voters: the leasing of customary lands and legal matters pertaining to, Samoa's foreign debt, Communist China's influence; and the most appre-hensive of all, the direction that the HRPP has taken Samoa to. On a different front, there is the physical vulnerability which brings climate change and human security immediately to public attention, among other issues demanding attention.

In the final analysis, the anticipation has been to find out how power can manage to accommodate the needs of all its stakeholders, now and into the future. With the general elections around the corner, it will certainly provide some clarity at least to the current conundrum. If by any chance a change in government happens after the 2021 elections, then it would be a clear sign of the people's wish. It would be an affirmation of democracy at work and a reassurance that the people only have the final say in democratic processes. But if at the end the HRPP continues its rule into the next decade, with not so much effort, then this will help answer the question of why Samoa's power relations continue to behave the way they do for Samoa's democracy.

From a personal perspective, I feel obliged to point out my own position in this study. First, a natural citizen, having lived and immersed myself in the *faaSamoa* and the culture for 28 years, which I continued to do so as a resident of New Zealand and another member of the Samoan diaspora, in the latter part of my worldly sojourn. Having been bonded to the *faaSamoa* through various roles I can safely claim my good relations with the culture, the language and the knowledge that represent.

As well, my work experience, starting from Samoa and continuing in New Zealand, has directed me to this inquiry; first, as a former member of Samoa's public service, which I considered my initiation into Samoan politics as an observer from within the system. I watched the public servants' first protest march across the street from the balcony of the old Government Building, the ensuing industrial dispute that went on for three months, divided a young democracy and impacted Samoa's power relations enormously. I looked at the march and saw my cousins whom I shared the same village with. We lived together as family until this moment when politics separated us. They have decided to march for what they believed was right; me too, I was part of the power regime.

So, I have been a witness of some of the roughest patches in Samoan politics in the eighties, as Samoa was verged on the brink of a political breakdown. The outcome for power relations was chaotic and desperate. Looking back there was a lot of grievous rupturing to be had in relations at all levels. Since that moment, power relations in Samoa's public service – even the country - has never been the same. The experience had much influence on my pursuing studies in Politics to where I am at this point, doing research on Samoan politics, with the benefit of lived experience.

In summary, this study is justified as follows:

a. to find out how and why power relates the way it is in Samoa's status quo.

b. to understand how Samoa's dilemma of thriving or otherwise under multiple systems and discourses can be unique to explain hidden aspects of power relations in small democracies.

c. to validate theory with the people's insights/opinions so as to provide substantial assertations on Samoan politics.

d. to validate a personal journey and own relation to Samoan politics.

1.4   Introducing my conceptual framework

How power relationships function in an average society is a political question first and foremost, hence it needs a most relevant framework that matches the task. For my purpose I have chosen a critical framework with a collaborative approach. First, I have selected the theories of power by Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu; all of them were interested in power and its relations in the role of government. First, Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony for me is the underlying theme of Samoa's power relations. Foucault's assertion on power as relational and ubiquitous aptly describes the essence of *fa'aSamoa*. His relevance to Samoa's under-standing of power is due to his emphasis first, on the centrality of human relations in power dynamics; secondly, the rationale of its usefulness in general, and thirdly, its general application in the context of a modern state.

Last but just as important, the contribution of Pierre Bourdieu. Complementing Foucault's notion of power as ubiquitous and beyond agency, Bourdieu viewed power as culturally and symbolically created. His theory of capital is considered as highly fitting to interpreting the qualitative nature and complexity of the *fa'aSamoa*.

In collaboration with the three theorists, two traditional approaches, in Critical Theory (CT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have been selected. While all acknowledged under the label 'critical' each is a distinct tradition though in the final analysis, they are much more agreeable and transferable than otherwise (Graham, 2005; Kendie, 2006; Linklater, 2007). Also given the scope of the space of scrutiny as demanded by critical theory tradition – totality of society – it means that its various approaches can offer the best to accommodate such a free expansion of knowledge to provide a more balanced assessment of societal relations (Linklater, 2007; Horkhemier, 1972).

Further still, a critical collaborative approach tends to provide a more authentic framework into gauging the Samoan social reality. Such reality can be revealed by measuring society's consensual truths against actual social conditions (Friesen, 2008). Such an approach always seeks to "make problematic what is taken for granted in culture, in the interests of social justice or the oppressed" (Nichols & Allen-Brown, 1996, p. 226 cited in Friesen, 2008). (See chapter 4 for further details).

1.5   The dilemma in literature

The thesis problem has been acknowledged by previous literature. The colonial record attested to attempts by colonial governments to replace or merge the matai system with a foreign alternative failed by all accounts (Meleisea, 1987). Even the adoption of the two systems since Samoa regained political independence has proven counter-productive for power relations. Meleisea (1987) wrote, "The contradictions between the two legal systems under which Samoans lived were never seriously addressed by Samoa's leaders, nor were the consequences of the assumption that the solutions to contradictions within what is now regarded as *fa'aSamoa* would resolve themselves over time."

His appeal for action to salvage traditional institutions implicates the plight of many third-world countries, whose own indigenous institutions and systems have succumbed to self-destruction due to lack of action or the dilemma of political inertia. His position represents the reality of the problem, the unfavourable consequences that underscores a rather cautious if not taken for granted attitude by the local leadership.

So'o (2008, 2006) observed Samoa's political structure as an academic and a matai and   has commented consistently on the resilience of the culture to withstand such ambiguity. His view represents those who believe that the dilemma can be resolved somehow within the confines of Samoa's own superstructure, that is, in the strength of

its customs. There is a chance that given time the problem will resolve amicably, though it implies the need for vision on the part of leadership.

Tui Atua (2009, 1997) whose credentials include state roles as former head of state, prime minister two times, an emeritus professor and a prolific writer on Samoan culture and politics, presented a paper called, *O le fa'autaga i le fa'aluafesasi: Insight into dilemmas*. In essence the dilemma is about the search for meaning in the dynamics of relations. Basically, the dilemma of power for him lies in what he calls, balance and harmony. The search for meaning then is striving for balance between two opposing systems. First, acknowledging the dilemma is full acceptance of the reality; striving to maintain harmony requires an ethical approach. *Tofa Saili*[6] is an indigenous way in response to the dilemma. Through *tofa saili*, Samoa can resolve the dilemma of governance (ibid.).

Iati Iati (2013, 2017) in his article Samoa's price for 25 years of political stability, was a response to part of the problem this study was also interested with. His analysis of factors that contributed to such stability revolved mainly around the political dominance of the HRPP, through a strategy that guaranteed its monopoly on power for 25 years. His concern is obvious from an observer's informed viewpoint. The dilemma of having a strong government comes at a price of a weak system of checks and balances.

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[6] The search for wisdom according to Tui Atua is an holistic undertaking that involves a critical reflection that begins with the searcher (Tui Atua, 2009; p.225).

1.6   Thesis Overview

The thesis is divided into 11 chapters, a list of references and four appendices.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The first chapter introduces the problem that is the general aim of the study. I lay out the rationale and introduced my conceptual framework. A brief overview of the literature highlights previous comments on the dilemma.

Chapter 2. Context of Study

This chapter introduces the context of the study. A comprehensive overview of Samoa's ethnohistorical framework, tracing power relations from its primordial evolution to its present development.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The third chapter discusses the methodology. I chose a mixed method. I explained the rationale of choosing this approach, particularly the notion of strength in combinations as Creswell (2003) pointed out. In total a detailed account of the research design, questions and participants profiles are presented herewith.

Chapter 4. Literature & Theoretical Framework

The Literature presents both local (Samoan) and international reference, with special attention on critical theory tradition, targeting the works of Gramsci, Foucault, Bourdieu, and their respective advocates.

Chapter 5. The indigenous concepts in Samoa's power narrative

The fifth chapter provides a summary of Samoa's indigenous concepts pertaining to power and power relations. The purpose of which is to provide a solid cultural underpinning of power from a Samoan perspective.

Chapter 6. Institutionalized political power: Samoan parliamentary democracy

The sixth chapter provides a brief overview of Samoa's democratic framework in terms of its institutions and functions. It highlights some of the pressing issues pertaining to power relations in which these institutions are implicated.

Chapter 7. Concentration of power: The Human Rights Protection Party

This chapter focuses on the party in power. It provides a brief history of its development and role as a dominant player in Samoa's power relations. The question of why it has held onto power for so long is addressed.

Chapter 8. Power diffusion & intersections: Village, Church & Civil Society

This chapter looks at power and its relations in local government and civil society and their institutions, respectively. The matai council plays a prominent role as sponsor of

fa'amatai; as well, the church as agent of normalization, both perpetuate cultural hegemony.

Chapter 9. The Field research: The People's perception of power

The ninth chapter focuses on the analysis of the data. Transcripts of twenty interviews were analysed and interpreted in the frameworks selected.

Chapter 10. Findings & Discussion

This chapter presents the findings and discussion in the light of the theoretical framework.

Chapter 11. Conclusion: Risks and Political continuity

The final chapter closes with a comment about Samoa's future power relations.

1.7   Conclusion

By Foucault's own assertion, no society can exist without power relations. Such a claim is self-evident. There will always be those who do the governance in terms of directing and controlling the conduct of the governed. The latter are as much involved in the process according to Foucault (1991). In Samoa's situation, power relations are very much grounded in the politics of a reconfigured culture. Foucault interpreted these politics in terms of strategies or that which both the governors and governed reproduced as if playing a game of life, which cardinal rule is to minimize the domination of one by the other as much as possible (1997b).

The reality of politics implies that the relationship between the two is never static but shifting and strainful though it can be accommodating too (ibid.). Such dynamic state reproduces dilemmas of power which are manifested outwardly at times, in various acts of protests by the governed, or lapsed into a suppressed state such as political inertia or moral uncertainty for example. Placed in such a situation, the majority of the governed seemed to have tacitly accepted their lot for less obvious reasons this research is keen to examine. Such an attempt at gauging the depths of political power in Samoa will help to provide a better understanding of the thesis problem.

Hence a critical conceptual framework was selected, in the lenses of the critical theory paradigm that favours a collaborative approach. The thesis problem was traced to the literature (see Chapter 4 for further details). Overall, this chapter serves to inform the reader of the thesis direction, by flagging as much on what to expect in the chapters ahead.

Chapter 2
CONTEXT OF STUDY

This chapter sets out to describe the context of the research. It attempts to trace the way power was situated historically, geographically, and politically in the story of the Samoan people, first as ocean migrants second as settlers of a new archipelago. The link between the past and present needs a closer look into to better understand how the past shaped the current situation of power. The first part is a brief presentation of Samoa's ethnographic history. It is a comprehensive overview of its story from a historical stance, with more leaning to the post-European contact period from the missionaries to the post-colonial era. Taking a discursive approach to its retelling may be a limitation to this study though there are works of note which serve as references and making up for the gaps. The second part provides an overview of the political context, first the traditional political layout in the village and its systems of government. An update of the place of study is provided for background information. The reader will note my attempt to put things into perspective by commenting on the current state of the status quo or updating on the development of a certain institution or issue for example.

2.1 Samoa's geographical and geopolitical composition

Samoa lies in the South Pacific Ocean midway between Hawaii and New Zealand in the Southern Hemisphere. Its geographical composition consists of two large islands and eight smaller islands five of which are uninhabited.[7] In size it is 2842 square kms in total, Upolu is the most populous and more developed; the seat of government and the capital Apia, and Faleolo, its only international airport. Savaii is the largest and has a more rugged terrain with the highest point, Mt Silisili at 1857m; and with Upolu account for at least 96 percent of Samoa's land area and 99 percent of the population. Geologically the two large islands are shield volcanic types created by hot spots that existed 23 million years ago, the same are responsible for the creation of the Samoan archipelago (Harris et al., 2020).[8] Located on the Pacific tectonic plate near the boundary of the Australian Plate, and within the 'Ring of Fire' active zone, lending herself

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[7] Britannica website.
[8] See also Britannica website online; Wikipedia.

therefore to the forces of its seismic activities (ibid.). In 2009 a submarine earthquake in the southern Pacific Ocean adjacent to the Kermadec-Tonga subduction zone triggered a tsunami causing significant damage and loss of lives, particularly on the southern coastlines of the two large islands (ibid.). While much freer from any active volcanic activity it is nonetheless susceptible to the Pacific cyclone season that affects the islands occasionally. Two powerful cyclones hit the islands, one in 1990 and another in 1991, causing huge devastation to crop and the vegetation, the national infrastructure as well, not to mention the impact on the economy and loss of lives (Samoa Observer, February 9, 1990).

Much of the coastal plains is flat and fertile that surround most of the larger islands with own vegetation of coconut plantations and native flora; this is where people cultivate their normal crops. More than 95 percent of the people live in village settlements along the coastline. The exception is some of the smaller islands that are coral in formation, like Manono and Nuusafe'e for example (Harris et al., 2020).

2.2 A brief history of migration and pre-colonial contact legacy

The Samoan culture (*fa'aSamoa*) is a product of mass migration over certain periods of human history; the vast Pacific Ocean has been the main arena of such movements by Polynesian forebears, much noted under the label, Lapita travellers (Salesa, 2004; Terrel, 1986). Research concurred that early movements from modern Taiwan to mainland southeast Asia occurred at around 4000 BC, having settled in the Bismark Archipelago, Vanuatu, and moving eastward spontaneously in groups of families later on (ibid.). Each group brought with them own social and cultural capital and natural resources, all of which bear on the physical landscape of new homelands found along the way (Salesa, 2004; Meleisea, 1987a). Samoa was settled around 3,500 BC (Lipson et al., 2014; Terrel, 1986).

Maritime interconnections with close neighbours became commonplace mainly for commercial and political reasons. Intermarriages among members of the Pacific noble families led to the first multicultural settlements in the islands; most notably the Tongans who settled in Samoa in numbers around 700 AD[9] (Meleisea, 1987a). The Fijians made their mark too on the landscape; a number of villages on both Savaii and Upolu Islands traced their origins to Fijian forbears who had founded these settlements (Tuimalealiifano, 2020; Gunson, 1990).

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[9] Peseta Gatoloai Sio's own estimation spanned 400 years from 600-to 1000AD (Meleisa et al, 1987a).

Culture has shaped the physical landscape, socially and politically; sometimes by means of the distinct leadership of a few individuals. Samoan folklore attested to Pili, founder of the Pili Dynasty, and his heirs, who divided Upolu into political divisions (Kramer, 1994), is widely conceded to as the political founder of Samoa (Meleisea, 1987a). These old divisions still stand to this day, perpetuated by tradition. Further divisions have resulted in today's status quo of 11 districts in all, 5 in Upolu, 6 in Savaii.

Map 2. A sketch of Samoa's political divisions: (Source – Kramer – 1994)
1 – Tuamasaga; 2 – Aana; 3 – Aiga i le Tai; 4 – Atua; 5 – Vaa o Fonoti; 6 – Faasaleleaga; 7 – Gaga'emauga; 8 – Gagaifomauga; 9 – Vaisigano; 10 – Satupa'itea; 11 – Palauli.

Respect for such tradition was sustained with the new electoral divisions of Samoa into modern voting constituencies. The old names are still upheld (refer map page 29). Each political district has own capital deferred to in the custom. The island of Upolu is also called Tumua in Samoa's honorifics, meaning the leading spokesperson on behalf of the two royal families and heirs. Savaii is also called Pule, meaning authority vested on its principal orators. Both islands lay claims to royal lineage on the two royal families. As such, from the story of Pili to his heirs and others that followed, all the islands are tied as one: historically and genealogically (Meleisea, 1987a, So'o, 2008).

The local folklore attested to certain periods in its story where evidence of political usurpation occurred (Henry, 1979). Most notably the influence of Tongan imperialism. Treated as guests, they ended up asserting power over their hosts. Their expulsion was gradual but final though their legacy lived on in other forms of influence and manifestations. Wars between villages, districts, alliances were commonplace, which motives were mainly political (Turner, 1884). The assertion of power by the

victors over the losers etched into political structures and institutions their claims to rulership. Such permanence of place in the hierarchy became the legacy of past wars and their rewards. For example, the ascendancy of Malietoa to become a prominent chief among the equals was due to the momentous defeat of Tuitonga Talaaife'i'i.

The Nafanua Wars changed the political landscape of the larger islands, so as the wars of succession of Salamasina heirs, the wars of Tamafaiga prior to the missionaries' arrival, and the civil wars that ensued from the turn of the 19th century and onward, continued to transform Samoa's political landscape and power relations (Meleisea, 1987a; Henry, 1979).

2.3 The missionaries and new power

It was a cohort of dedicated individuals that founded the London Missionary Society (LMS), whose zeal for a global Christian evangelization was described by a source as "transcending own religious affiliation, that also coincided with the 'winds of societal change' in Europe (Barker, 1996). Europe was the model of social, economic, intellectual and religious organisations of the time and also the predominant powerhouse politically in driving the colonial agenda (Lovett, 1899; Porter, 2004; Barker, 1996). Evangelizing the unsaved inhabitants of the world was the call of Europe and the Christian churches were at the forefront in this enterprise.

The South Pacific islands were selected in its early ventures, beginning in 1796; thirty missionaries and their families left England on The Duff in August for Tahiti; moving on from there to Tongatapu and the Marquesas Islands (Lovett, 1899; Porter, 2004). These early encounters proved to be crucial for the cause as it provided the essential learning experience in engaging the missionees successfully (ibid.). First and foremost: communication. Without any knowledge or prior experience in people's cultures and languages the mission was beset by problems from the start; reports of missionaries abandoning the mission could well be explained from this perspective of cultural and linguistic naivety (ibid.).

The missionaries who followed after would have a much better expectation of what's to come and a lot of them were prepared for the challenge. Such foresight then was credited in regards to the manner they had approached the problem. Firstly, with a strong sense of pragmatism (Barker, 1987). Indeed the main objective of the LMS was conceptual and subjective - salvation of the soul - but it was by means of its missionaries practicality which had far more impact on the missionees response, than their spiritual

zeal; and nothing could be more practical than conversing with the missioners in their own dialects (ibid.). For the latter, the choice to be assimilated linguistically was part of such appeal. Having learnt from prior experience, it was apparent that the subjects' language was the key to reaching out successfully (Lovett, 1899).

A great example of this knack for pragmatism was found in the life and legacy of one of its famous advocates, John Williams. Rev. Williams began his service in Tahiti and at once took upon himself the task of observing, acquiring, and quickly mastering the native dialects (Williams, 1984). From Tahiti to Rarotonga, he repeated this linguistic quest successfully and he was instrumental in the first recorded translation of biblical texts in Rarotongan dialects (ibid.). Such a rewarding orientation in Pacific languages proved handy in his next move to evangelize the Samoan archipelago. A successful mission to the Samoa Islands ensued, led by John Williams and Charles Barff in 1830, was attributed to a good strategy, in the use of a Samoan couple; the man of whom was a relation of Malietoa. Malietoa seized the opportunity for own political agenda; the mission in turn counted its blessings on the pedigree and influence of a sponsor to begin with (Lovett, 1899).

The arrival of the Wesleyan missionaries in 1835, and the Marist Brothers for the Catholics a decade later, marked a change in the relationship dynamics. The LMS monopoly was challenged for the first time however, and it soon became obvious the fact that these missions, however similar their goals and religious interests were, could not work together harmoniously (Lovett, 1899; Garrett, 1982; Sila, 2012). Due to the impasse, the Wesleyans soon left as they came then made their re-entry some decades later. The literature of the period attested to a breakdown in the relationship among the three missions both locally and abroad. The church politics in continental Europe has become an onus of the Samoan adherents too, causing divisions and even political unrest locally (Liuaana, 2002; Sila, 2012). In sum, the experience left an indelible mark on church relations for years, which still resonates today in terms of hidden power relations[10] (Liuaana, ibid; Alailima-Eteuati, 2007; Tuiai, 2012; Crawford, 1977).

The missionaries were revered for their skills first and foremost. The Samoans high regard for new knowledge and technology easily made them part of the family.[11] The missionaries were instrumental in laying the foundation of a new era. With the power of a new literacy, Samoa was on its way to connecting with the world. Politically,

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[10] Evidence of passive non-cooperation, competing agenda, grievances expressed in private or public discourse.
[11] The white missionaries were affectionately called 'tamā' (father); their official title was Misi.

the missionary enterprise introduced a new dimension in power understanding for the Samoans, with the missions' strong tendency for Western education and systems of government, making the new knowledge they brought with them a much more powerful tool that transformed the status quo dynamically (Meleisea & Meleisea, 1987a; Foucault, 1991).

In the final analysis, the missionaries' legacy can be viewed in terms of a successful programme of indoctrination on a grand scale. First the ushering in of a new religion while discarding an old one. British Christianity came with own fittings that included new systems of organisation, values, beliefs, and mannerism. Sharing the colonial mindset of the period, the missionaries' commitment to the missionees was premised on the Christian message of saving lost souls and doing good; cloaked in European customs and attitudes. These changes were accepted by the Samoan leader-ship with not so much difficulty (Fauolo, 2005). Pragmatic as they were naturally, the Samoans could only see in the missionary effort a pathway to moving forward as a people (Williams, 1984; Lovett,1899).

From the missionaries' experience, it was obvious the impact of colonialism on Samoa will be unstoppable (Hempenstall, 1978). While Samoa's colonial history seemed to start off with its involvement in international commerce - the entry of a German company Johann Cesar Godeffroy & Sohn, and the establishment of large-scale plantations to supply a high European demand - it was the missionaries that paved the way on its behalf.

2.4 Colonial legacy and foreign power

To point out a singular motive behind the inception of colonial rule in Samoa is problematic. The argument whether the colonialists were invited, or they just forced their way in may be justifiable either way given the evidence (Meleisea, 1987a). In Samoa's case for example, it was a matter of both. Notwithstanding which side is better supported, colonial rule was based on the principles of power hegemony which ideology put everything European in the central axis of power. First and foremost was European knowledge and its technology. This superiority was described along the lines of Social Darwinism, hence from the first point of contact, it was never meant to be an equal power relation from the colonialists' viewpoint (ibid.). Such viewpoint turned out to dictate the relationship from beginning to end. Exercising power coercively has been a familiar preoccupation of the warring Samoans as well, who viewed European technologies of power as proof of superior knowledge (ibid.).

Foucault surmised that power and knowledge are synonymous; in this case, coercive power to rule even without the consent of the subjects. The Samoans took advantage of the encounter while at the same time they would not allow themselves to be subjected totally; indeed, they went on to appropriate the introduced knowledge, utilizing it for their own benefit (Meleisea, 1987, 1987a).

The three powers – Germany, Britain, the United States made their presence felt on the pretext of protecting their citizens interests though the main motive was the pursuit of their own political goals (Hempenstall, 1978). The convergence of both foreign and local interests simultaneously at this particular space and time period couldn't have been fateful for all parties. History attested that Samoa, at one of its most unstable periods in history took advantage of the 'big powers' rivalry, hence drawing them into own domestic politics and quarrels for rulership of Samoa (ibid.).

The three big powers, for pride and imperial motives, became entangled in the controversy (Hempenstall, 1978). The three main church missions too were implicated, and with the death of Malietoa Vainuupo in 1841, a leadership vacuum resulted in another prolonged civil war (Meleisea, 1987a). Without any other recourse, the Samoan archipelago was split in two, the Western Islands under Germany, the Eastern under the United States.

2.4.1 German rule (1900-1914)

Under Germany, Samoa was transformed into a large farm of agricultural products which were in high demand in Europe at the time. It turned Samoa into a small economic power overnight. Dr Solf while encouraging the practices of the culture and *faaSamoa* also sought to establish a centralized government with the Kaiser as head. As political overseer on behalf of an imperial power, his duty was to maintain political stability. Described as a man of tact and diplomacy, he knew that foreign interests can never be protected without the support of the locals (Hempenstall, 1978).

Time could have been better for his plans; Samoa has been embroiled in a series of civil wars, but Dr Solf still managed to incorporate new structures and policies so that both warring sides were appeased. By his agricultural policy, the standard of living was lifted, thus diverting the attention of the people away from partisan politics for a while (Hempenstall, 1978; Liuaana, 2002).

But Samoan politics were fickle as the changing moods of its power relations at the time. A faction of resistance emerged called, *o le Mau a Pule*, led by Lauaki Mamoe Namulauulu. Lauaki could see from afar Solf's attempt to impose a foreign system at the cost of the traditional *fa'amatai* jurisdiction (ibid.). The instalment of new roles was politically motivated; the abolition of titles, government's direct interference in cultural matters was in direct contradiction *to fa'aSamoa*. This snubbing of the *fa'amatai* was an insult to the Samoan pride. Lauaki has a point. Dr Solf has a point too (ibid.). Nine years of political stability spoke for itself. Samoa has never relished peace for a longer while.

Dr Solf, the church and other local leaders who were indifferent to Lauaki's cause, knew that if Lauaki had his way, another war would have ensued (ibid.). The consequences for Samoa would have been far more devastating apparently. Solf responded by having him exiled to Saipan with his main supporters. The governor was accused of high-handed tactics by his foes. Unceremoniously he was summoned back to Germany for other duties (Hempenstall, 1978). His successor, Dr Schultz, was also sympathetic to the Samoans (Davidson, 1967).

The name Lauaki is synonymous with Samoa's own resistance to foreign rule, particularly where such rule attempted to assert own authority over the *fa'amatai* and *fa'a-Samoa* (way of living). Hempenstall argued that the German legacy was Solf's legacy. German rule under his tutelage was that of cultural preservation. The Germans indeed left a legacy; first, the infrastructure; secondly, the literary contribution of its

scholars to Samoa's ethnographic research and record of its oral history, are primary sources that attested to the German legacy (ibid.).

2.4.2   New Zealand administration (1914-1953)

The New Zealand military took advantage of Samoa's vulnerability when the whole world's attention was focused on the war in Europe (O'Brien, 2017). Germany was in the thick of the trouble, its stakes in the continent were far more significant. New Zealand also has been fortunate with timing as Samoa, for a longer while, has never been stable politically under German rule. Robert Logan and his government took over with a few adjustments on the structures and systems laid out by the Germans. It was business as usual (Meleisea, 1987, 1987a). The Samoans too were very much left to their own affairs. Until Logan made some serious blunders in decision-making, the most noted was to do with the permission into port of the *SS Talune*, a small cargo ship from New Zealand, which passengers were infected with the virus of a pandemic influenza. Almost a quarter of Samoa's population was decimated, and which turned Samoa against Logan's Administration.

He was replaced by Colonel Robert Tate. Tate's successor George Richardson was another military man whose condescending attitude fared no better on an already volatile relationship (O'Brien, 2017). He was soon to meet resistance in the Mau movement, a peaceful protest of non-cooperation. When the Samoan leaders asked for more say in the affairs of government, Richardson's adverse response was a reflection on the New Zealand government's own discriminatory foreign policy (ibid.).

His successor, Colonel Stephen Allen, another military man, could not ease the breakdown in relations and which culminated in the killing of some prominent Mau leaders in 1929. The Mau continued to apply pressure against New Zealand rule, through active promotion of its grievances locally and abroad. They had an able international campaigner and agitator in Taisi O. F. Nelson (O'Brien, 2017; Field, 1991). A change of fortunes too in New Zealand politics found favour with Samoa's call for self-government, with a Labour government supporting Samoa's aspiration. An Act was passed in 1947, paving the way for Samoa towards self-government. After coming out as part of the victorious alliance of the second world war, New Zealand, under a new government has decided to honour its pledge. From then onwards, it began to work alongside the Samoan leadership to attaining the goal of self-government. Such goal was soon to be translated into the call for full independence, attained on January 1st, 1962.

In principle, New Zealand's own legacy was marked by a style of leadership that was confrontational. Compared with Germany, it can be argued that the difference was made in the capacity of two key individuals; Dr Solf's intellectual and political acumen, and Dr Shultz's tact and empathy with *fa'aSamoa*; both far outweighed their New Zealand counterparts (Hempenstall, 1978; Obrien, 2017). New Zealand though made it up with the foresight of General Herbert Hart, and the popularity of his successor Alfred Turnbull, however. As a way of making up for the past wrongs - it seems that way - both sides signed a treaty of friendship, the only such treaty between New Zealand and a Pacific neighbour (Davidson, 1972).

In sum, the most telling of Samoa's colonial legacy was to do with the coercive attempts by foreign powers to assert one political system over another or the futile effort to reconcile the two. First, Germany's attempt to impose own form of centralized authority led to a deliberate manipulation of a system of government (Meleisea, 1987; Hempenstall, 1978). Under New Zealand rule, hidden power relations were unravelled in other social dimensions of which racial discrimination was part of its foreign policy. Power was interpreted as such, thus mixed-blood locals and sympathetic *palagi* rooting for the cause (*mau*) were considered enemies of the state. Lauaki symbolised Samoa's resistance to foreign domination, so as Taisi, Tamasese and all members of the Mau Movement protest – including the women's own (O'Brien, 2017). In the end, the people's will outlasted all foreign attempts.

2.5   Local governments

There are two authorities at the local level, first the village authority, vested in the collective jurisdiction of the matai in council (*fono a matai*). Secondly, the church authority. The latter's jurisdiction is ecclesiastical and limited only to its members, clustered under various denominations/ labels. Traditionally both authorities complement each other. The church works alongside the village authority in maintaining law and order, in its capacity as Samoa's traditional moral caregiver.

2.5.1 Village authority

The basic unit of traditional government is the village. Almost all Samoan villages share the basic characteristics in terms of social organisation and management; the matai council makes decisions on behalf of village residents, subordinate councils have own particular functions to play as well (Meleisea, 1987a). Under the HRPP the village *fono* was constituted under the Village Fono Act 1990, which made it a rational quasi-legal entity, which decisions are respected by law but can be overruled.[12] Village authorities are largely independent; however, they make own rules and enforce them. Matai councils can impose foodstuff or monetary fines and even declare the banishment of a person from the village. Yet any such decision can be challenged in Samoa's courts of law afterwards.

Samoa's peaceful environment is attributed to the role of traditional village authority as a curbing force against crime or any unruly behaviour. Organised crime as understood in Western societies is not yet a problem in Samoa and will have difficulty of taking hold due to village authority taking onus of such responsibility with not much burden to the state (See Chapter 8 for further details).

2.5.2 Church government

One of the main hallmarks of Samoan villages and the country is the visibility and ubiquity of the church. The village, as the grassroots base of mission was meant to be self-sustained, each parish financing own development and support own pastor through freewill offering of food, money, and a place to live (Tuiai, 2012; Tanielu, 2004). Individual parishes are constituted in clusters of sub-districts/districts jurisdictions under the watch of an overseer.[13] At the national level, it is the general assembly which jurisdiction is paramount. The village pastor has become the central figure of religious authority, with a lot of influence on people, even village affairs (ibid.). The three main denominations, EFKS (Congregational), Metotisi (Methodist), Katoliko Roma (Roman Catholic), constitute at least 65 percent of the total population.

A gradual decline in the membership of the three, over the past 20 years, is indicative of the social and religious factors at play in people's affiliation choices (Tuiai, 2012; Saada, 2008). While it may change dynamics of relations at village level, this sign

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[12] Since 1990 the Act still evolves in terms of amendments; as in 2015, which lends the village fono more power to curb the rising level of domestic violence and substance abuse.
[13] EFKS calls theirs pulega/matagaluega; Metotisi is sinoti; Katoliko is pule'aga.

of changing loyalty does little to the people's enthusiasm to be part of the church establishment, regardless of the motive or choice, rather than opting out altogether.

Institutionalized Christianity through its many denominations is thriving and continues to influence Samoan communities hugely and in many ways. For example, the churches have been proactive in the redeploying of traditional village functions; many taking over the diminishing leadership role of *fono a matai*, in terms of organising the people, by means of prescribed activities, including fundraising projects for church buildings and mission houses (Tanielu, 2004; Tuiai, 2012; Samuelu, 1999). Incorporation as such has tied the church into the traditional space normally reserved for matai or secular authority, making the church more influential.

Traditional institutions of *faataulele'a* and *aualuma*[14] - old reserves under the village authority jurisdiction, have been incorporated into the church under its own structures such as the Youth Group, Choir Group, The Women's Fellowship, for example. While the two old institutions are upheld mostly in rural villages, most young villagers now belong to the new management. Church membership implies active involvement and participation for most of the population; churches are now the leading sponsors of village youth group activities; some are very active in cultural arts and performance, and even sports management.[15]

Migration overseas has extended and reinforced church government as a global family enterprise in new lands and regions. Former residents of villages are chief sponsors of their homeland churches from afar, in financing village developments, apart from their own families. They also contribute to their national church upkeep through financial offerings held annually. Annual church conferences held in Samoa bring in hundreds of thousands of foreign currencies which contribution to Samoa's economy can only be described as exceptional (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2011; Ernst, 2006).

2.6 National development: General Overview

Samoa is now classified as an economically developing country by the United Nations, graduating from its former LDC status in 2014. In 2017, its gross domestic product in purchasing power parity was estimated at $1.13 billion US dollars, ranking 204th among the world (UNDP, 2018). Dependent mainly on agriculture and fishing at

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[14] Faataulele'a refers to the untitled men's group; the system under which the group operates; also called aumaga (men's guild). Aualuma is the untitled women's equivalent.

[15] Anecdotal evidence plus direct correspondences with pastors and wives who act as coaches, managers, mentors on behalf of their village sports/performance groups.

the local level, the national economy relies heavily on development aid and private remittances from families overseas. Tourism also has expanded, and accounts for about 25 percent of the GDP. Like many small economies, most of the population depend on subsistence farming. About 51,000 are employed, mostly in the service industry. Its exports are mainly agricultural products. Viewed at this point in time, the Covid-19 has highlighted the reality of the fragile nature of its economic relations.

Upolu's pre-eminence continues to this day, first as the seat of government and the bureaucracy. It is more developed than Savaii, the largest island. Apia the capital and villages in its vicinity are more exposed to Western influences and families have adopted a *palagi* oriented lifestyle or a blend of both worlds (So'o & Laking, 2008; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1987a). Upolu, due to its political and economic advantages, dominates in almost every aspect of the country's demographics. It has the largest share of the population; about three-quarters of the total 195,843, the majority concentrate on the north-western side; the most concentrated of which is the capital, Apia and its surrounding periphery. The pull of urban Apia continues due to its monopoly on better services such as education, health, and employment. Apparently, this puts pressure on resources which impact on state services, state, church, charitable agencies, families have become a growing public concern (Thornton, et al., 2010; Jones & Lea, 2007).

From a national stance, the preeminent position of Upolu in terms of public development and centre of economic activity, clearly highlights the unequal statuses of the two large islands in this respect (UNDP, 2008). There was a time when plans were made to lift Savaii's economic status through upgrading Salelologa. Such plans were stalled for reasons involving land rights and purchasing issues between the village authority and the government. The HRPP's pledge to equal the playing field between the two large islands is yet to be realized.[16] On the whole, most of the families across the country have been well catered for in terms of living quarters, transport, and such provisions, through remittances from families overseas. Electricity, water and good roading are made available to most of the population especially on the two large islands.

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[16] The HRPP slogan, What is good for Apia is also good for Savaii, bespeaks the importance of the latter in the party's founding vision.

2.7 Current state of relations

A publication was launched on Samoa's reaching a milestone in its history. *Samoa's Journey 1962-2012* marked its progress in the first 50 years of Independence. It is a historical recount of the period by local writers in their specialized fields. The writers were matter of fact and functional in their analysis, highlighting many of the pressing issues in Samoa's current power relations. So'o (2012), commenting on the state's political development, is concerned with the risks of power due to the dilemma of a weak opposition in parliament. In Law and Custom, the writers were preoccupied with the dilemma of having two systems, embodied materially in two courts; the contradictions that continued to mar the system because of the different interpretations by the two courts.

Eight years forward, the analogy of the odd couple seemed to have sustained; the government thought that the solution will be found with the splitting of Judiciary into two separate systems/ jurisdictions. The opposition decried that government has meddled with the cornerstone of liberal democracy. The passing of the Village Fono Act in 1990 was emblematic of a larger problem (Malifa, 2015).[17] Meanwhile, all eyes are on government's next move with the 'three legislations' that once passed, will change Samoa's judiciary system, and in turn power relations profoundly. In Social Development, women continue to make huge strides politically. Otherwise, the benefits of the relationships to power at the global level have contributed to promoting their cause undoubtedly.

Finally, the state-church relationship. The fact that the Independent state of Samoa and the largest denomination of the Christian church, the EFKS, are at perhaps the lowest point of their relationship may not be an overstatement. This loss of affection began with a dispute between the state and church on the former's proposal to tax several church ministers; reported by the press along the lines of a defining moment in Samoa's story. A law was passed in 2017 for its enactment.

The church, in the form of its dissenting branch, EFKS, the biggest denomination in the land, protested. The state offered leniency per due time but to no avail, then through its executive powers vested in government, decided to act. The state took its share forcefully from various bank accounts of the protesters (Samoa Observer, Issue

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[17] Malifa (2015) argued that the problem of upholding democratic rights at the expense of traditional faaSamoa rights can only be remedied by a full recognition of latter in the Act. Still such move cannot adequately answer the conflicting implications of the two systems as practices on each own rights, as Meleisea alluded to recently re the matter of proposed changes to the Judiciary system. Reported in Samoa Observer Issue 05/05/2020.

October 13, 2018). On the 11th of December 2018, the first group of 9 church ministers were summoned before a judge in Apia (ibid.). The charges related to the failure on the ministers' part to pay their taxes. An editorial headline of the Samoa Observer bemoaned the sight (ibid.). The message was clear, that the state has gone too far. Thus, the question, how far is too far? And even further, why has it gone this far? The first question highlights the delicate nature of the relationship. The second question implies the essence and validity of the problem. (See Chapter 8 for further details).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided a summative overview of the context of study from an ethnohistorical viewpoint. Based upon a supposition of an unbreakable link connecting the past and the present, it is power that moulded relations across generations through human activity or in this case migration, settlements, political usurpation and the appropriation of the land and the environment itself to shape politics and ideological assumptions. In the process Samoa has developed an enduring legacy in terms of organisation models and institutions, and a wealth of social capital in support. Such legacy withstood foreign intrusion and continued as part of the modern power relations arrangement. Politically, each manifestation of power played a role in etching the political landscape historically, that continued to evolve to this day. The historic encounter with the Western civilization introduced new power in terms of knowledge, beliefs, and superior power technologies.

Colonialism in part was a promise to better the lives of the subjects under the slogan of 'Gold, God and Glory,' though it also became a test of the Samoan resolve to resist foreign control encroaching on their politics and way of life (Hempenstall, 1978). It also planted institutions of power that have proven to divide the people rather than unify. The same institutions which have the potential to utilize power for the common good but for political reasons could not deliver entirely. Such dilemma of power serves to underline the context of this study basically.

Chapter 3

THE METHODOLOGY

Research methods constituting a research methodology are the ways in which one collects and analyses data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As methods they have been developed rigorously to prove the reliability and validity of knowledge. As such, a good methodology is systematic and purposeful, planned to yield data on a particular research problem (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The aim of this chapter is to introduce and explain the rationale for the research methods chosen for the study. The chapter presents the methodology and the intricacies of data collection – the methods, the analytic procedures, the population sample, and the research questions. It contains the following:

- my method of inquiry.
- the strategies used in collecting data, and a discussion of the framework for the analysis of data.
- a description of the field of research and participants of the study.

3.1 Mixed methods research

I have adopted a mixed methods approach (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). The rationale behind my choice is obvious, two or more methods will provide a much broader, deeper, and useful information (ibid.). Johnson defines mixed methods as a research inquiry that employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and partnership (Johnson et al., 2007). Creswell & Plano Clark, (2011) commented on the strength of a mixed methods design in terms of its use of qualitative and quantitative, in rapport, provides a better understanding of the research problems than it would have been in a one method study only.

Others argued that it is the most central premise of the philosophical reasoning in modern research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Ihuah & Eaton, 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). The latter (2016) summed up the fundamental principle of mixed methods research): the belief that research methods should be integrated or mixed building on their complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses.

Creswell (2003) has provided six strategies based on the Mixed Methods Research design. These strategies promised to offer more than one choice in terms of strengths as combinations. I chose the Concurrent Triangulation strategy (hereafter CTS). It is characterized by two or more methods used concurrently to confirm, cross validate, or corroborate findings within a study. Collection of data is concurrent. The purpose behind the strategy is complementary; that is both methods are used to overcome a weakness in using one with the strengths of another (2003).[18]

From the perspective of Qualitative Research, using a mixed methods can accommodate the main thrusts of its four major genres: ethnographic, phenomenological, socio-linguistic, and case studies much more effectively (Rossman & Rallis, 2017; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). All four genres are interconnected in postmodern research analysis (ibid.).

Five methods have been selected for my purpose. These are:

a. Interviews – semi-structured and unstructured.

b. Case studies: a village and a village mayor

c. Fa'afaletui approach.

d. Document analysis

e. General observations

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[18] Creswell proposed a list of six strategies, presented here as guideline information:

1. *Sequential Explanatory.* Characterized by: Collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by a collection and analysis of qualitative data. Purpose: To use qualitative results to assist in explaining & interpreting findings of a quantitative study.

2. *Sequential Exploratory.* Characterized by: An initial phase of qualitative data collection and analysis followed by a phase of quantitative data collection and analysis. Purpose: To explore a phenomenon. This strategy may also be useful when developing and testing a new instrument.

3. *Sequential Transformative.* Characterized by: Collection and analysis of either quantitative or qualitative data first. The results are integrated in the interpretation phase. Purpose: To employ the methods that best serve a theoretical perspective.

4. *Concurrent Triangulation.* Characterized by: Two or more methods used to confirm, crossvalidate, or corroborate findings within a study. Data collection is concurrent. Purpose: Generally, both methods are used to overcome a weakness in using one method with the strengths of another.

5. *Concurrent Nested.* Characterized by: A nested approach that gives priority to one of the methods and guides the project, while another is embedded or "nested." Purpose: The purpose of the nested method is to address a different question than the dominant or to seek information from different levels.

6. *Concurrent Transformative* Characterized by: The use of a theoretical perspective reflected in the purpose or research questions of the study to guide all methodological choices. Purpose: To evaluate a theoretical perspective at different levels of analysis.

3.1.1 Semi-structured and unstructured interviews

The bulk of the fieldwork data was collected by means of face-to-face semi-structured interviews with all (20) selected participants. The interviews were based on a questionnaire, a set of ten open-ended questions. In Samoa, the interviews were conducted at the participants' offices (5), a public facility in Apia (4), and in a village (family homes) (4). The interviews in New Zealand involved two locations, Auckland (4) and Christchurch (3) all in the participants' homes, except one in a public place. Two participants preferred to respond to the questions online while also making allowance for further discussion on the phone. Except for the two mentioned all the interviews were recorded then transcribed sometime after. Prior to the interviews the participants were made aware of the time duration supposedly for their convenience (at least 45 minutes), however all of them pushed the limit further, the longest interview was 2 hours and 40 minutes. A koha was presented to all participants as is the custom.

Unstructured interviews comprised two participants. The first was interviewed freely about her role as a former village mayor. She was free to tell her story without much interruption; unless to clarify a point or lend support to the narrator. The second participant was a titular orator who related to me the history of Lau village; his retelling served to reaffirm Lau's folklore regarding its traditional power relations as well, its governing ethos and political organisation. He led the conversation during an hour and a half long session. The two unstructured interviews formed the core of two case studies basically.

All the interviews were conducted in the manner and protocols of *faafaletui*, the most favoured approach in a Samoan setting where traditional leaders (matai) and adult people are involved. There are formalities to be observed in customary etiquette to begin with. The polite language is observed and some experience in the matai lingo is helpful. The matai lingo is allusive and rich in metaphor and imagery. A total of 11 participants were holders of matai titles. While a bilingual strategy was put in place, most of the participants preferred the Samoan option as the medium of communication/discussion. Thus, the use of the *fa'afaletui* strategy was deemed the best approach for the purpose.

3.1.2 Case studies

The researcher was very much aware of the importance of a micro study approach to understanding the intricacies of power relations. For example, a close look into *Lau* village's political structure and hierarchy has provided some greater insights

into power dynamics within a typical Samoan village polity. As well, presenting a micro case study about the role of a *pulenuu* (village mayor) has provided a deeper look into power relations where both state and traditional authority's interests are involved. A case study is an in-depth study of an individual, group, or unit, mainly in a natural setting (Patton, 2002). Case studies are preferred over other methods for their appeal to detailed analysis and greater insights to gain from (ibid.). The two case studies were based on authentic settings and situations where real people were involved. The researcher was able to verify what was said based on actual evidence observed there and then. Rossman and Rallis (2017) described the purpose of a case study: it "seeks to understand a larger phenomenon through intensive study of one specific instance" (p. 81).

Critical case studies according to Rossman and Rallis (2017) "are grounded in a critique of existing social structures and patterns. They assume theoretically that oppression and domination characterize the setting and seek to uncover how patterns of action perpetuate the status quo" (p. 92). The critical questions are, how do patterns of action and interaction in this case affect power relationships? Do they reproduce existing inequalities? How? (ibid.).

3.1.3 Faafaletui method

Understanding the way information is processed in any culture helps us to unpack their own methods of inquiry much more effectively (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 1980). In the Samoan framework, the term 'Fa'afaletui' is used to describe a serious conversation or discussion between two people or a small group of people. Samoan folklore referred to an ancient practice by the Pacific "tui" (kings) who met in pairs, to pick one's brain through riddles and such intellectual pursuits; it has been adopted by Samoa's traditional hierarchy since (Personal Communication).[19] Occasionally a pair or a small group of matai (chiefs) will gather to share private information.

The Fa'afaletui belongs to Samoa just as Kaupapa Maori belongs to the Maori indigenous discourse. Arguably it is Samoa's own form of Narrative Inquiry. At the heart of Faafaletui is the sharing of people's stories among themselves. Where private information is shared it is treated as such. In some instances, privacy of a space is demanded which means that participants are left on their own literally; or in most cases they can still share information prudently without drawing much attention of the people

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[19] By consensus, the late orator Auimatagi Fuiavailiili Konelio, the late educator Tofaeono Tanuvasa Tavale, with Rev. Elder Tumama Vili, by consensus shared this understanding.

around them. The interviewer and interviewee are free to alternate roles at will, thus enriching the sharing and add value to information gathering. Such approach is discursive at a deeper level and marks Samoa's own Faafaletui apart from others.

Bruner (2004) proposed that Narrative Inquiry is the study of experience understood narratively, or the inquirers thinking narratively about experience through inquiry. Experiences come to us in the form of narratives. When we communicate our experiences to one another, we do so by storying them. People reveal themselves easily through stories. They engage actively by telling stories. Stories then become the raw data (Mishler, 1995; Riessman, 2000). Experience has taught that it is a lot easier for people to structure events or recollect these events into distinct plots, themes, and forms of characterization through storying (ibid.).

Employed as a method, Fa'afaletui is much favoured in qualitative research. Fa'afaletui encourages relationship building that leads to effective collaboration; enhancing the capacity to collect, share and in the process validate information on behalf of both the researchers and participants (Tuafuti, 2016; Tamasese et al., 2008; Rimoni, 2016; Suaalii-Sauni & Aiolupotea, 2014). Researchers will need *faafaletui* to approach the Samoan world of traditional leadership (matai) and specialised discourses encased in the language. As such it demands a certain competency in Samoan oracy skills for any exchange to be meaningful (ibid.). More importantly, inquiry skills involve a basic level of proficiency in the matai language and protocols; at least subtlety/ experience when negotiating terms of information sharing (Tui Atua, 2004; Le Tagaloa, 1991; Tofaeono, 1999).

3.1.4   Document analysis

Access to as many documents of relevance to the topic was the intent of the thesis. This study was fortunate to have had such access to as many government policy papers, state legislation, research theses/ reports, newspapers, as were made available in both print and online. The role of the independent media, led by the Samoa Observer newspaper deserves special mention; the newspaper's contribution to the task of data collection for this and many other studies, can only be described as substantial. On the other hand, the government's own printed media (O le Palemene, Savali) provided its viewpoint with as much zeal and commitment.

3.1.5 General observations

Last but just as important were my own observations of the political environment which involved listening to opinions/stories of individuals or small groups about power relations in Samoa. I was able to raise personal conversations with family members, strangers from all walks of life who were as keen as the selected participants to share their views about the topic. In total, more than 80 individuals were involved. Theirs formed the study's anecdotal evidence which were factored into the context of issues and situations highlighted in the research.

3.2   Data collation and analysis procedures

Data was collated by means of two procedures:

a. the Thematic Analysis Technique (hereafter TAT) and

b. Fairclough's Analytic Procedure (hereafter FAP).

3.2.1   Thematic Analysis

First, the advantages of Thematic Analysis in data collation are well documented. As Braun & Clarke (2006) pointed out, its theoretical freedom provides for a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). The same (2006) argued that thematic analysis should be a foundational method for qualitative analysis, as it provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. Nowell, Norris & White (2017) attested strongly that thematic analysis should be considered a method, arguing that thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that can be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions.

Basically, it is a method for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Boyatzis (1998) referred to thematic analysis as a *translator* for those speaking the languages of qualitative and quantitative analysis; TAT enables researchers who use different methods to communicate with each other (cited in Nowell, et al., 2017).

As a technique TAT emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question (Riessman, 2008). In thematic analysis, the exclusive focus is on the content or what

has been said or suggested that highlights the meaning (semantics) rather than the form of the language (linguistics) (ibid.).

In the selection of emerging themes, these were the main key words I lay focus on, more so their implications, in Samoa's cultural/ linguistic allusion and symbolism, in my search for deeper meanings: power, power relations, good relations, use of power, balance of power, state, state relations, government, hegemony, concern, domination, relationality, fair, unfair, good governance, church, God, poverty, cost of living.

My experience as editor, writer, and publisher in the Samoan language for more than 20 years helped with the challenges of the task. As anticipated several themes stood out from the interviews. For example, the two core concepts: power and power relations, directly or implied. A set of patterns unfolded, most of which reinforced basic assumptions already anticipated, as well, affirmed the literature and my choice of a critical conceptual framework.

3.2.2 Fairclough's Analytic Procedure

FAP on the other hand emphasizes both critique of linguistic form and semantic. It is an application by Fairclough (1989, 1996) of Critical Discourse Analysis. It promotes the theme of CDA, that is to critically investigate language use within social contexts. In Henderson's terms, "By questioning the taken for-grantedness of language and enabling explorations of how texts represent the world in particular ways according to particular interests . . . to consider the relationships between discourse and society, between text and context, and between language and power" (2005). FAP consists of three interrelated dimensions of discourse (Janks, 1997), tied to three interrelated methods of analysis.

The three dimensions are:
a. The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts).
b. The processes by means of which the object is produced and received.
(writing/speaking/designing and reading/ listening/viewing) by human subjects.
c. The socio-historical conditions/contexts which govern these processes.

Each of the above dimensions requires a different kind of analysis. The first dimension involves a descriptive analysis of the text. For the second, it involves an interpretive analysis of the processes. And for the third, the analysis requires a critical explanation

of the social-historical context. The three tasks can be done simultaneously, according to Fairclough (1995).

Janks (1997) describes the rationale of this approach: "it enables you to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtaposition-ing, their sequencing, their layout" (p. 329). However, it also requires you to recognise that the historical determination of these selections and to understand that these choices are tied to the conditions of possibility of that utterance. This is another way of saying that texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained" (Janks, 1997, p. 329).

In reference to its usefulness: "Why Fairclough's approach to CDA is so useful is because it provides multiple points of analytic entry. It does not matter which kind of analysis one begins with, as long as in the end they are all included and are shown to be mutually explanatory. It is in the interconnections that the analyst finds the interesting patterns and disjunctions that need to be described, interpreted and explained" (Ibid., 1997, p. 329).

Interpreting the three dimensions:

In this investigation the object of analysis is power in relations, wrapped up in the language. The processes by which power is produced /received are culturally embedded by means of the Samoan language and associated discourses. All of these in the context of cultural hegemony that defines a society's political situation.

3.3 Participants and Questions

A total of 20 participants were involved in the study's investigation that included both Samoa and New Zealand. Eleven participants were based in Samoa, nine reside in New Zealand. They were physically attended to and interviewed through a questionnaire of 10 open-ended questions. Their responses were recorded on an audio tape and transcribed by the researcher. These were the ten questions of the questionnaire:

a. What is your understanding of good relations?

b. Who has more say in your village?

c. Do you accept the view that church and state must be separated?

d. Do you support the view that church should contribute to the state upkeep?

e. Do you have any worries about the use of power in the church?

f. Is church contributing to the task of maintaining good human relations?

g. Do you have any worries about the use of power by government?

h. Is government contributing to the task of maintaining good human relations?

i. Do you accept the view government is getting more authoritarian?

j. What are your concerns about Samoa's future in relation to this study?

Out of 20 participants, 17 were interviewed in person in the field; 1 preferred to put his answers on paper (manually); 2 answered the questionnaires electronically and later sent back to the researcher. In selecting the participants, the aim has been to ensure that a wide representation of the sectors of the population is reflected in the sampling and data. To that extent, the intention was to focus mainly on members of the public who have a fair grasp of the power conception and who also deal with power consciously and proactively (Yin, 2014). Thus, children or those at age range of 19 and below were not included.

Purposeful sampling has its merits (Patton, 2002) though the overriding intent was for a fair representation of the population. In saying that, more than eighty (80) unidentified individuals were randomly engaged in chance conversations for their views on Samoan politics in general, all of which served as the thesis' anecdotal evidence.

I was fortunate to have secured a session with the deputy prime minister[20] and a peer, another senior minister of the Samoan government. A session with the president of the Methodist Conference,[21] and an elder minister (*Toeaina Faatonu*) of the EFKS, validated the church's claim on power relations, considering their statuses and prestige.

A total of eleven matai participated which range of insights provided clues to understanding power relations from their perspective. Two executive heads also commented on power relations on behalf of the state bureaucracy. Out of 20 participants, 12 were university trained. All participants were happy to introduce themselves first before the interviews were conducted. While in Samoa I was based in a village for the most part of my stay; the fieldwork took two and a half weeks to complete.

Tables of sample of the participants:

Table 1 (a) Participants in terms of social status

Village leaders	Govt ministers	Church ministers	Bureaucrats/ Academic	Young adults/ Students	Total
7	2	2	6	3	20

(b) Participants in terms of country

Country	Village leaders	Govt ministers	Church ministers	Bureaucrats/ Academic	Young adults/ Students	Total
Samoa	3	2	1	2	3	11
NZ	4	0	1	4	0	9

(c) Participants in terms of age group

70 +	65 - 69	60 - 64	50 - 63	40 & below
4	4	5	4	3

(d) Participants' academic background

University trained	12
Non-university trained	8

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[20] The Honourable Deputy Prime Minister at the time of the interview. July 2019.
[21] The President of the General Conference at the time of the interview. July 2019.

3.4   The ethics procedure & risks

This research was conducted upon the approval of the Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Approval was sought to conduct interviews locally and overseas (Samoa) and granted. The fieldwork was conducted in full compliance with the requirements of the human ethics procedure. Allowance for the modification of the plan was granted in the ethics approval. Savaii was not visited as planned due to an unforeseen commitment in Upolu. This has not much effect on the validity of the research itself given the representative nature of the groups which Upolu was able to afford on both islands' behalf. As far as physical risks were concerned, Samoa is one of the most stable and secured places to be doing research in. Risks for the participants were mainly psychological and symbolic due mostly to the hierarchical nature of the political environment. Central to the ethics plan was the security of all 20 participants in that regard.

In saying that, all the participants were happy to speak freely and openly about themselves and political positions in the discussion; agreeing also that their contributions be noted by their names/titles publicly. Overall, the people's generosity, my familiarity with the environment, and the home language made up for the traditional gaps and constraints of fieldwork.

3.5   Conclusion

In this chapter I set out the methodological design of the study. The key purpose was to provide a strategy that can effectively facilitate a good coordination of the thesis problem with the selected tools of investigation. In opting for a critical methodology, a mixed methods approach was selected for its advantages. Collecting the data was conducted by means of interviews, case studies, document analysis, observations and the Samoan Fa'afaletui approach. Participants were purposefully selected. The collation and analysis of data was facilitated by two procedures, TAT and FAP. Data was analysed through qualitative functions of description, interpretation and critical explanation using both procedures.

The chapter was divided into three parts: 1. my method of inquiry, 2. the strategies used in collecting data, and a discussion of the framework for the analysis of data, and 3. a description of the fieldwork of research and participants of the study. In the next chapter, the conceptual framework of the research will be discussed in further details, along with the literature.

Chapter 4
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will critically examine the theoretical framework as well as discuss some relevant literature that will inform the research theme and arguments. The goal is to identify the gaps in the literature as well as incorporate discourses to contribute to the theoretical discussions. As noted in the Introduction, I have chosen a critical approach as my theoretical framework. Thus, I have selected the theories of power by Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu; all three were interested in power and its relations in the role of government. This Literature review is divided into three parts: The first is a presentation of the theoretical framework, in the theories of power by three theorists and their relevance in Samoa's political context. The second part focuses on the key concepts – power and state - and a review of the international literature. The third part examines the local literature. The overall aim is to provide a sound and comprehensive overview of a framework that is responsive to the demands of the task.

4.1 Part 1: A critical and collaborative framework

As noted, three theorists have been selected to provide the basis of my theoretical framework. All three share common values of critical theory tradition, wherein power structures are critiqued in relation to society's problems basically. While distinct in each own rights, the point of interest is with the shared concerns rather than disagreements. More importantly the strength in collaboration when one complements the other. Also given the scope of the space of scrutiny as demanded by critical theory tradition – totality of society – it means that a variety of stances can offer the best for such framework to be accommodating; it also provides a more balanced assessment of power relations (Graham, 2005; Kendie, 2006; Linklater, 2007).

On that understanding, the three theorists are discussed within a wider context of relations with other critical theory traditions, CT and CDA for example. Such a critical and integrated approach provided a more authentic framework to understanding the Samoan social reality. This reality will be revealed by measuring its society's consensual truths against actual social conditions (Friesen, 2008).

4.1.1 Critical Theory

Critical Theory (hereafter CT as a theory) widely refers to a school of thought that stresses a reflective assessment and critique of society and culture by applying knowledge from the social sciences and humanities to help communities understand and if necessary, challenge power relationships (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008; Thompson, 2017, Horkheimer, 1982). It has a dual meaning in terms of origins and histories: the first originated in sociology and the second in literary criticism (Horkheimer, 1982). It is used and applied as a term to describe a theory founded upon critique; thus, social theorist, Max Horkheimer, described a theory as critical insofar as it seeks "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (ibid., 1982, p. 244).

CT has a dual purpose according to Horkheimer; first, it should be directed at the totality of society in its historical specificity; secondly, it should improve understanding of society by integrating all the major social sciences (ibid.). Primarily Critical Theory maintains that ideology is the principal obstacle to human emancipation. Critical Theory focused on language, symbolism, communication, and social construction. It has been applied within the social sciences as a critique of social construction and postmodern society (Agger, 2012).

Linklater (2007) commented on the advantages of Critical Theory. First, CT as opposed to positivism argued that knowledge does not arise from a neutral engagement of subject with an objective reality, rather it reflects pre-existing social purposes and interests. As such, claims about neutrality often conceal the role that knowledge plays in reproducing unsatisfactory social arrangements (ibid.). He viewed their relevancy in the critique of neo-realism, and for the sake of international relations 'salvaged social discourse from familiar pitfalls of the early twentieth century idealism'.

Secondly, critical theory is opposed to empirical claims about the social world and its structures as immutable. Immutability implies that structured inequalities of power and wealth are supported whereas in principle this can be altered. Critical theory promotes the idea of a new form of political community in which individuals and groups can achieve higher levels of freedom and equality (ibid.).

Thirdly, critical theory, having learnt and able to overcome the weaknesses inherent in Marxism, moved on to construct a historical sociology with an emancipatory purpose. In the works of Habermas for instance, a project of reconstructing historical materialism is significant according to Linklater (2007). This project denies that class power is the fundamental form of social exclusion or that the production is the key

determinant of society and history. Instead, Post-Marxist critical theory has extended conventional Marxist analysis to blend in with local and universal discourses (ibid.). As a result, other new possibilities open for constructing such a historical sociology with much human purpose.

Fourthly, Critical Theory according to Linklater can judge social arrangements by their capacity to embrace open dialogue with others. It believes in a pragmatic approach and use of unconstrained discourse to examine any boundaries or possibilities. Including in the task is the role of discourse in the study of international relations (2007).

4.1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA is described as "a type of discourse analysis research that studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts (van Dijk, 2004, p. 352). In other terms CDA looks at the way language is employed and manipulated, to show how ideological presuppositions are hidden underneath the surface structures of language choices in text (ibid.). As van Dijk pointed out, CDA unlike other analyses explicitly places itself in oppositional stance. Irrespective of which theories and methods its scholars indulge themselves with, all are bound by a concern for the investigation of the reproduction of ideology in language (van Dijk, 2004; Fairclough, 1992).

Henderson (2005) argued that CDA has offered the researcher an opportunity to question the taken-for-grantedness of language and enabling explorations of how texts represent the world in particular ways according to particular interests. As a research method, CDA provides opportunities to consider the relationships between discourse and society, between text and context, and that between language and power (Fairclough, 2001).

Janks (1997) described this use of language as a form of social practice. Because a language is tied to specific historical contexts, it then provides the means by which social relations are reproduced or contested. As well, serving various interests, language in this sense is about serving human interests (ibid.). The questions are: How are such interests positioned in the text? Whose interest is negated in the relations? What are the consequences of such positioning? The role of analysis is to seek to find out such implications in power relations (ibid.; Fairclough, 2001). Wodak (2001) views the role of CDA as a closer look into institutional, political, gender, and media discourses to find

out how certain social groups may be ill-presented or misrepresented in all these various types of discourses.

As a tool, CDA examines patterns of access and control over contexts, genres, text and talk, their properties, as well as discursive strategies of mind control. CDA studies a discourse and its functions in society and the way society, and especially forms of inequality, are expressed, represented, legitimated, or reproduced in text and talk (van Dijk, 1995).

In sum, CDA is of the view that language and social reality are directly related. Language is an active player in the way people and societies interact through any manner of relationship (McGregor, 2003); that the relationship between the linguistic forms and ideas of reality are binding and thus makes language part of a wider ideological process in the representation and construction of meanings (ibid, 2003). In turn, any political discourse is loaded with meaning that is ideological. McGregor (2003) argued then that the main role of CDA "is to uncloak the hidden power relations, largely constructed through language, and to demonstrate and challenge social inequities reinforced and reproduced" (McGregor, 2003; Wodak, 2001).

4.2   Gramsci and cultural hegemony

Antonio Gramsci's contribution to political power understanding revolves around his best-known theory of cultural hegemony (Ramos, 1980; Kendie, 2006). With much support, his ongoing relevance to studying modern society is based on his interpretation of power relations in a situation where capitalism thrives, and class struggle is in retreat (Ramos, 1980). Such relations can be explained in the idea of a 'third face of power', or 'the invisible power'; or as Heywood (1994) put it, the pervasive power of ideology, values and beliefs in reproducing class relations and concealing contradictions (1994). Marx recognised the concern, that while economic exploitation is the driver behind capitalism, the system is reinforced by a domination of ruling class ideas and values – hence Engel's famous concern that 'false consciousness' would keep the working class from recognising and rejecting their oppression (Heywood, 1994). Gramsci took these ideas further and developed them in the solitude of prison from which two famous concepts emerged—hegemony and manufacture of consent (ibid.).

First, the concept of hegemony which according to Gramsci is about predominant control by consent. It is a condition in which a ruling class exercises a political, intellectual, and moral role of leadership within a hegemonic system,

underpinned by a common worldview or organic ideology (Ramos, 1980). As Ramos interpreted, the exercise of this role on the ethico-political as well as on the economic plane involves the execution of a process of intellectual and moral reform. This is where the previous ideological terrains are transformed and redefined (Ramos, ibid.). This transformation or redefinition is achieved through a rearticulation of ideological elements into a new worldview which then serves as the unifying principle for a new collective will. It is this new worldview, which unifies classes into a new hegemonic bloc that constitutes the new organic ideology.

It is not a worldview that is imposed, but a transformation in the realms of moral and intellect. (ibid.). Gramsci would like to emphasise that in this transformation, there is no complete replacement of the previously dominant worldview; rather, the new worldview is a co-construction of the hegemonic class and its consensual subalterns, out of the existing ideological elements held by the latter in their discourses (Ramos, 1980; Heywood, 1994).

Cultural hegemony hence according to Gramsci, is not about subjugation or domination in the old sense; rather it is power domination in a subtle form; in ways by which authority maintains power by having others give their consent. While domination denotes absolute control, hegemony on the other hand signifies the effect of influence, patronage or leadership (Kendie, 2006). Unlike reward power, which is the opposite of coercive power, cultural hegemony is about a mental disposition in the realm of ideas and knowledge, that is, in most cases, devoid of 'critical consciousness' (Freire,1970).

The state is the dominant player in power relations, with the capacity to influence the people to believe and do what they are expected to believe and do (Gramsci, 1971). State institutions are the means by which this is carried out through its normalization programmes (ibid.).

'Manufacture of consent' is a Gramscian concept which refers to the forces by which a dominant class or state sustains its hegemony through the consent of other classes or the public (1971). Gramsci has given examples of such institutions sponsored by the state like education for instance, which serve as agents in manufacturing consent (ibid.). He argued that the current education system promotes 'cultural educational hegemony' through an emphasis on content and tasks and expectations for learners (Manojan, 2019; Dawson, 1982; Fontana, 2002). Education is a powerful tool by which ideas are disseminated, most of these ideas find their ways into government policies, academic discourses, the news bulletin in the shop to children's literature in the

classroom (Fontana, 2002). With the predominant status of capitalism and neo-liberalism in the world today such values are propagated through international networks of capitalist institutions - social, political and economic (Freire, 1970).

4.2.1   Role of ideology

Ideology is a key concept in Gramsci's writings and provides the basis of his political thoughts on power relations (Gramsci, 1999, 1988; Ramos, 1980). While Marx viewed ideology as a form of false consciousness, he failed to see socialism as a true form of ideology (ibid.). Gramsci's experience involving own country proved that Marx's penchant for historical factors determining the outcome did not apply in other cases (Gramsci, 1999; Richards, 1993). While disparity in the relations of production was evident, capitalism still abounded, there was no class struggle. Gramsci would end up seeing a new light in the old concept (Richards, 1993). As such, ideology is a tool that can be used to advance the people's own 'ideologies' and political action (Kertzer, 1979).

It means that the struggle against the ruling class can also be waged at the ideological front. In more direct terms, ideology is a factor in its own right, it is the key to understanding power relations according to Gramsci (1971). Hence Gramsci's conception of hegemony, based on his general observations of other forms of social control that are less repressive or agreeable with societal norms, helped to explain what Marxism could not (Kendie, 2006). These other forms replaced the military based rule and coercive state control which were prominent in Weber's thinking, or the reactionary response known with staunch Marxism (ibid.). Through the rule of 'hegemony' the ruling class is able to exert own control in ways that are considered legitimate by the people (Gramsci, 1988).

4.2.2 Relationship between ideology and social order

Having constituted the political importance of ideology, Gramsci then looked at how ideology relates within the social order. Marxist ideology was confined as it were to a reductionist view about class struggle and each group holding onto own ideas that describe own approach to others as confrontational (Ramos, 1980). Rather Gramsci's understanding was in terms of practices, politico-ideological discourses and elements (ibid.). He used the term "terrain" of practices, principles and dogmas having a material and institutional nature. They constitute individual subjects and social agents which are instrumental in spreading own ideas across the substructure and the ideological superstructure (ibid.).

Hence his ideas of organic ideology and organic intellectuals. First, organic ideology, described in terms of the organic arrangement of all ideological elements into a unified system by means of hegemonic rule, is the work of the organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1999; Ramos, 1980). Such ideology is the binding force of society by means of complex arrangements. Among its features is the ability of its proponents to successfully articulate and express the more essential elements of the ideological discourses pertaining to the subaltern classes.

Organic ideology is diffused throughout civil society by the political consent of all classes and by common virtues of socio-economic relations (ibid.). This becomes a hegemonic principle of the state or the ruling class, accepted by all as 'common sense.' Such common sense pervades and prevails in the works of civil institutions and structures such as family, churches, the media, schools, the legal system, trade unions, public and private associations (ibid.).

Organic intellectuals are found in all groups and classes and more directly related to the economic structure of their society compared with traditional intellectuals whose members are identified with civil society mainly (Gramsci, 1988), and who also represent traditions and the past. Both groups in their specialized skills, knowledge and professional impartiality put them in good stead within the system.

But it is the organic intellectuals who are considered more useful in the struggle to achieve counterhegemony (Gramsci, 1999). By their own social backgrounds many of them are more empathetic to the common people, they serve as agents for the relaying of subaltern ideals and aspirations into the public discourse. Both the organic and traditional intellectuals however can collaborate at a political level for the common good of all classes (Karpova et al.; 2016; Gramsci, 1988).

4.3 Bourdieu's contribution

Bourdieu's contribution to power understanding is significant (Navarro, 2005). A foundational principle in his theory is the notion that culture is not only the very ground for human interaction but is also an especial terrain of domination (ibid.). He argued that all symbolic systems are anchored in culture and thus determine our understanding of reality. Not only that culture and its effect ensure communication and interaction, but they also create and maintain social hierarchies. "Culture, in the form of dispositions, objects, institutions, language and so on, mediates social practices by connecting people and groups to institutionalized hierarchies. Thus, it necessarily embodies power relations" (p. 15).

4.3.1 Bourdieu's theory of habitus

The concept of habitus is identified with Bourdieu's works and claimed to be the core concept in his political philosophy (Edgerton, 2014). Used by Bourdieu to address the sociological problem of agency and structure (Lacroix, 2012), habitus refers to the physical embodiment of cultural capital in the habits, skills, and dispositions that people possess due to their life experiences (Bourdieu, 1986). These are deeply ingrained in a person's body and psyche, he argued. Thus, a person will generate agency and reproduce social structure by means of these human attributes and learned skills; for example, transforming a political idea into an organised movement or turning an individual habit into a group culture.

Habitus is composed of "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66). Physiologically and psychologically, it is a natural way of responding at the human level. This idea of a collective response or tendency defines communities at many and various levels of interests, behaviours, and ways of thinking. Socialization makes cultures out of people; thus, a powerful force in the production/reproduction of habitus.

Each habitus attaches own value system on its subjects depending on their social fields or the environment in which they operate (Lacroix, 2012). This is where their social positions are located. Because cultural capital is considered of high value in many habitus its impact on human perception and conditioning is complete. Thus, what is valued within a habitus is conferred through its institutions such as the family, school, church for example (ibid.).

4.3.2 Bourdieu's theory of capital

Therefore, habitus features directly in Bourdieu's conception of power as symbolic (1979). He articulated this in his theory of capital. There are three forms: 1. Economic capital 2. Social capital, and 3. Cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital refers to material assets that are 'immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 247). His definition of social capital is, 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 247).

Social capital is considered as a collective feature of society (Song, 2013); a conceptual construct based on the idea of the value of social relationships and networks that complement the economic capital for economic growth of an organization (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Bourdieu described it as a network-based resource that is available in interpersonal relationships (ibid.). At least four types can be identified (Carpiano, 2006): social support, social leverage, informal social control, and community organisation participation. Bourdieu's context of social capital is at the group level, which space enables group members to function much more effectively. When relations are well nurtured, capital is amplified which end results are solidarity, group cohesion, empowerment, and so forth. In his words, many requirements for social life are accessible only "*via the virtues of social capital or the relations, obligations, trust and reciprocity inherent in it*" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 252).

As Bourdieu put it, 'Such virtues do not occur instantaneously but are products of the investment of both time and energy before and beyond their use. Such acts are not guaranteed, nor are they sealed with legal contractual arrangements and do not appear to have imminent results. Time lag is the key factor that transmutes a simple act of goodwill, a favour from a stranger, a smile, a gift, a greeting into recognition between parties. What was at the time a pure and simple debt becomes across time "*the recognition of a non-specific indebtedness*" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 252, cited in Atkins, 1999). To this Bourdieu gives the label, 'gratitude.'

Social groups which show strong signs of solidarity are the ones who invest more in their social relations. Thus, there is an ongoing demand to invest in social capital (tending to relations, building trust for example) or it will deteriorate (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu stressed the importance of investment of time and energy to the maintenance of social capital, where every member of a group plays a part.

The foundation of social capital is investment of time and energy based on a basic premise of trust to allow for recognition, more trust, good faith, and reciprocity to transpire. Such virtues are invested without the expectation of prompt or immediate returns, but an investment strategy for the future or indeed a response from the past that self-generates as an investment for the future. A lack of response or input from other parties, or indeed an abuse of the resource, reduces the levels of social capital between the actors and so self-regulates its own losses. Stocks of social capital not constantly nurtured or invested will deteriorate (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 252).

Cultural capital refers to the sum of symbolic elements such as skills, credentials, material belongings, aesthetic taste, mannerisms, even posture and attire (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital comprises a person's education profile and social status and privileges arisen from. Bourdieu proposed three forms of cultural capital: Embodied, Objectified, Institutionalised (Bourdieu, 1986). For examples, to be skilful in an art, language or occupation is capital embodied. To own an expensive car is capital objectified. To hold a university qualification or a civic title or membership of a reputable organisation is capital institutionalised.

Cultural capital is acquired through socialization to a dominant culture and its higher traditions (ibid.). By a person's intellectual disposition or common rapport with like-minded individuals (habitus) he/she takes on the values, attitudes, or traditions of any such group. For example, mastery of a specialized language of a higher culture is a way of embodying cultural capital, thus enhancing a person's social status (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Language then is not just a means of communication but a medium of power (ibid.).

Possession of such cultural capital leads to formal recognition in society and much better chances in the job market, with the assurance of social privileges attached to. Cultural capital can be converted to economic capital simply by describing it to the seller in the language of power (ibid.).

4.3.3 Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power

Because cultural capital is symbolic capital (prestige, honour, recognition, etc.) then naturally they are more dominant in determining how hierarchies of power are situated and reproduced across societies. Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power refers to the 'tacit almost unconscious' domination of cultural/social modes in the everyday social habits (1986, p. 47). He used the term 'distinction' to differentiate social spaces and the power relations that go with these. Belonging to a certain group is evidence of a

person's social distinction or his/her symbolic identity, manifested in lifestyles, tastes, language, decorum and so forth. Politically, symbolic power accounts for the discipline in maintaining places in a social hierarchy (Giddens, 1973). The effects of symbolic power on social relations can be understood along this line of accepting the status quo without question.

Indeed, while everyone has some form of cultural capital, some are more recognizable than others. The more recognizable person enjoys such status at the expense of others who are less identifiable or none. Thus, when Bourdieu asserted that power relations are misrecognised, he meant that society has 'consecrated' such with or without the knowing of those involved (ibid, 1986). He stated, "Symbolic power is the power to make things with words," (1989, p. 23).

Deference to those in power reinforces their recognized statuses or 'consecrate things that are already there' (ibid., p. 23). The social practice of greeting and saluting people reinforces these conventions daily. Power differential between social groups leads to symbolic violence, Bourdieu argued (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). So, when the more powerful seek to alter the actions of those with less power, they have symbolically exercised violence. And because some statuses are higher and more recognizable than others, cultural capital then is a major source of social inequality (ibid.).

4.4 Michel Foucault

Any reference to Michel Foucault is daunting basically for many reasons as those who studied him pointed out. Discourses in relation to those reasons are ongoing and is not in the scope of this research. Regardless of the polarization of opinions, there are strong proponents of his views and political philosophy, nevertheless. Even Foucault's political philosophy by its own merits and entirety is not the aim. The purpose rather is to provide a summative reference overview of Foucault's ideas on power relations that concern more with the thesis objectives.

Michel Foucault[22] was a renowned French historian and philosopher whose ideas on power had much impact on political theorizing and understanding of modern society in terms of power relations. His popular appeal across disciplines and cross-cultural references speaks for his intellectual versatility and relevancy in many and varied situations (Taylor, 2011). Foucault's views on power and its relations are considered highly relevant in describing Samoa's power situation also. Basic to his philosophy is the assumption that human knowledge and existence are profoundly historical (Blackburn, 2008). The historical man is political. The political man lives for the present moment (Foucault, 1991). The political man is motivated by power as much as he is subjected by the forces that arise in its wake (Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy).[23]

Power according to Foucault is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge. Hence, human knowledge, or its forms required to effect power, plays a central role in the way power works, always in relations, for constructive ends or otherwise (ibid.). This constructive role of power has been his focal point of research interest, challenging the idea that power is essentially corrupt and negative (ibid.).

4.4.1 Foucaultian Discourse Analysis

Inspired by the works of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and critical theory (Wooffitt, 2005), FDA is a form of discourse analysis which focused on power relationships as expressed through language and practices (Given, 2008). A distinct characteristic is the stress on power relationships (ibid.). As such the analysis will look at how figures in authority use language to express their dominance or demand respect from others (Ferreirinha, 2010). Conversely, the way language is used as a form of resistance against authority (Given, 2008). A researcher will apply FDA to find out how the social

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[22] As profiled by The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy 2nd Revision.
[23] Foucault was influenced by the political thought of Nietszche who maintained that man is motivated solely by political power. This is articulated in his book The Will to Power (1901).

world is shaped/ constructed by language and how such activity affects power relationships (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

4.4.2 Biopolitics & Biopower

According to Foucault there was a time when power was centralized in the figure of a sovereign authority, who used threat and physical violence to control the population (1988). Until the emergence of a new form of authority around the end of the 18th century; the state. Its primary concern was the care of the human population. By then new mechanisms wrought by new technologies of power have emerged to cater for the management of human lives. Foucault used the term biopolitics to describe this new phenomenon. Biopolitics is a government rationality based on the use of this technology of power as a means of mass control through state regulation (Foucault, 1988). It is about the control of an entire population through the application of this technology on the individual or the human body (Kelly, 2014).

Such application he gave the name biopower. This new form of power coalesced around two poles, the first involves the efficient management of people's daily lives, for example, in the regulation of personal information such as dates of birth, death, sickness, hardships and so on. The rationale behind is the fostering and promotion of life as in population management, promotion of public health for example (ibid.). The ascendancy of the modern welfare state is the legacy of this phenomenon (Berend, 2005).

The second pole he gave the label disciplinary power, which target is the human body and how it can be manipulated and trained for political ends (Foucault, 1982; Kelly, 2014). It does so through the 'totalizing power' of state truth and political implication, enforced by its institutions, a process whereby human biology and state politics intertwine (ibid.). Prisons, factories, military, hospitals, schools act as 'techniques of power' to provide such discipline en masse and serve the goals of social order.

In more direct terms, the individual by his or her body has become the business of the state; an object for examination and constant surveillance through the techniques of power and their regulatory processes (Foucault, 1979). And because of the shift in outlook from disciplinary to knowledge power, the people are attuned to accept their being disciplined by the state tacitly in these new ways. Foucault maintained that the modern state has integrated the old techniques of power of the church into own practice. It is given the name pastoral power, providing the example in the church's confessional rites to which people are subjected mentally and psychologically.

it cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It is linked with a production of truth, the truth of the individual himself'' (Foucault, 1982, p. 783).

The constant surveillance of the population has become the legacy of the modern state. This is the disciplinary role of power, subtly demonstrated that it is hardly noticeable, with own regimes of truth in support, in which state institutions such as prisons, hospitals, schools, military, play leading roles. For instance, Samoa's serious commitment to safeguarding their intellectual properties in family and village genealogies, and the way these have ended up in the safekeeping of the state, attested to this subtle manoeuvring since the colonial administrations. Such legacy in Samoa's own biopower continued with its modern bureaucracy and functions. This will be discussed in more details in chapters 9 and 10 – analysis and discussion.

4.4.3 On power and its constitution

Foucault's noted maxim that 'power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but it comes from everywhere' is definitive (1979, p. 93), as well as problematic for the same reason, as many critics of Foucault would contend; but there is no question of its revolutionary appeal. He was against the old idea of power as a right or possession of an individual or selected group; rather he argued that power is diffuse, embodied, and enacted; discursive rather than purely coercive (Gaventa, 2003). Power pervades society. And because it comes from everywhere it is neither an agency nor a structure.

How then can it be understood and analysed? Power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding, and truth, he argued (Foucault, 1984). By truth, he refers to a country's political discourse, reflected in the values espoused and sanctioned through the word and social practices of a people.

> Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true' (Foucault, 1984, pp. 72-73).

By regimes of truth, Foucault refers to the results of scientific discourse and institutional knowledge, reinforced and redefined constantly through the systems of education, the media along with competing ideologies, as if all vying to establish rules by which truth and falsity are determined (Heller, 1996). In other words, truth is identified with the effects of political power. This will explain why truth always revolves around a country's political economy and production of knowledge (ibid.). For example, Heller and others strongly argued that economic liberalism has become a technology of the modern state (ibid.).

4.4.4 Power and knowledge

Power and knowledge are synonymous in Foucault's epistemology; power is knowledge-based and even source of its generation and regeneration (Foucault, 1982). The power-knowledge conjoint denotes Foucault's understanding of the diffuse nature of the two concepts as an integrated unit. Heller (1996) noted that Foucault would not say much about knowledge as a subject though by implication, he referred to specialized knowledge basically. In relation to power therefore it is apparent that such knowledge appeals to a higher form of information (1996). Simply put, power for Foucault is based on knowledge and utilization of knowledge. Power reproduces knowledge by shaping it according to its anonymous intentions (Foucault, 2008). Power also creates or recreates its fields of exercise through knowledge (ibid.). Knowledge can never be neutral, rather it is the result of dynamic power relations underlying its discourse (Foucault, ibid.).

Why and how does power make use of knowledge? It serves the goals of those in authority. The state is the symbol and regulator of modern authority which, from a stance of the political economy, utilises information at its disposal to achieve its own goals (Foucault, 1982, p. 72). Such knowledge becomes the basis of 'truth' discourses that a state can exploit either for ungainly advantage or for productive ends (ibid., p.73). As said earlier, truth is identified with the effects of political power. Which is why they always revolve around a state's political economy and power discourses (ibid.).

But power has more potential for good than employed for ungainly advantage, Foucault argued. For example, he opposed the idea of repression because it is not the only effect of power. Not all relations are those of domination, he argued (1980). Power can be good when people accept it; when it "produces things, induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (1980, p. 120). The negative effects of power have been demonstrated through power discourses historically, where certain psychiatric or sexual

abnormalities were considered diseases for instance. Acknowledgment of its positive effect came up much later, with access to more knowledge and acknowledgement by the authorities. His strong allusion to knowledge as informed, ethical, and open to scrutiny contrasts with his view on 'ideology' which he described as any rigid settled notion of 'truth' (Foucault, 1981).

This power-knowledge understanding was later to be incorporated into Foucault's own constitution of the concept of governmentality, in which he elaborated further the role of the state from this perspective of rational government as an art form. As an art it is described as the organised practices through which subjects are governed (Mayhew, 2004); the art of government (Foucault, 1991); governmental rationality (Gordon, 1991); the techniques and strategies by which a society is rendered governable (Foucault, 2008).

Researchers referred to a certain point in Foucault's theoretical positioning in which neoliberalism provided a context for the ascent of liberal ideas and governments; hence the promotion of decentralized authority and responsible governance (Mayhew, ibid.). At this point, the idea is that governmentality is not limited to state politics alone, usually in its repressive form, but overall plays an integral role in societal systems of control, where institutions of knowledge contribute to providing better power discourses. The rationale is that with more advanced knowledge people can govern themselves better.

Foucault's association of governmentality with the term mentality, lends legitimacy to the notion of rationalising its exercise in society (Rose, 1996). Here all parties have come to a common understanding that power vis-a-vis knowledge can be shared, that social controls are necessary for the common good, and so on. Perhaps the most poignant part in this exercise is the appeal at the micro level of power, such as in human behaviour, in which government signifies problems of self-control, managing of households, also known as technologies of the self, in this shared understanding of human existence (Rose, 1996). To such extent, the moral and conduct of the soul too (Lemke, 2001).

4.4.5   Foucault and power relations

As stated earlier power according to Foucault exists only in relations. The old idea that power revolves around one person as in the metaphor of The Prince[24] was rejected by Foucault. The real difference came about with the launch of the modern state, as said earlier. It was at this stage that both economic and technological advancement came up with instruments of power that were able to redefine power relations on a whole new level. Power relations then came to be defined in terms of these techniques or power technologies, as Foucault would call them (1988). Utilised as a productive force, power then would come to redefine relations among people, people and the state, and so on. The question of who wields power is secondary because power is diffuse; each and everyone is an embodiment and vehicle of power in own capacity. Part of this utilization is to do with societal discipline.

In his investigation, Foucault made it clear his primary objective, that is, to provide a history of the different ways in which human beings were made subjects (Foucault, 1982). First, made subject to others by control and dependence. Secondly, in the sense that their own true identities are subjected by being tied to a specific identity through a conscience or self-knowledge (1982).[25] In his concrete example of the Panopticon[26] (refer page 80), the man-made structure signifies the power relations between the state and society. From its central observation tower, a warden can monitor each prisoner within their cells. The observer is positioned in such a way he only can see the prisoners. The prisoners know and have become aware they are being watched. 'Each prisoner is seen but does not see' (Foucault, 1991, p. 200).

By becoming aware they are being monitored continually, they begin to regulate own conduct. Such awareness has more power of control than being locked up in cells or chains. Thus power relations from the authority's perspective is maintained even in the conscience of the prisoners (Foucault, 1991).

Putting the human body in the centre of his analysis, Foucault has given power relations its political framework and main point of reference (Kelly, 2014). The body is an element to be managed in relation to strategies of the economic and social management of populations (Kelly, 2014). From such perspective, it is through this

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[24] Attributed to Nicollo Machiavelli who penned the book of namesake.

[25] For the Samoans this specific identity is faaSamoa or the self-knowledge of belonging to this identity; it is tied through a strong self-awarenss of who they are as defined by their culture, internalized through social relations. As a result, they are subjected to this identity conscientiously.

[26] Refer to image page 80 of a typical panopticon; its functions in the context of a prison ward are aligned with a traditional Samoan village own setup, the open fale make for easy surveillance of the whole community including tapu observance.

biological function that truly defines the reality of human existence, by which individuals seek own references of who they are outside and within themselves, towards others and the way they relate to power as its subjects and vehicles at the same time (ibid.).

By the same token, it makes meaning of the role of the state as a disciplinary force for the service of law and order; for national security and political stability. At this point in human history when the populace has become too dependent on the state's care and direction, so too are the risks attached to (Fukuyama, 2014). It is the moral duty of the state to minimise the threat of such risks for sake of good relations. Foucault referred to the subtle nature by which modern disciplinary techniques make 'disciplinary power' less ubiquitous and become normalized. On his/her part of the bargain, the average person, by his/her moral obligations as a citizen, is expected to provide resistance where relations are breached (1984).

In summary, all relations are power relations hence political (Foucault, 1991). Every society has own systems and networks of generating and maintaining these relations in their capacities as agents of power. Research on Pacific ethnography attested to this focus on the human body by Pacific Polynesians, in which three fundamental concepts - *va, tap*u and *mana*, all correlate one way or another. By employing Foucault's own inquiry lenses, both old Polynesia and even the Pacific modern state tend to show parallels in this connection between the human body and political control (Mills, 2016; Maliko, 2012). Such control is discrete, perpetuated by society through own rituals and ideology, upon which the modern state reconstitute own forms of relations, through subtle and regulatory processes of modern power technologies (Foucault, 1991).

4.4.6 Power and resistance

Foucault talked about resistance in terms of struggles; three types of which he referred to historically: struggle against exploitation, against domination, and subjection. In his analysis of the struggle against subjection, the state is the central source of power. Foucault's stance is clear that there is resistance in the constitution of power. Since power exists in relations, there must be resistance also to involve (Foucault, 1991). For him, such resistance is aimed against the objectivizing nature of power relations, by which man is turned into a subject for manipulation and control. These may be in the form of anti-authority struggles or asserting own right to be different (1991).

At the same time Foucault has impressed on the world his preference for power as a productive force, reminding them about the ubiquitous nature of power itself; the fact that it is diffuse and circulating, meaning that resistance against it is difficult. Since power as such spreads out across society it implies that any resistance against it must also be diffuse (Pickett, 1996). Pickett pointed out that since Foucault could see more good with the use of power than otherwise, his early stance on resisting authority seemed to have moderated obviously (ibid., p. 458).

4.5   Part 2. The concepts of power and state

The following sections discuss the two key concepts of power and state. To define the two concepts is challenging as it can be problematic (du Pisani, 2010); what has been accepted is a conventional interpretation from the standpoint of critical theory generally. I have assumed Foucault's discursive approach, meaning, the concern will mainly be on the question of how power behaves a certain way and less on a particular sociological definition (May, 2006; Taylor, 2011; Foucault, 1998).

4.5.1   The three models of power analysis

I follow the traditional arrangement of political theory under three model groupings (Held, 2006; Connolly, 1995).   These are 1. The pluralist models 2. The power elite and 3. The Marxist models. The pluralist models or pluralism are hinged on the question of how power is distributed. There is the notion that power is equally shared on the basis of a citizen's democratic rights to the electoral system and free participation in a country's politics; the idea that everyone plays a role regardless of class or status; that there is diversity in the relations of power, hence in groups people can bargain effectively with government or others regarding their interests. Further, while there is inequality the system can sort things out somehow (Held, 2006; Krouse, 1983). The main criticism against pluralism is, there are groups more powerful and therefore more influential in the relations, meaning the chances of small groups in power bargaining are usually compromised. Sometimes the government, rather than being the referee on behalf of all groups, will end up bowing to the pressure from bigger and more powerful few (Ellis, 1980).

Secondly, the power elite theory focuses on the question of how power is concentrated (Bottomore, 1993). The central argument is, power in a democracy is vested on just a few individuals, some of whom can be independent of democratic elections and who fashioned own agenda. Proponents of the power elite theory argue that society has an elite group who exert significant power over the corporate and government. Simply, the power elite theory opposes pluralist models for their narrow views of power in democratic spaces, especially the notion that all individuals and groups share equal power. In its labelling democracy as a utopian folly, the power elite theory argues that democracy is unrealizable within capitalism basically (Merkel, 2014). Mills (1956) pointed out three power groups: political, economic, and military whose leadership, through a process of rationalization generated a funnelling of overall power control into

the hands of a few (cited in Bottomore, 1993). Advocates of this theory use the American system as an example.

The third, Marxist models, also are interested in the question of the concentration of power. The basic assumption rests with economics and the relations of human labour and power, hence the role of capital and its reproduction in the equation. Such reproduction is a key feature of any capitalist structured society. The result is inevitable when one class dominates the means of production, generating an unequal distribution of power and a proletariat. Hence the call for political action. Underpinned in Marxist philosophy is the belief that under capitalism it is the ruling class that holds all the power economic and political. Relations of power are predominantly economic. Inequality is explained solely in economic terms. Criticisms against Marxism includes a narrow interpretation of social inequality, focusing only on the class divide (Held, 2006; Krouse, 1983).

4.5.2   The power concept: a historical overview

The old sovereign power lends us a perspective to the nature of power relations as it were. Power in the hands of one person (king), an elite (oligarchy) or family (dynasty) prevailed until the modern state came into being, and a rationale was sought to justify the new authority (Foucault, 1970). Historically, a uniform notion of power was propagated in the classic works of Niccolo Machiavelli (early 16th century), Thomas Hobbes, John Locke (mid-17th century), Karl Marx, Max Weber (19th century), and well into the 20th century in the likes of Dahl (1957), Lukes (1977) and Giddens (1984) for example, who gave us a pro-Western outlook of the subject (Finkel & Brudny, 2012).

Of lasting influence was Hobbes who represented the idea of power as hegemonic, causal and the need to surrender it over to the state (Clegg, 1989). Considering the risks of a natural state, it is for the good of a political community that it hands power over to a central authority who can exercise it for the common good, Hobbes argued. Power thus is presented as a position of will between the governor and governed; a societal contract that is necessary for its own protection from the threat of anarchy (Lloyd, 2009). John Locke considered power in a context of a strong and stable government for the security of the people and national interests (Aaron, 2001; Lloyd, 2009).

From a contractual to a 'bureaucratic' inspired model, Max Weber took the lead for the latter. Bureaucracy was a new form of organisation that replaced feudalism and patrimonialism; from kinship relations and patronage values, the new model was based

on merits and rational values such as efficiency, according to Max Weber (Clegg, 1989). Bureaucratic models are goal-oriented and therefore far more effective as models of governance, he suggested.

As a political theory, bureaucracy is a form of centralized management by the state or any governing authority (ibid.). It is the basis for a systematic formation of any organisation designed to ensure efficiency and economic effectiveness (ibid.). Weber's approach to power understanding was borne out of his interest in bureaucracy and the factor of domination involved (Clegg, 1989). Power relations for him is always from a position of dominance (parent-child, employer-employee, priest-parishioner relation-ship). Hence his take on organisational power is usually connected to the constitution of the modern state and the will of the rulers to activate power despite resistance to it (ibid.). In the name of a disciplinary society such power is justified, and people are tuned to behave accordingly. The system through its own mechanisms will internalize and rationalize discipline in people's thinking and behaviour (ibid.).

Weber argued that capitalism is well ingrained in bureaucratic Christianity, more importantly the evolvement of disciplinary power to become a fixture of the modern state. Disciplinary values thus as proposed by modern bureaucracy, can be traced back to old disciplinary systems practised by both secular and religious forces as mentioned. Ascetic Protestantism[27] was an example. Which is why discipline as such plays a crucial part in Weber's power relations. Foucault called these the technologies of power, the means by which a population is managed efficiently. Bartels (2014) argued about Weber's relevance to studying the modern bureaucracy and new forms of domination, particularly under the new phenomena of privatization and even deliberative democracy.

Clegg (1989) pointed out the fact that it was Weber who first predicted the adverse power of the bureaucracy in the mechanization and routinization of human life; a type of power instrument that would sabotage new forms of democratic institutions (ibid.). The ultimate task of a punitive bureaucracy is to control the minds, bodies, attitudes, and behaviours of the workers (O'Neill, 1986). The argument would become more prominent in power discourse in the works of Foucault (ibid.).

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[27] Researchers like Weber argued about a causal relationship between religious ideas and spirit of Capitalism. He wanted to understand how religious ideas were translated into maxims of everyday conduct. Idleness was despised and perceived as a sin by the church thus the ethic of labour and hard work was promoted. Through work discipline is applied on a large scale, in workplaces and organisations. Capitalism therefore becomes part of the modern church narrative. Marx could only see the economic exploitation of workers through the relations of power in the system. Bourdieu talked about symbolic power in group culture as the means to perpetuate capitalist values. Foucault can trace modern discipline back to Ascetic Protestantism and the emergence of Capitalism in Europe (SparkNotesLLC; Oxford Reference).

Power as both overt and covert or the two faces of power, was identified with the works of Bachrach and Baratz (1962) who studied the two ways of making decisions by those in authority; was developed further by Lukes (1974) with his notion of a third dimension (Sadan, 1997). Lukes surmised that such a dimension is the most difficult to discover; the fact that people are made to succumb mentally to upholding interests which are not their own. This is power at work in a very covert way (Clegg, 1989). The implication for Lukes was, unless the people see beyond the two dimensions to discover (understand fully) an entire political agenda, then they are bound to be blindsided.

Gaventa (2003) proposed a three-dimensional theory of power and powerless-ness. His work focused on the phenomenon of quiescence, 'the silent agreement in conditions of glaring inequality' (p. 3). The purpose of power he argued, is to prevent the rise in conflict against the rule of a social elite. The strategy is 'silent agreement' as mentioned. Thus, an apparent lack of conflict in a political domain is a sign of power mechanisms at work. Gaventa's theory complements Lukes (Clegg, 2006); powerless-ness is the outcome of unilateral power usually exercised by an elite group in a very unequal society (ibid.).

Power as symbolic came to be identified more with the works of Bourdieu (1986) and his proponents. Bourdieu (1979) contested that cultural roles are far more dominant than economic forces in determining how hierarchies of power are situated and repro-duced across societies. Thus, equated with symbolic power, described as the tacit almost unconscious domination of cultural/social modes in the everyday social habits (ibid.). Symbolic power accounts for the discipline in maintaining places in a social hierarchy, which explains the reality of power relations individually or through system institutions (Giddens, 1973). Hence Bourdieu's argument that misrecognition is universal (Riley, 2017). Upon Bourdieu Althusser suggested that state power is partly based on symbolic repression (Althusser, 1972).

Weber (1968) too argued that social status is far more significant than a person's relations to the market. The honour and privilege of belonging to an esteemed group may become the means by which power is acquired and or exercised (Ritzer, 2013).

Gramsci on the other hand looked at symbolic power in the prism of the concept 'cultural hegemony.' Focus must be on a society's 'organic' culture and the way it is manoeuvred politically by a dominant group, with the aim to establish new norms, hence the determining role of ideology in this transformation. Ideology in the forms of beliefs, values, mores, artefacts are all part of a symbolic representation of hegemonic power.

These are tacitly accepted or appreciated, like the privileging of some groups over others. On the positive at least, people with limited power may counter by forming powerful groups to gain a greater share over economic and other state resources (Ritzer, 2013). To this end, Gramsci believed that it is through democracy that the common people can deliver counterhegemony effectively for their own benefit.

Power as legitimation of authority was the priority of others. Weber's notion of legitimate authority rests on his understanding of the power concept. Power is a factor of domination; it is based on economic or authoritarian interests (Weber, 1988; Sadan, 1997). Political domination has been justified based on three criteria. First, traditional authority or the authority of the 'eternal yesterday, the mores sanctified through the unimaginably ancient recognition and habitual orientation to conform' (Weber, ibid; 1919, p. 78). Second, charismatic, by which a person distinguishes himself/ herself as an authority figure in leadership or show of extraordinary *mana* or skill. Thirdly, rational/legal. This authority is validated by virtue of rules or the rationale of being governed by laws.

The three types of power legitimation interact in most governing systems and political environments. French and Raven (1959) included legitimation in their five bases of power. The five bases are coercive, reward, legitimate, referent and expert. Raven later added the sixth base in information power.[28] Legitimate power is derived from the consent of a group to bestow authority on a person to do a task or perform a certain role basically. Elections are ways by which modern societies do so for politics. Saying that, legitimate power is nuanced and contextual.

All the five bases may be considered legitimate in each own right at any given context, as long as society agrees, even if their rationale for doing so may be anything but rational. Reciprocity for example may be part of a legitimation value in certain societies but is considered illegitimate in others. The same can be said about secular values proposed by the state as opposed to the value systems of minority groups.

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[28] While information power is another form of power according to Raven (1965), Foucault is noted for not distinguishing between power and knowledge. The power of information as knowledge is the monopoly of the state (Foucault, 1976).

Foucault talked about the 'logic of government,' meaning that the bureaucrats and political leaders are the shapers of such logic (Foucault, 2008).[29] The relevance of having an efficient system and a strong government is reinforced by a knowledge regime that is under the control of the state.

Truth is derived from an official corpus of knowledge appropriated by the state and declared as society's own. Such a monopoly on knowledge forms the very basis of legitimation, the justifiable notion that the state knows better (Ibid.). Foucault believed that the state has the means of control (technologies of power such as techniques to utilize knowledge) to increase and perpetuate its hold on the people.

The art of governmentality is a Foucaultian reference to such capability of the state to maintain control subtly within the parameters of power relations (2008). With the emergence of the welfare state and its capacity to provide both political stability and the people's social welfare/well-being, its right to govern is well justified.

Haugaard (2012), in his reconceptualising of power as a dichotomy between domination and empowerment, suggested a four-dimensional approach (2012). He argued that the normative processes such as Lukes' three-dimensional power (power over) have the potential to be emancipatory (power to). Hence the need for a fourth dimension, he argued. Such a dimension has the potential to be accommodating of both. This includes seeking fresh interpretations that relate to new political realities (ibid.).

Hence the idea of power as a deal in human relations was sustained in terms of its empowering appeal (Evans, 1997). A reciprocal nature of human relations is said to be the underlying thread in describing power over and power to (Lewin, 1997).

For the proponents of the relational approach to power, such understanding is the key to unlocking the rationale of power itself (Guzinni, 2005). Power hence is perceived as accommodating because it is relational.

The basic argument is that relational power enables 'personhood' and healthy communities, as opposed to unilateral power that undermines. Mesle (2016) summed it up in terms of three capacities: 1. the ability to be actively and intentionally open to the world around us; 2. the capacity to create ourselves out of relationships with others; and 3. the ability to sustain internal relationships, to influence others by having first been influenced by them. Such an approach to power leads to richer lives and more creative relationships, not to mention good government (Mesle, ibid.).

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[29]In Theory Culture and Society 26 (6):78-108, 2008.

Many agreed that with Foucault, a shift in power understanding had taken on a whole new level of interpretation (Clegg, 2006). As described already, his notion of power as encompassing, all-pervading, free of any agency or source was a radical departure from the traditional consensus. Foucault premised that 'power is everywhere', 'comes from everywhere' so in this sense is neither an agency nor a structure (Foucault, 1998, p. 63). Power is in the very fabric of our existence. There is this new understanding of power as diffuse, relational and can be utilized for the common good ultimately (ibid.).

How do we understand power?

Proponents of critical theory agreed that language is the key. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) places language in the centre of their analytic activity. Language, they argued, is synonymous with power understanding, which is why the focus must be on how a language is used or made to work, particularly by those in power (van Dijk, 2004). In the language are traced hidden power relations which stand for inequality and dispossession (Fairclough, 1989).

Fairclough maintained that language is usually made to work by the authority for the purpose of maintaining and changing power relations (ibid.). The people need to understand the intricacies of these processes so that they can put up resistance and ultimately change society for the better (ibid.). It is not surprising that the linguistic cultural capital is a monopoly of the power elite, thus making a political narrative hegemonic in the sponsored activities of a secular state or religious government for that matter (Foucault, 1980).

Habermas (1981) argued that because language is the foundational component of society, he proposed that human action and understanding be analysed for their linguistic structure and reference to freedom (1981). In his rereading of Weber's notion of rationality or the latter's rather limited interpretation of human action, Habermas (ibid.) contended that freedom and the reconciling features of a culture need to be read into the analysis of power. Hence the term, 'emancipatory communicative action' (ibid.). The task of understanding power in such intricacies of language is still evolving, though overall, the likes of Habermas were more optimistic than the Webers of academia, on the potential of human action to make power a medium for doing good (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006).

Powerhouse 1. Featuring the panopticon, symbol of state power pervading all spheres of society as modelled in prison life, the optimization of power using technology and a subtle political strategy to which Foucault has given the name – biopower.

Source: theguardian.com

Powerhouse 2. Samoan version. No walls to divide, a typical Samoan meeting house (fale fono) is open, its situation is right in the midst of the village, meaning that politics is not a secretive business but shared with the community through family representatives.
Village power pervades the whole through the fa'amatai and all members of the community that monitor the entry and exit from within the houses and from outside and every corner unobstructed.

Source: AJ Tattersall

4.6 The State

A primary definition and Western understanding of 'the state' was that of Max Weber's in his 1919 essay, titled Politics as a vocation; he surmised, it is a political structure wherein coercive force is monopolized legitimately (Weber, 2015). From Weber the concept of state has evolved dynamically; not one definition suffices for a wide range of situations and phenomena (Vincent, 1987). As Vincent put it, it is one of the most profound that can be asked in politics (ibid.). What has been widely accepted is that a state is not a unified entity but a multi-dimensional phenomenon (Held, 1983, Wu, 2007); an idea which manifests itself in either temporal or concrete forms and ways of expression.

4.6.1 Rationale of a state

Because it is a mental conception, a state is not easy to ignore (du Pisani, 2010). In real life we stumble across its force and make own response however and whenever we confront it. The state has become an integral part of many people's lives that on a practical level, life without it is difficult (Vincent, ibid.). Du Pisani (2010) pointed out the state's inevitability due to the role it plays on behalf of society. Such a role involves a body of attitudes, practices, behavioural codes, and so forth, that shape the lives of its subjects. Giddens (1985) ties the same influence on resources for example, the state as a 'power container' with a high concentration of resources to disperse (ibid., p. 8).

Various models of a state are promoted (Fukuyama, 2014). The focus is on the modern state; the state within society; constituted by society and bound together inextricably by forces that are unique to any such environment (Dauvergne, 1998). The state has come to represent the apparatus of government, and for those adopting a democratic framework. The common features of the state are described generally across those lines of shared values and principles promoted by many Western liberal democracies.

For my purpose, the concept of state refers mainly to its disciplinary, civic, and symbolic roles of which apparatus and institutions are its visible representations. The premise is, when a government exercises power on behalf of the state, it is doing so for the benefit of the people. This is the underlying purpose of statehood. The concept of state also highlights a political demarcation between the old and new; a modern state and rule of law and traditional authority and own norms of accepted behaviour, bound to past authorities or old principles (Jessop, 2007).

4.6.2   The ethics of governance

Weber's understanding of power relations is a classic example in terms of its organisational and moral-legitimate structures. It describes the impact of power not just on human relations at a personal level but larger dynamics such as groups, organisations and even governments (Weber, 1978; Capra & Luisi, 2014). The three-component theory of stratification is attributed to him. He argued that a person's power can be shown in the social order through their status; in the economic order through their class, and in the political order through their party (Bourdieu, 1986; Hurst, 2007). Wealth, prestige, and power all interplay to provide a multi-dimensional understanding of a person's influence in the social strata.

Weber stated that there are two basic dimensions of power: the possession of power and the exercise of power (1978). Possession of power derives from a person's ability to control the social resources. This includes economic possession (land, money, etc.), social (respect, prestige, etc.), and intellectual capital. Exercising power according to Weber, means the ability to get your own way with others, knowing they have the ability to resist. Hence the role of moral legitimation in structures, to facilitate the ethics of governance in power relations.

Modern relationships irrespective of structures are meant to describe power as a dynamic force that influences the quality of human life directly (Yonk, 2011). Quality is understood as both ethical and legitimate; which concerns are underpinned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in which basic human rights, measured according to quality of living as lived or experienced, is the purpose and essence of political activity (Hayward, 2012; Yonk, ibid). As such, power relations can be understood in any context in which quality of life is promoted freely (Navarro, 2002).

4.6.3   The idea of a strong state

Basically, the idea of a strong state is upheld on the premise that only in such environment can democracy thrive in terms of the rules of law and supporting institutions that facilitate the balance of power (Fukuyama, 2014). As a chief proponent, his core argument is that for a well-ordered society three building blocks are required: a strong state, the rule of law and democratic accountability (Runciman, 2014). In real life, it is rare to find such a society, as the Economist 2018 has strongly attested to (refer page 86). But as Fukuyama argued, democratic institutions can only function effectively when a strong state is put in place first and foremost. Democratic institutions are but one

component of political stability. The rule of law is another. None of the two can function either without the guarantee of a stable political environment. For Fukuyama, there is a place of a strong state in a positive sense in which democracy can flourish. Fukuyama traced modern democracy to its inception at the end of the 18th century (2014). Since then, the world has witnessed a dynamic unfolding that brings out the best and the worst in its adoption and readaptation in many forms by many peoples.

The Samoan government, subject of this study, is perceived as ''strong'' by many of its citizens, both in its positive and negative connotations. The presumption is that the political party in power, the HRPP, by upholding a strong stance in governance, has managed to maintain political stability this long for a bureaucratic government to function normally (So'o, 2012).

4.6.4 The state in society

Defining 'strong' and 'weak' is problematic (Dauvergne, 1998); there are various other state forms in this continuum, each with own unique features; including in some, striking variable factors such as culture, ideology, technology, all of which pre-scribe to supporting either side or even both. Dauvergne (ibid.) argued that the concepts can be misleading. His is a dynamic view that both strengths and weaknesses of a state are essential; that we must accept the multiple dimensions of strength and weakness; the importance of perspective, and continual change over time (ibid.). He contended that a state-in-society approach "provides a more refined understanding of state strengths and weaknesses than treating states and societies as dichotomous and undifferentiated, or as mere products of the dominant social group" (ibid., p. 125).

In his observations of some of Asian-Pacific states he was concerned less with the extent of state autonomy and more with the question of how a state is woven into its society. A definition of state strength thus involves:

> the willingness and ability of a state to maintain social control, ensure societal compli-ance with official laws, act decisively, make effective policies, preserve stability and cohesion, encourage societal participation in state institutions, provide basic services, manage and control the national economy, and retain legitimacy. Strength or weakness is seen as arising from how all levels of the state interact with various social groups. The particular features of a country—such as its political system, military and police, bureaucracy, precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial histories, economic structure, cultural traditions, and relative position in the regional and international systems—shape the extent of state control over social groups and the extent that social forces reshape, reinforce, or undermine state strength (Dauvergne, 1998, p. 125).

Dauvergne (1998) cautioned against simplistic analyses and conclusions particularly where certain contexts may appear different from the norm. Pouligny (2010) too argued that due consideration be given to these variables that are inherent in certain societies, as they are crucial to understanding power relations in many developing contexts (Ratuva, 2019). For instance, the impact of these factors on policy and action can be crucial for national development (Ratuva, ibid.; Pouligny, ibid.). They can also be detrimental for development planning when shunned or taken for granted (ibid.). Dauvergne also pointed this out, weaknesses may be strengths in one person's count, thus perspective is important.

> Ties to social forces can be a key source of state strength; but they can also be a decisive source of weakness. In this view state strength is much more than just organisational cohesion, coordination, centralisation, or financial capacity—although of course all of these may help maintain a state's ability to impose rules and norms (ibid., p.125).

How urban-based politicians view development may not be the view of ordinary people in the country. The ideal is, that a strong state is a synthesis, a convergence of many things by which human relationships facilitate power at its best. On the other hand, the question of whether this can be realized in its totality is part of this discussion.

4.6.5 State responsibility

In political development, the concept 'power in relations' means many things to many societies adopting democratic systems. Many modern democratic societies though allude strongly to the state and the way it plays its role in relation to other stakeholders of power. Such expectation has a lot to do with the people's societal needs or those of other species; which in essence are associated with other temporal demands such as strong governance, an effective rule of law, and an efficient system of checks and balances within a democratic framework (Fukuyama, 2011; Foucault, 1979). These various needs are usually attached to fundamental democratic values of equity, equality, and freedom in which basic human rights take centre stage in global declarations and international treaties.

A life of an individual person or society is deemed important in this context of global human governance and expectations. Hence the modern state through a central executive authority is called to account for their upkeep and perpetuity.

The concept of human security has become more popular to describe relations of power holistically (Ratuva, 2019). It is considered an ideal approach to understanding power relations, by which people have taken centre stage as opposed to traditional approaches to national defence and hard security only. Such a shift in perspective from national to global in which physical security to issues of human poverty and deprivation are all part of the strategy (King et al., 2002). Hence quality of life is reviewed from a global view-point of obligations of countries to their citizens, as they cater to life satisfaction in terms of well-being (physical, mental, and spiritual), family, education, politics, employment, wealth, safety, security, freedom, beliefs, the environment, and so forth (Hayward, 2012; Yonk, 2011).

Many of these factors are considered as the modern functions of the state whether it be civil, military, or indigenous. In political sociology reference to the term human security is promoted in literature as consistent with good and healthy relations within an organisation or state for that matter (Ratuva, 2019; King, et al., 2002; Yonk, 2011). The primary evidence is high voter turnout in local and national elections or rallying to support good candidates for community committees; or enabling group capacity to accommodate a wide range of political narratives within the context of pluralistic multicultural societies (Yonk, ibid.; Hayward, ibid.). Mostly it turns out that each society has own social arrangement and mechanism through which power is harnessed as a political tool for leadership, management, and motivation (Fukuyama, 2014).

4.7 Democratic aspiration and reality of the modern situation

Democracy is still favoured by many societies around the world (Fukuyama, 2014). Political participation is progressively promoted by the United Nations and its agencies because it hinges directly upon its moral aspiration to improve the quality of life not for just a few but everyone. Quality of living for all demands strong leadership and effective working relationships, but for the majority of the world's democracies, it is an ideal to strive for. Poverty is a factor. Abuse of power is a factor. Corruption is a factor.[30] Resource distribution is a factor. All these impact on power relations one way or another. Monopoly of power by the state or church or a certain group even a language are political realities for many developing democracies (ibid.). The system still serves

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[30] "Corruption breeds disillusion with Government and governance and is often at the root of political dysfunction and social disunity," Secretary-General António Guterres told the 15-member Council, which bears the mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security. The meeting took place in September 2018. The global cost of corruption according to UN data is $2.6 trillion per year, about 5 percent of the worlds GDP.

the interests of an elite group or a few (Naidu, 1988; Hauggard, 2012). Hence the call for mitigating factors is always the moral catch-cry so that such extremes can be avoided as much as possible (Teachout, 2015).

Real life experience has taught us the diverse nature of political realities. For example, in the case of many developing democracies, access to information can be a major obstacle. It is apparent that quality is a matter of exposure to a good political education regime and promotional resources in support. Raising public awareness to make the people's voices count or at least make sound choices in terms of picking candidates is no easy task. This leads to the question of who controls the media has always been synonymous with power. For developed countries with unequal wealth distribution, it may be the issue of political apathy that stands out, the reluctance to vote; as in the case of the United States, a conscious attitude by voters against what they interpret as a system supporting inequality.

The difference between domination and relationality is becoming ever more apparent, as power domination by one group or sector of others has become the norm (Clegg, 1989; Cooper, 1994).

In its tenth edition the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index (EIU hereafter) suggests that things aren't getting better. The index, which comprises 60 indicators across five broad categories - electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, democratic political culture, and civil liberties - concludes that less than 5% of the world currently lives in a "full democracy." Nearly a third live under authoritarian rule, with a large share of those in China. Overall, 89 of the 167 countries assessed in 2017 received lower scores than they had the year before. It concludes that this unwelcome trend remains firmly in place (The Economist, 2018).

Even the label 'flawed democracy' when attached to old 'model' democracies like France's own is striking and leaves much interpretation to the imagination (ibid.). Simply put, what the EIU Index tries to tell us finally is, power is still unevenly distri-buted; also, the balance of power which is the cornerstone of liberal democracy is a misnomer in many democratic states; all of which point to the issue of power legitimacy, the question of how human relations can be described or justified in such dualistic and dubious environment of power domination.

4.8 Part 3: Samoan research and reference on power

For reference purposes I have found the following works useful. These studies by Samoan scholars/writers, penned and/or edited, have addressed the impact of state power and relations from a variety of perspectives: Anae, 1998, 2020; Iati, 2013, 2017; Liuaana, 2002; Malielegaoi, 2017; Malifa, 1999, 2010; Meleisea, 1987; 1987a; Meleisea, et al., 2012; Meti, 2002; Nofoaiga, 2017; So'o, 2008, 2007, 2006; Sila, 2012; Suaalii-Sauni, et al., 2018; Tavita, 2002, 2014, 2017; Toleafoa, 2012; Tuiai, 2012; Tui Atua, 1987, 1989, 2001, 2007, 2010, 2018; Tuimalealiifano, 2006, 2012; Va'a, 2001; Va'ai, 1999. While many of these works may not address power relations as a single topic, the implication for most is obvious. It needs to be noted also the vital role of the independent media, particularly the Samoa Observer, as the source much close to the scene. The wealth of information available was impressive for both government and the private outlets. The attempt to pick and choose may have been an advantage but was also a limitation.

Additionally, the reader will come across other references of Pacific authority, mainly those that are relevant to the broader implication of this inquiry. Given the diverse nature of the Pacific literature, with indigenous references to political power and how they relate among its multitude of cultures, the best effort to be as inclusive as possible is unrealistic. The following works have been useful supplementary for my purpose: Crocombe, 2007; Davidson, 1967; Field, 1984; Garrett, 1982; Gilson, 1970; Hayward, 2012; Hempenstall, 1978; Henry, 1979; Huffer, 2005; Kramer, 1994; Lawson, 1996; Lovett, 1899; 2013; Naidu, 1988; O'Brien, 2017; Ratuva, 2019, 2019a. The list is by no means definitive.

First, Meleisea in his work, The Making of Modern Samoa, has become an authority on Samoa's story of the transition from colonial to the post-colonial. His thesis is summed up in this introduction of the book: 'Since independence in January 1962 several constitutional court cases have exposed the dilemma which the Western Samoa Government is facing, balancing *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan customs and traditions) with Western legal systems of authority. This book traced the clash between Samoan and Western notions of government and law from the 1830s to the 1980s emphasizing the hitherto neglected interpretation of events from a Samoan perspective. As a critical reinterpretation of the literature on Western Samoa, drawing on oral sources and material from the archives of the Land and Titles Court of Western Samoa, the book provides important new insights

into pre-colonial Samoa, the German and New Zealand colonial regimes, racial issues, and the contemporary political problems of the independent State of Western Samoa" (Meleisea, 1987; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 2020).

From the outset the author set the scene by introducing the dilemma of trying to balance the two systems of authority. This was played out in the interpretation of the two systems by the judiciary, where individuals, families, villages, districts, and even national government took their disputes to the court for settlement. The point of contention is the source of legitimacy. Legitimacy is power and therein lies the problem for Samoa as an example, how two very different systems can cater to the demands of power as an unpredictable force (Howlett, 1998; Keenan, 1987).

For this study's purpose, Meleisea's concern raises the issues of the situation and legitimation of power in society, which obviously for some belong in the traditional *faamatai* and governing jurisdiction. Others would like to argue that power belongs to the people. In plain democratic terms, the individual in relations, not an elite in relations. The argument thus, it is not so much the arduous effort of trying to strike a working balance, or lack of discernment in what is best in a system, rather, what matters is the risks of power without a rule of law that applies to all. Collective values could only be considered legitimate in a context where individual voices are accorded respect. The risks of unbridled power in the hands of an influential few, paraded in the name of authority, is the current reality (Toleafoa, 2017; Malifa, 2010). This is where the state comes in with the rule of law.

So'o wrote the Democracy and Custom in Samoa. An Uneasy Alliance. The purpose of the book, in his words, "This study examines the extent to which the dual existence of an indigenous institution – broadly known as the *matai* system and centred around a system of chiefly titles – and the legalized democratic political system have affected each other in the period following independence. It seeks to answer such questions as: Has the existence of indigenous institutions hindered or aided the progress of democracy? To what extent has the progress of democracy impacted on indigenous institutions?" (So'o, 2008). Like Meleisea's, his work output provided substantial evidence of power and power relations at work in Samoa's political frameworks. So'o's main study reference also revolved around the same dilemma his older contemporaries addressed extensively.

The consensus is, Samoa has adopted a pluralistic framework for its political constitution, and as a result created own conundrum. Indeed, the progress of democracy has impacted Samoa's traditional institutions hugely as the evidence showed. For example, granting the universal suffrage has changed traditional power relations dynamics overnight. Court decisions in favour of one over the other continued to reinforce a discourse of discordance than otherwise. At the same time, democracy could not do without the support of traditional authority. In a collaboration with Huffer (2005) and local writers, the consensus is that the flaws of governance have much to do with lack of understanding of the nature of the relations between the two governing systems.

While democracy is presented by So'o more or less as an equal in the relation, this thesis argues that culture as constituting authority bears far more clout. As alluded to earlier, symbolic power diffusion has enabled the incorporation and reconfiguration of different government systems to form the base and superstructure of society. Thus, it needs to be acknowledged as a syncretic mix and complicated to be taken for granted. It is hybrid in that sense, like an aggregate of all powerful things - political, social, religious, intellectual, technological, and so forth, irrespective of which label of authority.

Democracy may be another name for authority, but it is also an instrument of cultural hegemony, just as *faamatai*, a tool for leadership to exercise power as they wish (Ramos, 1980). So'o strongly believed that the two systems can resolve own differences and learn to coexist ultimately.

Tui Atua (1987, 2006, 2014, 2018) whose career as an academic was spontaneous but timely from the vantage point of lived experience and maturity. As said earlier, he was directly involved in Samoa's politics from the start, as a former prime minister and head of state. His first work was published in 1987.[31] A collection of speeches, which first articulated his political ideas, and resonated into the second book,[32] leading to two more publications in English, both reinforcing his original thoughts. A proponent of the indigenous reference, his approach to inquiry may all be too obvious, that the holistic worldview of Pacific cultures needs to be taken seriously in order to diagnose and even resolve their governing problems.

Power relations to him is presented in the dilemma of the problem in relation to the solution. The way to explore these relations are multi-dimensional, he argued. In

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[31] Titled, *Ia faagaganaina oe e le Atua fetalai.*
[32] Titled, *O le talanoaga na loma ma Ga'opo'a.*

2006, he presented a paper called, *O le faautaga i le faaluafesasi:* Insight into Dilemmas, making references to Barth's own dilemma in the concept 'God-sickness' and Thompson's own in what he called God-chasing (Tui Atua, 2018). God-sickness is about the preoccupation with the dilemma itself; God-chasing on the other hand, is about searching for truth, for knowledge of God in response. The dilemma of power then lies in what he calls, perspective and balance. The search for meaning is striving for balance between two opposing systems.

To acknowledge the dilemma is full acceptance of the reality; striving to maintain harmony requires an ethical approach. For example, the matai system is not an end unto itself; it is only relevant as long as it serves the needs of the Samoan public, he asserted (1987, 2001, 2007). The dilemma therefore is about the search for meaning in the dynamics of social relations. First with Tagaloa and past ancestors; then with the living. 'Samoa is family' is a favourite quote of his hence Samoan politics is family politics and must be understood as such. *Tofa Saili*[33] is the indigenous way in response to the dilemma. Through *tofa saili*, Samoa can resolve the dilemma of governance, even if all it takes is the most demanding of virtues (Tui Atua, 2020).[34] In the search for perspective and balance, *tofa saili* requires the wisdom of the 'long view' and the 'deep view', in the orators' insight (*faautaga loloto*) or the deep view, and the chiefs own (*tofa mamao*) or the long view.

By deduction Tui Atua's *tofa saili* can be interpreted in the cognitive-psychological functions of the will as a free agency[35] in the task of deep contemplation. Hence, the view of the man on the canoe deserves articulation because his is a close up on the daily struggle; he knows a lot about the will to live.[36] But he still needs the view of the man on the land, whose will to power sustains both. Even so, both need the long view of the man on the heights whose will to meaning is crucial to everyone's long-term survival.

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[33] According to Tui Atua, the search for wisdom is an holistic undertaking that involves critical reflection that begins with the person who searches (Suaalii-Sauni et al., 2018 Edition; p. 245).

[34] Tui Atua is quoted, "All it will take is accountability, transparency and a lot of humility to solve our problems." Editorial Samoa Observer Issue 16/5/2020.

[35] Freewill is something that human beings cultivate as part of their identity package, according to Foucault. He referred to this as practices of the self (1979, 1980).

[36] The concept 'will to live' is attributed to Schopenhauer in his work The World as Will and Representation (1818); the will to live is identified with the primordial impulse that drives instinctive behaviour/attitudes towards or against human reality. E.g. the desire to avoid suffering. The will to power is identified with Nietzsche (1844-1900) in his work of same title, who believed that the desire for power is the main driving force in humans to achieve in any activity including government. The 'will to meaning' is attributed to Victor Frankl in his work The Will to Meaning (1969).

The indigenous Samoan view takes a holistic approach whereby 'three perspectives' are considered; all three contribute equally to the conception of reality. Freely interpreted, this analogy by the researcher emulates in terms of the three basic functions of government: to cater to the physical, political and spiritual needs of the people, exemplified in the three works mentioned.

Balance is found when all three views are consulted. Politically there is imbalance and discord when one view is shunned or kept out of the conversation.

Iati (2013, 2017), a representative of the diasporic Samoan academia, assessed the situation from a distance and thus a factor in his perspective.[37] His research question was, How has the HRPP managed to hold power for so long? Granted there is a power monopoly in a political party at the price of a sound democracy. Notwithstanding, there is every possibility of assuming or resuming good governance irrespective of the situation, with the presence of democratic institutions still intact, Iati argued. His concern about the growing dominance of the government in the relations is shared with others, who have interpreted its move to further legislate customary matters, as consequential for the future of Samoa and people (Samoa Observer, Issue Nov. 29, 2020).

Apart from the four mentioned, there were other writers/observers of note whose works have also been referred to throughout the discussion. As a group they presented a functional and relatively circuitous assessment of Samoa's power relations from each one's methodological choice. In other terms, they pursued a structural-functional approach in which political power is predicated on a mutual cooperation of diverse interests within a complex system (Varshney, 1978). This may explain why some of them have taken a pragmatic stance in Samoa's political development, and presumably, the future of power relations in its society.

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[37]It may not be from his perspective but from Samoa's prime minister, who responded to Dr Iati's stance against legislation to lease customary land under the Torrens system. The ridicule was aimed at his allegedly non-presence at the original space of activity, implying a lack of first-hand knowledge on issue. No doubt the latter would have reciprocated in kind with own refutation. On the other hand, his 'diasporic' status may have been a factor in terms of expressing his view much more freely than otherwise; as well, the fact that the prime minister singled him out.

4.9   The gaps of the literature

A random browse through the body of literature on or about the Samoan govern-ment and power affirmed that the gaps were implicated, first, in the restrained use of any critical methodology to analyse society. Granted, the emphasis has been to identify the problem more than finding out how and why it persisted at a deeper level. So, the real impact of political power through culture could have been clarified through Bourdieu's insights on capital, or the notion of power as diffuse as Foucault asserted, or hidden as Lukes argued, or transformed in Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony pervading society. Upon this premise, the risks for any research on power are obvious, because the dilemma of power relations must be clarified with the understanding of the way political power is intricately positioned deep in societal discourses (van Dijk, 2014; Geuss, 1981), or the dominant ideology lurking in the backdrop freely and unchallenged (Ramos, 1982; Gramsci, 1992). Hence, authority continues to perpetuate the illusion, or what Foucault called, "the utopia of completely transparent communication" (Foucault, 1997b, p. 298).

Because power is diffuse and ubiquitous within Samoan society, it is not easy to identify the real agents of power (Foucault, 1991; Bourdieu, 1984). For example, the government regime in the guise of state authority and democracy also poses as an advo-cate of the matai system and traditions. As village leaders they are also active in church government. With the concentration of power on the government they are free to traverse between the systems for the advancement of own plans. Ratuva (2019a) noted that the intersection between nodes of power and the relationships between societal institutions could only create a complex configuration of overlapping discriminatory and unequal relationships. Thus, it can be argued that while critical theory approaches may have been around for a while, their employment in the study of Pacific societies are still developing, strictly speaking. Political research is still constrained by the culture and its dominant discourses in the hands of the authority – secular and religious (ibid.; Bourdieu, 1986).

4.10 Conclusion

In examining the theoretical framework of the thesis, two key concepts defined as well as summed up the whole chapter: power and the state. The rationale of selecting a critical framework was informed by the virtues of each concept, particularly their central stances in power relations understanding in a democratic society. Such a critical approach was meant to be flexible and collaborative. While the focus has been on Gramsci, Bourdieu and Foucault, other traditions have also been referred to. This approach adds value to the qualitative nature of the research. Selecting three reputable theorists to describe the Samoan reality was challenging but necessary. From a research perspective, only a complementary approach can cater effectively to the demands of the challenge.

In using the inquiry lenses of critical theory, power was identified and critically assessed in terms of its relations, dynamics, and multiple effects through the power-knowledge discourses. On the other hand, the role of the state was unravelled as an agency of power, whereby knowledge becomes a monopoly to the extent that state influence reigns on behalf of society (Foucault, 1991). Allusion to state influence needs to be understood in the hegemony of a culture.

The culture in that sense is like an aggregate of all powerful things - political, social, religious, intellectual, technological, and so forth. Additionally, connections were made between critical theory and the local literature or gaps identified thereof, the over-all aim was to provide a sound and robust framework that is responsive to the demands of the task.

I now turn to address the major indigenous concepts of Samoa's power discourse that will inform the conceptual framework with much more depth and finer nuances of power understanding from a Samoan perspective.

Chapter 5

THE INDIGENOUS CONCEPTS IN SAMOA'S
POWER NARRATIVE

This chapter examines the multi-faceted aspects of the culture (*faaSamoa*) through which power or its agents thrive daily. These agents are either tangible or conceptual or both. From a historical viewpoint their depictions are critical to an in-depth analysis of the nature and development of the power concept to where it positions itself today in Samoa's power narrative. Together they underpin Samoa's indigenous reference on power relations (Tui Atua, 2018; Meleisea, 1987a). These are the core concepts in this manner, not at all definitive. Summed up here in recapitulatory formats, they represent the basic consensus of opinions, though the reader will be free to complement in the light of other perspectives/analyses. In other terms, a better understanding of these concepts is the key to unlocking Samoa's power narrative, hence their high relevance to the thesis argument.

I wish to begin this chapter by reiterating the contribution of Critical Theory (CT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) traditions in the analysis of social institutions, specifically from the perspective of power hegemony. As Gramsci posited, the idea of hegemony of power is the opposite of domination where coercive force is involved; rather, hegemony is power through subtle forms of management, the influence of ideas by which modern authority maintains control. So, in this chapter the reader will be encouraged to discover how the old wine lent flavour to the new taste, to use a biblical analogy that is most relevant for this situation. I refer to the aesthetics of the Samoan language and custom in their allusive and rhetorical appeals for example (Tui Atua, 2018). As Gramsci argued, a new worldview is a reproduction of the old, a modern repackaging in favour of a power elite or system.

5.1 Aiga (family)

Like many other Samoan concepts, aiga is highly nuanced, depending though on context to clarify meaning. Aiga is the elementary family; it is the extended family as well. It means lineage, kin, home, someone's spouse, being related. Tui Atua, who once held the office of the head of state, in his official speeches often refers to Samoa as a

family. He is in fact referring to the anthropological makeup of Samoa; its social and political history where a people are connected by close ties due to kinship loyalty, language and culture and other such common affinities. Samoa is also part of the bigger family of Polynesia or the Pacific people living in Oceania in that sense. Noted earlier, genealogical ties to its Pacific neighbours for economic and political interests were due in part to early mobility, which continues today with a new understanding of families as transcultural and transnational (Va'a, 2001; Anae, 2020).

Politically traditional Samoa is composed of big families (Meleisea, 1987; Soo, 2008). These are clusters of villages made up of ordinary family units, which political basis revolved around an original founder or title of high ranking. There are nine such families (So'o, 2008) and throughout Samoan history they held the balance of power on their own terms or through alliances until the status quo was severely disrupted when foreign forces intervened (So'o, ibid; Meleisea, 1987a). These traditional power blocs while highly influential in their days no longer determine the fate of modern Samoa directly, though ideologically and symbolically they still influence its power relations. Their representatives still play important roles in the Samoan state.

Given the fact that genealogy is core to matai oratory and *fa'aSamoa* repertoire, the reinforcement of this sense of belonging to the whole, on behalf of family, village, district or a representative is palpable (Kramer,1994; Turner, 1884; Simanu, 2002). A strong sense of belonging to one of these big families, or the two paramount titles (sa Tupuā, sa Malietoā) by which most of Samoa are connected genealogically, is intrinsic in every Samoan born and bred. This is a person's cultural identity through their village genealogy.

To avoid duplication, Aiga was discussed in Chapter 2 under Village Authority. What can only be stressed here is, that its socio-cultural meaning precedes its Western understanding in most cases. On the other hand, the line between the two has blurred since Samoa reclaimed its independence. With the emerging popular practice of title splitting, most married males, while matai in their own clans; are also heads of their own immediate families; some living in private properties and tend to own affairs and businesses. As So'o and others alluded to in the book, *Changes in the Matai System*, power relations in the modern Samoan *aiga* have changed rapidly.

5.2   Fāiā (kinship relations)

Milner in his dictionary defined the word *fāiā* in terms of kinship relations or else relation by affinity. Literally it means a log used as a bridge over a stream that links two sides. It is an important concept when it comes to understanding the significance of cultural relationships in the *faaSamoa*. How a person relates to his/her cultural environment very much defines his/her role as an individual of multiple relations or as a member of a collective of own multiple relations. Through kin a person is an identity of relations (Anae, 2010). How someone is related to another as kin is binding to the *faaSamoa* in terms of claims or obligations at every level. Even if such claims or obligations may only be psychological or affective at least. These designated relations have been the hallmarks of the *faaSamoa*, embedded into the psyche and have become definitive aspects of its organisational ethos and good living (Tui Atua, 2018).

Kinship relations for Samoa is taken seriously, described by Participant 6 as a sensory umbilical cord by which traditional born and bred Samoans see themselves connecting to others or the world as an identity. Kinship relations lie at the very heart of traditional Samoan politics (Meleisea, 1987a). In the past special claims were made in times of war and hostility when alliances were needed. Rallying to the aid of a kin in times of need is a moral obligation. Whether lending support to his or her political campaign or contributing to a family funeral, the levels of commitment and expectation are the same. It is an honour to both parties. Honour is enhanced even more when you formally acknowledge your genealogical connections through proper protocols of traditional identification. Such cultural protocols reinforce bonding and identification of self in relations, no matter what level of social interaction that involves (Anae, 2010).

A brother-sister relationship is integral to this understanding of power relations. The relation has political significance in terms of obligations that are binding for both in what is called a covenant (*feagaiga*). The covenant puts the sister pride of place; a brother defers to his sister and applied in the name of good governance it bears significantly on human relationships at many levels of organisation and social hierarchy (Meleisea, et al., 2015). Many village genealogies can be traced back to these basic kin bonding, some villages whose progenitor is the sister are saluted as *feagaiga* or *tama-fafine,* others who originated from the brother are lauded as *tamatane* (male lineage). Both descendants of the two are treated as equals though in reality the relation is unequal as the *faamatai* is partial to the brother or male lineage in terms of family titles and land appropriation (Motusaga, 2016).

Other synonyms of *fāiā* are *so'otaga* (linkage), *pi'itaga* (cleavage), and *auala* (right of access). They are associated with *fa'asinomaga* (cultural designation) as individuals or members of a group. For example, part of a person's *fa'asinomaga* obligates him/her morally to help out when kin is in need; if it's a funeral, his right of access to a funeral *tapu* is through his/her genealogical link, and claim to kinship connections. A traditional Samoan identity must always be described in the context of relations to lands, titles and people (Tui Atua, 2018).

5.3   Va (relational space)

The *va* concept is one of the much discussed in Samoan-based research where human relations are involved, therefore it needs not much introduction. Literally *va* refers to the space between two people or groups of people, is not just space but a relational zone of negotiations in human affinity; sanctioned by the culture. Its upkeep is essential for harmonious relationships and perpetuation of strong peaceful communities (Anae, 2010, 1987). As noted earlier, *va* and *tapu* are closely related; due to the common understanding that *va* is sacred; hence *va tapuia* is used to describe the essential quality of this space (Tui Atua, 2018; Anae, ibid.).

Local researchers talked about the relational self that is understood in terms of obligations (Tui Atua, 2010; Lui, 2003; Anae, 1998). As such *teu le va* (Anae, 2010), tending to the space, is a direct appeal to its application as a custom. Tui Atua believes that 'va' tending is the essence of the *faaSamoa* (Tui Atua, 2010). Tending to the relations is a way of living; a mindset; a cultural awareness of a people, a moral obligation (Tui Atua, 2018;). Ideologically it is sanctioned by *tapu* and *mana* and ritualised through *aga fa'aaloalo*, a customary system of deference with a set of norms and a code of practice.

Based on the principle of reciprocity, it is an individual as well as a collective effort; and the Samoan children are instructed very early on the protocols of *fa'aaloalo* (Tuia, 2013; Tanielu, 2004). As a family unit all members are morally obligated to its upkeep, first among own members; secondly, with respect to others in the group and the world outside. As a code of practice, (*faiva o fa'aaloalo* ~ practice of deference) it serves the interests of 'va tending' within a community and outside of it (ibid.). It reinforces other values such as family loyalty, the sharing of resources and collective responsibility (Anae, 2020).

But it has come under intense scrutiny for reasons all too obvious. Tending to relations has become an expensive exercise socially, financially, and mentally particularly when lending to its human excesses. While there are families who can cope with its pressure, who dare raise the bar in flaunting wealth for reasons such as family honour, other not so well-off families are compromised (Tuiai, 2012; Thornton, et al, 2010). These families will resort to borrowing to avoid losing face. The consequences for some can be damaging (Families Commission Study 2011, New Zealand).[38] Family members who live overseas bear the burden for most of their *aiga* in Samoa, whether it is a funeral, a wedding, a village building project or church *taulaga*.

These customs and practices have been blamed for Samoa's social problems and even poverty among families in both Samoa and overseas (ibid.; Samoa Observer, Issue June 4, 2019). Because of the affective and unconventional nature of *va* tending, it encourages certain malpractices, which in the context of modern state law and principles of fairness, highly contradictory (Larmour, 2012).

One social aspect of *va* tending is referred to as *tausi mamalu*, meaning maintaining the dignity of a title or office. Because of the sacredness of the space between leaders and servers, it is uncustomary for titular chiefs to be frequenting with the common folk on a regular basis. Such extension of *tapu* in practice was strictly observed by the *faifeau* in the village. His symbolic absence in the village cultural activities (e.g., wedding, title bestowal and funeral feasts where material goods were distributed) was a statement on the high moral ground that was identified with such roles. Normally it was the orators and the *salelesi* whose presence were warranted by custom on such occasions. Today the change could not be so obvious. The presence of the matai cohort in funerals of untitled members of the village, to perform rituals that are reserved only for titular chiefs has become commonplace (Personal communication with source).

By using Foucault's lens of critical analysis, starting with his premise that power exists only in relations, we can review all the above in a new light. At the end of this discussion, we may be able to concede to the simple fact that the *va* concept is core to Samoa's power relations (Tui Atua, 2018). Indeed, all its cultural practices and institutional structures embody sets of power relations that are embedded in the system (Clegg, 1989). It can be argued that this space is where political power is concentrated, recreated, negotiated, and redistributed daily. As evident in the above discussion, the power

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[38] Families Commission Study 2011. Media reports on the problem both in New Zealand and Samoa are commonplace. Personal communication with a source who lost a property in gambling due to cultural pressure.

of a system lies in the unconscious acceptance of values, traditions, cultures and structures of an institution or society (Bourdieu, 1986; Hardy, 2001). As Hardy put it, 'it emphasises the discursive aspects of power – how actors are locked into positions by way of the linguistic practices available to them to make sense of a situation' (ibid., 2001, p. 10958).

> Important power struggles are not those about the allocation of material resources or decision-making capabilities, but those that form around the ability to 'frame discursive and nondiscursive practices within a system of meaning that is commensurate with that individual's or group's own interests' (Deetz and Mumby 1990, p. 32). Further, knowledge and meaning impinge on the identity of *all* individuals as they participate in the production of organizational life (Hardy, 2001, p. 10959).

Hardy described this form of power as an 'inherent aspect of organisational life, reproduced by day-to-day communicative practices.'

> Organizational reality is characterized less by the domination of one group over another, but by complex discursive practices that 'define what it means to be an organizational member and allow for the privileging of managerial interests over others (Deetz and Mumby 1990, pp. 32, 39) (Hardy, 2001, p. 10959).

Following Foucault's line of argument, the *va* as maintained by *mana, tapu and tua'oi*, has provided the ideological underpinnings for the Samoan society to frame discursive and nondiscursive practices that make sense for them (ibid.). Power is viewed then in terms of a collective identity, a network of power relations in which everyone plays a part. Given the assumption that power is diffuse, the relationship between *pule* and *tautua* then is symbiotic, a socio-political obligation, affirmed by the morals and values of kinship, upheld and sanctioned by the system's own truths. Such power is hard to escape from (Hardy, ibid.). And because legitimation of power relations is hinged on a very powerful ideology (known to a group as a way of living), there is little room for critical reflection.

Which answers the question of why *va* tending is always maintained, first, it is considered a moral obligation because family is involved; secondly, because the outcome is mainly productive as it draws a community together (Hardy, ibid.). So just by the very nature of its relationship arrangement, there is much room too for abuse. There are those who continue to support the traditional way for its strong cultural appeal and materialistic advantages; others who look at *va* tending for its contemporary ethics only,

in terms of simple, affordable, sustainable relationships, may go for the latter or another form of compromise. In the final analysis, the latter is hardly an option. Many villages leadership still strongly favour the traditional way for reasons as stated already.

As an intellectual abstraction and a meeting point of minds, *teu le va*, is a continuum by which Samoans will continue to relate to their culture; those with more freedom can choose the type of relation, others may not be due to real constraints such as living within a cultural space literally, where conformism is the norm. Such a continuum can be applied as an assessment of the degree of commitment, or the ideal way they would like to see it expressed in practice. Should we do it the traditional way or the *palagi* way and still call it *fa'aSamoa*? (Suaalii-Sauni, 2007: Tiatia, 1989). It can be argued that *va* tending had begun with all good intent, as one participant surmised, particularly at a time when the means to doing so were quite modest by today's estimation; now that many have access to money, so as the penchant for flaunting, which consequences are devaluing a good principle[39] and impoverished a good number of the populace – both local and families overseas.

5.4 Fa'ataualofa

The principle of *faataualofa* is at the heart of Samoa's *va* tending social practice. While *teu le va* is about creating cultural awareness, *faataualofa* is the moral ethos. Premised on the value of love, or the ethic of reciprocating a kind act, it is the pulse of the culture in word and action. To trade kindness for kindness is a universal moral guide to good living which Samoans have internalized and institutionalized through its matai system and *faaSamoa*. Contributing to a neighbour's *faalavelave* therefore has become a rational response for the fact that they came to my own previously. Noted earlier, when done with moderation, it is an empowering principle. Its abuse today in the name of the culture and even human generosity itself, is regretful.[40] This is due to a number of reasons. First, the giver complained because he thought that he was not reciprocated adequately on the basis of what he gave. Secondly, the giver may be pressured to loan money so he can reciprocate the receiver equally or even more, who has come to his/her aid previously. Thirdly, the giver may lose face due to not reciprocating the receiver well enough.

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[39] The principle of faataualofa.
[40] Raising awareness among the young Samoans about such abuse is a collective responsibility. An academic debate entitled Ua leaga le aganuu a Samoa i le tele o le fia fai mea ~ The Samoan culture is spoilt because of greed; highlighted the concern of a number of New Zealand Samoan educators about the problem.

In most cases, flaunting wealth by either party is always to do with family prestige and reputation. The concern is that given its technical familiarity it has lost its moral appeal. It puts the vulnerable to all sorts of pressure, particularly in a culture where symbolic capital (prestige, reputation, family honour) are considered more valuable. *Fa'ataualofa* is considered a social capital, and along with Samoa's wealth of cultural capital they reinforce the symbolic control of power on families. Thus, upholding family honour usually comes at a cost.

5.5 Tua'oi

The word *tua'oi* is equated with English boundary basically. As a concept *tua'oi* is a discursive construct linguistically and culturally (Tui Atua, 2018; a prepositional phrase, *tua-atu-o-i* (beyond this point) that implies both the specific and the allusive. The allusive incorporates the significance of relations (va) in *fa'aSamoa*. Relationships are governed by *tapu* of boundaries. Relational space thus implies the respect and deference accorded to each in maintaining a reciprocal relationship of spaces and boundaries. Like the concept of *va* (space), *tua'oi* (boundary) is more than just a line in the ground; they are reference to a network of dynamic human relationships (Tui Atua, ibid.). The boundaries (*tua'oi*) are multi-layered and can operate simultaneously (ibid.). Symbolically they are respected as much as they are in practice, not just for sake of human *va* tending but the belief that power relations involve the whole of the cosmos. A breach of the *tua'oi* will deserve punishment; such is required in order to restore *mana* and cosmic balance (ibid.).

Most societies have incorporated the modern state with own set of boundaries; the most notable is that between itself and the church. Samoa has managed to incorporate the state through an ideological immersion. Thus, state *tua'oi* is a merge of the culture and elements of other systems. Contemporary politics has expanded the state territory beyond the mere physical boundaries to overlap with other aspects such as environmental concerns, local politics (Hayward, 2012) and church authority also (Nieuwenhuis, 2012).

This has posed a series of dilemmas sometimes as of who defines the functions, demarcations, and even policing of the boundaries. This may not be easy to determine in some situations and unfamiliar spaces (ibid.). As implied earlier, the boundary may be real or ideological as in Samoa's situation. The *tua'oi* of land is governed by *tapu* of culture hence the view that Samoa's state institution of the Land and Titles was an

encroachment on those *tapu*. Of particular interest is the demarcation of such boundary between state and church; wherein mutual interests in civil politics are shared (ibid.). For example, the row between the government and the EFKS on the pastors' tax is a case in point, when one party decides to redefine the boundary by itself. What was once imagined and *tapu* by society (symbolic) has become real once defined by law.

5.6 Pule

The term *pule* is not unique to the Samoan vocabulary. It has shared nuances with the Tongan. Pratt, the most noted lexicographer of the Samoan language, who started working in his dictionary in the 1850s, equates pule with the English authority, order, command; a synonym *aiā* is defined as 'to have authority over'. Another century on, another Samoan lexicographer, George Milner, who worked in Samoa in the mid-1950s confirmed. The English synonyms 'authority', 'power' and 'governance' were equivalents of the Samoan *pule*. Milner made eight entries in reference to its noun usage. These are related mostly in terms of its application and general understanding (*pule* as a modern corporate manager or a traditional village chief and exercise of one's influence over the others under his chain of command).

Such understanding relates to the moral, mental and physical capacity, or ability of a person to exercise power or deal with it in a particular situation or context. Pule when exercised fairly and mildly, it is then perceived from a moral stance of wisdom, clemency, fair judgement, good governance.

The word *pule* can be traced back to its Proto–Malayo-Polynesian origin (Kirch & Green, 2001). Little is known of its initial formation. The four languages: Tongan, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and Samoan share the same meaning of authority, of which close proximity linguistically, ethnically and geographically would attest to such historical uniformity, compared with Maori and/or Hawaiian understanding, the two being the most isolated posts of the Polynesian triangle. The argument is this close identification with the socio-political authority wouldn't have been simpler and more clear-cut during the precontact period (ibid.). Authority rests with the leadership of which the *ariki* institution was part of virtually all Polynesian societies (Rigo, 2016).

While authority is shared among the rank and file, it is the chief (*alii, ariki, eiki, aiki, akariki, aliki*) whose special powers set him apart from the rest (*tapu*). He has *mana* through which he controls his subjects and environment (Tominiko, 2014). His authority is considered sacred due to the nature of his claim to leadership or that which the

followers had preconceived by means of group ideology. With the acceptance of Protestant Christianity, a new order was realized in terms of own forms of interpretive paradigms. From then on, the source of power and legitimacy is derived no longer from indigenous gods or nature but has shifted to one universal god, the Christian God (Kamu, 1989).

With the rise of the modern state, Samoa being the first Pacific country to regain independence, legitimate *pule* has, by the people's consensus been reconceptualized to align more with the democratic state authority (Meleisea, 1987). The state is the modern *ariki* and agent of legitimate power, enabled by the new institutions of democracy and Christianity. *Pule* then has refashioned itself like a modern man. A man of two worlds. While adhering to the rule of law in the Weberian sense, he is as much a traditional man as charismatic all at once. His power base is the village polity, wherein temporal power is still defined, recreated, and maintained (Vaai, 1999). So, while the state wields its *pule* at national level, real *pule* is still in the hands of the *faamatai*, in the village leaders where its impact is keenly felt or anticipated.

5.7   A new power configuration

The fact that churches have chosen the village as their bases for mission has resulted in a new configuration of *pule* which share the same space (Samuelu, 1999, Tuiai, 2012). Ecclesiastical authority is autonomous in villages, their officers operate independently under their national church constitutions. Each church denomination exercises own *pule* in tandem with the village authority freely. Harmonious co-existence of the two *pule* is the goal. As mentioned earlier, village leaders are themselves part of the church leadership and such goal is hardly an effort for villages having one or a couple of churches. For other villages who may have as many as five or six churches co-existing, such dynamics are sustained through the power of human relations and *tapu* of the culture. A lot depends on the quality of leadership and personalities too.

The church's own *pule* is founded on a religious ideology (Foucault, 1982). For the Samoan Protestants, God is the source of all *pule* including secular, and the pastor is the messenger/ speaker. The office of the village pastor has become prominent due to the hold of such religious beliefs on the believers (Taule'ale'ausumai, 2019). The institutional church through its denominations has become a national 'village' council in its own right, with own power hierarchy and systems of governance. As organisations of structures and functions they are a fusion of democracy, modernity and *faaSamoa* (Ioka,

1998; Liuaana, 2002). Samoa's constitution acknowledged God as the foundation of its establishment. In theory, both church and state exercise *pule* on the strength of three pillars: religion, Samoa's indigenous institutions, and liberal democracy. Traditional *pule* bears the indulgences of the past in terms of its ideological underpinnings (Meleisea, 1987). To have *pule* implies the essence of *mana*, a supernatural endowment in terms of special virtues or leadership clout, and protection of *tapu* (sacred sanction). Ecclesiastical *pule* on the other hand draws its *mana* and *pule* also from tradition, plus a superior source, God.

While church *pule* is limited to each one's own religious jurisdiction, the state goes further, by asserting authority on behalf of all citizens irrespective of the people's religious affiliations.

5.8 Soalaupule

The traditional European view of power as an exercise in authority has been a sticking point in the relationship between the Samoan subjects and their colonial masters (Meleisea, 1987; So'o, 2008). The latter, who hailed from a background of historical feudalism and monarchical tradition, wherein vertical power structure was the rule, found Samoa's own approach quite a different proposition (Meleisea, ibid.). This approach favours consensus, matai style, arguably a style of political decision making that is unique to Samoa. It has been the mainstay of their politics for many generations. The clash therefore between two worldviews was obvious. Research agreed that both the German and New Zealand administrations had failed for the fact that they really misunderstood the way power relations worked for their Samoan subjects (ibid.).

It comes to this concept, *soalaupule*. It is a principle of power dealing based on mutual consensus among its stakeholders. Samoa's ontology of power and leadership viewed these concepts holistically; a collective undertaking, a process of mutual inter-ests, an egalitarian exercise in decision making that defers to the goodwill of all parties involved (So'o, 2008; Tcherkezoff, 2000).

In contrast to democracy, it is not a rule of the majority. This is better understood in the way politics is played out at the grassroots level, or the village polity. A typical village council is made up of two major ruling cohorts, *tamalii* ceremonial chiefs (consisting of titular *tapa'au, aiga* and lesser ranking cohort) and orators (consisting of titular *tulafale* and entourage of lesser ranking cohort). Tradition has apportioned roles by which the latter group does the practical side of politics on behalf of the *tamalii* group.

Members of the orators' group will deliberate and negotiate on a matter until everyone agrees. The orators' consensus is called *moe* (sleep) or *faautaga* (discretion); the titular chiefs' collective resolution is called *tofa* (polite term for sleep). The reference to the human activity of sleep alludes to the discerning power of the mind to reflect and make connections, the Samoans believe, with their past ancestors and prior experiences (Tui Atua, 2018).

Upon reaching a consensus, their senior spokesperson will request the mutual endorsement of the *tamalii* group. A member of the titular group will respond on their behalf in support or else beg to differ by offering some advice for a review of a decision. Supported, the process ends, reviewed it means postponement until another day. It is not uncommon the practice of deferring a matter, particularly a difficult issue, for further deliberation in the next meeting. This is called *moe le toa*. Let the rooster sleep on it. Like the rooster, once replenished in the process of sleep, a matai will come out fresh for the next day's round.

In other terms, *soalaupule* is about power dealing in partnership, which procedure by Western standards can be strenuous and time consuming, its advantages though outweigh the disadvantages for small communities. The psychological impact on members and political environment is hugely empowering, doing so without the divisive and restrictive nature of democracy's majority ruling. Inclusiveness is considered its most appealing feature in group decision-making.

5.9 Malo

Malo is the Samoan equivalent of both government and state. It is a noun, a verb, and an exclamation; as a noun it has multiple meanings. The Pratt dictionary definition, 'a conquering party' alludes to a political context of one-party usurping power by defeating the other party in war. Malo is victory, victorious and refers to guests too. The word *manumalo* (manu le malo) is a conjoint of *manu* (to herald) and *malo* (government). Governors and victors are synonymous. The popular exclamation *Malo!* ***Congratulations!*** connotes a political salute. *Ua o mai malo!* ***The guests are coming!*** is a call of welcome and hospitality. To salute the guests can only be interpreted as a subtle propaganda on behalf of the rulers; a political normalization of power legitimacy as a daily ritual. The victors are welcomed the losers are jeered at and shamed. They are called the weaker side (*itu vaivai*) as opposed to the stronger side that is the government (*itu malo*). Turner's (1884) interpretation was strictly in terms of political organisation which is the matai system (*pule a alii ma faipule*). The village polity was the place of government activity, the parliament of the people.

Other conjoint terms pertaining to are: *maumalo* – the government is estab-lished; *faumalo* - to vie for power; *faimalo* – to join the government; *tautua malo* – in service of the government. Samoan folklore referred to a number of its principal chiefs who strived to establish own governments. There were those who used force (*faumalo*); some who sought the help of higher powers through peaceful means (*su'emalo*). Others were drawn into for sake of higher principles (*laga le to'ilalo*). The renowned stories of the brothers Tuna and Fata, and the war-goddess, Nafanua, fit the third criteria.

The idea of establishing governments is both practical and symbolic basically. It was for security purposes but mainly a political statement of power. The Salamasina monarchy, due to strong claims of the *tafa'ifa* holder to royal lineage, was consensual and therefore mainly symbolic. Behind the symbolism though were power politics of ambitious elite groups of powerbrokers at play apparently (Tui Atua, 1995; So'o, 2008; Kramer, 1994). Other governments such as Funefe'ai, Tamafaiga and Nofoasaefa's were constituted and driven by individual ambition and violent tendencies (Tui Atua, 2017). None lasted for long which proved a point that Samoa cannot tolerate despotic rulership (Turner, 1884). Those who were politically astute like Vainuupo knew how to go with the flow of Samoan politics where foes were family too (ibid.). So even the most ambitious weren't able to establish a centralized government in the framework of a dictatorship would last. Even the efforts of colonial governments to promote a new kind

of kingship under various titles (*tupu, sui tupu, alii sili, tamaaiga*) ended in failure (Meleisea, 1987, 1987a). By contrast, Tuna, Fata and Ulumasui were motivated by patriotism as much as love of family.

The same with Nafanua. She too was motivated to intervene for sake of family; but as a god, it was a matter of principle.[41] Nafanua, the story about a warrior goddess, born a blood clot who became a saviour of her people and others, even renowned as an oracle, is legendary. The myths built around the figure have been perpetuated by the culture. The most notable was an encounter she had with a Malietoa who sought a mandate to form government; but he came late; instead, he was told to wait for the heavens to deliver in its own opportune time. When the Christian missionaries arrived, this was interpreted along the line of Nafanua's premonition. The mandate for government being awaited was then narrated as peaceful as it was originally conceived by the goddess (Meleisea, 1987a). The name of the ship that brought the messengers ashore aptly fit the narrative.

While Nafanua usurped power coercively, it was out of love and loyalty to kins in trouble (Kramer, 1994). The fact that she left Pulotu to attend to her people's plight carried the risks of *tapu*, though her mission was a collective response 'from the other side' to the call to restore *mana*, to re-establish the balance of power. It was no less than a divine intervention.[42] To prove, Nafanua seized power temporarily for sake of peace, then surrendered it over to the people once mission accomplished. Nafanua's intervention therefore was a legitimate act of the highest order. Her legacy would have a lasting influence on the Samoan psyche, due to its emancipatory appeal in the history of a people. The ascendancy of the Fe'epo line, or the Tonumaipe'a for that matter began at that point in history (Tui Atua, 2017). The message, if not the narrative, was further reinforced with those of the missionaries and own redemptive narrative in Christ' sacrifice, the likes of Moses and the Esthers of the Bible.

On its own, the *malo* narrative is interesting for Samoa from the perspective of cultural hegemony or the dominant ideologies involved. It is important that research on

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[41] In a discussion (faafaletui) with P5, we arrived at a consensus that Nafanua's intervention in Samoan history was unique; the fact that she left Pulotu to attend to her people's plight was heaven's will. As a goddess, she has the mandate to rectify the imbalance of relations and set it right again. The fact that she surrendered the *papa tafa'ifa* over to Levalasi (Salamasina) was a symbolic gesture of goodwill, a way of bonding the country closer through the lineage, according to P5. Even part of the narrative which pointed to the ascendancy of the Lotu, makes sense, given the fact that she was in essence a goddess, a heavenly missioner. Even the war effort was done with all due discretion, there were tapu of boundaries to be heeded; one of her weapons was named, to strike with courtesy. No one can do such unless they be divine.

[42] Personal communications with an elder matai, the late Auimatagi K; and elder pastor, Tumama Vili, in private faafaletui with the writer.

Samoa's power relations take due consideration of the ideological factor. For instance, the role of the missionaries in the fusion of an indigenous narrative with the ascent of the church as a new reckoning force (Tui Atua, 2018). Even so the environment was the impetus. For instance, the stark parallels of the Christian narrative with the indigenous own was a crucial coincidence. In addition to, the missionaries were able facilitators from a position of power. Soon the Christian message was appropriated and later became an extension of Samoa's modern *malo* narrative. The search for spiritual freedom also became the rallying call to be set free from the bondage of colonialism.

Samoa's own struggle against foreign domination was all part of the 'in search of freedom' narrative to which the legacies of Tuna, Fata, Ulumasui, Nafanua, the Matuna couple and Ta'i'i all belong; not because of the missionaries' intervention but purely on the strength of the principle upon which they acted. Thus, it can be argued that Samoa's old *malo* narrative was strongly partial to the *faumalo* principle. Folklore attested that this has been achieved by symbolic and coercive means. Rather, Samoa's quest to regain freedom now and then was directly related to the third criteria, *laga le to'ilalo*, or to restore lost *mana*. The rupture in relations became the motive to regain the balance of power which led to these random acts of individuals or even the intervention of supernatural powers themselves.

Hence Samoa's idea of government from the start was all-embracing; it was never meant to be an imperialistic intent at all (*malo*) but a consensual arrangement at the village-district level, through appointments (*tofiga*); a free federation of local governments in partnership *(pulega)* guided by the principle of *soalaupule*. It was *faumalo* that vied for total domination. While the true saviours of Samoa were applauded somehow, they have proved their true worth by surrendering power over to the people (Lukes, 1974; Dauvergne, 1998). In sum, freedom should not be equated with centralized government.

5.10 Mana

Like *pule* the concept of *mana* cannot be pinned down to a singular equivalent in English or described in a sentence or two. This study will not pretend to know everything apart from its ideological association with the Samoan culture. To begin with, *mana* belongs to all the Pacific, as much as *moana* (sea) that envelops Oceania and continues to nourish its indigenous beliefs (Blust, 2009); an elemental foundation of its peoples' worldviews, a spiritual quality with a supernatural origin, a sacred, impersonal force (ibid.) Blust (2007) argued that *mana* implies an association of meanings pertaining to human power, influence, prestige, authority, demeanour, efficacy. The ability to lead or command, to perform a task in a given situation; the aura that surrounds such a competent performer are outward manifestations of *mana* (ibid.). The quality of *mana* is not limited to humans; animals, places, inanimate objects may also possess *mana*, and accorded respect as much as ideologies attached to (Stair, 1897).

Mana is a noun and a verb according to Pratt (1897). As a verb it means to exert supernatural power. To breathe or to speak to somebody is the way to impart *mana* or empowering that person in such a way. Empowering by means of a blessing or a curse to disempower are both done in the medium of the spoken word. The power of the word brings life or death to people in traditional Pacific-Polynesian beliefs (Turner, 1884). The derivative *mananū* (*mana nu*) describes the surge of power in the spoken word as akin to a human murmur. The reduplication *Manamana* appeals to the forbidding power of the word; its other meaning is to bear constantly in mind; which links to the faculty of the memory. Hence *manamana i loto* means to cherish in the memory (ibid.); or be empowered with *mana* by means of retaining words in the memory, alludes to a close association of *mana* with the spoken word in Samoan beliefs (Tui Atua, 2018).

A derivation, *Manatu* (*mana atu*) is a verb which meaning is to recall; its reduplicated form *manatunatu*, means to think deeply about something or someone by recall; a telepathic form of reaching out. It also means to ponder seriously in the power of the memory as inclusive of *mauli* (inner person of soul and spirit). The Maori describes *mana* as an extraordinary power that comes from *te kore*, beyond the natural world. *Mauri ora*, the breath of life that animates and binds all things (Royal, 2007).

Differences can still be identified today among the Pacific cultures on its various and subtle interpretations. The Samoans have long identified 'mana' with both the unexplained power of nature and human. Anything supernatural or superhuman therefore has *mana*—good or bad. Such *mana* (quality, energy, power, force) has a dualistic

appeal in that it is derived from the forbears whose *aitu* are still with us, implying there-fore such unbroken link with the past ancestral gods (Tui Atua, 2001).

With the accession of Christianity, *mana* has become widely accepted as sourced directly from the Christian God. In the translation of the Bible in Samoan, the word *mana* was equated with *pule*; reserved specifically for God and his power or the mani-festation of such power both outwardly and inwardly. Only God has *mana*; he alone can impart *mana*; human has none unless given to him/her from above; as the founder of Christianity told Pontius Pilate, a symbol of secular authority (John 19.11).

The missionaries successfully supplanted and recontextualised such idea by means of the language, both written and spoken, that found its way in the public narrative (ibid). The idea that *mana* is an inborn quality or an integral part of our pre-Christian divine heritage, as understood by the Maori culture, and Hawaiian to some extent, is a matter of contention (Rigo, 2016). For instance, together with *tapu* concept its applica-tion in certain quarters of old Polynesia could be as different as it were from others even now. While *mana* is reserved by the Maori for its earthly manifestations particularly in humans, the Samoans have given this to God, the source of all power.

Today it can be argued that the Samoan Christian church holds the monopoly on its use and interpretation. The pastor, in his capacity as head of church and a member of the village community has become the spiritual head of the polity (Ioka, 1996). Presum-ably, he has *mana* imbued from below and above in his role as God's spokesperson (*tulafale*) and intermediary for the people. In the old days, it was the matai (orator) who blessed a new title holder, now it is surrendered over to the village pastor. The allusion is obvious.

For an average Christian devout believer, it is no mere assumption of a belief; *mana* as the work of God in the personal and spiritual dimensions is as real as anything in life, as some participants of this research were happy to testify to. Otherwise, the matai cohort, whose strong presence in the church hierarchy enabled their right of access to the *'mana'* by being active members of their church communities, hence legitimizing their claim to this godly power. Notwithstanding, the older generation still holds onto old beliefs in the supernatural *mana* of the spoken word through their elders, in a form of a blessing or a farewell testament or even a curse to befall on a person or group (Turner, 1884).

5.11 Tapu

Tapu is a common term among the Pacific languages in their various socio-political contexts (Mills, 2016). The English word taboo was adopted from this Pacific conception of setting something aside as sacred or prohibited as to be left alone. Tui Atua (2007, 2018) refers to *tapu* as a sacred essence that underpins man's relations with all things, with the gods, the cosmos, environment, other men and self. The verb form *tapui* means to sanction by means of prohibiting access to something as opposed to the ordinariness of acquiring things in everyday human transactions. The term *va tapuia* means space that is claimed as sacred and must be treated as such. There is a sense of reverence and cautiousness when treating things that are set apart as sacred or forbidden. Such an attitude is meant to govern every aspect of human relation to human, to God, spirits, other animals, the natural environment in all their diversity and complexity. The basic supposition is, all relations are *tapu*, at both their macro and micro levels and dimensions.

Tagaloa the creator, for who he is in essence and capacity is *tapu*; which sets him apart as well as define his relationship with his creation (Tui Atua, 2018; Stair, 1897). So is human, a man is *tapu* for who and what he has become. His body is *tapu*, his family, his belongings, his status in society, his titles, food, animals for example. The higher the status the more reserved the *tapu* pertaining to. For example, a paramount title is reserved for only one title holder as opposed to a lesser title which can be shared. More importantly, his relationships are defined in the same way. As said earlier, reference to a relational space between two people is *tapu* to both persons. The sacred space (*va tapuia*) implies a sense of caring and maintaining such a relationship by own code of ethics and etiquette. Tending to the *va* (relational space) is a moral obligation that directs each and every relation according to custom. The relationship between man and God is *tapu*, so as man with woman, matai and *tautua*, human and nature, human and animal, and so forth.

Mills (2016) in his study of *tapu* in pre-Christian Tonga proposed three different senses of the term as sanction in Tongan history. These are: episodic *tapu*, relational *tapu*, and regulatory *tapu*. The first refers to a potentially fatal episode such as sickness or untimely death due to violation of a *tapu*, reserved especially for a chief or a senior. The second refers to a prohibitive nature of sacredness which prescribes boundaries between all types of relations. Any violation may lead to episodic *tapu* consequences. For example, Samoan *tapu* that governs the sister-brother relationship shares similar

features with Tongan's own. The sister is called *feagaiga* (the covenant of a brother) deferred to by the brother as well as protected. The third sense refers to prohibition (*tapu*) imposed on specific food resources or activities. It is the role of authority to impose *tapu* for political, economic, or religious reasons. Tapu needs to be lifted or the victim may die (Turner, 1884).

There is a political, economic and even psychological sense in the link between food and stomach (*manava)* (Tui Atua, 2018). Thus, *tapu* from a chiefly perspective gives stress on this particular part of the human body. Touching food that is prohibited is akin to touching the head of a chief which consequence is episodic (Mills, 2016). Research lay emphasis on the role of the *manava* as a system regulated by *tapu* in both its disciplinary and emancipatory roles (ibid.). There is an interconnection of the bodily systems – the digestive (*manava*) and the reproductive (*fuāmanava*), more so the role of *manava* in human procreation and nurturing.

All of these allude to the sanctity of human life even if higher *tapu* relating to are politically motivated or partial to the leadership (elite). For example, *tapu* reserved for *taupou* or the village maiden (Tcherkezoff, 2004).[43] From the above, it is evident that the employment of *tapu* as ideological tools for political control has long existed in pre-European Pacific. First, the idea of a leader as *tapu* is very much ingrained in the Polynesian-Pacific psyche. The human genealogy is traced back to the chief progenitor, Tagaloa, thus legitimizing a person's claim to a higher relationship. A leader is declared *tapu* (sacred, dignified) on the basis of such higher claim or simply *tapu* as the basis of all human relations (Mills, 2016). Foucault talked about how power controls the human body through a highly structured regulatory regime (1988).

Secondly, the way *tapu* has evolved conceptually and practically down human history has often been to support a status quo in power relations (Mills, 2016; Rigo, 2016). Such status quo usually favours the ruling regime. Today *tapu* still connotes traditional religious significance of the past while catering to secular tendencies of the present (ibid.). Whereas the human body and relations were *tapu* in their time and space, they have been subjects of the power system ever since, a pivotal focus of interest, reviewed to suit the needs of successive authorities (Foucault, 2008). If the human body then was regulated for political and economic goals then food and sex were the means

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[43]The taupou is sanctioned by tapu, meaning that she keeps herself chaste for her first marriage. The politics of such disciplinary regime are described in the literature. For instance, the taupou figure was central in the maintenance of Samoa's old power relations. To give in marriage is strictly for political purposes, to form alliances, boost social prestige, etc. (Tcherkezoff, 2004).

to achieving those ends. The human body is the object of modern state preoccupation (ibid.). For instance, such *tapu* system is now reconstituted through state legislation or any such regulatory control. And in these activities the dual role of *tapu* is realized; first by declaring something as sacred or using the modern term legitimization; second, through prohibition or control (Foucault, 1992). Thus, it is interesting to note that when Foucault talked about the phenomenon of biopolitics or its dual role; that is to conserve life as well as discipline life for sake of political control, the Pacific peoples have been practising these for generations long beforehand.

5.12 The Fa'amatai

The word power in the Pacific literature has always been nuanced and complicated (Rumsey, 2016); it is even so in the Samoan concept of *pule faamatai* (matai authority system), the basis of its political authority for generations. For instance, to understand *pule* means to be informed of its functions in Samoa's cosmological beliefs and social systems, most importantly the intricate nature of the relationships and manner by which they operate harmoniously (Turner, 1884; Tui Atua, 2018). Such complexity can only be deduced using the tools of historical analysis. Relations of power implies context. In the case of the Samoan society, it is *faaSamoa*. The concept embraces an all-encompassing system of social functions and relations which political framework and organisation is *faamatai* (Le Tagaloa, 1992; Tofaeono, 1998).

Fa'amatai refers to a system of chiefly rule which has been upheld by the constitution and perpetuated through legislation and machinery of modern government (Va'ai, 1999). Chiefly rule in contemporary Polynesia evolved from the *ariki* institution that most society members nurtured and fashioned as they liked; Samoa for one developed its own system under a new name, matai (Tcherkezoff, 2000). The word *matai* is derived from the verb '*mata*' (eye) meaning to behold so as to emulate (*mata i ai*). Hence this new chief is a subject for emulation, a role model that is relatable, not the old *ariki* which is shrouded in mystery and strange aura, a supernatural object detached from the ordinary. Tcherkezoff (2000), argued that this new institution was a breakaway from the old one-dimensional notion of *ariki* to a more egalitarian type of political organisation.

Two sub-groups were identified; first, *tamalii, alii* for short (ceremonial chiefs), comprising titular chiefs, also called sacred chiefs (alii pa'ia)[44] and subordinates (aiga, usoalii). The second sub-group, *tulafale* (orators or talking chiefs) whose ranks depend

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[44] Also called alii sili, alii ta'i, tapa'au, suafa, tumutumu.

on their titles or positions in the hierarchy. Tradition usually identifies political will and authority collectively with both sub-groups (*pule a alii ma faipule*); though it is the *tulafale* cohort who wields more administrative power in terms of making decisions and taking care of the daily affairs of a village. This subgroup also was reserved the speech-making functions on behalf of the *alii* subgroup and village as a unit. But as a collective body both subgroups complement each other in terms of vested power interests as leaders of the village polity (Meleisea, 1987; So'o, 2008, Va'ai, 1999).

As a political system, *faamatai* is highly organised in terms of roles, division of work, discourse, and supporting ideology. Authority rests in the hands of the matai under three forums: 1. family meeting 2. village fono 3. the country's legislative chamber. Firstly, the family or aiga. Members are made up of a lineage with a common progenitor. Politically it is always a collective; as a unit it consists of a principal matai (*matai sa'o*) and a number of *matai* who holds subordinate roles. They are called *matai tautua* because their role is to provide the principal matai with the moral and cultural support that he or she needs. Then there is the untitled group of young men (*taulele'a*) whose main role is to serve the matai or the family on the matais' behalf; they are supported by another group consisting mostly of young unmarried women of the family who attends to the catering needs of elders or guests inside the house. Together with older kins of both genders who are not matai, they all contribute.

Family meetings are called by the principal matai particularly on matters of best interests to the family. This involves titles, lands and disciplinary issues affecting family reputation, among other things. Every matai has a say in his own time according to rank-and-file procedures of matai protocols. Decisions are usually by consensus though the influence of the principal matai may be evident at times or most of the time. In the village fono (matai council), it is the principal matai who speaks on behalf of the *aiga potopoto* (the extended family); his/her senior subordinates lend their support.

Matai influence at district level could not be stronger politically. As mentioned earlier many Samoan villages fall into clusters of much larger political units bound through traditional allegiance to a royal line or else aligned by common purposes; they are called *aiga o Samoa* (families of Samoa). Such influential relations are called upon by leaders of political parties for their own political ends now and then (So'o, 2008, Meleisea, 1987). Such a privilege is extended at the national level in the selection of the members of parliament. One of the criteria for entry to parliament is to be identified as a *matai*. Parliament therefore is an assembly of matai. They speak in the best interests of the *fa'amatai*, they perpetuate the *pule-tautua* ideology that underpins the *fa'amatai*. All of these reinforce power relations from top down with regards to the modern state system as well as bottom up with regards to the grassroots ideology that supports *fa'amatai*.

5.13 Matai ideology: an ethnohistorical overview

To understand the relationships of political power in the Samoan context, one needs to look closely into the ideological ethos behind the *fa'amatai*, or the *pule-tautua* principle (Tominiko, 2014). As defined earlier, *pule* stands for authority and power that is embodied in the person of a matai whose power base is found at all three levels of political organisation/activities: family meeting, village fono, national assembly. Old Samoan cosmology is pantheistic and supports the belief in the divinity of human and sanctity of its leaders (ibid.). Tagaloa the supreme god and progenitor of life is also human; both earth and sky are his dominion; thus, his sphere of influence on human affairs is personal and far-reaching. While the gods in heaven rule over the spiritual realm (*atua o le lagi*), matai are gods and rulers of the earthly realm (*atua o le lalolagi*) (Tcherkezoff, 1991). The gods are personified in the leadership, in the first ancestral matai, the first title bearer whose authority rests on such divine designation. This idea of ancestors as gods; their names (titles) and power perpetuated through their offspring from one generation to another, has endured (Turner, 1884; Tui Atua, 2018).

As noted earlier, Samoa underwent own paradigm shift. Tcherkezoff (1991) contended that the matai institution appeared later, probably around the 1850s. This shift may have been attributed to historical circumstances, a case that can be argued from the viewpoint of the influence of the new religion at this particular point in Samoa's history. It was at this point that the focus of attention was on the missionaries of the new religion, centred on a momentous event, the translation of the Bible in Samoan. Assuming the word *Alii* was adopted for Lord (God), that would need a new substitute for earthly lords.

Hence matai (leader) was born. The substitute relegated all temporal authorities to a common noun, irrespective of statuses, occupations and ranks. Hence *matai alii* (titular chief) and *matai tufuga* (master craftsman) are equated in terms of a general salutation the same with *matai tulafale* (orator). The new leader is promoted as a good role model in the new order. All are equals in the new order (ibid.).

The *faamatai's* basic principle: *O le ala i le pule o le tautua* ~ The way to authority is through service, supports the Calvinist work ethic for its persistence on the values of hard work (Tuiai, 2012; Garrett, 1982). Such work ethic was part of the missionaries' narrative; a concept in theology, sociology, economics and history that put stress on hard work, discipline and frugality as evidence of a person's subscription to the values espoused by the Protestant faith (Garrett, 1982; Lovett, 1899). While the Calvinist work ethic supports Capitalism and individualism, the values that it espoused do complement Samoa's concept of *pule-tautua* for its end results (Tuiai, 2012). Hard work deserves a reward.

The fusion between the old and the new—the mortal *matai* professed by the new religion and the divine *alii* of pre-contact Samoa still promoted in matai propaganda, is hardly an issue of contention. Since the ascendancy of the Bible the printed word has prevailed in terms of supplanting the 'old word' that once stood to represent old tradition including Tagaloa religion (ibid.). In favour of the new is understood in the fact that today's church is another stronghold of matai leadership, anything that promotes their interests is worth defending. For example, Pauline theology is highly favoured. A strand of Calvinistic 'predestination' theology is another; an appeal to a divine call like the Jewish Prophet Jeremiah's own while still in his mother's womb; a predisposition upheld by the leadership in terms of their election to high offices.

The Bible has become the single most powerful affirming truth for those in power to defend the legitimacy of their ascendancy to important roles. Hence ideology in a new morphing continues to be a powerful underpinning force for *fa'amatai* because it is embedded in the language. In the forms of wise sayings, encased in rhetorical speeches, public discourses, propaganda, the matai discourse, had over generations, become *tapu*, an integral part of the *fa'amatai* discourse.

5.14 Tautua

To bring this discussion into perspective, the meaning of *tautua* and its understanding in such regard has changed markedly over the past 50 years. This is due to a range of factors including transmigration, modern mobility, capitalism and the technological nature of serving (Anae, 2020; Va'a, 2001; Toleafoa, 2007; Tui Atua, 2001). While in the past the *pule-tautua* (also known as *matai-tautua*) paradigm denotes a unique sense of power relations that is empowering and egalitarian (Tcherkezoff, 2009), today this has served the interests of power politics, Capitalism and human greed (Toleafoa, 2007; Thornton et al., 2010, Tui Atua, 2014).

The sweeping changes in the systems, brought about by the dictates of globalisation and money on the relationship have contributed to this shift in a very dynamic way (ibid.). For example, the proliferation of matai titles across generations has undermined the original idea of t*autua tuavae*. His is an image of a subordinate who is present and close to the matai, as opposed to *tautua 'aitaumalele* or someone who does so from afar. Such *tautua* has become more popular with the Samoans migrating overseas. They continue to serve their matai through remittances and other means of services they send home. A *matai tautua* can do *tautua upu* (serve by word) for the principal matai by speaking/ orating on the latter's behalf.

The Samoan *tautua* changes his/her status the day when he/she is conferred a matai title. This initiation to mataiship gives them the authority to become leaders of their families and to participate in the matai council. It allows them to enter parliament as representatives of their constituencies. Along with a good education and some expertise they can better their chances in the ladder of leadership, in government or civil society (Chan Mow, 2007; Fuata'i, 2007; Taleni, 2017). Today, service through achievements in education that brings honour to a title, enhances a family prestige, is rewarded. From an egalitarian stance, it needs to be noted that such a seemingly clearcut demarcation between *pule* and *tautua* can be misunderstood at times.

A matai can overemphasise his authority at times though the underlying notion is, *tautua* is the prerogative of both. The *pule* (matai) does his/her *tautua* through the role of leadership/ governance, so as the untitled *tautua* cohort who do the serving. As noted earlier the meaning of *tautua* has changed with the time, any manner of serving others will qualify. Thus anyone, from the matai to the untitled, can claim the title of *tautua*, as long as this is done on behalf of the family, strangers, charity or wider society

for that matter. In sum, a matai is the visible embodiment of leadership individually or collectively; the rest of the community represent the *tautua* under various pseudonyms.

A number of studies have delved into the intricacies of the concept from a wide range of perspectives (Tofaeono, 1998; Nofoa'iga, 2017; Tominiko, 2014, Tui Atua, 2018). Noted earlier, it has been appropriated by the church to suit own reading of the biblical notion of service or discipleship. *Tautua lotu* has become an integral part of the main menu of the church discourse. Because God loved humankind, in return, serving God is the ultimate goal and purpose of living, hence service by means of tending to the needs of the church is deemed the most appropriate form of human response. The noblest offer of *tautua* is to become a messenger in God's name (*faifeau*) or a missionary (*misionare*) as it were during the early years of church development (Latai, 2016).

Of the latest studies that referenced *tautua* directly or indirectly, Nofoaiga (2017) offers a keener insight, using the lens of biblical 'Pacific' criticism. His proposal, *tautuaileva* drew theological discernment and the insights of critical theory closer together. To serve in-between spaces signifies the essence of the space in which a *tautua* is practised, dually facilitated by the lenses of *faasinomaga* (right to serve as one who belongs) and *tautuatoa* (right to serve with confidence). His space is local and political (the *faamatai* hierarchical system), as it is real as the economically impoverished Galilee of Matthew; his crowd may be the misrecognized of Bourdieu (1986), compliant of Foucault (1991), but they are real people in the space with names and cultural designations.

Nofoa'iga (2017), Va'ai (2015) and Latu's (2017) are representative of a few studies from a theological perspective, whose rereading of biblical scriptures have placed the people in the centre of *tautua*, which implications for the Samoan church are obvious. Latu resonates the church's own scholars' appeal for a reenvisioning of the *faifeau* institution, or the need to rediscover the model of service, epitomized in Jesus' own *tautua*, that is subsumed into the world of 'prestige, power and wealth' (Latu, 2017, p. 137). Exemplified in Jesus *tautua,* this notion of serving is politically emancipatory as well as theologically grounded. The right to serve with confidence places the onus on Jesus' Samoan followers to challenge every manner of hypocrisy and falsehood, while also striving to better their lot and those of their less fortunate peers.

5.15 Aganu'u (fa'aSamoa)

The Samoan equivalent of the English common noun 'culture' is *aganuu* or *faaSamoa* to be concise. Like the other Samoan concepts discussed already it is highly nuanced. Suffice for the purpose of this study to articulate its meaning and general application. As such the term *aganuu* refers to a system of social behaviour and norms by which the Samoan people have organised themselves socially, politically, and economically. As a system it is encompassing and self-sustained, hence knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, and creativity arisen from all serve to define its identity (Tylor, 1871). For this study's purpose, the concept is understood from the stance of social constructivism, whereby knowledge appropriated continues to evolve and in which power is implicated (Foucault, 1997).

After generations of successive socialization and enculturation the Samoan *aganuu* is a diverse organism in its own right; a living culture that withstood the test of time. In practice *faaSamoa* thrives on its indigenous institutions and systems, the foremost of which is the *faamatai*. As well, its systems of human conduct are grounded on a set of core values that are meant to empower social relations and collective wellbeing. But like all living cultures, *faaSamoa* is not immune to change. Panikkar (1991) listed a number of ways in which cultural change can be brought about. This includes growth, development, reform, innovation, syncretism, modernization, indigenization, diffusion, evolution, transformation, to name a few. The Samoan culture would have experienced many of these changes one way or another. In total, it can be argued that the *faaSamoa* of today, due mainly to its transnational flow, has been promoting transculturation for a growing diasporic community of two Samoas, about 600,000 in total globally (Vaa, 2001; Anae, 2020).

At the same time, globalization has impacted its local community hugely as this study also attested to. In sum, most of the challenges faced by today's *faaSamoa* constitute the dilemma of power relations even from its pre-colonial past, which a growing number of research, including this research also, continue to examine closely (Maliko, 2012; Tuisugaletaua, 2011).

5.16 Fa'asinomaga

In the traditional Samoan context, the term *faasinomaga* refers generally to a person's cultural inheritance. From the verb *faasino* (to point to, to direct towards), it has a plural meaning. First it alludes to a moral direction, a pointing out of the way. Second, it alludes to a fixed designation, a cultural affirmation of belonging and therefore a rightful claim to family and its capital. This leads to the third, that is, a sense of obligation to protecting family entitlements such as titles, genealogy, lands, and even people. This comprises reputation in terms of the cultural roles or specialized skills and trades that are passed on intergenerationally within a family line (Tui Atua, 2018). A person is directed to his/her cultural designation through socialization within the family unit, the village, and the wider society (Bourdieu, 1998).

In this process individual identity is nurtured and established. Through relationship tending group identities are nurtured and perpetuated. Thus, a person has multiple sub-identities, first through his/her family, in terms of the titles, the lands, professions; secondly, his/her village, thirdly, the district and finally the country as a whole. The Samoans are deeply conscious of the fact that everyone has a cultural inheritance, a fixed designation in society through various forms of capital appropriated on behalf of the family. To verify such a claim to designation, a matai must have land upon which to build his/her house and a land for crop cultivation. Which is why the land is crucial in Samoa's traditional power relations (See Tui Atua, 2018).

5.17 Fa'alupega

Last but just as important is the concept of *faalupega*. Meleisea (1987) defined it, 'a set of ceremonial greetings which are recited when the *fono* meets. It serves as a constitution and encapsulates, in a few phrases, the origin and rank of each constituent title of the *nuu* (village) and the order of the precedence and ranking in the *fono*. There are *faalupega* for individual titles, groups of titles (as in the case of orator groups), for the village polity, districts and the nation' (1987). Lupe is Samoan for pigeon (bird) from which the verb *fa'alupe* originated, an allusion to the Samoan ideal of beauty or aesthetics of natural appreciation by which human is metaphorized. Researchers use other synonyms of greetings: complimenting, salutations, honorifics, charter. In any other terms, a *faalupega* is a Samoan way of profiling the who's who of leadership and places, of which purposes I can mention three. First, as the means to acknowledge order of precedence and hierarchy of a polity. Second, to honour a host for sake of cordial

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relations, which honour is reciprocated accordingly. Thirdly, it signifies genealogies and relations. Such code of practice is reinforced at all levels of the political strata (Meleisea, 1987a).

With the inauguration of the state, a new charter was proposed, based on the state's own hierarchy, beginning with the office of the head of state. In state ceremonies where both traditional leadership and state personnel are present, a spokesperson will defer firstly to the state leadership cohort, then to traditional authority. Civil authority follows. At the village level, the village pastor(s) and titular chief(s) are saluted or acknowledged first and foremost. As a system, it is an integral part of the *faamatai* discourse with own rules, *tapu* and practice. This is the specialty of orators whose moral duty it is to upkeep on behalf of the leadership. A fine display of skills (reciting of salutations and genealogy pertaining to with precision) will enhance their reputation individually/collectively. Those who have been saluted will get more recognition than the others (Bourdieu, 1986; James, 2015).

Cultural distinction, according to Bourdieu (1979) is about defining who a person is in society based on his/her title, family background, schooling, association, interests, aesthetic tastes, wealth and so forth. From the stance of power such ardent distinction can only serve to reinforce the conditions of subjectification and perpetuate the status quo (Heller, 1996; Foucault, 1991; James, 2015). (For further reference, see Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power on page 63).

5.18   Conclusion

This chapter was premised on the argument that any contemporary analysis of power and power relations in Samoa will have to familiarize first with the multifaceted aspects of the culture through which power or its agents thrive daily. From a critical theory viewpoint their depictions are crucial to an in-depth analysis of power from whence to where it positions itself today in Samoa's power narrative understanding (Fairclough, 1998; Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008). The presentation of indigenous concepts served to inform the uninitiated about the nature of power relations in the Samoan society, more importantly in the task of producing a balanced analysis.

As Gramsci asserted, the hegemony of a system is not so much its coercive appeal but the subtle form of control it manifests itself through systems of ideology accepted as common sense by both the governors and the governed (1999). A new worldview is an extension of the old, a matter of rearticulating or disarticulating narratives wherever it suits the current status quo (ibid.). This is aptly demonstrated in the evolvement and development of the power concept from Samoa's traditional village rule to centralized government. The result of this unpacking will help explain the forces behind the ambiguity of power relations, especially where multiple systems are involved.

It needs to be stressed also the importance of understanding all or most of these key concepts/principles in the light of critical theory traditions as much as possible. First and foremost, the key role of knowledge in their understanding of power relations. As Foucault asserted strongly, power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge. The Samoan indigenous knowledge applies to almost every sphere of its society, which implies the efficacy and extent of knowledge power in the Samoan society, where both social and cultural capital merge to produce symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1986). As pointed out, such power reproduction very much defines the essence of its relations as a society.

In sum, any serious observation of power in the Samoan context cannot be validated without a better grasp of most of these key power related concepts, all of which attributed to a fuller understanding of power from a Samoan perspective.

Chapter 6

INSTITUTIONALIZED POLITICAL POWER:
SAMOAN PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Samoa is a parliamentary democracy. It has a structure, a purpose, and the means by which it is executed on behalf of the state. Structurally it is a constitutional democracy, framed along the lines of the British Westminster's model. Its purpose is self-preservation of the Samoan people ultimately;[45] the means of doing so are in the rule of law, systems and institutions that uphold the ideals and practices of good governance. In saying this, it needs reiterating the point that Samoa is a democracy with a difference. Traditional authority (matai system) is still the underpinning force of its governing systems, including the state (Meleisea, 1987, 1987a; Soo, 2008). As the HRPP party takes a more proactive role in government, the boundary and manner of relations between the democratic based authority (upheld by the state and rule of law) and traditional authority (upheld by its matai customs and traditions) can only be described as muddled. Firstly, the fact that Samoa is a democracy that is bereft of the essential checks and balances (Malifa, 2010; Iati, 2013). Secondly, because of the assertive role of the ruling party in government in reshaping Samoan society by the day (Toleafoa, 2017; So'o, 2008; Meleisea, 2020).

6.1 Political spheres of power influence

Three main political spheres of influence can be identified in this study (refer p. 124). First, the state, a parliamentary democracy in the Westminster's style. Secondly, the civil society, which comprises the Private Sector, the Church, Pressure Groups, the Media, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Thirdly, traditional authority, which power centre and sphere of influence is the village in council. Apparently, there is overlapping in the three spheres of influence due to the multi-layered nature of society. For example, the *faamatai* is the political tie that binds the three spheres together; maintained by the power of kinship connections and *faaSamoa* as a social organism.

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[45] As spelt out in the Preamble of the Constitution, explicitly and implicitly.

Figure 1. Samoa's power relations: Structure of legitimate power & relations and spheres of influence
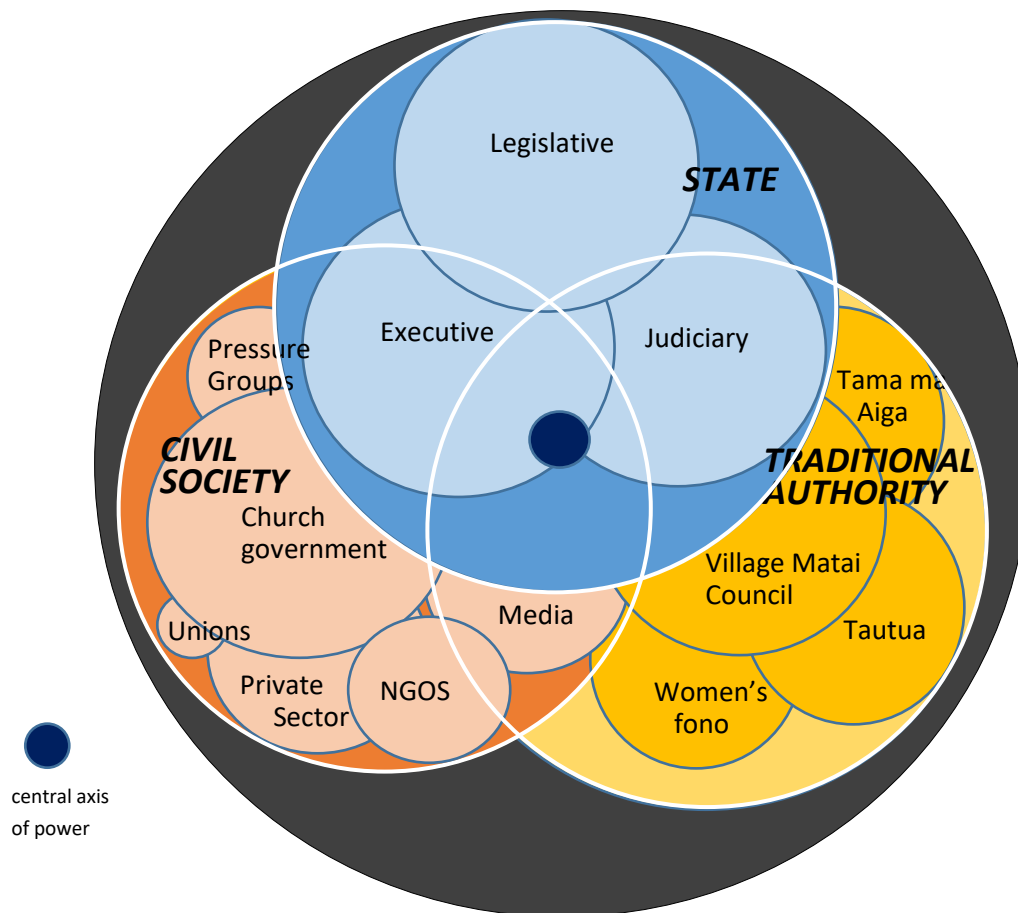
- **As the figure shows, the overlapping in the spheres of influence among three authorities, denotes a confluence of power relations, is obvious. For example, while Tama a Aiga are acknowledged by the state in its leadership, they too have as much influence in the village and district affairs. The state apparatus displays the ideal democracy; an equal distribution of power among the three estates of government. In civil society, the church shows dominance while the village matai council does so for Traditional Authority. Those with less influence are further away from the central axis of power.** *Source: LPSTavita*

6.2   Parliamentary democracy and legislative power

Parliamentary democracy is a system of democratic governance of a state where the executive branch derives its democratic legitimacy from its ability to command the confidence of the legislative branch, typically a parliament, is also held accountable to that parliament (Levine, 2004). Samoa does not fit the normal description of a parliamentary democracy where equal human rights take first place and consideration. The Samoan system is rather a compromise of Western democratic ideals and traditional principles of *faaSamoa*. While it has adopted universal suffrage lately, its candidates for parliament are selected on the basis of status, that is, one has to become a matai in order to be eligible for entry. Thus, the modern Samoan parliament is a variation of the Westminster system but has some direct historical links with the New Zealand system as well. On top of the hierarchical ladder is the head of state, performing ceremonial duties on behalf of the state. The powers vested in this office are limited.

Ambiguity surrounding the selection criteria has been part of its political discourse since Independence. Traditional convention has it that the role be filled by any one candidate of the two royal lines, the Sa Tupuā and the Sa Malietoā.[46] The constitution on the other hand is clear that any candidate that fits the criteria prescribed is qualified. The idea of ''royals only' is not clearly stated in the constitution, though this has been the conventional practice since the country regained independence. This also applies for the office of the council of deputies that plays a supporting role to the head of state office. The idea that the royal head of state supported by his other royal peers is the argument of pro-royals; again, it is not spelt out in the constitution. Otherwise, any further pretence has been resolved politically by the HRPP government when non-royal (those without *tamaaiga* status) candidates were selected for the first time to the council. It remains to be seen if a non-royal assumes the office of head of state; which any pro-democratic government can do; also given the fact that such a move is constitutional and therefore legitimate.

It was obvious that Samoa's strive to regain its independence must align with the demands of a UN Committee (Davidson, 1967, Meti, 2002). On that understanding a compromise was deemed inevitable between Western democracy and *faaSamoa* ideals. Both stood to represent two incompatible political systems, two ways of living, and it was the ultimate task of the Constitutional Convention to make a match of them in as

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[46]'Royal as referred to Samoa's nobility of the first ranking order is highly favoured by scholars; this involves the two lineages and titles derived from.

best a way as possible (Meti, 2002.). To satisfy all parties, some form of compromise could only be the answer given the situation; even though it was a temporary fixture for serious disagreements (Soo, 1987, Meti, 2002). The anticipation of pro-traditionalists was that Samoan customs will continue to be read into the constitution and will prevail finally. There is a big question on such intention and the way it should be carried out (Meleisea, 1987). For example, while the Samoan customs are acknowledged in the constitution, customary authority, in essence, is not part of the modern state apparatus. While customary authority is acknowledged under the Village Fono Act, ultimately it is subjected to constitutional or statutory law upheld by the state.

While the Land and Titles court may deliberate on customary matters and make decisions on that basis, their enforcement are done under 'state' jurisdiction through the court and law enforcement apparatus (ibid.). This is well exemplified in the appointment of *tamaaiga* to executive positions, which roles are strictly ceremonial and lack political leverage to be of any influence in the relations of power. Only parliament is acknowledged as the sole law-making authority in the land by the constitution.

Proponents of the old system (matai suffrage) would like to argue that the system was truly democratic for the fact that a matai is chosen by the consent of all family members (So'o, 2006). It was the matai title proliferation phenomenon during the seventies and eighties - for the purpose of winning elections - that put a question mark on the former's claim more so, credibility. The new model (universal suffrage)[47] is yet to prove itself. Suffice to say that the smooth transition from the old to the new, though with the exception as described, is indicative of the levelling effect of *faaSamoa* on major political decisions affecting the whole populace.

Samoa's current parliament has 50 members,[48] with 47 seats selected by the voters from 41 political constituencies; 2 seats are elected on a non-territorial basis by special voters; an extra seat was added to make up for the 10 percent quota arrangement on behalf of female members, agreed to by parliament. Samoa follows a simple plurality system in its election process, like New Zealand's previous system of First Past the Post; the candidate who polls more vote than any other candidate is elected. It is a five-year tenure. With the introduction of political parties, candidates' campaign on behalf of

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[47]While universal suffrage is now part of Samoa's electoral system, the untitled cannot be candidates of national elections; they need to hold a matai title in order to qualify.

[48]Leading up to the 2021 general elections, the next parliament will have 51 seats selected from 51 electoral constituencies. The change in the division of electorates has become a political hot potato for conservative forces since it was enacted, and which caused for one influential member of the HRPP to walk away and formed own party.

their parties and election policies. Members of a new assembly will select a speaker, and deputy, who will preside over the normal business of parliament.

Members of parliament are representatives of their constituencies and are morally obligated to their demands to be heard and acted upon by government. A majority party forms a government and the executive branch headed by the prime minister, supported by a group of 12 ministers, who in turn are supported by 13 associate ministers. Others who missed out may be selected as members of various parliamentary committees or board members in government corporations. The change of numbers from 8 to 13 ministers, and provision for the office of parliamentary undersecretary (aka associate minister) required an amendment in the constitution and legislation for the latter. The changes, particularly the instalment of 13 associate ministers, were strongly criticised by the opposition party at the time as politically motivated (Toleafoa, 2013).

Just five decades had passed since independence and Samoa's parliament has withstood the impact of change brought about by technology but mainly through the political will. Some of these changes have been transformational with the passage of time; most notably the legislations in response to the 'constitutional crisis' of the 1980s. A successive change of government occurred three times within a span of a year. Fanned by the divisiveness in party politics at the time and the uncertainty that turned out as a result, parliament has sought to rectify the anomalies through the best way it can: legislation. Legislating against party hopping for example was considered the best way to counter the problem, according to the incumbent prime minister (Malielegaoi, 2017). This and other legislative measures proposed by government and passed as laws have become the norm, particularly with the HRPP commanding almost full majority of seats in the house.

As the highest forum in the land, parliament today has become more a voice for the party in government, a testament on the anomaly in power distribution. Without any viable opposition that counters, it is by any name a one-party state. Because of this anomaly, it lacks the vibrancy of previous assemblies, or its traditional prototype, the village *fono*, where everyone expresses freely without a party line to worry about. In the meantime, there is a sense of urgency for a quick reinstalment of a strong opposition to redress a very serious imbalance in the system.

6.3 Judiciary and disciplinary power

Samoa's Judiciary was established under Article 6 of the constitution. The Supreme Court is presided over by the chief justice and has jurisdiction over both civil and criminal matters. There is the Court of Appeal which president is the chief justice and deals with appeals from the lower courts. There is a District Court, a Family Court, a Youth Court, a Family Violence Court, a therapeutic court called Alcohol & Drug Court. Samoa also has a court called *Faamasino Fesoasoani* Court – a part of the District Court, that deals with customary matters pertaining to customary lands and titles. The president is one of the judges of the Supreme Court.[49] Samoa is a member of the Commonwealth and other respective judicial forums globally.

Samoa's modern judiciary system was borne out of the country's colonial legacy, particularly the New Zealand influence on its structures, practices and organisational ethos (Sapolu et al., 2012). Its perpetuity even when the country became independent in 1962 was understood apparently; a system could not be transitioned overnight, especially with the ultimate purpose to pass the reins on to the Samoans themselves. Indeed, it takes time for the local personnel to familiarize themselves with the intricacies of a new system; that a workforce needs judges, lawyers and administrators; more importantly raising awareness among the people about living under codified law as opposed to traditional village rule based on oral tradition. Not least, convincing the public that justice can be served with Samoan judges replacing their *palagi* counterparts (ibid.). This moral doubt was keenly felt where their lands and titles have increasingly become a matter of judicial interest.

But the overriding matter of contention for the Judiciary was to do with the interpretation of the constitution which basis is the universal code with due deference to customary rule. The former is premised on individual rights and democratic principles, while customary matters judged under the *faaSamoa* ethos and *faamatai* philosophy. It was soon realized that judicating under a dual system of contradictory values was problematic (Meleisea, 1997; Sapolu et al., 2012). Under the constitution, individual rights seemed to have been well protected over communal. Problems abound for the judiciary leadership as time progressed, as the issue of communal versus fundamental human rights can no longer be ignored (ibid.). The Judiciary is implicated now and then for

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[49]Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration General Information.

interpreting the law one-sidedly, while government too is accused of empowering traditional authority for its own purposes.[50] As it turned out, the overall outcome for both sides has been unsatisfactory.

The dilemma was compounded by other such cultural matters that need urgent attention, for instance, the practice of splitting a matai title among many holders. With other malpractices that impact the court processes, the result was a backlog of work and postponement of justice that reflected negatively on the state. A commission of inquiry was appointed in 2016 to investigate the matter, which recommended for an improvement of the quality of the service as well as fixing the problem of resourcing (Samoa Observer, Issue June 28, 2016).[51]

In 2020 the HRPP government decided to respond to the dilemma by proposing a separate system for customary matters. No longer subordinate to the supreme court and the common law system, the proposed court will have its own structures, administrative institutions including a court of appeal. The concern of the critics is, this will lead to more politicization of the system leaving another arm of democracy more susceptible to political encroachment (Samoa Observer, Issue March 25, 2020). For example, under the new law judges can be dismissed by a commission which members the critics pointed out, appointees of the government (Samoa Observer, Issue April 29, 2020).[52] Currently a judge can only be dismissed by a two-thirds majority of the parliament. Of much concern is the implication of power through these legislations for all parties involved.

More potently, such a move will compromise the delivery of justice, the protection of fundamental rights of families or individuals guaranteed under the constitution, the opposition argued. Resistance against the move has gained momentum, both locally and overseas (Samoa Observer, May 1, 2020). The local association of lawyers, even the overseas legal fraternity, some of international repute, strongly opposed government's plan (Samoa Observer, Issue April 29, 2020). In defence of the government, the prime minister argued that the change was necessary for the sake of customs and the culture (ibid.). He maintained that the constitution was written by Europeans whose understanding of the *faaSamoa* was limited if none at all (Samoa Observer, Issue May 5, 2020). He also contended that the common law was European derived and not

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[50] The motive behind government's move to empower village councils is political according to Participant 3.
[51] The prime minister called for a check on the judges of the LTC hence the commission. Samoa Observer 28/6/2016.
[52] The president of the Samoan Law Society, Leiataualesa Komisi Koria, is quoted in the Samoa Observer Issue 29/4/2020, as saying, the proposed changes mean the Supreme Court judges will no longer be free to conduct their work without fear or favour. Implication for judges of the newly proposed LTC court is also obvious.

Samoan; that rights-based values espoused under democracy infringed on the collective values of *faamatai* (ibid.).   The gist of his argument, a separation of the Judiciary will solve the problem, more so the imbalance due to the constitution's leniency towards individual rights.

To counter, the former deputy prime minister turned rival maintained that such a move is another step closer to dismantling Samoa's constitutional and legal framework altogether. Her point is, no one is above the law, individually or collectively. Her concern is to do with the uncertainty of this commitment whereby a panel of a few individuals will dictate the terms based on their own interpretation of *faaSamoa's* oral tradition, especially with a lot of power to influence court decisions. This plan by the government is political and self-serving, she argued (Samoa Observer, October 13, 2020). In other words, the principle of the separation of powers is right in the fore of Samoa's political discussion at this very moment.

The incumbent chief justice was fully aware of the predicament by reminding everyone of this key governing principle when he took his oath. He declared, "The three branches of government are independent of each other, and that is what we call the separation of powers. We do not act together as a committee, but rather three separate parts of a whole" (Samoa Observer, Issue December 9, 2020). Once legislations are enacted, this principle is jeopardised.

Section 42 of Samoa's constitution stated: There shall be a Parliament of Samoa, which shall consist of the Head of State and the Legislative Assembly. The subsequent section (43) clearly stated the power of Parliament to make laws: Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament may make laws for the whole or any part of Samoa and laws having effect outside as well as within Samoa.

6.4   Executive and instrumental power

Part 4 of Samoa's constitution spelt out the Executive functions of its democracy. Executive power is vested in the office of head of state who exercises such power, though parliament also confers other such functions independently. The role of a cabinet of ministers is to direct and control the affairs of government through its ministries and state-owned enterprises. The cabinet consists of the Prime Minister and no more than 12 ministers of his or her choice. The constitution also calls for an Executive Council. The council is normally reserved for emergency cases whereby both the head of state and the Cabinet take to council on any matter of urgency or importance to government or the nation that needs for such meeting. The head of state or the prime minister can summon the council.

Since regaining Independence in 1962, the council has never been put to the test until the constitutional crisis of the 1980's came up. In 1982, two sides of the house were embroiled in a bitter tussle for leadership of the country. An abrupt change in the HRPP leadership caused for a new power shift.[53] In the ensuing struggle the HRPP boycotted the head of state's decision, reinstating Tupuola Efi's government (So'o, 2008). The council was summoned by the head of state.

The year 1982 is marked as momentous for Samoa, having three prime ministers seated in one year. The event highlighted a number of things pertaining to the functions and relations of the executive power. First, the role of the head of state or more directly the authority vested upon to appoint a government. The crisis referred to implicated the role of the office of head of state strongly, more so the lack of clarity on the extent of its power and jurisdiction (So'o, 2008). Secondly, the problem of party-hopping that has been blamed as the cause of government disruption and political instability. Both have been dealt with through legislation (Soo, 2008; Malielegaoi, 2017).

As central authority of the executive government, the HRPP leadership continues to take a more liberal stance to issues involving power relations. This could be seen by its drive at democratizing the systems. Under its leadership, the first non-*tamaaiga* members joined the Council of Deputies, hence removing the demarcation between tradition sanctioned by customary *tapu* and the state justified by the constitution. On the other hand, choosing a woman as deputy in a male-dominated caucus is a gesture to both democracy of fair representation and tradition whereby seniority and service are

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[53]Vaai Kolone stood down from office of prime minister due to a court decision; the head of state responded by reinstating Tupuola Efi as prime minister.

acknowledged all the same. The ten percent allotment for women representation in parliament, the introduction of universal suffrage before that, even the embracing of minority groups such as *faafafine*, and women in the workplaces, all happened under the HRPP's watch.

Power relations among the three executive powers, cabinet government, judiciary and parliament are understood in the context of their three separate functions. There are frictions to be anticipated, as world experience would well attest to in abundance (Fukuyama, 2014), Samoa is no exception. Once such rupture emerged lately between the government and the judiciary. Government had called for a commission of inquiry which the judicial authority snubbed by withholding its members from testifying. The prime minister responded that as 'central authority', it is the cabinet that has the final say. Since then, he has continued to issue strong remarks against the judiciary, singling out the Land and Titles court, questioning the integrity of some of its personnel (Samoa Observer, Issue January 25, 2017). Presumably, the move to change the system alludes to this claim of the prevailing power of the Executive on and through all state apparatus.

By contrast, its relationship with parliament is mutual and complementary. This is very much understood in the light of its current status. With a commanding lead in the house, 47 against 3, the HRPP has dominated two of the three branches of governance, and under the leadership of Tuilaepa, it is not hard to tell which one exerts more political influence on the other.[54] Many times the editor of the Samoa Observer Newspaper wrote in reference to the influence of one person as enormous in the affairs of the state. The relationship between the three branches will be elaborated more on later.

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[54]Latest developments in the HRPP membership count, with three of its members leaving the party for good.

6.5   Political parties and power politics

Party politics was introduced via democracy and still young by world standards. While it can be argued that Samoa's transition from consensus to party politics has been voluntary, a number of factors stood out. First, that of the leadership and the role of the *tamaaiga*. Mentioned earlier, members of this group have been deferred to in terms of holding the highest offices of the modern state. For the prime minister's role, almost two decades of post-independence belonged to them; the first member took control of the prime ministership unopposed, until the 1970 elections, when his leadership was challenged for the first time. So'o (2008) talked about the decline of consensus politics with reference to the 1970-1972 parliament, when around this period the business of selecting Cabinet ministers became a contentious issue and factions began to be more visible than they were prior to 1970. Such factions have been drawn along the lines of collegiality, friendship, powerful kinship connections and policy convictions, which also included some political manoeuvring and influence on the part of most individuals involved. This would have been expected of a young parliament, in a juggling act to draw the two powerful forces of state law and traditional custom closer, to forge a working relationship (ibid.).

So'o traced the emergence of Samoa's political parties to the 1979 general election (2008). He remarked on the significance of having two non-*tamaaiga* titleholders to contest the office of prime minister, the implications of such shift on the future course of power relations between custom and democracy, and the overall impact on Samoa's political landscape thereafter. In the 1979 election, a contest for power revolved around two personalities, Tupuola Efi and Vaai Kolone. Tupuola, the sitting prime minister, was of *tamaaiga* by direct descent, entered parliament under the family title of Tupuola. He had clout in terms of political connections historically and culturally. His maternal grandfather was a patriot in Samoa's struggle to regain independence (O'Brien, 2017). His own father, the late Tupua Tamasese Meaole, was the first head of state with another *tamaaiga* in a corule arrangement. Vaai Kolone on the other hand, represented the common people, a self-made individual who proved his service to his own family and community. The outcome of the vote favoured Tupuola, a win by one vote, 24-23. (The winning vote was that of Vaai's own brother, who could not be won over for sake of family, by any means of persuasion (So'o, 2008, Tupua, 1987).

As So'o reported, Samoa tussled with the challenges of accommodating changes that come with the new environment. The 1979 election marked a new phase in Samoa's

political development. First, the actual realization that the prime ministership can be contested freely, that the honour of leadership, which custom has reserved for *tamaaiga* only, has now been shared with the rest of the populace.

Secondly, that consensus politics and family loyalty, basic elements of *faa-Samoa*, can no longer be sustained; an irony that was aptly demonstrated in Va'ai's own brother's unfamiliar act. To contest freely is in the letter of the constitution; though in spirit deep reservations in favour of customary convention has been the norm; proved in the choice of the first prime minister and conjoined head of state (So'o, 2006, 2008). But change was deemed inevitable. Emerging signs of consensus politics disintegrating can be traced back to the 1970 election, when two *tamaaiga* contested the office of prime minister. The 1976 election was that between a titular *tamaaiga* and close kin, another signpost pointing in the same direction. The 1979 election was a vote between a *non-tamaaiga* and an untitled *tamaaiga*. The 1982 election saw the ushering in of a new non-*tamaaiga* holder for the first time (So'o, 2008).

A strong argument can be posed against the likely existence of the first political party, called Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP), would it have been Va'ai that came out as victor in the 1979 election. This could have been said of Tupuola also in the event of a defeat presumably. But the HRPP believed that it has a point to prove. This could only be done through group solidarity, cemented with the establishment of a new political party.

The HRPP was established in May 1979, founded on seven objectives. Its famous key slogans, what is good for Apia is also good for Savaii, is a reference to the need for equity in development and opportunities for all of Samoa. In part the appeal was clever politics no doubt. Reference to impoverished Savaii has brought out such powerful values to the fore for the first time. In essence, it is an appeal to the country to rally behind the new party. The HRPP had a six-year advantage before another political party emerged. Other new parties were to follow (So'o, 2008). Such development of parties can be viewed as an experiment in theory and practice. Some were short-lived. If anything, the effort has been to rally enough supporters to win power in the next round mainly. None had the organisational acumen and long-term vision of the HRPP.

Otherwise striving for power, whether by chance or by design, has been the most defining factor in the early years of forming parties or majority governments for that matter. The establishment of the HRPP marked a turning point in such electoral process

development, from informal and loosely organised manoeuvring to formalised rituals (So'o, 2008). Once in government the HRPP passed three pieces of legislation which have contributed to the founding and consolidation of political party systems in Samoa. One of the legislations was aimed at countering the problem of 'party hopping', which has been the main threat to government stability in the eighties and nineties. Apparently, all these changes were meant to ensure that political parties become a mainstay.

The 1991 election was marked by the introduction of the suffrage vote for the first time. The HRPP won 27 of the 47 seats, the SNDP won 15, the Independents took 5. Political observers agreed that the balance of power took a turn when the HRPP government acted against internal checks and balances such as those vested in the office of the controller and chief auditor, later the independent Public Service Commission. Even then the staunch parliamentary opposition made up for the imbalance. Such effort was sustained, with the support of the independent media, until the 2006 election when the HRPP won by a landslide victory, 30 out of 49 seats; again in the 2011 elections, 36 out of 49 seats. And in the 2016 election, another, winning 35 seats out of 49. Later 12 Independents joined in, hence securing a majority of 47 out of 50 seats for government since (So'o, 2008).

No other party has done more for this aspect of political development than the HRPP. It continued to do so through legislation and in the process established new norms and rules. To this end, the formation of political parties resulted in new political behaviour and attitudes for all parties involved. As new institutions, still evolving and adapting within the confines of *faaSamoa* collectivist ideals and Western based indivi-dualistic ideology. Later, an attempt will be made to look closely into the question of how political parties have impacted on traditional power relations and Samoan values.

6.6   Political advocacy and mitigating power

Arguably the history of the development of modern political advocacy in Samoa is traced back to another development, that of political parties. The first political party, HRPP, was founded in 1979. Since then, it has been proactive in promoting itself to the community in terms of policy and recruiting membership. Its appeal to the wider community in the early years was hinged upon a democratic principle of advocating on behalf of the ordinary people, whose rights need realization in terms of economic development and political participation. The rights of the workers in the public service to a

fair pay was a noble cause to fight for, the HRPP shared part of the credit in ending the Public Service 1980's strike and helped paved the way for its ascendancy to power.

One may argue that it was the HRPP that has done more in terms of promoting democracy and creating political awareness among the people than any other interest group would have done since Independence. It introduced universal suffrage, upgraded the voting system, and encouraged the population to vote. The government has also used the power of the media effectively, including a newspaper in the people's first language to get in touch. The voters have become much more aware of their rights as citizens of a democracy at least. Such role has now been questioned given the partisan nature of Samoan politics with a one-party majority in parliament (Personal communication with P6). Meanwhile, political advocacy in terms of a balanced policy input, has become the official duty of the independent media and a few dissenting voices in parliament.

It is important to note also that in small communities as Samoa, in which cultural norms and standards are perceived as over and above any human activity, political advocacy or any activity relating to 'change' is highly nuanced from an insider's perspective. For a young adult to question the integrity of a leader or an elder is not cultural. It is not easy to talk about real contemporary issues in a culturally sensitive space. The prevailing view that matai are leaders and politics is their business would not help the cause of good quality advocacy by any means. It only thwarts any best effort from a purely democratic viewpoint.

Indeed, there are NGOs in groups of similar interests and purposes, which development goals are social, emotional, and psychological, advocating mainly on behalf of disadvantaged groups that include women, children, disabled, transsexuals, victims of domestic violence and abused relationships. However, their influence is acknowledged and felt more in the courts of justice than in the corridors of power.

On the other hand, advocacy can be subtle, as Foucault alluded to in a modern state (1989); installing of institutions such as the ombudsman or empowering a team of mediators in the judicial system, using the cultural approach of *soalaupule*, are acknowledgements of local strategies, or the complex nature of advocacy that are practical and relevant, in certain democracies. The establishment of the Ministry of Women was meant to advocate for the needs of women and the female population. It has been instrumental in the push for their representation in parliament; now at least 10 percent

of parliamentarians are allotted to women in any incoming assembly (Samoa Observer, Issue February 4, 2021).

6.7   Counterpower: the opposition in parliament

The idea of having political parties as part of the electoral system came about rather abruptly. Borne out of the 1980s constitutional crisis the first party emerged; the HRPP became the first noted opposition party, then the SNDP (So'o, 2008). From then on the concept of Opposition Party has become part of Samoa's political narrative.[55]

The development of a viable opposition depended largely on the whim of power politics or in other words the political fortunes of one party, the HRPP. Since its tenure, political parties have come to be recognized as official players in Samoa's power distribution. Even then the formation of other parties, according to Toleafoa (2013), have been fraught with "overly restrictive measures" meted out by the HRPP government (2013, p. 73). Leaders of other parties complained that they've been hard done by.[56]

Toleafoa (2013) in his assessment of the situation, related rather candidly to the motive of the HRPP, to 'accumulate to itself absolute power at the expense of parliament and other democratic institutions' (2013, p. 71).

In total, the demise of the Opposition in parliament is partly blamed on a number of things. Firstly, by the success of the HRPP itself. On the one hand, the weight of its political machinery and how it has entrenched deeply in local politics at village level. As reaffirmed in this study, the HRPP has had the foresight to mobilize the rural vote and leadership right from the start. On the other hand, it has the power to apply resistance against opposing parties, as any other governing authority could do within the parameters of power, a situation similar to what Foucault (1991) alluded to.

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[55]It can be argued that the idea of countering or checking is very much part of Samoa's traditional discourse, in the soalaupule (*soa le pule*). The word soa means to pair up with another, to complement the other in the process of decision-making. The Samoan term 'agai' means to face towards the other, implying respect. Two people in the act of respectful and meaningful deliberation. As in the example of Lau village, the two high chiefs are countered (graced) by the Aiga representatives on the opposite side of the fono house. The orators cohort in the front faces the leading lady and leading male of the tautua groups or their representatives at the back. While the orators deliberate and form own consensus, the tapa'au and aiga are free to counter by means of own input. This can be in the form of advice or wise counsel. *Moe le toa* is a way of countering that is insightful because it defers to the importance of time in forming quality decisions. Compared with modern discourses, soalaupule counters with a touch of chiefly grace, dissimilar to the argumentative approach of modern parliaments; a style now adopted by many non-Western democracies.

[56] Two former leaders of opposition accused the government of hypocrisy. While preaching the message that a viable opposition is part of good governance, it seemed bent on discouraging the same by its own actions (ibid.).

Secondly, by the shortcomings of the Opposition (office) itself. There never was a time when the Opposition, the HRPP aside, enjoyed the pleasure of a popular leader, though the closest to this were former leaders, Asiata Vaai, and Tupuola Efi. Asiata Dr Saleimoa Va'ai died prematurely. Tupuola Efi may have been a popular prime minister in his first administration, but his misjudgement of a critical situation in power relations in the 1981 industrial strike, no doubt had worked against his acuity as an able opposition leader (So'o, 2008, 2009). In sum, the lack of unity among the opposition parties and internal squabbles over the leadership could not stand against the 'one leader one band' strategy of the Human Rights Protection Party.

6.8   Conclusion

The purpose of any democratic government is to protect the sovereignty of a state and that is premised on the principles of accountability and transparency first and foremost (Held, 1983; Fukuyama, 2014). The Samoan people's choice to continue forward by indigenizing a foreign model and with own traditional customs to fill the gaps have proven to be testing at certain twists and turns of its journey. As proven in the discussion, Samoa's democractic machinery revolves more around the political state by the day; the Executive authority takes almost full control of power. Being assertive in the relations, the HRPP government has impacted all of the state's democratic institutions one way or another. Judged by Fukuyama's criteria of a balanced democracy, Samoa has demonstrated traits of a strong state, an average compliance under the rule of law and a weak system of democratic accountability (2014).

As argued throughout the chapter, Samoa's option for a strong state may have ensured the survival of its democratic institutions and a bureaucracy at least. However an average compliance under the rule of law is blamed for reinforcing the ambiguous relations between the two forces – traditional culture and democracy - consequently. Thirdly, the weak system of democratic accountability is the price to pay for opting for strong government. This is due mainly to the assertion of the political will. In sum, Samoa's democracy is sustained at the price of checks and balances (Iati, 2017; Soo, 2016, Toleafoa, 2013).

The demand by the HRPP for the perpetuity of a strong state has been the party's top priority. Democratic instruments such as political parties, the electoral system, majority rule, have been utilized effectively toward this goal; so as the manoeuvring of cultural institutions politically via its multiple power relations and *tapu* (control mechanisms). Judged on the basis of such manoeuvring, the HRPP government has made its intentions clear, the retention of as much power in the Executive branch as possible (Toleafoa, 2013). This has been facilitated by the predominant influence of a culture and a successful normalization programme.

Thus from a democratic viewpoint, the future direction of Samoa's democracy is hung in the balance; even though a change in political fortunes in favour of the 'opposition' in the upcoming elections may help change this power anomaly. Other than that, another term in power will help secure the HRPP's vision of how they want Samoa's democracy to be.

In the following chapter, the reader will be introduced to the political party in government. It is a story about power strategizing and the evolution of a political party to take centre stage in Samoan politics.

Chapter 7

CONCENTRATION OF POWER:

FROM STRATEGY TO HEGEMONY – *THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION PARTY*

Power politics in Samoa cannot be fully understood unless we have a good in-depth look into the party in power, the Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP), the first and longest ruling party in Samoa to date. This chapter will attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the party's history, organisation, policy development, leadership and the way it wields power. Every effort was made to present a fair description of people, policy, events and developments, considering the paucity of information on some aspects, the leadership for example. On the other hand, given the abundance of information on or about government policy and development, the aim for balance has dictated the choice of references and direction of this discussion. But the emphasis of this observation will be on the HRPP leadership, especially in the figures of a few individuals, who have been influential in its direction.

But first, the name. Arguably HRPP's political vision is entrenched in its name. It was a promise to protect the rights of the people as the cornerstone of its founding. So, when the name resonates in ordinary conversation or critical dialogue, there is a common understanding that it refers to the average Samoan in villages, the population at large, the citizen whose political rights need protection. The choice of name will take us back to its origins. The HRPP's founding members believed that the rights of the average Samoans have been compromised by the powers of the day (Malielegaoi, 2017). The experience of the Public Service strike, the fallout with the head of state on his part in the power tussle among the parties, impacted directly on the naming task.

From the perspectives of the HRPP, it was authority versus the common people. State authority seemed to have been the monopoly of a few, the 'haves' who were concentrated in Apia. The way to rectify this was to appeal to the average citizens' economic sensibility. Alluding to equity and equality sounded somewhat revolutionary at the time, particularly in a society that is hierarchical, rural and people happily accept their lot. To equalize the score between Apia and backward Savaii (no offence at all) was a powerful vision in hope as much as it was good politics.

7.1 Organisation and ethos

Like the New Zealand model, the party has a president whose office is symbolic though active in the administration aspects. The party has a Secretary and Treasurer. Then there's the Leader and Deputy Leader. The caucus is made up of all voting members including its members of parliament and a cohort of officials. As government, the leader is the prime minister while the deputy leader is the deputy prime minister. The main offices are selected by a secret ballot. The leader of the party is also the leader of the government. As a political apparatus the office of the leader of the party is preeminent over the caucus. The leader as prime minister is also the main spokesperson on behalf of the government. The party is supported financially by its own members mainly through donations and fundraising activities. In terms of ideological orientation, it is described as conservative, in the centre right of the political spectrum. Hence its organisational ethos is a reflection of traditional *faamatai* in both theory and practice.

By the same token, its leadership propagates the belief systems of conservative Christianity and a vocal support of social conservative policies. For example, its stance against abortion and same sex marriage (Samoa Observer, Issue September 2, 2017).

7.2 A brief history

The HRPP came into being as a result of power relations gone sour. It was a political response of a group to a situation of political disarray, a reaction by a defeated party to a very murky political dilemma. While the intent was to counter effectively, its long-term impact might not have been considered too much at that particular point in time. So'o (2008) elaborated on the birth and emergence of this party in much clearer terms, highlighting the complex nature of politics in which democracy and culture were interlocked into negotiations, by which the politics of personalities and political acumen were shown for what they were. With the benefit of hindsight, such a move to mobilising people on a grand scale is now considered politically prudent and forward-looking.

As alluded to earlier, the politics of personalities revolved around a few individuals whose stature in society drew immediate attention naturally, and in the arena of politics were the easy pick in terms of leadership. Stature is defined by one's good standing in the *faaSamoa* for example, as in the case of Samoa's first prime minister, Fiame Faumuina Mulinuu II, who also bore the *tamaaiga* title Mata'afa while in office. Tupuola Efi, who by heritage was a *tamaaiga* himself, and rightly so when he was bestowed the Tui Atua title later on. Their claims to *tamaaiga* placed them above the

rest and with leadership skills and experience to enhance made them the ideal candidates. Moreover, the constitution highly implicates the *tamaaiga* institutions and ideology. Its members are candidates to the office of head of state and members of the council of deputies in deference to Samoan custom. Thus if personalities are meant to be endowed as such then this particular group has the advantage. Since the birth of the new state, the leadership was the monopoly of the *tamaaiga* regime.

Political acumen marked the emergence and development of the new party in terms of its leadership. First, the vision. The idea of a formal establishment of a party by creating roles, structures, organisation and most of all membership, was a novel undertaking. In fact it was a bold step away from the norm; the loose politics of consensus and traditional gentlemanly manoeuvring (So'o, 2008). This has been the politics of personalities and customary reciprocity by which *tamaaiga* ruled supreme since Independence.

In their 1979 defeat the HRPP leadership have learnt of the power of the collective will to counter (Malielegaoi, 2017). This they did successfully. As representatives of their constituencies, they knew how best to tap into the hopes of a rural populace. This required human effort and resources. And a strong message too, about equity and equality and upholding everyone's rights under the constitution. So when they called for the country to rally behind the cause, people responded. In the 1985 election the HRPP won by a landslide. In the election that followed it was against the power of a coalition, but they still managed to slip through by a one vote majority (ibid.).

With the gradual disintegration of the opposition by its own differences, not least the voters indifference, the HRPP again won the 1991 elections comfortably. And again in 1996. All these under the leadership of Tofilau Eti Alesana. He introduced universal suffrage, bridged a loophole in the law that put a stop to party hopping, passed the Parliamentary under-Secretaries Act 1988, and changed the law in order to appoint heads of government departments on a contract basis. Other changes that followed, under the leadership of his successor, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, would only consolidate the HRPP's grip on power.

Of the major political developments that HRPP pushed through, the one that stood out was that which put a stop to party-hopping. Such practice had almost destabilized the state and posed a direct threat to democracy. Since Tofilau's watch, some of the major amendments have been made on the constitution under HRPP. Some of these were vehemently opposed by the opposition and the independent media. Yet

overall support for the government still remained strong at grassroots level. Samoa has been under the HRPP rule for more than three decades. It is technically a one party state and with the absence of a strong opposition, it is hard to imagine a dramatic shift in fortunes for those who wish for a change.

Tupuola Efi, later addressed Tupua, a formidable opponent of the HRPP from its inception, charismatic as he was though, did not see the merits of forming a party according to one source; or he might have possibly done so but for some unknown reasons sidestepped the challenge (So'o, 2008). Would it have made a difference to his political fortune though? It is arguable, though he did form a party later and was a leader of opposition under a coalition government. But the political taint that lingered long in his career, in the mishandling of the public servants strike by his government would prove costly for power relations; otherwise fortunate as far as the HRPP was concerned, and which ultimately served to propel a new party to the front.

One source blamed the lack of sound advice on the part of his senior ministers and confidants. His entourage were mainly urban based, the elite of Apia in business and urban politics and more attuned to a European lifestyle than the harsh realities of rural living (ibid). For some of them, their claim to power was more through their wealth than the *mana* of their cultural heritage and association. Tupuola Efi may have been the tie that bound the whole but this could not stand against a united front by means of robust organisation, together with grassroots support of kin-based networks and communities. It can be argued favourably that the HRPP's success with power is attributed largely to its collective ability to mobilise the voters, something that other parties failed to achieve.

7.3 Activating power: a new style of leadership

The leaders of the new party were ordinary matai, though a number of them bore titles of significance in their villages and districts. Most of them were self-made and have tested their mettle in the bustle of Samoa's daily grind. The *faaSamoa* called it *tautua* (service). Every aspiring leader needs to build a reputation first through service to his/ her family and community. Their active participation as members of their respective communities meant that many of them were much closer to their grassroots support. They will have these credentials to be counted deserving of their family's blessing, by bestowing them a matai title as a reward for their service. The village will lend its support of their candidacy when they decide to run for parliament.

The first leader of the HRPP was a high village chief, dignified by the salutation of *aloalii* (prince) though not equated with the *tamaaiga* (sacred sons) status. He was a government teacher having taught in one of its reputable colleges before he took up farming. Another contemporary of his served his family through commerce but it was his kinship connections with a church and a reputable family name that bolstered his entry and success as a politician. By the time both men entered politics each has made a name for himself already in their communities. They would soon emerge to become archetypes of a new model of leadership that favoured the new political environment.

Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi was the third leader of the Human Rights Protection Party; an understudy of his predecessor, Tofilau; who took over the rein when the latter resigned from prime ministership and leader of party due to ill-health. He was sworn into office in 1998 and has remained there since. He entered parliament in 1981 as member of parliament of *Lepa* constituency; and has been representing *Lepa Itupa i Lalo* for three decades to date. Born and bred in the village, his early education was with the village pastor's school in which he learnt his literacy by reading the Bible, and numeracy, and was noted early as a high-achieving student (Malielegaoi, 2017). His move to Apia to live with relatives changed his education fortunes with the Catholic education regime - and faith too; his success in its school system was rewarded with a scholarship to further studies in New Zealand. He was capped with a Masters degree in Commerce by the University of Auckland in 1969, the first to hold this degree for Samoans who've entered university. Tuilaepa returned home at the end of the same year to start a public service career as an Investigating Officer in Samoa's Treasury Department (Malielegaoi, 2017).

Tuilaepa's political career was borne out of a personal frustration with the political system; more exactly the political machinations by those in power that thwarted personal aspirations of senior public officials under their watch. In his book, Palemia, a Memoir, he was promised the leading role of Treasury by the then minister; this did not eventuate and given Samoa's political circumstances at the time; his belief that the industrial dispute between government and the Public Service Association, in which Treasury should have been directly involved, can be averted; all served as a motivation to change career. Hence his decision to enter politics. Samoa's problem as he saw it then was lack of political vision – at least trust in those with the expertise (ibid.).

His timing coincided with events of magnanimous proportions in Samoa's democratic development; first, political instability due to divided loyalty of parliamentarians. Prior to his inception, Samoa had three prime ministers within a span of a year. Samoa's economy was in trouble. The public service was rocked by a dispute with government over wages that could have been handled a lot better, he believed. All of these influenced him deeply, as he related in his Memoir, and no doubt factored into his views and actions later as a leader and a career politician (Malielegaoi, 2017).

Tuilaepa's leadership is still ongoing; described as a reformer and 'man of action' by the research participants in this study (See Chapter 9); his legacy is a consolidation of the HRPP control and positioning the party as a formidable force in Samoan politics (See Malielegaoi, 2017). Next, we shall look a bit more closely at the leadership of its second leader, whose actions put the HRPP on Samoa's political landscape.

7.4 Tofilau Eti Alesana

By Samoan standards, Tofilau Eti entered politics early, first as a village high chief, at 24; later as member of parliament at 34; a 10-year stint in service to his family and village as a matai. He represented his constituency of Faasaleleaga under his other matai title, Luamanuvae, and quickly got involved in national politics when appointed minister of health only a year after arrival. He was successful again in the 1965-67 elections and reawarded the ministerial portfolio of health; and again in the 1970 election under his Tofilau title. While he continued his service for the next two parlimentary assemblies it was as a backbencher, though it must be noted that he was very much involved in the assembly committees with years of solid in-house experience. The lull in ministerial involvement at this latter period is attributed to a change of guard in leadership. Mata'afa's successors would have own people to choose from; until the 1982 election when he took over the prime ministership and formed his first administration. By then he was 58 years mature and less arguably the most experienced of his peers to start in the office (World Biographical Encyclopaedia Incorporated).

Like many Samoan statesmen, not much is recorded about his early years. He was born in the village of Vaitogi in American Samoa. A son of a Congregational minister and wife of good standing in the Samoan community. He was educated locally in the pastor's school and Poyers School in the territory which continued on at Maluafou, an LMS mission school in Western Samoa, when his father was posted for work at Malua

Theological College in Western Samoa. He joined Samoa's work force early culminating in a managerial role at one of Carruther's commercial branches. At one stage an attempt was made to join his father's pastoral career but this would not eventuate (ibid.).

Apart from his immediate family, only close friends and a few parliamentary colleagues knew him well as a person and more importantly as a leader. Such scant information means there's a blur when describing a personality or even commenting on somebody's leadership qualities. Anecdotal evidence abound. Witnesses speak about a family-oriented man, a leader who has a way with people of all classes and walks of life; approachable and comfortable with everyone and with himself. This rapport with the public and ordinary people helped him negotiate the terms of a dispute between government and the Public Service Association over wages, when goverment appointed him chairman of a commission to sort out the problem. This skill was displayed well during the Pule and Tumua strike,[57] the first major challenge on his administration, when he was able to quell the unrest, given the complex nature of traditional politics involved, his own safety, and in the end still held the key instigators to account under the rule of law (Malielegaoi, 2017).

Such shrewdness in politics was shown earlier. Once he stood in for Vaai, to sign the Protocol, an unpopular move at the time for the country and even in his own party; made him a popular figure in New Zealand politics nonetheless, with not too much of a fuss perhaps with the Samoan voters who would blame Vaai. This boded well for him when he became prime minister; during his administration the New Zealand government responded in kind to its many and various requests; the former New Zealand prime minister, Jenny Shipley, at his funeral, spoke of a colleague who's not easy to say no to. Saying no to the Privy Council's decision may have been the wise choice for the perpetuity of the two country's treaty of friendship. Tofilau might have discerned that though it was a political risk on his part according to Tuilaepa. In retrospect, Samoa, by offering a political favour, has gained enormously from the relationship as a result. But when New Zealand and Australia attempted to discourage Samoa from reaching out to China, Tofilau was adamant. Supporting Communist China politically in its one China policy has seen Samoa reaping the benefits in the development of its infrastructure and economy as a whole.

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[57] A peaceful demonstration that involved traditional powerbrokers of the Samoan hierarchy, against VAGST taxation.

The international row over the one China policy accentuated Samoa's own autonomy and independence in its foreign affairs. It sent a message to its traditional allies – New Zealand and Australia in particular - that Samoa's foreign policy has shifted with the new geopolitics of the Pacific, most notably the entry of the Chinese Communist government into the space. To prove, he was the first Samoan prime minister to visit mainland China. Such assertion of authority by Samoa was considered bold at the time, soon other Pacific neighbours followed (Malielegaoi, 2017). Tofilau and the HRPP no doubt had played a role in that repositioning of a new post-colonial Pacific in global politics.

The case of China would have exposed him as a modern opportunist who snubbed Samoa's traditional allies. At one time when New Zealand decided to ban nuclear weapons from its ports, Samoa proposed to Washington that Apia is available for its ships to berth at (ibid.). It proved at this point Samoa's right to make own decisions and paved the way to forging a foreign policy that picks and chooses whoever and however it sees beneficial to its national development. Tofilau was a pragmatist who could only see new opportunities with own pair of eyes. The opening of the first Samoan Embassy in Washington is attributed to this early courting of Washington by Tofilau (Malielegaoi, 2017, p. 134).

A leader's capacity can only be tested. Tofilau no doubt went through a very tumultuous period in Samoa's political history, first a test from within his own party and secondly from without, in the form of a very strong opposition. So'o remarked on this period of the party's early formation in finer details. The leader would soon realise that a structure is made up of people of different temperaments and own personal aspirations. It takes an able leader to pull it all together, politically speaking. In his Memoir, Tuilaepa remarked on his predecessor's political shrewdness, an experienced tactician who had the ability to manoeuvre for the sake of unity at whatever the cost.

Under his watch, some of the best 'minds' in their respective fields, who have entered politics, converged on the new party. They thought that they have what it takes to demand a ministerial portfolio in the government. It caused for alertness on the leader's part, particularly when signs of factionalism emerged and which, at one point, led to the defection of others to form new alliances. Tofilau was no 'procrastinator.' His ultimate solution was to add the number of cabinet ministers and promote thirteen backbenchers to the designation of Under Secretaries. It caused an uproar in parliament. Tofilau pressed on.

Equally testing was the phenomenon of 'kingmaker' that emerged in Samoan politics at the time. Tofilau successfully dealt with such on two occasions; first, directly with one such member who in the final hour, defected from the opposition camp to join the HRPP's own (Malielegaoi, 2017). The member's constituency got involved, entering the HRPP camp the next morning and demanded that the member left with them. They said they have some unfinished business to discuss. Tofilau, reading the situation clearly, intervened. He appealed to the supreme court of the *faaSamoa*; seated in the conscience of the people who value their genealogical connections most highly. At the end, the visiting party had no choice but to leave the member as he chose. After all, he is as much a family to Tofilau as with the opposition leader (ibid.).

The second scenario was an extension of the first, and involved a political impasse. Samoa's political power was hung in the balance with two sides of parliament commanding 23 members each. Tofilau, prime minister at the time, was on his way to the head of state requesting for a dissolution of parliament and a call for new elections. The leader of opposition was there already; beating him to the head of state's attention; and it seemed that the head of state has made up his mind already. Tupuola Efi, leader of opposition will be prime minister and he Tofilau will be deputy in a grand coalition. Again it was family kinship that made a difference. Tofilau would appeal to his cultural connection with the head of state; he Tofilau is the ninth family of the Malietoa clan by Samoan tradition. The head of state, as much as he is related to Tupuola through *tamaaiga* connections, also must defer to his family and mustn't be seen by Samoa as partisan. In this case, while it was the head of state who played the role of kingmaker, again the credit belonged to Tofilau's prowess in turning an impasse in his favour (ibid.).

Such an ability to adapt to a situation or even reconfigure a whole situation to serve politics was indicative of Tofilau's own style of leadership. This was clearly shown in the party's next move, amending the constitution to make way for Samoa's first full adult suffrage. As it turned out, the 1991 elections was the party's first clear majority, 27 out of 47 seats. It must be noted that prior to the passing of legislation, such a move away from the traditional base of Samoan authority, the matai system, was hotly contested both in parliament and across the country. The plebiscite outcome came out in favour by a modest margin; which was enough for Tofilau to usher in a new start in Samoa's electoral history.

The rationale behind the change couldn't be made more clearer; this will put a stop to the abuse of family titles to feed the electoral roll (matai franchise). With the

inclusion of non-matai sectors, the pressure on candidates to secure votes has lessened, and so government justifiably has sorted half of the problem. A participant of this research talked about Tofilau's tact and wisdom by way of such response to a very serious issue. It was also a calculating move, he believed, which in smart politicking, turned out in favour of the HRPP. With the benefit of reflection it can be argued that the move for change, and the benefits for Samoa's democracy as a result, speak for his leadership's keen sense of understanding local politics and societal group behaviour. Otherwise, a risktaker who was confident with own ability and the trust of his loyal supporters.

The leadership of the party has always been a contentious issue from its beginning. Between him and his contemporary, Vaai Kolone, the choice revolved; the latter became its first leader then replaced by Tofilau later on for reasons to do with the electoral system infringements. Vaai's choice to leave the party caused for its serious split and end of Tofilau's second administration. The transition from his predecessor was not much of a problem given his experience and high level of support in the caucus. No one can argue against his capability to lead, particularly when he was physically fit and healthy but once illness caught up with him, a few colleagues in the party vied for the role. Tuilaepa recalled a number of such incidents when plotters worked behind the scene, with a plan, in case the ailing leader wouldn't make it to the next day (Tuilaepa, 2017).

As mentioned earlier, vying for the top positions – prime ministership and ministerial roles – marked this period, and Tofilau sought for a pragmatic solution, in the form of a larger cabinet and 13 undersecretaries (now called Associate Ministers). His ability to win over a disgruntled individual or a dissenting faction, appease a contender or colleague who has missed out on a ministerial position, and lend trust to those who matter to his survival all have made a difference to his perpetuity as leader.

Secondly, Tofilau was faced with an arduous task of containing a formidable opposition, aptly understood in the context of Samoa's current political situation and uncertain future. Tuilaepa described the nature of government's operation as under a survival mode. In parliament, the opposition party, with Tupua as leader, was an equal match for government. The lineup of government ministers and their opponents on the other side of the house were a blend of talents, skills and experience. Both Tofilau and Tupua, with years of experience in government, and possessing the best oratorical skills Samoan could offer proved a perfect match in the debating floor. Debates revolved

around the two, and was a spectacle to observe. Sometimes emotions can hardly be contained so that the line between a good and bad debate was often blurred; the Speaker had to always intervene. At best childish banterings at worst, character assassinations. Bad blood is spilled to personal innuendos; one calling the other names or dishing out the common labels, the result, protocols of *va tending* and *tua'oi* were breached many times over.

The opposition's tenacity in parliament was amplified outside through a newspaper, the Samoa Observer, representing the independent media. The Samoa Observer was established in 1979 and quickly made a name for itself by being critical of government policy and leaders. So when government passed the law called The Printers and Publishers Act 1992, the newspaper was faced with a challenge of a different kind; its sources now can be disclosed in court, a move which the newspaper vehemently opposed as undemocratic and a way of undermining media freedom (Malifa, 1999).

A lawsuit by the prime minister followed, against the newspaper on the grounds that his name has been defamed by its reports. The lawsuit was upheld; two others followed; the rest of the story was told by the owner of the newspaper operation himself (Malifa, ibid.; So'o, 2008). According to the leader of opposition, the law was deemed a threat to press freedom; a breach of the people's constitutional rights to express freely, he argued. Such a tenacious collective counterstrike propelled the issue to the fore of the world's attention and made a name for the newspaper internationally (Toleafoa, 2013). In this case, power may have been the means to achieve political ends, but it revealed Tofilau's own human foibles, particularly his rather unusual sensitivity to public criticisms. The appeal by the newspaper to remove the legislation may never eventuate; as a matter of fact, the current government has revamped the same law to counter similar opposition, now in a new form of the so-called online ghost writers, who have become ever more critical and ruthless by the day.

Tofilau's vision of Samoa was encompassed in his word, 'what is good for Apia is also good for Savaii.' It has become the party's slogan. It signifies equity and equality for all of Samoa. Under his watch he upgraded the infrastructure and modernised Samoa's economy to meet modern day demands. His early addresses to the country with an appeal to make sacrifices on behalf of Samoa echoed a famous US president's line. His vision is yet to materialise fully for Savaii and Samoa's outer districts. While his move to

introduce universal suffrage could be interpreted as political, it was prudent and posed well for his political image as a mover and shaker. Last but not least, he was fortunate to have a few colleagues whose loyalty and expertise also made a real difference to his achievements.

Notwithstanding the achievements, his administration was tainted with many serious accusations. From the critic's viewpoint, the most serious pertains to its meddling with the country's constitution. As such, the keystone of transparent democracy has been jeopardised, they said. Seriously, the changes wrought in the constitution have made allowance for a state that is devoid of its proper checks and balances. While this can be viewed as Tofilau's last resort in a political situation that seriously threatened Samoa's democracy, it comes in the way of other issues, the critics pointed out. Some of these other issues are still in the limelight of Samoa's ongoing political discussion.

As noted, the long strides taken came at a cost of a reputation severely tarnished by violence. Power relations within the party hit an abysmal low when a minister of the state was gunned down, and two of its own fellow cabinet ministers were implicated, trialled and found quilty of masterminding the murder. Tuilaepa, prime minister and eye-witness, had this to say: "The assassination was a major trauma for Samoa. Political debates had always been robust, but political violence was something else altogether. I think Samoa lost its political innocence the night Luagalau was shot" (Malielegaoi, 2017, p. 164). The incident, given its profound impact on the Samoan state's reputation and politics, did little to influence the voters trust in the HRPP's leadership regardless. Politically, such a high profile incident could only serve to prove the power of the Samoans own traditional peacemaking principles to mending any type of ruptured relations.

Some of the so-called controversial legislations pushed through by government and enacted by parliament were initiated during Tofilau's tenure. These included amendments of the constitution which the opposition viewed as a violation of the people's rights by means of neutralizing the powers which served as other checks and balances within the state. For example, the independent role of Controller and Chief Auditor, as well as of the public service. On the other hand, some of the popular legislations from an outsider's perspective proved a positive to the HRPP's reputation as a promoter of democratic values and institutions. These included the change from matai only suffrage to universal.

A participant of this study strongly stated that Tofilau was the chief architect of the present status quo, who lay the foundation so that his successor has taken over with a lot more ease. In sum, Tofilau can be judged as an astute political leader, and should be known as the instigator of modern Samoan political manoeuvring, in which a political party takes a central role in Samoa's affairs seriously for the first time. To him, political unity is primary and preeminent, the rest is secondary, can sum up his legacy.

Tofilau the churchman has not been visited though it was very much part of his story. Steeped in EFKS tradition, his parents were village pastors as noted earlier. The church, especially the EFKS, has been very supportive of the HRPP right from its early days of inception, according to a source very close to Tofilau.[58] Naturally so when its leadership comprised some notable personalities in the EFKS fold. There was Va'ai Kolone, and Tofilau himself, Laulu Fetauimalemau, widow of former prime minister Mata'afa who had been a proactive member of the church when he was alive; Le Mamea Mualia, current member of the Council of Deputies, Polataivao Fosi, to name a few.

The rupture in power relations due to the public servants' strike proved yet again the delicate nature of the balance of Samoa's power relations. As long as politics and church intertwine, the spirit of old divisions could easily be evoked yet again when allegiance are drawn along such lines. Once a party or leader is identified with a certain faith it then has political repercussions. According to the source, Tofilau was very disappointed when he found out that certain members of the church leadership backed the Tumua ma Pule[59] demonstration in 1994. The experience caused him to align more with the 'new faith',[60] perhaps a personal reprisal against such treatment by the mainline churches, strictly speaking.

At a personal level, counting his blessings on divine intervention would have been part of his plan. The government's 'New Year' prayer meeting was his initiative. Faith in God can be applied as noted in the establishment of the national university, allocating $5 in the budget for the foundation work. As well, the pension for the elderlies, Samoa's first taste of state welfarism. A couple of sources who related to me their personal stories very early during my fieldwork; one of them went to Tofilau's office seeking his help. He needed his money from a government fund for his late father's funeral. By law the fund authority wouldn't let him have his share. Tofilau was able to change that on his behalf. This shows his human side, which the critics will no doubt

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[58] A relation of former Tofilau Eti Alesana in a personal communication with the writer.
[59] The Tumua ma Pule strike in 1994 was a protest against the enactment of the VAGST (tax) legislation.
[60] Commonly referred to new churches originated mainly from the United States.

use to reaffirm their views about his credentials as a lawmaker. The source has own interpretation. He held Tofilau's memory in high regard. But perhaps the most notable accolade came from an unlikely source, the Samoa Observer, Tofilau's most outspoken critic, reported on his passing.

On its front page title, 'History will remember Tofilau well', the newspaper commented that his achievements outshone his weaknesses. In reference to his pragmatic leadership, "He was a doer, not a procrastinator. Access to electricity, piped water supply and tar sealed roads are now nationwide, while multi-storey government buildings now add prestige to the capital; previously an ad hoc collection of wooden structures mostly from the last century mostly" (The Sunday Samoan, Issue March 21, 1999).

7.5   Consolidating power through policy imposition

After almost forty years in power, it is almost assumed that the ruling party's national policy or policies, is the secret behind its success and perpetuity in government. What can be assumed for sure is the durability of the slogan by which the HRPP Party has adhered itself to in its policy direction and economic management. 'What is good for Apia is also good for Savaii' is proudly tagged on its website homepage. Two revised versions were found, first under page HRPP history of the same website, which says, 'Works speak louder than words and what is good for Apia resident is also good for those in the rural areas.' Second, under Vision and Values, 'What's good in town is also good in the rural villages'; in total are variations of the same theme. As mentioned, the original analogy in its rather limited interpretation has taken on a much broader sense, on the side of good politics, the appeal to a political economy of equity and equality has become so entrenched that it is almost regarded as truth (Foucaultian) and common sense (Gramscian) to any adherent of both. Truth for the party is in the evidence of works, stressed in the slogan's longer version.

7.5.1   Economic strategy

In this and the next section, an attempt is made to describe HRPP policy from the standpoint of two traditional instruments of government, economics, and politics. The aim is to highlight the main issues involved and to make critical comments. First, the HRPP government's economic policy has always been at the forefront of its broad development strategies and national appeal. The HRPP has made a point of this from the outset. In their own words "in the worst possible situation since Samoa became independent.'

> When the first HRPP government came into power in 1982, it first addressed the Government's poor financial position as well as its foreign reserves to enable the purchase of various goods from overseas. These difficulties were quickly remedied with an improved flow of Governments regular revenues and with the assistance from the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank. These difficulties no longer exist today (Quoted from The HRPP official website).

Hence the backdrop and urgency of the situation the party faced in its initial policy launching. Firstly, policy in terms of initiating structural reforms became the first priority. Such reforms no doubt motivated by the experience as described but driven mostly by the political will. The rallying call by the leader on the country to sacrifice

echoed solemnly at the time. Systems of control were put in place on the public sector spending costs for example, while the work of restructuring took on a new mindset. The urgency of the need for change was related by the Minister of Finance at the time, the strategy was to quietly fend off the old, planned economy, state-led approach for a more sustainable responsive choice (Malielegaoi, 2017). Diversification was then encouraged to reduce reliance on the agricultural sector, with development in tourism, fisheries and light industry showed steady signs of growth. A privatisation programme was pursued. To this end, the facilitative apparatus of financial donors and local expertise made the transition possible. Evidence of the positive outcome of policy direction and management showed up at the latter end of the 1990s (Amosa, 2012).

The establishment of Samoa's own central bank earlier provided policies and processes to monitor and regulate financial transactions of banking institutions to support economic development. Its primary function to regulate financial policies would ensure it serves its purpose by protecting economy. Such measures have been ongoing and transforming over the years. Lately the charge for more liberalisation of the economy has government called for the deregulation of the financial sector, the encouragement of investment and for continual fiscal discipline (ADB, 2011). But the most telling evidence of government priority was to be witnessed in the building of contingency utilities in support of the economy. These, in the forms of the basic infrastructure, in new access roads, water and electricity projects, buildings, schools, for example, which people tend to equate with policy efficacy quite easily.

Samoa's economic policy has been the focus of international donors and partners interests, whose own measures impact both directly and indirectly on Samoa's policy direction and management. While success is reported 'in some circles', the ADB has noted several constraints that need to be addressed (ADB, 2011). First the rising costs of doing business due to government's central role. The state plays too large a role in the economy hence accounting for over 40 per cent of Samoa's GDP, said the report. Many state-owned enterprises were inefficient. Second, the issue of property rights as not well-defined because of the weakness in the land leasing framework. Third, the need for financial market deepening and the factors involved such as weak property rights, the lack of collateral framework and difficulty in collecting debts. Fourth, the need to complete law reforms. Commercial law reform is incomplete, the report stated. Fifth, the need to improve policy in relation to promoting its niche agricultural products. Sixth, the need for better processes to attract foreign investment (ADB, 2011).

Seventh, the need to improve engagement between government and private sector, particularly the Chamber of Commerce. Reports on the lingering issue of mismanagement of resources as well as poor execution of policy served to highlight the practical difficulties that correlate with higher aspirations of the leadership adversely. Attempts at tackling inflation and cost of living is also a matter of policy and political expediency, something which the HRPP government has managed with variable success (Amosa, 2012). Fluctuation of market costs affect inflation which is translated to living costs. There has been a strong feeling among the populace that the cost of living has become burdensome for the average family. An AusAid led survey estimated that 20 per cent of Samoans live below the basic needs poverty line; 8 percent below the food poverty line (AusAid, 2011).

Facilitating its economic policy commitment has been well referenced in previous studies (Vaa, et al. 2012, Amosa, 2012; ADB, 2011). I can only reiterate briefly on two factors in terms of their impact on Samoa's economic growth. First, the factor of human resources. Samoa has enough reserve of human manpower to cater for its needs for the moment. Most of its paid workforce is concentrated in the service sector, served by a steady flow of school leavers from 26 colleges and own university yearly. They account for the 12 per cent of the total population. Samoa sends a number of students on overseas scholarships, many of whom return to serve the country. On the other hand, the lack of opportunities for young job seekers is an issue for government in its role of creating enough work for its younger population.

Otherwise, many will leave the country to join its international cohort of overseas based workers who send money home in the form of remittances and goods, hence contributing significantly to Samoa's economic development. The others may join the list of seasonal workers who have been frequenting New Zealand and Australian orchards as fruit pickers. Since its inception, a total of 2,405 Samoan workers have been employed so far, a good number of them have been regulars (Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Labour)[61]. In its report, the ministry cited evidence of economic growth at both micro and macro level in relation to these developments (MCIL, Report 2018-2019). Such labour mobility and policy creativity were aimed at encouraging foreign investments (ibid.).

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[61] Cited in Samoan Observer Issue 05/03/2019. MCIL stands for Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Labour.

Government objected to the fact that a measurement of poverty is often Western based; the contention is that although the macro-Samoan economy is market-based, people still rely heavily on subsistence living. However, many have long become accustomed to other food choices over taro and other staple crops. In a culture whereby import foods play a central part in *faalavelave*[62], and has become a big fixture in the country's consumer spending, the average family is directly affected when prices increase now and then. Chicken for example used to be reared and processed locally for home consumption, now is part of the imports cohort, along with canned meat, which people depend on for daily consumption.

Mentioned earlier, an AusAid led survey estimated that 20 per cent of the populace live below the basic needs poverty line; 8 percent below the food poverty line (AusAid, 2011). The Tuilaepa study (2006) stressed the importance of the dimension of vulnerability in the 'poor' people's perception of their situation.

In fairness, government's economic policy was marked by a prudent management of policy over the years regardless. Its policy direction however is still conditional due to factors beyond its control. International downturns in terms of market price fluctuation, its commitment to the World Trade Organisation, the far-reaching influence of globalization, physical isolation and the most challenging of all, natural disasters, are major examples of the types of demands it faces as it strives to become economically viable, at least uphold long-term sustainability. A country that is bereft of natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals will always depend on its human resources, foreign aid, and loans. Allegedly, the government was implicated in using laundered money to boost its financial position.[63] (Samoa Observer, Issue December 7, 2017).

Yet the pace of development bespeaks government's belief that foreign debt, as long as manageable, is needed for the country's development. In response to its critics, government uses its work record to show, as well as reassure the country every now and then that things are under control, a reference to Samoa's record at debt repayment. Samoa's foreign debt reached the $1 billion mark in 2017.

Overall, Samoa's economic policy is driven largely by its political agenda which puts first priority on infrastructural development and investment across the field both locally

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[62] Cultural obligations/practices such as funerals, etc

[63] Tupua Tamasese Efi talked publicly about this issue; Samoa Observer Issue 22/5/2020. A 2017 EU report has the name of Samoa in its blacklist of 17 countries, alleged to be tax havens for such activity (Samoa Observer, Issue December 7, 2017; Samoa's Central Bank rejected the EU report: www.rnz co.nz

and overseas. While the people have benefitted from good roads and better services, the task of balancing the books due to rising demands of the services themselves is onerous. Ongoing commitments to the global community come at a cost, so as fulfilling government's role as fiscal manager of the state.

By far the economy is largely dependent on tourism, foreign aid and remittances from Samoan citizens living abroad, most of which help to offset a persistently large trade deficit. The highest share of tax revenues in Samoa in 2018 was derived from value added taxes / goods and services tax (40.1%) (OECD, 2019). The fact that this tax is imposed on the demanding daily consumer items means the majority of the population contribute immensely. The tax is viewed as biased against the low wage earner due to its regressive formula (OECD, 2019).

To reiterate, the political implication of its economic policy is very much part of its political appeal to the public. As argued, it is core to its long-term strategy as a party (Malielegaoi, 2017). Yet the cost to the country and the people's well-being is obvious, according to the opposition. Short-term, the acceleration in the cost of living; long-term, the foreign debt and consequences for future generations. The risks of sustaining such policy means the HRPP will have to keep on developing with borrowed money. Evidence of the waste in terms of so-called 'failed projects' are the hallmarks of such an ideologically driven policy, according to the opposition (Samoa Observer, Issue January 20, 2017).

7.5.2   Political strategy

As said earlier, the political chaos of the eighties had made a strong impression on a new party; the context of which provides a better understanding of its politics and direction once it consolidated power. Tofilau's tenure saw the party embarking on a mission of power consolidation. Political stability has been the core issue of politics at the time. It can be contended that this one issue determined its policy direction by and large. Both the HRPP and its critics conceded to the severity of the matter of political instability affecting the country. The HRPP would ensure that this would not happen again under its watch (Malielegaoi, 2017). As the incumbent prime minister referred to in his book, it can only mean making bold decisions and drastic measures.

The reforming of the country's constitution created a precedent; its political impact may only be equated with New Zealand's experience with Rogernomics. What the latter has

done for New Zealand economics alone, the former would do for Samoan politics; both experiences have been transformational in their own contexts. Since 1962 to December 2019, the constitution of the Independent State of Samoa has been amended liberally, mostly under the HRPP. First, constitutional amendments in which accumulation of political power under the Executive branch was construed as the ulterior motive.

Toleafoa (2013) wrote about the decimation of constitutional offices that were placed in there for the democratic function of checks and balances of power. The fate of the office of Controller and Chief Auditor was his example. So as imposing direct political control on the public service and autonomy of sector, ending its political impartiality. Toleafoa (ibid.) viewed the changes in parliamentary tenure from 3 to 5 years, the enlargement of Cabinet from 8 to 13 members, the appointment of 13 Under Secretaries (later upgraded to Associate Ministers), the appointment of ministerial committees, as all part of government's control mechanism and creation of a powerful patronage system, which ultimate purpose was to normalize power from a Gramscian understanding (ibid.).

McConnell (2010) was interested in the question of why a policy is successful from a government's perspective and a failure from the opposition's viewpoint. The reality lies somewhere in between, he suggested. Part of the problem is the fact that a policy has multiple dimensions; successful in one or two and not so in others. In general, policy has three realms according to McConnell: process, programme, and politics. The three strands of policy overlap. First, the Process which refers to the concern that society could and should make by means of the collective choices in the public interest. Traditions pertaining to this have pointed to government responsibility in terms of identifying the problem, examining potential policy alternatives, consulting, then making decisions. It can be an arduous effort as everything is weighed, assessed, and analysed (Lasswell, 1971; Lindblom, 1979). Secondly the programme; also known as the working role of the government, gives concrete form to a policy statement. It involves planning and a host of other factors. Then the third strand, politics. Any policy is political because it affects people. Thus, any programme has political repercussions for a government if it failed to deliver, according to McConnell (2010).

Figure 2. McConnell Spectrum:

Policy as Politics: The Spectrum from Success to Failure:

Political	Resilient	Conflicted	Precarious	Political
Success	Success	Success	Success	Failure

McConnell believed that the most democratic-oriented outcome is in Resilient Success. Here a policy is achieved notwithstanding some modifications and setbacks. There is room for input from the opposition for instance, an added legislation or advice. Inevitably proponents of policy are prepared to compromise for sake of achieving higher goals of a programme. As McConnell pointed out, an attempt to align the three Ps can be problematic. A policy for instance can be good politics but not a good programme or process for that matter. A sound programme may not be good for politics, which may lead to conflicted or even precarious success in the end. This is where policy is viewed as more successful in one realm than in another or vice versa (McConnell, 2010, p. 357).

Using McConnell's spectrum as an analytic tool to study HRPP's policy requires another research to do it justice; what it can offer at this point is a basic framework that will help the reader pursue just that. Meanwhile, what can be substantiated generally is the fact of power relations and the need for balance. Assuming that the HRPP has faced up to the challenge, handling all the three contradictions from a position of enormous power, it follows that policy as process, programme, and politics were each considered a political success. An example of process success was demonstrated in the amendments made to the constitution, with not so much difficulty. Indeed, there was strong opposition, inside and outside of parliament, but they lacked the resources to win the people's support over, in order for government to take note and change course accordingly.

Even the amendments pertaining to checks and balances of power, such as the role of the Controller and Chief Auditor, were speedily processed and passed on as successful programmes of government. On the matter of policy as programmes, HRPP again has the numbers to push them through as demonstrated in its electoral reforms and other programmes. The launching of the universal suffrage and changing the side of the road for driving encountered stiff opposition from interest groups, but in the end the majority of the voters lent their support. Because of the popular support, the government can claim legitimacy in launching these policies. This is Resilient Success and Successful Politics on the part of the government.

McConnell's analysis aligned with Foucault's idea of governmentality. Noted earlier, the concept puts rationality in the centre of government activity (Foucault, 1991). Responsible governance becomes the rationale as well as the moral charge of the state leadership (ibid.). The state is justified by its appropriation of knowledge in all aspects of the government activity. The government knows what it is doing is a script at the core of its political narrative. To the extent that such bodies of knowledge earn the right to be called state truths, they also become the people's truths and a common-sense part of society's predominant ideology (Gramsci, 1999).

This monopoly of knowledge by the state gives the authority the advantage to control dissenting discourses within and outside its sphere of influence (Kelly, 2020). Because truth needs to be sustained, the government must act, whether in terms of policy direction or change. As shown in the discussion, the government has a reason behind each of the proposed changes, regardless of the opposite opinion, however rational it may seem (Foucault, 1997b; Kelly, 2020).

7.5.3 Social development and power strategy

For the purpose of this discussion, the name Strategy for the Development of Samoa is henceforth abbreviated SDS or simply Strategy. It is a name given to a Samoan government document or list of successive strategies for its development. For instance, the latest issue, 'Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016/17-2019/20' provides government's policy direction from an economic and financial viewpoint. A clear signal about moving forward economically from the standpoint of the last SDS (Strategy). Key development strategies and sectors are listed as targets to focus on in the four-year period. In the words of the current finance minister, 'an important document for all Samoan. It is a guide to the path the Government is committed to follow over the next four years.' Four priority areas comprised Economic Sector, Social Policies, Infrastructure Sector, and the Environment, is a continuation of the previous SDS targets. So as pursuing the 'over-riding' vision to improve quality of life for all Samoans citizens.

As a strategy the SDS recommends a holistic approach, focusing on the three aspects of public development: economic, social and the environment. Sound economic management is the key to the strategy. The primary goal is to generate and sustain economic growth. Achieving the priority outcomes will be evidenced in the employment and generation of opportunities for example, towards the end goal of achieving an

improved quality of life for all. Such improvement includes both quality outcomes in the two main sectors of public service: health and education. The aspiring goal is not to leave anyone behind, or in the context of two sectors mentioned, either pupil or patient, 'to ensure that vulnerable groups can equally share in our progress' (ibid. p. ii).

7.5.3.1 Health

Under priority Area 2 (Social) of the Strategy are three Key Outcomes. First, a healthy Samoa and Well-being promoted. This one can be achieved by means of a cohesive approach that targets two things: a 'people focus' service and preventative programmes. The keyword is improvement. For example, improvement can be measured by a reduction in numbers of alcohol drinkers and smokers by 5 per cent each. Improvement is demanded in the area of population screening for early non-communicable diseases, safety and quality of health care service, management and response to disasters and emergencies. For example, the call for a 100 percent compliance of healthcare workers with professional standards does bear on the level of negligence reported in the service at times. A recent incident of two children who died under the care of two registered nurses is an example (Samoa Observer, Issue August 2, 2019). Waiting time in the emergency department, general outpatient and triaging have been niggling concerns for many, so as the escalating costs of sending patients for overseas treatment that drained scarce resources.

Access to primary health care is also marked for some more improvement, particularly in the rural areas. In district hospitals, the need for doctors, medicine and advanced technology for treatment has been acknowledged by both the authority and the public (SDS, 2016/17-2019/20; Anderson, 2013). Along with health promotions on living healthy lifestyles and mental well-being, the government hopes this strategy will deliver an outcome that reflects population inclusivity, service effectiveness and fiscal accountability (ibid.). In 2013, Ian Anderson prepared a discussion paper on the state of Samoa's health and the financing options involved.

Samoa currently faces two important public policy challenges in the health sector, he pointed out. One is to stem, and then reverse the rapid rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The second challenge is to put the country on a health-financing path that is effective, efficient, and financially affordable and sustainable. The two challenges are interconnected (ibid.). For the first, NCDs include obesity, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, and cancer are a top health priority, with high and

increasing prevalence rates: the obesity rate is currently 57.0 percent, the diabetes rate is 23.1 percent, and high blood pressure rate is 21.4 percent (ibid.).

For Samoa, the four main risk factors are smoking (tobacco), poor nutrition, excessive alcohol consumption, and physical inactivity (SNAP) (WHO Country Health Information Profile for Samoa 2009; Lima, 2004). Curbing measures come in the form of raising excise tax for instance. Anderson listed eight options which he examined and made proposals on to address the financial challenge. He concludes that the chief opportunity arises from more efficient use of resources already in the health system that are not presently used to maximum effect. Improving technical and allocative efficiency of the existing system has the potential to make a large difference and is technically feasible, he suggested. Anderson is one among others from outside who've commented positively on the strides Samoa have made to improve its health care. Comparisons with other lower middle-income countries have noted some interesting facts.

The World Health Organization figures showed that Samoa has achieved some higher health outcomes and outputs than other lower-middle income countries on a range of indicators, especially infant, child, and maternal mortality, births attended by skilled health personnel, and access to sanitation (WHO, 2013). Government expenditure on health is relatively high compared to other lower-middle income countries. About 7 percent of the country's GDP is spent on its health and the second largest item in government's 2011/12 budget, about 16 percent of total government appropriations in 2011/12, a distinct proof of government giving priority to health (WHO, 2014). The ongoing challenge for the government is how to sustain such commitment over time while still being able to maintain intended outputs, outcomes and impact as expected (Anderson, 2015; p.15).

Conversely, the average Samoan's low expectation of their own health system does not match such a serious political commitment on health by the government. Allegations against government policy as not being pro-poor points to the low level of access to treatment by the poorer population when compared to the wealthier. As the Anderson report mentioned, the latter is overrepresented in the diabetes, 29 percent compared to the poorer' 9 percent. Which means that they have far more share of the resources as patients, given the fact that the poorest 10 percent earned 1.8 percent compared to the wealthier' 31 percent of total income (p. 5). The cost of sending patients for treatment overseas has become a lingering issue; about 15 percent of total public health expenditure annually, exceeding even the spending costs of twelve government

ministries/ agencies (p. 24). Also reflected in the priority outcomes is the disparity factor between urban Apia and the service of the rural population. Which means that emergency and specialized treatment are still the preoccupation of Apia. Savaii and the outer islands are disadvantaged and will remain so for a longer while. Many families would rather take their patients to Apia than their district hospitals, believing that the service in Apia is more reliable.

The recent exposure of the system in terms of its response to the measles outbreak has reaffirmed two important points. First, Samoa's vulnerability in the face of a global disaster/emergency; secondly, the permanence of its poor public image in terms of the people's trust in its own national health care system. The negative image has been entrenched, reinforced by incidents such as the one that was blamed for the proliferation of the measles 2019 outbreak. One of the goals of this Strategy is to change such perception, especially among the common folk. This can be done by measures such as relocalizing the health care, as it used to be with the *Komiti Tumama* institution, according to a participant of this research. Perhaps more transparency is needed, another participant suggested, who also believed there is a serious misunderstanding between the government and the public in the way its policy is processed, programmed, and promoted.

On promotion alone, two participants argued for a better approach, a well-coordinated effort from the standpoint of village leaders, to lift the level of awareness on healthy living that could even be internalized by the majority through mass education and routinized community activities. His point is, the problem is too big for any government, it can only be tackled by having the people on board. Besides, a country's health is a collective responsibility. A new approach is sought or perhaps in this case, old ways of doing things revisited. There is a concern raised that Samoa's health is dictated mainly from outside forces to which government policy is tied in many and various ways (Faalili-Fidow, 2014).

In the final analysis, while government commitment in dollar terms may reflect positively on its politics, this may not be from the view of some sectors, particularly the poorer population, whose assessment of a policy is much truer and cannot be underestimated for any reason. In cases of emergencies of international proportions, resources have become the key issue, though the expectation for leadership to lead at such crucial moments was found lacking as in the handling of the measles epidemic. The public outcry and cynicism that emerged against the Ministry was well documented by the

independent media in its reports throughout the course of the outbreak. The prompt response to the Covid-19 could only mean that some lessons were learnt.

7.5.3.2 Education

Like its health, Samoa's education policy is an outworking of many factors and players (Lee-Hang, 2011). It involves dynamic relations between government and communities, local, regional, international, even global. A closer look reveals a hybrid of both old and new elements merging easily or coexisting incongruently (ibid.). Its education system is a legacy of the Christian missionary enterprise, the colonial German, and New Zealand administrations. The latter introduced modern schooling to Samoa, which system of governance and teaching pedagogies have been the mainstay for more than a generation. Prominent in the colonial policy was the role of education and assimilation programmes that employed a colonial curriculum and the English language. National development has been the rallying call by the leaders of the newly independent state, and education was the key then and still is. English was and still is the language of development and progress. The call has been sustained politically since.

In the name of national development, Samoa has pursued the cause of globalization. As part of the global family, obligations to its major donors and various institutions have become serious commitments. Samoa is a member of UNESCO, UNDP, and a signatory of WTO. Advocates of globalization point to the benefits for small economies (Becker, 1994; Naisbitt, 1994). Becker argued that cost affordability can work in favour of small open economies as world economies become more integrated (Makhlouf, 2018).

Conversely, those who find fault in globalization pointed out a huge imbalance in power relations as big economies dictate to the small and the vulnerable their values and standards. Changes on a global scale can modify policy, and in Samoa's case, the influence of borrowed policies from donor countries and world agencies (Tuia, 2013). Imposing an alien policy runs the risk of clashing with indigenous people's cultural values and priorities. Jackson (2016) noted that there is no global consensus on the benefits or otherwise of globalization. World educators do not just react but interact with its flow on the basis of one's perspectives, values and priorities. So, while small economies may benefit to some extent, the long-term disadvantages will prevail finally, is the counterargument.

So far, the Samoan stance on globalization has been that of accommodation and adjustment, striving to legitimize her standing among the rest of the global family franchise (ibid.). Legitimacy means adhering to global standards and expectations, accepting the fact that outside donors do have a say in its education policy. Its development blueprint 'Samoa Development Strategy' (SDS) echoes a global call for a lift in the quality of Education and Training. So as pushing for inclusive curricula through sustainable programmes and raising organization capacity to achieve quality standards (SDS 2012-2016). Reviews of the SDS help give us a close glimpse into Samoa's schooling agenda and a list of current priorities. On the face level, the theme of quality education and training is echoed and sustained successively. Ideally boxes are ticked in terms of goals and strategy shared but the repeated call for improvement denotes more clarification at the micro level.

In a 2015 Review Report on Education for All, several gaps have been identified. For instance, while Early Childhood Education is recognized as an important component of the sector, it lacks government support in terms of funding infrastructure and training staff. While it is compulsory for all children to attend school, its enforcement falters and therefore fails the moral purpose of the policy: to provide quality education for all. While adult literacy rate is relatively high the overall student literacy rate has not measured up to own standards according to the latest report (Samoa Observer, Issue March 22, 2021). The review report noted a high percentage of at-risk students at both primary and secondary levels over the years. Classroom overcrowding, teacher shortage, poor implementation of policy have become part of the media's regular reporting (Samoa Observer, Issues April 26 & 28, 2017).

Quality can also be assessed in terms of changes put in place. A few participants alluded to a decline in the quality of teaching since the old Samoa Teachers' Training College was incorporated into the country's university.

Gender inequality in education on the other hand has been improved (Amosa, 2010), though the low level of tertiary enrolment reflects growing inequality between the haves and the have-nots of society or the fact that money determines access. Legitimacy can also be assessed in terms of the human output, or the ability of the economy to provide employment for the country's school leavers annually. Education remains government's top priority in its budget allocation, more than Health.

7.6   Conclusion

From its humble beginnings to initial activation of power to political hegemony, the HRPP has ruled Samoa for almost four decades with not much opposition to stand in its way. Its political success is attributed to a combination of factors.

First, a prudent management of the economy guaranteed its constant relevancy as a political manager of the state over the years. Secondly, strong leadership and a good organisation strategy made for a lasting impression on the voting public. The HRPP took its stance seriously among the power competitors through better organisation, assertive leadership, and a political will to take risks, even if that rouses the ire of its opponents. Thirdly, by its political strategy of normalizing infrastructural development and the electoral process for example, it enabled direct connection with the people. In this way, the government has established direct and lasting relationships with the voters to earn their trust and loyalty. Conversely, such normalization comes at the price of further control through restrictive measures, making it harder for citizens to participate freely in national politics. Tying a person's right to contest freely in general elections via commitment to his/her village obligations (*monotaga*) is one example. Otherwise, it is an apt demonstration of a compromise between the two authorities/ systems.

Gramsci's own notion of the manufacture of consent is hereby highlighted, where all parties (matai and tautua) are made to agree through the multiple arrangement of power relations: at the village level where matai leadership and own ideology rule, the same who hold power in the state and civil government. The literature attested to the various ways by which such control is subtly processed and managed. For example, as the state took over social responsibilities, it has all the reasons to accumulate and utilize power through knowledge systems and government apparatus. Foucault in his concept of biopolitics, talked about the role of the state by which the new technologies of power are unleashed to the singular goal of managing the person in all his/her intricate details (Foucault, 1991). In other words, the legitimization of his/her political participation.

Government on its own cannot solve inequality for the less privileged, at least apply relief measures on its own when traditional culture rules over the whole. One way or another, it is government which can have the last say in the final shape and design of social policy.

Finally, without a strong Opposition in parliament, only the HRPP government can genuinely assess the success of any of its policy from the vantage point of a fiscal manager of the economy, no less importantly its role as a responsible provider of the

people's social needs. It is not just a professional but a moral charge the task of balancing the act, on its own, without any opposition or other checks and balances to remind (Teachout, 2015). And given its enormous power status in the relations, the question is, would the HRPP government be willing to sacrifice successful politics for the sake of pursuing more flexible processes and programmes for the benefit of all stakeholders?

Chapter 8

POWER DIFFUSION AND INTERSECTIONS:
VILLAGE, CHURCH & CIVIL SOCIETY

I wish to begin this chapter with the assertion that apart from the state, Samoa's power relations also need to be understood at other levels, the village, church, and the broader civil society. Understanding this helps to unravel the complexity of power and the way it works in the Samoan society. This chapter will look at five major sub-sectors, the village, the church, the media, pressure groups, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Some of these have been noted earlier, like the village authority and the church. To get a closer look at local governance, I decided to use a genuine village setting as my subject of observation.

This overview of village authority is treated as part of a continuous discussion that is spread out across the chapters. The reader will have come across references on *aiga*, *faamatai, tautua* in Chapter 4. As noted, Samoa's traditional authority is synonymous with village authority that is vested upon the village matai council. This authority is founded on the philosophy of *faamatai* and core values of *faaSamoa* (Meleisea, 1987; So'o, 2007).

Samoa's local government refers primarily to village government system where authority is vested in the council of matai (*fono a matai*). Technically there are two types of local governments at the village level. First the political council of matai which is secular. Second, the church through its various denominations, which is religious. The two authorities are distinguished by their specific purposes, characteristics, and political constitutions. Both share the same space, that is, the village[64]. As argued earlier, 'civil society' is part of today's political order; understood as 'third sector' of society, distinct from government and business (World Bank).[65] Included are non-governmental organisations and institutions which are independent of the government. The independent media included.

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[64]A village is a basic unit of political authority and local government in Samoa, defined by geography, ethnohistory, etc. The concept civil society is used by other researchers in its inclusive application, that is with the traditional village authority as well. I have used it here solely to differentiate a space for introduced institutions such as the church, the Media for example, as opposed to the indigenous government, vested in the faamatai and village fono. There is no intention to implicate or contest other interpretations.

[65]The World Bank. Civil Society page IBRD.IDA

While many of these organisations are supposedly apolitical, or professed to be so, their influence on society or state policy can be huge, depending on their status and type of service in the world, therefore can impact local politics indirectly or even directly in politics (Allard & Martinez, 2008; Espesor, 2019). The World Bank (WBG) refers to civil society as "a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations, labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations" (quoted from The World Bank, IBRD-IDA. Online Website).

Literature affirmed that the term became popular in political and economic discussions in the 1980s, when it started to be identified with non-state movements that were defying authoritarian regimes, especially in central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. Understandably, how civil society is discussed in those parts of the world may be different from the case of Samoa. Civil societies in developed countries cannot be compared with their poorer counterparts, though the institutions are more or less similar by name and general goals, the key aspirations very much shared.

8.1   Village government

Meleisea (1987a) traced the political economy of the Samoan village from an ethnographic perspective. His account provided a fuller understanding of its complexity at the family, village district and national levels. Primarily, village authority revolves around the village matai council. While each village has own protocols to follow when meeting or deliberating, the essentials are shared. First, a village salutation is important; this is power relations expressed, when the who's who of the council are formally saluted/ acknowledged. The order of speaking is important, so are the rituals attached to. Every member is aware of the principle of *soalaupule*, that is, the consensual approach by which deliberations are conducted. An opinion is always conveyed in the spirit and tone of deference to one another.

To elaborate, I wish to refer to the village that was my operation base while collecting data in Samoa. This village I will call *Lau*. In *Lau*, there are two titular chiefs (*suafa/ tapa'au*) and two principal orators (*tulafale tāua*). The two titular chiefs are seconded by a cohort of other chiefs of lesser ranks (*aiga*). The same with the two principal orators, they also are supported by other orators of secondary status. For my purpose I called these orators, *Sula* and *Male*. The two principal orators, by virtue of

their designations, convene the council meeting.[66] They operate by mutual deference as of who speaks first, though as P15 affirmed, the younger of the two will defer to the older and senior. The senior will return the favour in the next meeting. It is uncustomary in the culture to claim your right as first speaker and proceed. Courtesy has it that you always ask your peers for their endorsement. While members of the two principal groups may be proactive in the discussion, there is room for other matai of lower ranking status to express own views. A consensus is arrived at after all possibilities (pros) are assessed against the risks (cons) and weighed.

In the traditional political sphere, *fa'amatai* has placed own system of checks and balances to counter abuse of authority by a member or a faction. Having two principal orators in *Lau* for instance was a political manoeuvre, designed by the environment[67] to provide checks and balances, according to P15. Many villages have more than one or two principal orators, which means no one holds monopoly of power. The same with the high chiefs' cohort. *Lau* has two titular chiefs, *Pale* and *La'ei*. Each of equal status, meaning authority is shared. The orators' group, regardless of their political clout in village politics, is subject to the counsel of the high chiefs. The high chiefs on the other hand, which own *mana* and *tapu* systems are maintained by the orators, normally use own power leverage with tact and restraint (See also Tui Atua, 2001).

Principles of reciprocity, deference, due consideration, have moulded power into a tolerant force, and along with a clear, well-defined prescription of authority and roles, there is a prevailing sense of order and tolerance among the community. Balanced power relations then are understood in that sense of harmony. As a political continuum, extreme order means extreme measures of discipline which can only produce authoritarian communities. Conversely, extreme tolerance makes for anarchic communities. The balance lies in the tact and restraint of wise counsel - part of which is the influence of the Christian message on leadership (Tui Atua, 2018, 2001). The village power hierarchy and dynamics are observed in the seating arrangements in a village council as shown in Figure 3 (next page).

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[66] For practical reasons, a member upon whom both 'principal orators' factions agreed, can perform this task on their behalf.
[67] Participant 15 disclosed in confidence the lineage and rationale of having two principal orators for Lau.

Figure 3. Power Relations: Saofa'iga a le Nu'u Samoa: The seating of the village authority in council

FRONT OF HOUSE

Faleupolu

RIGHT SIDE   Suafa   Consensus   Aiga   LEFT SIDE

Taupou & Sa'oaumaga

BACK OF HOUSE
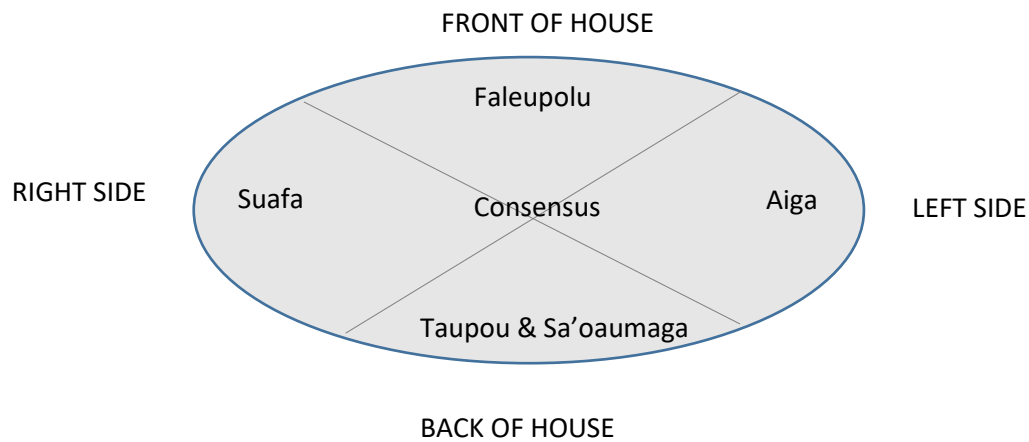
The Samoan *fale* on its four flanks has been reserved for each of the four groupings of power brokers. Using *Lau* for example, the *Suafa* are seated on the right flank. The *Aiga* (including *Usoalii* or the brotherhood of chiefs) acknowledges their presence from the left flank. On the front are the *Tulafale* (also known as *Faleupolu*) led by the two principal orators and cohort of orators. From the back flank sits the *taupou*, she is a symbolic representation of the *sa'otama'ita'i* (first chiefly daughter) and village women; with members of the *sa'oaumaga*, also known as *malosi o le nuu*, protectors of the village. They represent the *manaia* (first chiefly son) and cohort of untitled men called the '*aumaga*.

As mentioned earlier, the orators group does most of the deliberations, when upon reaching own consensus on a matter, call on the counsel of *Suafa* and *Aiga*. By then each cohort must have decided on own collective stance. A *suafa* (member) will speak on their behalf to either endorse or advise for the matter to be deferred for further discussion (*moe le toa*). Where deliberations among the three are thorough and reflect quality, then Samoans will use the phrase, *ua sa'ausi le tofa*. The opposite is, *ua leai se tofa* (there is a lack of the deep view); or *ua sola le tofa* (the deep view slackened) (cf. Tui Atua, 2018). All of these allude to the crucial role of deep reflection in the process of Samoan decision-making, which activity is personal, subjective and ongoing. Such activity occurs mostly during a restful repose in the night; hence the orators' contemplation is given the name *moe* (sleep). The titular chiefs are given the same in its polite version *tofa*. *Moe manatunatu* is contemplative sleep for an orator while *tofa saili* is the search for wisdom by a titular chief in such moment of deep repose. *Tofa liuliu* according

to Tuisugaletaua (2011) refers to the process of continuous deep contemplation and cautious consideration. The outcome is *tofa liliu* when consensus is finally achieved.

While the *taupou* and *sa'oaumaga's* role in the discussion is largely symbolic; their temporary presence is nonetheless impacting. In fact, they represent the hidden dimension of village power relations that is subjective yet quite substantial. This is understood in the power relations of *feagaiga,* a pledge by a brother to be his sister's protector and provider while a sister would also attend to mending relations among her brothers (*o le pae ma le 'auli*). This role is embodied in the figure of the first chiefly daughter (*sa'otama'ita'i*) at the village level.

Hence by virtue of this sibling covenanting, women, in the form of matai spouses (*faletua, tausi*) wield a lot of influence in village politics. Thus, when a matter is deferred, it is an opportunity for matai to seek counsel with their spouses. As part of the fourth invisible powerbroker then, the 'backbenchers' in women can be quite as engaging in the process of influencing power relations indirectly.

8.1.1   The Village Fono Act 1990 and implications on power

The village authority as vested in the village *fono* is very much part of Samoa's political order. The Village Fono Act 1990 was designed for the purpose of empowering local authority. The rationale behind the empowerment was to do with the state's own, according to the leader of government at the time.[68] The law reinforced its status and role first, as a major stakeholder in modern power distribution; secondly, its autonomy to run own affairs. Since the HRPP consolidated its rule, government's relationship with the village authority has been duly established. Government has own representative in each village council, which selection is made by the council and formally endorsed by the government minister. Called *sui o le nuu*[69] (representative of the village) the primary role of a representative is to inform the council about government's business in relation to village development and so forth; at the same time relay the demands of the council to the government.

Like other new relations of power, most village councils have managed to incorporate *sui o le nuu* into its system of government successfully. (Refer to a micro case study of the office of *sui o le nuu* in Chapter 9).

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[68] Politically the government saw the merits in the move though the support of village authority has been there apparently.

[69] Formerly pulenuu. It can mean governor, hence the change to sui o le nuu (village representative).

Due to the nature of the relations however, government is blamed now and then for using *sui o le nuu* in its own propaganda (Riddle, 2006). Instances of discrimination and high-handed treatment of which government is accused by a *sui o le nuu* are reported by the local media now and then. Government always denied the accusations. In one instance, the *sui o le nuu* was removed from his role for what government called, tampering with national politics; this clearly implies government's intention of the role as apolitical, or to be seen as such (Samoa Observer, Issue March 1, 2009). For the majority of those who toe the line there are benefits to be had in terms of their village development.

There are benefits too for the government; especially the support it needs behind its national programmes and rural development policy. Perhaps most importantly, the psychological impact government has on the minds of the general populace, by means of proactive engagement, making the role of *sui o le nuu* - and other state roles - ever more relevant in the life of the wider community. Good works (projects) plus positive engagement can only produce trust that is translated to votes, in the end perpetuate a party's grip on power.

8.1.2   Challenges to village authority

The challenges to village authority are due to a number of factors that are social, economic and political. Social changes pertaining to lifestyle, choices, social mobility, and new cultural demands that come with globalization have impacted village authority hugely. Traditional lifestyle that is considered the norm is faced with other alternatives; the gaps of generations in leadership is a threat to the status quo, as the young ones imposed own styles and manner of doing things (Personal communication with P15). New cultural demands affect power relations which influence on the whole community is felt individually or collectively. But the most pressing challenges are political, as the following practices will serve to point out.

8.1.2.1   *Splitting matai titles*

The practice of splitting matai titles among multiple holders has become the new norm. It has raised new issues with the village authority, some considered critical, for example, how to accommodate all these new power relations into the political structure. For families, the risks in social capital are both economic and cultural, especially the fact that such practice goes against Samoa's core values of status, roles, property rights, and so forth. A principal matai of families is accused of short-sightedness, greed and

materialism (Tuimalealiifano, 2006). Participant 15 called it monetization of the matai system, the irresponsible selling of family heritage for cash.

8.1.2.2 The power of money

The challenges brought about by the power of money on village community relations are transformative. As noted earlier, new relations of power are drawn, especially by somebody who has money. Family titles are bestowed on a candidate who has academic clout or wealth over a candidate who served family and village though under resourced. As one participant put it, 'Matai titles are dished out like food as long as a candidate can afford the amount asked for' (Communication with Participant 15). The practice of transferring titles from older candidates to their children caused government to intervene, limiting eligibility age to no less than 25 years old.

From individual to family, the power of money has changed human perception on traditional ideas about family reputation and gaining prestige. Today money has raised the bar in terms of enhancing old reputations and forging new ones. This is expressed mainly in the three most basic events in the life of a Samoan community – the funeral, the wedding, and the bestowal of a matai title. Family reputation comes before the individual, upholding the *mana* of a deceased high chief demands the rallying of the clan or village with as much resources as possible. Apart from fine mats the most sought-after commodity is cash. A funeral of a parent is viewed as the last bid to honour them in the presence of the living. With access to money, an extended family[70] can raise a considerable sum. Well-to-do families can manage, but for many ordinary families it can be a struggle. The embarrassment of not being up to the standard has led to all sorts of problems for individuals or families affected.[71]

Money has forged new types of symbolic relations; families with not so much political stature in the village hierarchy can establish own reputation this way. An individual with money can buy social influence, and thereby manoeuvre power relations for own purposes. As noted earlier, the conception of family is inclusive. Church is family therefore its maintenance is of top priority due to the symbolic risks involved. Village is family because of the strong bonding of place to identity and sense of duty. When the call for help comes, the *tamafanau* 'children of the village will respond kindly.

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[70] Made up of all members of a clan or sub-clan. Lack of research on the costs of faalavelave though anecdotal evidence put the estimate at tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands. The higher the status the higher the expectation, which can also be said of a large family and the village expectation for them to provide more.
[71] Anecdotal evidence abound though the majority usually prefer not to discuss such things openly.

Literature affirmed the negative impact of such impulse on the marginalized of society (ibid.). While most large scale *faalavelave* are sponsored by family members in New Zealand and Australia, the question of their sustenance long-term only time will tell.[72] The Samoan government has attempted to intervene by own measures, the purpose of which is to alleviate the financial cost to ordinary families at least.

8.1.2.3 *Alleviation measures*

A few initiatives regarding poverty need to be noted. There have been a few that came up now and then in this alleviation enterprise. The *faatofamamao*[73] was a brain-child of the late Cardinal Pio Taofinuu; a social strategy informed by the Gospel message, which gives a leeway to the less fortunate of society. The late cardinal once explained his strategy as both Samoan and Christian. The Samoan value of *alofa* and Christian compassion cut across the boundaries of cultural taboos and fears, to propose a most common-sense approach to doing family funerals. Another initiative, matai-led, which called themselves *Faleula o Fatua'iupu*, promoted a similar message under the slogan *faamama avega* (easing the burden).

A few villages have followed in this pathway. Not to be outdone was the government's own initiative, such as the directive to repackage cartons of tinned fish into smaller packages, so that the distribution went further. The government also encouraged the restoration of Samoa's fine mat and doing away with the coarse *lalaga*.[74] The message was quality above quantity. In some church parishes similar initiatives have been reported; for example, a Samoan parish in New Zealand which work policy of *'fai i le lotomalie'* (give as one pleases) has proved a success with raising funds for its projects.[75] While these measures may be modest in appeal, they somehow contribute to the new consciousness of reimagining culture to suit the people's socio-economic situation.

In the matter of title splitting, those who support the practice argued that this will ease the burden for families. More matai in a family means the load is shared hence

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[72] The Covid-19 has provided a new perspective re the long-term maintenance of such practices for all parties involved – Samoa and overseas. Any long-term impact remains to be seen.

[73] Faatofamamao. Doing it the deep long view is a strategy that is attributed to the late Cardinal Pio Taofinuu. The traditional presentation of fine mats and monetary gifts etc is not part of the funeral ritual.

[74] Lalaga is a name given to a coarse type of fine mat that used to be a commonplace in customary exchange of goods; they were not displayed as their larger and finer counterparts but in greater numbers (quantity) they made their presence felt. The Samoan government discouraged their use and initiated the restoration of the genuine ie Samoa (Samoan fine mat).

[75] The EFKS church Satauro o le Manumalo in Christchurch, with its facilities, were established largely on the basis of this policy. It is still its standing policy according to incumbent church minister.

easing the burden.[76] The irony as Participant 15 pointed out, it only makes matters worse for some families. Intense competition among members who have the resources sometimes leads to rivalry as of who contributes more or otherwise loss of face for those who contribute less (Communication with P15). The outcome could not justify the good intention in the first place. Due to the threat of the Covid-19 on lives, a Samoan village council has put a ban on *la'uava*[77] altogether.

8.1.2.4 *Partisan politics affect village relations*

The village site has also become the hub for aggressive electioneering during the election season. Literature abounds with evidence of their impact on village council stability; some councils have split into two authorities as the consequence of differences due to partisan party politics (Samoa Times, Issue April 14, 2016).[78] Cases of matai council versus individuals are not uncommon, for instance, a council endorses own candidate, causing a row with an individual who decides to run against the council's choice. A number of these cases have found their way up to the Supreme Court, which usually upholds the democratic rights of an individual. It has caused fractures in the relations of power at the village level. The consequences for some have been extensive (Meleisea, 1987). Partisan politics is blamed for the unrest.

8.1.2.5 *New churches*

One of the pressing issues faced by village councils is to do with new churches and the dilemma of trying to accommodate them into an already crowded space (Personal communication with Participant 5). The appropriation of churches by a village community comes with the moral claim of exclusive loyalty to the predecessor(s). While the traditional three[79] can live side by side, the inception of newcomers is never an easy task for those involved (Ernst, 2006) (See next discussion, under 'Church.'

8.1.2.6 *Gender and power in the village*

Gender relations as propagated and practised in the village is the preserve of the culture. A female is born and bred in a village that gives her a cultural identity on the

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[76] The popular rationalization of title splitting.
[77] Lau'ava is Samoan for a funeral feast wherein goods (fine mats, food, cash) are distributed among the village leadership. See also Samoa Observer Issue April 16, 2020 Report: Villages adapt to life in lockdown.
[78] For example, a long squabble that involved a late MP from Anoamaa who took issues with the village and assumed own proxy village authority. Samoa Times Issue 14/4/2016.
[79] Refers to the EFKS, Metotisi, Katoliko Roma. The Latter-Day Saints (Mamona) has been around since 1888 and is considered the fourth stakeholder of church power relations; its membership has been on the rise.

basis of her family status. For instance, females which fathers are principal chiefs have own special roles assigned for in the conduct of village protocols and rituals. Wives of matai are given the designation of counsellors to their male spouses. The rest of the village females, mainly the young unmarried, belong to the *aualuma* group, which own roles have also been assigned by custom. For the fact that Samoan social organisations are structured and hierarchical, the line of command is always vertical.

Traditionally the women through own organisations have been the backbone of village social and economic development. Well-known was the *komiti tumamā* in which women have been proactive in the nurturing of own village health and well-being. Since the institution of the National Council of Women in 1966, from which a realization of women's contribution to the country's social and economic development was noted, the government has become more involved. Literature attested to the evolvement of this partnership since 1962, in the political interest, which culminated in the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1991.

The empowerment of women has become the business of the Ministry since, in terms of new skills and knowledge to become able providers of own families; more so, understanding their political rights as citizens. In village politics, women have also made an impact directly or indirectly. While only a few have become matai and sit in village councils; their representation in parliament is symbolic of the great strides they have made so far since Independence.

The country's constitution upholds the rights of women to equal opportunities, though in positions of power their male counterparts still hold the monopoly. Women matai of note in village and national politics are looked up to for leadership, on women issues such as domestic violence, equal employment, entrepreneurship, and empowerment through political participation (Simanu-Klutz, 2020). Through education, women have carved own pathway to power, slowly but surely, manoeuvring power relations in their favour. However, there is still more to be done in the effort to unpack the hidden power relations between the two genders, in terms of deeply held beliefs, perceptions behind the violence and abuse, the visible manifestations of inequality (Meleisea et al, 2015).[80]

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[80] A 2000 study found that about 46.4 percent of Samoan women had experienced some form of abuse by their partners. See Samoa's Journey 1962-2012 Aspects of history (2012). Meleisea, et al., page 170.

8.1.2.7 Rights-based values and fundamental rights

Last but just as significant is the place of rights-based values in society or the challenges posed by the power of human fundamental rights in village power relations. While such rights are well safeguarded in the constitution, they prevail ultimately though oftentimes at the cost of cultural cohesion and such values upon which *faaSamoa* depend. This concern is very much at the core of the power relations dilemma. To give more power to the village council or the newly proposed LTC authority will likely jeopardise human rights of an individual or family. On the other hand, a village council without power may lose its credibility and political clout and which has a direct bearing on matai authority and influence. This concern is expounded in the overall discussion.

8.2 Church

I have described the use of the term 'church' early on in this research. Simply in its collective nuance and which for this research Christian denominations which professed the same faith prescribed in the country's constitution basically. As mentioned earlier, the government decided to amend the constitution to accommodate its Trinitarian position; that is, the belief in the Godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The amendment has aroused much heated debate outside than inside Samoa's religious community itself. Those who objected believed that the change was deliberate, the purpose of which was to exclude other religions which are not Christian (See Samoa Observer, Issue 29 December 2016; Issue 15 February, 2017). The government and its supporters would not pretend either, Samoa is a Christian country, they asserted. Samoa's own religious mandate is summed up in the state motto: Samoa is founded on God. God is trinitarian to be specific. The point is, not that the opposition did not argue enough, rather the passing of the amendment was inevitable, particularly when state and church agree to agree.

In the backdrop is a constitution that upholds and protects religious freedom. They provide for the right to choose, practise, and change a person's religion. A religion is allowed to establish own schools, though religious instructions in public schools are partial to Christianity. Christian holy days for instance are part of the country's public holidays. The non-Christian religions own holy days are not part of the public discourse. Church missions overall have been instrumental in the literacy development of Samoa, right across the country, for the better part of the 19th century right up to this day. The renowned church-run pastoral schools in villages belong mostly to the CCCS and the Methodist, providing after school hours for many children. Mission schools cater for at least 12 percent of Samoa's primary enrolment, and 38 percent of the secondary enrolment (Tuiai, 2012).

8.2.1 Composition and power diffusion

The census 2016 confirmed that more than 30 organisations/ denominations/ faiths practise own religion in the state of Samoa. The majority belongs to Christianity. Many of them are members of Samoa's National Council of Churches, a non-political authority which main purpose is to nurture fellowship and cooperation among the group.[81] The three mainline churches took up 60 percent of the country's churchgoing population; the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (29%), The Methodist

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[81] Established in 1961, called then Samoa's Council of Churches.

(12.4%), and the Roman Catholic (18.8%). Apart from the Latter-Day Saints (Mamona 16.9%), the Assemblies of God (Fa'apotopotoga a le Atua 6.8%) and The Seventh Day Adventists (Aso Fitu 4.4%) the rest or the majority thereof are below the 1 percent margin. However, their ascendancy in membership is counted against the decline in the mainline churches own, since the 2001 Census. The EFKS, holding more than half the total share in 1961 (53.6%) lost almost half within a 55-year span (24.6%). Though still the majority at 29%, its downturn has been rapid compared to the other two. The Roman Catholic lost 2.8 percent; the Methodist 3.6. By contrast, the Latter-Day Saints, at 6.3 gained 10.6 percent; the Seventh Day Adventists at 1.3 gained 3.1 percent; the AOG from 0.5 gained 6.3 percent. Of the 97 percent of the churchgoing population only 2.5 percent belongs to the non-Christian religions. They include the Baha'i, Islam, and the Jehovah's Witnesses.[82]   Reports of activities in relation to Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism have been noted (Ernst, 2006).

Table 2: Samoa's Church Affiliation: Demographics 2001- 2016 [83]

Affiliation	2001 census	2006 census	2011 census	2016 census
CCCS	35.0%	33.8%	31.8%	29.0%
Methodist	15.0%	14.3%	13.7%	12.4%
Roman Catholic	19.7%	19.6%	19.4%	18.8%
Latter-day Saints	12.5%	13.3%	15.1%	16.9%
Assemblies of God	6.6%	6.9%	8.0%	6.8%
Seventh Day	3.5%	3.5%	3.9%	4.4%
Others	7.7%	8.6%	8.1%	11.7%

Source. Samoa Bureau of Statistics. Census 2016

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[82] Samoa's Baha'i is considered a religious minority (0.4%) yet noted as hosts of one of Baha'i's seven major temples; the Muslim community has only 87 members. The Jehovah's Witnesses (0.8%) is the most active of the three in its door-to-door proselytizing.
[83] Others in census records include smaller groups yet to officially identify themselves; there may be more than 30 according to a reliable government source.

Figure 4: Church Affiliation: Demographics 2001-2016 & Future Projection
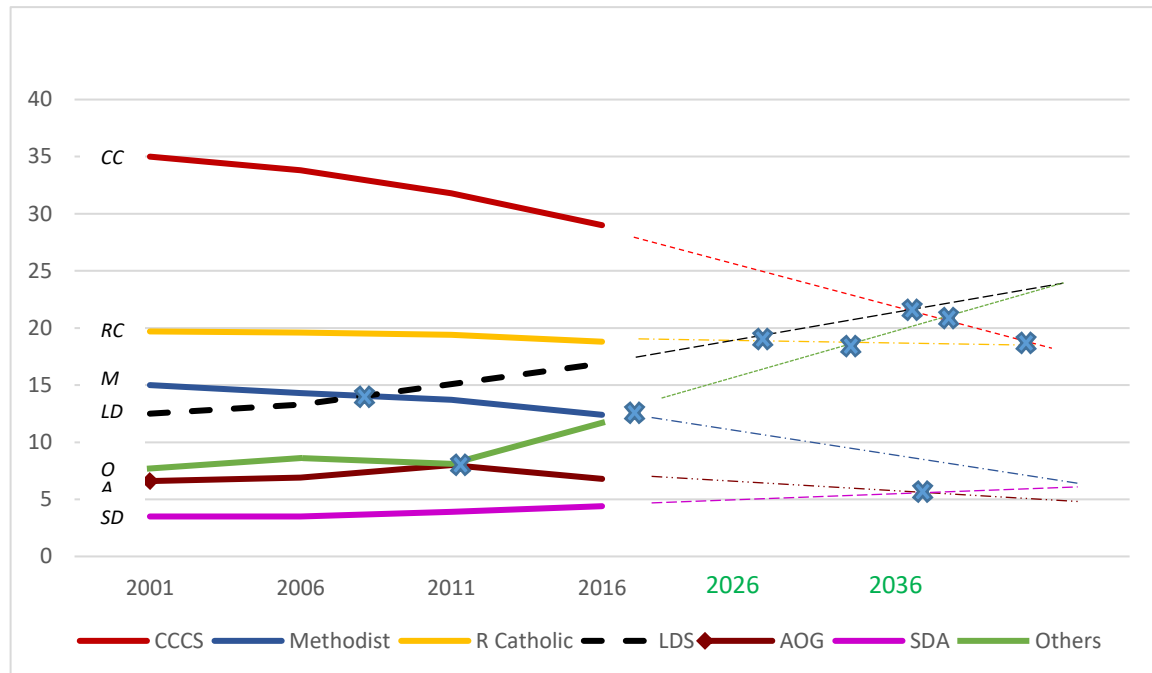
As the graph shows, the trend in ascenders versus descenders denotes a seemingly irreversible pattern that is symbolic of a societal shift from old to new loyalties and preferences. Translated into a demographics of power of leverage, the so-called new churches, together with non-Christian religions, comprising at least the current 40 percent, may likely hit the 50 mark within a decade or so, if the current progression stays the course. As with any demographics involving social relations, it is the distribution and concentration of power that determine the dynamics of such interactions (Brams, 1968). In that sense, it is the difference in scores that count first and foremost. Like any type of power relations, numbers make the difference between the principal actors and aspiring contenders (ibid.).

8.2.2 Church relations and power

The history of Christianity[84] in Samoa is a commonplace in literature, the attention of many research past and present (Ta'ase, 1995; Sila, 2012; Ioka, 1998, Liuaana, 2001; Tuiai, 2012; Faalafi, 1994). They provide the authoritative basis for information and perspective. A quick glance backward reminds the reader that the relationship among the churches has all but been smooth sailing. With ample evidence, it is only fair to conclude that the struggle for territory among the three missions, in the

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[84]The early literature on the Christian religion in Samoa was the collective effort of the missionaries themselves.

formative years, marked the beginning of church relations. It also marked the start of a tumultuous relationship.

First, that between the LMS and the Wesleyans. The tenacity by which both sides approached the relation aptly described the reality of the moment (Garrett, 1982). The LMS though having the advantage in terms of manpower and organisation; as well, the support of a prominent figure in Malietoa and clanship, was equally matched by the Wesleyan's own royal patron in the figure of the Tongan king and local Samoan cohorts. Oral evidence attested to the *lotu Toga* existing in various parts of the country, supported the claim that there was a Wesleyan connection already (Alailima-Eteuati, 2007). The evidence pointed to a proselytizing campaign by both, very much on an equal footing until 1839 when the Wesleyans retreated leaving the field alone to the LMS.

The Wesleyan mission resumed activity 18 years later, by then the Roman Catholic has entered the scene, taking its share of the populace and assertion in the power relations. While the Wesleyans retained old traditional footholds, the LMS had taken long strides, securing its dominance in Samoa's power relations, as the demographics indicated. George Brown became a key figure in this relaunching, so as E.G. Neil and others that came later (Faalafi, 1994).

Secondly, that between Roman Catholicism and adherents of Protestantism. The entry of the Catholics on the Samoan scene changed the dynamics of power relations for the church even more. Old hostilities between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Europe had opened own front in the Pacific. With news of its arrival a hostile reception was anticipated. Violette observed, 'Before we had been ashore, in a land that refused to be hospitable to us, we were sowing consternation in the Protestant army, composed of sixteen ministers, and several well organised teams of catechists, with powerful chiefs for support!' But the Catholics found its own George Brown in Louis Elloy, like Brown, an able diplomat. Under his leadership the Roman Catholic mission gradually made headways in terms of developing prestige and moral influence. While both the LMS and the Wesleyan leadership were implicated in colonial politics involving the three powers, Elloy, was viewed as an impartial negotiator (Garrett, 1982).

In the end, such mitigating influences of a few individuals worked both ways. First, to the mending and improvement of relations among the three. Secondly, to advancing the cause of each mission by tacitly acknowledging each one's presence in the field. But as argued earlier, the most powerful agent in the mending of relations was the culture itself, in its principles of *va fealoaloa'i* and *ava fatafata;* strategies which the

Samoans knew better about than their European leaders and mentors; especially when Samoa regained its independence and old rivalries among *tamaaiga* factions subsided.

8.2.3 The village power model and church authority

It was natural that the localization of the church followed a village model.[85] This seemed an ideal choice for a number of reasons. First, it is the most cohesive ecosystem of social organisation in Samoan society. On that factor alone, political stability is guaranteed, even the economic sustenance of its workers and church in general (Tuiai, 2012). Not to mention the ease by which mobilized people can facilitate further mobilization into new allegiances. Second, it aligns naturally with the people's choice, the idea of appropriating a new religion is always viewed from a cultural mindset. Church as source of a new mana lends more respectability and prestige to the village hierarchy and immediate community (ibid.). On this understanding, a village authority obviously would not wish to jeopardise its dignity by sharing the same platform with another village.

Thirdly, it was viewed along the lines of Samoa's traditional *tapuaiga*[86], which has always been a localized activity for generations. Each village has own *tapu* to observe for example. The village authority has been instrumental in its maintenance. Hence the most obvious priority in the minds of the first two missions was to train pastors, for this purpose of serving in every Samoan village.

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[85] Tuiai (2012) provided own thorough report of the 'village-based model' from the EFKS perspective.
[86] Dr Turner's recount of old Samoan worship in his book Samoa, a hundred years ago, attested to this. Personal communication with Rev Elder Tumama Vili complemented.

Figure 5: Power Relations: Saofa'iga a le Pule Fou
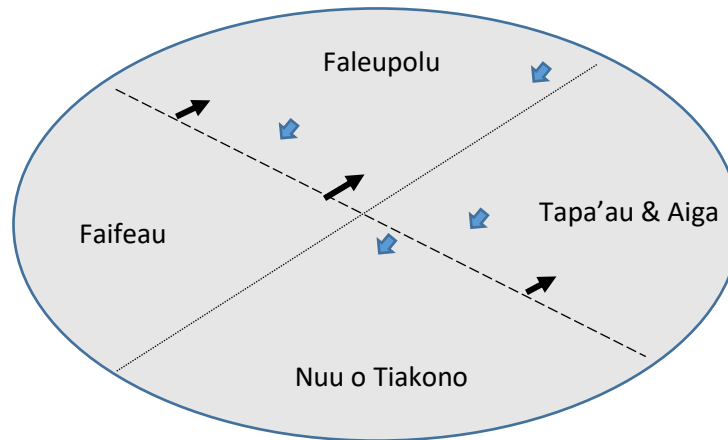
(A Post Mission Village Power Model)

Figure 5 depicts a post-Mission Village Power arrangement in power relations since the absorption of the church into the village polity. In the new order the church as *new feagaiga*[87] has taken over the right and lower flanks originally reserved for *Tapa'au*. The *Nuu o Sa'otama'ita'i* and *Sa'o'aumaga* has become *Nu'u o Tiakono*[88] (refer Fig. 3, p. 173). The *faifeau* institution symbolizes the new *ariki*. He is the figurehead on behalf of the new Tagaloa, his family is *Matagaluega/Sinoti/Pulega*, in this ethnohistorical review in deconstruction and reformulation. The *faifeau* is a simple designation that aptly depicts the theological significance of the role.[89] His cultural salutations bear far more clout in society's political power relations. He is the *o le fa'afeagaiga, o le fa'afeagaiga a aiga, o le tamā fa'aleagaga, o le lupe fa'alele a aiga ma afioaga, o le sui va'aia o le Atua, o le ao o fa'alupega*.[90]

Thus, the dilemma of *faife'au* veneration is hinged upon two contrasting narratives or religious worldviews (Latu, 2017). Like the *ariki* of old they are revered so that a *tapu* of boundary is installed which crossing over is almost non-negotiable.

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[87] Embodied in the faifeau institution or the holder of the title.

[88] The use of Tiakono is representative only as other denominations have own terms for their laity.

[89] Faifeau means an attendant to the needs of others, as in the humble figure of an untitled young man serving the elders during a meal. His other salutation, auauna a le Atua – God's servant, depicts his sacred designation and entitlement to the supernatural mana. Deconstruction analysis unravels a contradiction in text and meaning.

[90] Faafeagaiga taulagi ~ the heavenly covenantee; faafeagaiga a aiga ~ the covenantee of Samoa's kingly families; o le tamā faaleagaga ~ the spiritual father; o lupe faalele a aiga ma afioaga ~ the homing pigeons of families and communities; o le sui vaaia o le Atua ~ God's visible representative – this salutation equates the Samoan faifeau with the Roman Catholic's Papal office linguistically at least; o le ao o faalupega ~ the primacy of all salutations. This title/salutation was disputed by a noted orator, the late Leaupepetele Taoipu, who argued that this must be reserved for God only. In the context of church, the eminent head is Christ, implying he is the bearer of such salutation. Proponents of its usage argued that the context is strictly cultural not religious. In practice the use of the simple salutation *Lau susuga a le faifeau* is rarely applied though it depicts the very essence of the Christian vocation or Christ's notion of servanthood (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:25-28).

Critical theory argued that the relationship between linguistic forms and ideas of reality are binding; hence any political discourse associated with is loaded with meanings that are predominantly ideological (McGregor, 2003; Fairclough, 2001).

The *Nu'u o Ti'akono* (village of deacons/deaconesses) is a new model refashioned from the old order (Ramos, 1980). Also known by the terms *nu'ulotu* – church village, *aigalotu* – church family, *aiga o le Atua* – God's family, *nuu o le Atua* – God's village. As an instrument of the new social order, it is the new vanguard as opposed to the *Faleupolu*, representatives of the old guard *Tumua ma Pule*, protectors of the old *mana*. The *ti'akono* is the new orator. As a cohort they are also the new *tautua* (servers), the equivalent of the *matai tautua* in the old order; instead, they serve God through the church. Their loyalty lies in the church, as a group the workhorse of the new order. Both the symbolic and literal incorporation of the two flanks – *Faleupolu* and *Sa'o Tama'ita'i/ Sa'o Aumaga* in the *Nuu o Tiakono*, have recreated a new image of a serving community. The identities and roles are redefined, more so the shift in dynamics of power relations felt. The demarcated line between the new order and the old has become more blurred by the day, symbolically speaking. While most *ti'akono* (deacons/ deaconesses) are also *matai* of their families and villages, their political allegiance and loyalty to either authority are by and large compromised.

The black arrows in Figure 5 indicate the forward thrust of dominant forces of church in the struggle for assertion of power over traditional institutions' own. The blue arrows stand for pockets of resistance that provide the checks and balances much needed in the power relations. In the final analysis, the struggle for hegemony is underscored by a moral dilemma of 'one servant serving two masters.'[91] As the struggle for relevance is always ideological, what both the church and traditional authority can only do is negotiate terms of power relations continually, in and through the minds of the common people.

8.2.4   New power configuration

In the LMS work, Christianity was adopted and acculturated to serve the whim of power, hence its popular support in the early days of missioning. High chiefs kept missionaries like prized possessions which motive was political, the appropriation of the new *mana* (Williams, 1984). In the bargain, the hosts had to pay a price. The attempt by the missionaries to discard old *tapu* indiscriminately exposed a lack of good judgement,

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[91]Bible: Matthew 6.24

for example, the LMS insistence on doing away with customary rituals (Wendt, 1996; Maliko, 2014). As church influence grew, a shift in the balance of power was inevitable. As the new regulator of morals and values the church would come to play a very powerful leverage in the village relations of power. A *faifeau* can chastise the village leadership, sanctify and bless the people; authorise people to perform certain roles, intervene as mediator among feuding parties in case of emergencies; summon the aid of God during troubled times, and most notably his pastoral role of sustaining the moral strength of the populace by his preaching.[92] He is the modern priest who came into being in a new institution called *faafaifeau,* pastorship. Symbolically, he is the bridge between the old and the new dispensation.

A traditional chief which claim to authority is hereditary is contrasted to *faifeau* which basis of legitimation through church and culture is meritorious basically. The latter's own transformation is unique; while a *taule'ale'a* (untitled), he is treated like a high chief due to his *feagaiga* status. As spiritual leader he is the father figure of all, including every manner of chief, all of whom defer to him. Culture has reserved his first placing in traditional salutations and meal serving (Meleisea, 1987). Since its institution, certain church practices and discourses have continued to evolve and find new forms and meanings around the figure of the *faifeau*.[93]

The extent of such a shift in power relations has been the focus of several research. While critical theory may view the role of the church as a new form of *tapu*, that is, curbing the abuse of power by the matai authority, others are worried about church leadership having too much power.[94] Samuelu (1999) studied the impact of a church on the social structures of a Samoan village. His context of study was [Vaisulu], a village in urban Apia vicinity. His argument was, 'the dominant power of the church contributes to the erosion of traditional Samoan social structures and values in [Vaisulu]' (p.119). Samuelu pointed out the waning influence of traditional chiefs and the village *fono*, as the focus becomes more concentrated on the *faifeau* and church by the day.

The shift from a traditional *malae fono* (meeting place) to a place of worship is highly symbolic of the trend in power relations in favour of the church. Value wise, the democratic framework of the church itself, along with its promotion of own principal values, resulted in a moral dilemma, two sets of values, one traditional-communal, the

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[92] Personal communication with Reverend Elder Tumama Vili.
[93] P1 referred to the disciplinary and corrective roles of the pastor from the missionaries to date, the indigenization/acculturation of certain church practices (e.g., manner of donating to church, the pastor's upkeep, the rationale of giving, the role of the transnational pastor etc), of which the pastor is the overseer in the new order.
[94] More than half of this study's participants shared this concern.

other democratic-individualistic. For instance, while traditional authority defers to age, seniority and ranking in culture, the church could not differentiate basically. Hence the idea of bypassing the old members by giving leadership roles to the young is perceived as uncustomary (ibid.). Due also to the fact of its autonomy, the village church is a government of its own, its members answerable only to the pastor who is answerable only to the mother church. Unless of course village rules have been violated would matai authority intervene; but most of the people have rallied to their churches, their routines revolved around church activities on a weekly basis. With the dying out of *aualuma* and '*aumaga*[95] in many villages – more notably urbanised areas - the concern is that the youth have missed out on a solid cultural orientation as Samuelu pointed out.

In their places the church has substituted for its own in *autalavou* (Methodist, Catholic youth groups), '*autaumafai, 'auleoleo* (EFKS), *a'oga Tusi Paia* (Bible study classes), for example. As it turned out, church authorities have become more and more society's main sponsors on beliefs and ideological orientations. Also, with the gradual loss of influence in the matai council to rally the people as it were in the old days, there emerged a new formation of micropower clusters; new relations of power that revolve around ecclesiastical authorities and beliefs. Members of the village *fono* are also leaders of their churches. Others may be influential in church but not in the council. Samuelu's study attested to the ascendancy of the church as the trend.

Perhaps one of the most notable evidence in support of church becoming more assertive in the relation is that of the *faifeau* entering the space of matai, that is, the village political council and sphere. For example, the blessing of a *saofa'i* (title bestowal) that used to be the preserve of a *tu'ua* (senior orator), or a high-ranking matai has gradually been handed over to the *faifeau*. The *faifeau* by custom does not have a sitting post in the village matai council, nor partake in the cultural protocols such as the 'ava ceremony. His space is the church where his blessings are imparted upon the chosen candidates, in a separate ceremony prior to the cultural ritual performed by the matai cohort themselves.

This is the procedure observed in *Lau* village (refer page 237); the rationale according to P11 is to maintain the *tapu* of *tua'oi* or the *va tapuia* between the two authorities. Now with the *faifeau* doing the role of *tu'ua* or culture for that matter, the breach in *tua'oi* and sacred relations is obvious. Otherwise, 'breach' may not be the

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[95] The demise of the two institutions is self-evident in urbanized spaces though they still remain strong in rural areas.

right word, rather rebridging the ancient gap which had been the preserve of the *taulaitu* and *taulasea* or the sacred priests of old. Perhaps in that sense, the restoring of the old was preordained.

Similarly, another change where the *faifeau* is perceived as crossing the line is the *fa'atau* (customary negotiation among orators to select a speaker). What used to be the prerogative of *tamalii* or *tapa'au* of the village to bless has also become another hand-over to the *faifeau*. Participant 1 argued that this is uncustomary, given that the *faife'au* as symbolic *feagaiga* has taken over another role, not to mention an intrusion into the cultural space. The two examples serve to underline the transition of power or its subtle transfer in favour of the church. This has been the trend as witnessed in the power relationship between church and *faamatai* overseas.

8.2.5 Church power configuration and organisational ethos

Talking about church government, Samoa's own is a mix of European and local elements. The early LMS missionaries established own version of Calvinism that in many ways fit or reflect Samoa's socio-political environment (Ioka, 1996; Garrett, 1982). First, the autonomous character of a village polity reflects the sovereignty of its local church authority, an essential quality by which Congregationalism is known for (Tuiai, 2012). Congregationalists in general, believe in the equality and priesthood of all believers, the freedom of each member to interpret Scriptures, and in social organisation the right of members to run own affairs autonomously through democratic means and systems. Every local church congregation is independent, ecclesiastically sovereign, and thus autonomous (Britannica.com).

8.2.5.1 *Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa (EFKS)*

The general assembly (*Fono Tele*) is the highest authority of the CCCS in terms of making decisions and policies. Facilitated by a chairman, the general assembly oversees the administrative apparatus, in the form of six (6) committees that report to the assembly on a yearly basis. There are eighteen (18) districts under the general assembly, 9 in Samoa, 9 overseas.[96] Districts are divided into subdistricts each of which is presided over by a *toeaina* (elder minister). A district conducts own meetings and passes motions on any matter of importance to the unit or the collective interest; that may become part of the general assembly's next agenda. The *Fono Tele*[97] has the final say. Otherwise, the panel of *Toeaina Faatonu* (directorship of elders) has become the arbitrary arm of the *Fono Tele*, including personnel matters, including the conduct of its church ministers where it affects the constitution or church reputation. Their pronounced influence at district and the general assembly is premised on their privileged status as leaders, making them an indispensable force in EFKS power relations (Tuiai, 2012).

At the village level the *faifeau*, pastor, is the overseer of the church administration and all religious activities under his jurisdiction. Next to are lay deacons who are organisers and sponsors of the church, financially and culturally. There are lay preachers who support the *faifeau* in his pastoral responsibility. At times, the misunderstanding on the extent of the pastor's authority may lead to a breakdown of relations with parishioners; the *faifeau* believes his jurisdiction to knowing and even managing overrides any authority under his watch. Participant 6 expressed the view of those who believe that the *faifeau's* only part in the government is the spiritual (the pulpit); ministering in the Word and spiritual development of the people and leaving the administrative aspect to the laity.[98] This has been a contentious issue for overseas Samoan churches especially, liberal parishioners challenging the notion that the *faifeau* is the sole overseer of the church operations. Such matter has not been resolved entirely hence still left to linger in the people's minds.

At the base of the structure are parishioners, in active participants who share in the church's religious life, and the quasi-active who attend but not so much obligated in that sense of wholesome commitment.

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[96] The number will change to 20 soon according to Reverend Elder Tumama Vili.
[97] The EFKS's annual general meeting normally held at Malua in Samoa.
[98] Highlighting a difference of opinions, not fully resolved.

Indicative of the EFKS organisational ethos is the blend of the Samoan culture and Calvinistic Christianity.[99] This makes for a unique if not contentious relationship, as the influence of Calvinistic principles which champion equality, individualism, transparency, tend to contest the communalistic pull of the Samoan culture and its trappings. The EFKS adherents argue that its system is different from others due to its grounding in the *feagaiga* principle. Persisting in its cultural interpretation of modern power relations is part of the current misunderstanding between itself and the government's own assertion. This point will be pursued further under Analysis Chapter.

8.2.5.2 *Ekalesia Metotisi i Samoa*

Structurally the Methodist model of organisation shares more similarities than differences with the EFKS. Like the *Fono Tele*, the *Metotisi* has own general assembly widely known, *O le Koneferenisi* (the conference). The conference has the powers to make decisions on issues that are put through the synod and recommended for approval by the general assembly, very much like the EFKS procedure. There are 12 synods altogether, including New Zealand, Australia, and American Samoa. Each synod, under the watch of a seer (*sea*) attends to own development. He is also the key facilitator in the financial upkeep of the mother church. The Methodist too is village based and emulates the village model of organisation. The pastor (*faifeau*) is the head of the village while *ulumatāfale* (heads of families who sponsor church activities) make up the village. The *ta'ita'i* (group leader) and *failauga* (lay preacher) support the pastor in his pastoral duties.

While the point of difference between the two is in the appointment of village pastors, the cultural underpinning pertaining to the office is very much shared. Another point of difference is with the executive arm of the Conference; in the *Komiti Tumau*, which role is part executive part administrative, and members include the laity; then the office of the president, which has overriding powers to make decisions, particularly in cases of emergencies. Still another point of difference is the selection of women to the role of *failauga* (lay preacher). Like the panel of directing elders of the EFKS, the president exerts a lot of influence on the church's own power relations as mentioned. The president's tenure though is temporary, which means that concentration of power on a figure or panel for too long is avoided.

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[99] Calvinist teaching provides the basis for the Presbyterian Church model of government.

Finally, while the EFKS *faifeau* stays in a village by the decision of the parishioners, and probably for life; his *Metotisi* peer is welcomed but for a temporary stay. His conduct and performance are part of his appraisal in the next round of *tusi tofiga* (list of appointments to new pastures). Given the highly centralized nature of its power structure, this has left the average pastor more vulnerable in the relations of power. Sometimes a negative report from parishioners to the central authority is enough to dismiss their service; where minor allegations are involved; they can be disciplined through the church's own disciplinary procedure (Communication with P3).

8.2.5.3 Katoliko Roma

Samoa's Roman Catholic follows the universal model traditionally sanctioned by the authority in the Vatican, with some modifications that reflect the environment. For instance, in the institution of the *fesoasoani,* an equivalent of the EFKS *a'oa'o fesoasoani* who can lead church services but not the Mass. The office of *tiakono* was a recent addition. The parish priest is the overseer of a diocese and under the authority of a bishop. Currently the head of its hierarchy and ruling authority is in the figure of a monsignor, who too is the archbishop of the Samoan islands and Ecclesiastical Superior of Tokelau. While also based in villages, the constraints of the culture on its workers are not as marked as the other two; part of which is due to a different renumeration system. An average monthly stipend makes do, and with no spouse and children to maintain, puts less pressure on them. The cultural impulse of competing and striving to outdo each other financially is not encouraged; people give whatever they can afford.

Of the three, the Catholic workers have demonstrated a keener sense of social commitment in the care of the needy and marginalized, with not much care for accumulation of material possession. Its religious orders in nuns, brothers, catechists, priests, monks, laity, have proven such an ethos in its social services, including a rest home for the ailing elderlies on Upolu Island. An initiative by the late Cardinal Pio Taofinuu was meant to alleviate financial pressure for the average family was noted earlier. Its take on the culture is by and large symbolic, in the sense of adapting its symbolism to enhance own liturgy mainly. Not that the culture is any less significant than the fact that it is less imposing, as proven in the practice of donating secretly for the upkeep of the church, for instance. Distancing temporal duties from the worship is a mark of Catholic distinction. In principle, the culture reserves own time and space.

8.2.6 Power relations in the Church

Literature offers little about an in-depth look into the dynamics of contemporary power relations within the three main churches, individually and collectively. Saying that a few studies have addressed several concerns in relation to the imbalance (Samuelu, 1999; Ahdar (2013). What can be ascertained was tumultuous past which implications still resonate in the current relations one way or another (Tuiai, 2012; Sila, 2012). This study was interested in exploring these past relations, trying also to understand the implications of these on the people's perception of power and relations in general for generations. Samuelu (1999)[100] provided a glimpse of the church in village relations from a sociological perspective; Ahdar (2013) commented on the constitutional status of the church as not 'Christian' alluding to religious interrelations. Still the gap deserves more attention in fairness to the churches concerned. What can be offered in this study is a critical comment, based on the literature and data from 20 interviews.

First, churches, like all human institutions can only thrive on good human relationships. The early Christian Church faced own issues of power relations in the leadership,[101] and among its members.[102] And especially when Christianity became a state religion and secular values set in to influence if not dominate the Christian narrative. Advocates such as Eulau (1954) strongly argued that power must be central to analysing church relations, even though this is hardly debated or talked about (1945). Eulau remarked in depth about the centrality of power, evidential in the Christian church discourse that was lacking in critical reflection.

Such power looks fragmented for the Samoan church relations otherwise hidden through *tapu* of *va tapuia*. The most contentious issue is the inception of new churches into villages. In 2002 the court ruled in favour of a group of villagers who wished to establish own church. The group has faced the wrath of the majority led coalition in the three mainline churches which do not want another church in their midst. Their properties were burnt, damaged, stolen, not to mention threats of violence, banishment and even murder (New Zealand Herald, Issue November 22, 2002). The case was reported around the world though this was not the only such case to come up where church snubbing is involved.

Prior to that a similar case also involved the mainline churches which ended up with some people getting arrested, jailed, including a pregnant woman (Pacific Islands

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[100] Samuelu (1999) study of the influence of the church in an urban village.
[101] Ancient History Encyclodaedia. www.ancient.eu
[102] Ibid.

Report, 2000). They were condemned for contempt of court order not to practise their faith (bible study) in the village compound. The Supreme Court overturned the Land and Titles court decision three years later.[103]

There were other similar cases but the two described here highlighted a very pressing issue that is very much at the core of Samoa's ongoing power relations contention: individual human rights as upheld by the constitution versus collective community rights espoused by the *faaSamoa*. Indeed, this struggle between the old guard and the newcomers is about self-preservation; the maintenance of the political status quo which has long served Samoa's collective interests; the new forces then were viewed as the enemy, a threat to the status quo long enjoyed by the community under organised religion (Ahdar, 2012). The gist of the argument presumably, is that many Samoans no longer need any further enlightenment on the Gospel. The space is getting too crowded; too close for comfort as one local Apian put it. These new churches, introduced from outside, are fundamentally different in culture, beliefs, and style from the traditional churches, he reasoned.

As noted earlier the *tapu* of the *va* has set church relations direction on a fixed course; the clergy is deferred to as the *pule* while the laity is the *tautua*. The influence of the *faifeau/ failotu* as described has become ever more a decisive factor, first within his own parish, second with other churches in the village. At the national level, it is the Samoan national council of churches which facilitates. The SNCC is very much under the control of the three mainline churches (Personal communication).[104] Apart from the Roman Catholic, both the Methodist and the Congregational (EFKS) have a centralised authority in their general assemblies, executive power is vested in the Committee of Elders Directors for EFKS, the office of the President for the Methodist.

In terms of gender, the women are part of the laity cohort, as deaconesses (*EFKS*) and lay preachers (*Metotisi*), or nuns in various Catholic orders. The three mainline churches may have to wait for a woman *faifeau* for a long time. A number of denominations are implicated for discriminatory behaviours against transgenders and such marginalized groups of their congregations. P17 and P19 spoke out strongly on behalf of these groups.

Traditionally, employment relations are not a strong part of the church narrative. From a democratic stance its workers are more vulnerable to the whim of the leadership.

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[103] Country reports on human rights practices. Volume 2003, Issue 1. Online.
[104] Personal communication with three participants.

Of the three churches, the EFKS tends to have the most problems with power relations where the clergy is involved.[105] Either this may be due to the arbitrary nature of the governing body or the fact that the EFKS's government model encourages freedom, transparency, and democratic ideals.

Without another power to appeal to, the grievant is pressured to seek justice with secular authority. Often the outcome does not bode well for the individual and the national church, not to mention the members who are directly caught in the struggle. For the other two, the rarity of any such case implies that either the governorship is fair and tolerant, or the coercive nature of power has proved to be an effective restraint. The global exposure of the issue of sexual abuse of children in the church, and the authority's role in covering it up for its workers, lend credence to another dimension of vulnerability, that such behaviours are rampant in social spaces where symbolic power takes first seat over moral principles (Palmer, 2016).

The rest of the religious cohort emulate own mother churches that are based in Europe, the States, or the Middle East. For instance, the Samoa Latter-Day Saints is part of a global network that strictly adheres to organisation principles that are homogeneous worldwide. The tenure of the office of bishop (*epikopo*) is temporary and voluntary. The bearer fends for his own daily sustenance.

The moral dilemma on the part of the 'new churches' is in the choice of how much culture can be infused into its structures and practices, to be accepted as Samoan, and doing so without compromising own principles and Christian character. Otherwise, striving to be respectable in the Samoan context may not be too much of a compromise for its own sake. For some, the infusion of new practices in the form of social services for the less privileged lends support to the argument for a relook into the core of the Christian narrative, espoused locally, that according to observers within the system, has become clogged spiritually in the trappings of culture and materialism (Tuiai, 2012; The Samoa Observer Editorial, 2019).[106]

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[105] Anecdotal evidence based on the frequency of media reporting where a denomination is directly involved in such matter in which the state court intervened, for the past twenty years.

[106] Samoa Observer Editorial, 2019. Issue 23/3/2019. What is it with the church and money these days? The leadership of some of these so-called new churches were accused of investing church money in controversial schemes such as Bitcoin, Onecoin etc with reports of losses in the end.

8.2.7 Church and State relations

The Samoan indigenous view of power puts religion in the centre of the political sphere; it can also be argued that from its religious stance, temporal power is inseparable from the realm of the supernatural. Such view lends legitimacy to the concepts of *tapu* and *mana* and thereby their effects on those who acquire them. Progenitor god Tangaroa and a host of heavenly deities were the main benefactors of the *mana* while the recipients were their earthly peers, in the form of *ariki* or earthly deities from which derived Samoans own, in the matai figure, endowed with *mana*, reinforced by *tapu* institutions (Tcherkezoff, 2000). Apart from a few (assumed to have been graced with more), the rest of the cohort were wielders of both temporal and sacred powers, in their capacity as leaders-priests on behalf of their families and communities.

The early Christian missionaries attested to the religious state of the Samoans as highly observant of their gods, which meaningful connections; for instance, the Christian's own idea of *mana* equated with Samoa's own, fared well in each own favours, making headways in getting to know each other's intentions (Turner, 1884; Ta'ase, 1995). The success of institutionalized Christianity was in the political usurpation of the Tagaloa religion and family *tapua'iga* (Tuisugaletaua, 2011) in the battle of ideologies; leading to an even more accomplishing feat, a total reset of society, politically and socially (Meleisea, 1987; Wendt, 1996; Tui Atua, 2007; Maliko, 2012).

As noted earlier, with the inception of the *faifeau* institution, a new paradigm shift in the relations of power ensued, with new *mana* and *tapu* to substitute for the old ones (Taule'ale'ausumai, 2018). The new outfit aligned with the inauguration of a new kind of political authority, a British parliamentary style democracy; a new political-religious model which has the king (governor) at the top; subordinated by the clerics on behalf of the church; and by the executive and parliament on behalf of the state, and finally the people making up a civil society (Meleisea, ibid.). As head of both church and state the king/queen savours both secular and sacred powers at once.[107]

Similarly, the new Samoan political order has the head of state at the top[108]; the office is a representative symbol of unity of religion (church) and secular authority (state) at once. The clerics (*faifeau*) leads the church; the matai leads the state. Both authorities were meant to serve the same goal of unity under a shared religious dogma[109]

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[107] In reference to the Anglican church (lotu Agelikana) model of governance.
[108] The Head of State is the highest office of the state.
[109] A hybrid Samoan Christianity.

which professed the sovereignty of the Christian God.[110] Both authorities were endowed with such *mana* to rule; by virtue of their shared dualistic heritage, under the auspices of the culture. As parts of one organism (society) or design, both were inclined naturally to cooperate in mutual relations. Which brings us to the current state of the relations between the government and the church. The political impasse between two authorities on the pastors' tax has posed the question of why the non-cooperation now. In other words, who defines the functions, demarcation, and policing of the boundary, if there was any - legal or imaginary - between the state and the church in the first place (Abdulla, 2018)?

More to the point, the question of separation. This has not been seriously explained at any time. While special privileges in terms of tax immunity have been granted to the village *faifeau*, this was entrusted to the goodwill of the state authority for its upkeep and perpetuity. It was assumed on a common understanding it is the will of the people of Samoa. Then the HRPP government thought otherwise. Now the government is accused of snubbing church and the culture for that matter. What was *tapu* then in the power relations now is overruled by the law. Both sides have sought the counsel of the court. All the while they have been wrestling it out on theological grounds. Suffice to say that rights and wrongs of the argument are for the validation of the court. Nothing can be certain at this stage, a matter of wait and see. The point is, if there be any more misunderstanding about the state-church separation, it is now clarified in the impasse at hand. Which proves a point from the stance of critical theory, all relations by any name, can only be described as political (Foucault, 1981; Greenberg, 2000).

Thus, when the government was at the forefront of a constitutional change that clearly stated who God is (Trinitarian), the implication was obvious, the government has meddled with religion which is the prerogative of the church. When a call was heard for Islam to be banned in Samoa, the head of the Samoan Roman Catholics made his stance clear, that the state and the church are separated (CathNews New Zealand Pacifica, Issue June 3, 2016). If the motive was political, that is, to distance Samoa from Islamic fundamentalism, then it seemed its leadership is implicated by the same behaviour – advocates of Christian radical fundamentalism. A New Zealand based Samoan academic agreed that the motive was indeed political, that the mainline churches need to 'protect their turf' (RNZ Radio New Zealand News, Issue 19 May, 2016). And borne out of fear,

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[110] In the nation's motto, Samoa is founded on God, in the preamble of the constitution.

the action could be deemed reasonable - even justifiable solely on the basis of a people's self-preservation, physically and emotionally at least (ibid.).

One past incident I can recall personally; this was between the government of the day and the Methodist church. In 1976, the government asked the church for a purchase of a portion of its land (8 acres) at *Faleula*. The space was found to be highly suitable for the building of a telecommunication antenna. The problem was, this land (*Tauese-Avoka*) is *tapu* to the church, it is part of *Foga'a*; the church capital to say the least. The government, after exhausting all avenues of negotiations, then resorted to coercive tactics, threatening to force their way in, on the pretext the project is for the common good. The church leader at the time was adamant that no government official be allowed to enter the compound. On the morning assigned for the work, a large group of church members were up and waiting for the arrival of the government surveyors and police. They did not turn up. The matter was finally resolved the Samoan way. The prime minister at the time did concede that the church was right for holding fast to its 'treasures' (Milo, 1997). The church leader would not blame the government entirely but vented his frustration at a few personalities in the church who were playing politics (ibid.).

Coming back to the current stalemate between the government and the EFKS, the latter has accused the government of breaching *tapu* and church protocols.   In response, the government has returned the favour by blaming the EFKS leadership for meddling in secular politics (Samoa Observer, Issue June 24, 2018).

8.3   Media power and Samoan society

Which brings us to another type of power, the Media. The right to speak freely and confidently within a society of law and order has been the ultimate aspiration of every citizen, hence the rationale behind the role of the media.[111] Where politics is involved such role in democratic societies finds its deeper meaning, whether in one's capacity to express an opinion through one of its many platforms, or the more serious such as its contribution in the checks and balances of a modern state. Generally described as platforms through which communication are passed from one person to another, or from one place to another, its application has become more sophisticated though far more accessible in today's technology.

In traditional politics, the media is expected to stimulate citizen engagement for instance, whether in raising political awareness on the importance of electoral participation or rallying behind a political cause or campaign against a government policy (Lister et al., 2008). While other checks may be subjective or subtle, the independent media is by and large immanent and confronting (ibid.). The power of the word is hard to ignore by the authority and Samoa is no exception.

8.3.1   State of Samoa's media & communication

The development of the local media is described in a few reports which provided a public overview of its structure and basic functionality. One issued in 2013, entitled, Samoa: Media and Communication Report 2013 (Australian Aid, 2013). It provided a comprehensive account of its makeup, summed up under four areas namely: Policy and Legislation, Media Systems, Capacity Building, and Content. It was apparent from the report the leading role of the state in the appropriation of public information, from policy to its direction and implementation. There is work to be done but the infrastructure is very much in place, according to the report. On the one hand it showed Samoa's capacity for effective provision of the means of communication in the public interest. On the

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[111] The media can be divided into five major types, namely: traditional media, professional media, electronic media, social media and popular media. References to the media in this discussion is inclusive however, unless specifically stated. Traditional media refers to the role of newspapers, televisions, radios and magazines. Also referred to as the print media strictly speaking. Professional media refers specifically to the professional output in the form of research, books, films, scientific commentaries, which collective impact on power relations discourse is no less imposing. Electronic media revolves around the Internet and its platforms; radio and television can also be part of the repertoire. Social media refers to 'interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.' The popular media employs traditional platforms such as oratory, singing, dancing, storytelling, poetry, drama, comedy, most of which are common throughout the world's cultures. All or most of these platforms are interconnected in terms of serving any particular message or narrative, in this study, Samoa's political discourse. See Chandler & Munday (2011); Wikipedia, Media.

other hand, it implies the state of the environment where the place of an independent media is very much tied to political authority (Siebert, 1995).[112] From that viewpoint, an alternative interface is provided by the independent media to respond the best way it could (Malifa, 2010; Toleafoa, 2013). For my purpose, I wish to comment briefly and strictly on the political impact of latter in the current state of Samoa's power relations.

8.3.2 The role of critical media in the context of power relations

In commenting I wish to adopt the critical media theoretical framework, which Ott & Mack (2020, p. 1) described as 'an attempt to describe an array of theoretical perspectives that, though diverse, are united by their sceptical attitude, humanistic approach, political assessment, and commitment to social justice.' First, the sceptical attitude refers to a basic norm in critical news making by which the media does own observation. Ricoeur (1970) used the term 'hermeneutics of suspicion.' He described hermeneutics as a mode of interpretation grounded in close analysis which implication is deep distrust of surface appearances and common-sense explanations (cited in Ott & Mack, Ibid.). Secondly, the humanistic approach, by which the media is associated with a particular set of intellectual concerns that influence our approach to the social world and our place in it. Much of those concerns revolve around two concepts - human freedom and social responsibility; or in other terms, the contribution that the intellectual can make to the welfare of society (Said, 2012). Critical media hence will approach knowledge from the perspective of humanities first and foremost.[113]

Thirdly, the assessment of any information output by critical media is by and large political. Critical media is interested in the question of whose interests are served by the media; as well, whose interests contribute to the domination, exploitation, and asymmetrical relations of power (Ott & Mack, ibid.) Its view of society is premised on power; hence a community is a complex network of interrelated power relations in which certain individuals and groups benefit materially over others (ibid.). The basic aim of critical theory is to evaluate the role of media in this interplay of power relations (Marcano, 2018).

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[112] The press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structure within which it operates – Siebert.

[113] Edward Said addresses the ways in which the intellectual can best serve society in the light of a heavily compromised media and of special interest groups who are protected at the cost of larger community concerns. Said suggests a recasting of the intellectual's vision to resist the lures of power, money, and specialization.

Finally, critical media looks at humans striving for social justice as the driving ambition behind the role of an independent media in society. This is borne out of a natural desire for improvement of our social world (ibid.). Such a media owes it to own society a moral responsibility, that is, to identify political injustices, and have the courage to confront and challenge them. These may be repressive systems in the rule of capital, patriarchy, oligarchy, racism, sexism, nationalism, for example (Fuchs, 2010). It is the media which gives the voice to the voiceless, posing the hard questions on their behalf. The media empowers the powerless, rallying the people to a moral cause, etc. (ibid.). This is easier said than done though. Some societies have far more appreciation of the media's role than others who may be corrupt, hostile or simply indifferent.

Whichever way, the role of the independent media is always compromised due to the political aspect involved. I will extend on this argument shortly. To reiterate a point, it is common knowledge that the most pressing type of challenge to the media and its role is political. Now these are my observations:

8.3.3 Some personal observations

First, the independent media has contributed hugely to Samoa's political development. Such claim is self-evident. First and foremost, its role as the government's watchdog on behalf of the people. Since the colonial heydays to the post-Independence era, there was always a representative or two. There was the Samoa Guardian against the New Zealand colonial establishment. During the sixties and seventies, the Samoa Times, since then the Samoa Observer and a good number of Samoan language newspapers that carried the mantle forward.[114] For the past forty years, the name Samoa Observer is synonymous with the role.[115] Since its launching in 1979, the newspaper has reported and commented continuously on government policy, decisions, behaviour, performance as the alternative recorder.

Such an undertaking is not to be taken lightly by the political authority. A law was passed in 1992, called Printers and Publishers Act 1992, which called for publishers to reveal the sources of any leaked government documents they publish. Now with a critical media that is prone to political lawsuits, for reasons such as defamation, the

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[114] The current status of Samoan newspapers continues to decline in terms of numbers in the past 20 years; out of six that served New Zealand readers in the past decade; the last one standing, Samoa Times, was closed recently due to Covid-19.
[115] Government watchdog.

limitations on what the press must or must not say is an issue not just for good govern-ance but media accountability. Hard questions have been asked, the price paid for doing so (Malifa, 2010)[116]; yet misunderstanding of its role remains. This role has become ever more self-clarified, such as this point in time, when the voice of opposition in parliament is muted for reasons stated already (ibid.).

Secondly, the role of critical media is anathema to culture. Savea Malifa, founder of the Samoa Observer, in his address of the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day Conference in Brisbane, traced the development of its network's relationship with the government. For instance, expensive lawsuits levelled at the newspaper demonstrated the reality of unequal power relations in emerging democracies. Which points us to the prevailing political ideology. Samoa's own is predominantly cultural. It is the domain of the *faamatai*, embodied in the figure of a matai whose authority individually and collectively is unchallenged. The Samoan culture has no room for criticism of authority, especially by the *tautua*. Malifa, a matai of note himself, pointed this out. But he was a matai of a different mould, the majority of his peers were happy to go with the old script.

The irony could not be more telling, with the appropriation of power under parliamentary democracy, one of its vital institutions is still yet to find its place, for reasons as noted. Malifa (2010) would have wished that with the inauguration of democracy in 1962 then suddenly 'everything changed.' The new values will have been superimposed and taken hold and the transition smooth as anticipated, but experience has proved otherwise; he too was very much aware of the nature of Samoa's political environment (ibid.). One research participant argued it is the *faaSamoa* that needs more appreciation. He was alluding to foreign journalists whose forthright manner of investi-gative journalism, by his personal judgement, lacked cultural finesse (Personal commu-nication).[117]

Thirdly, a change of perception of the role of media can only come with a strong prevailing sense of political awareness among a larger portion of the populace. There is a point in the argument that a country's media is only as effective politically as the common voters whom it represents (Sandoval & Fuchs, 2010). The question of why the average voter needs the service of an independent media and vice versa is pivotal in

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[116] Malifa (2010). Presented a paper in the UNESCO Press Freedom Day on the theme the press in Samoa is not free. The content of which included an account of the human cost to him, his family and business for speaking up.
[117] His comment was made in support of Samoa's prime minister which awkward encounters with foreign journalists: first New Zealand's John Campbell, secondly with British Brian Deer, made world headlines.

understanding a country's own power relations. The basic demands of a democracy on their citizens revolve around a common assumption that they are first and foremost politically literate, meaning, that they have the capacity to vote rationally, express themselves freely and even influence the political sphere by their vote for the better (ibid.). This is where the media plays its role. Political theorists talk about the other aspect of the media's role as educator (ibid.).

It comes back to this; any talk about politics is *tapu*; a preserve of the matai regime only. It is considered unbecoming of the servers and the children (*tautua ma le tinifu*) to delve into this realm and be part of the conversation. As such, the ruling regime, as part of the matai cohort has a reason to hesitate. But everyone knows that the answer lies in the task of a good rationalization programme, a proactive national promotion of political awareness among the population. Interestingly, it is government that is pro-active in promoting political awareness on its own terms; the independent media could not compete with the resources it has. There is then always an uneven sharing of information, with the absence of input by the independent media, or the opposition for that matter, for balance. The government is viewed as being successful by it taking the people with them, understandably with own monopoly of the public media.

Perhaps one of the weaknesses of the independent media in this respect is to do with the most vital tools in any form of communication, the languages. While government makes full use of Samoa's bilingual utility, the independent media has limited its potential to one medium mainly. Language is power and most of the voters are not attuned as much to politics daily grind, because of the language barrier. Access to financial resources is a factor, implying that Samoa's independent media will find it hard to take the people along with them; or sustain on their own without the moral support of the majority, at least vocal and visible, something that is taken for granted by such media as New Zealand's for example. So, while its impact is self-evident, its full potential will always be thwarted by the factors as mentioned.

Fourthly, what traditional media could not do for fear of reprisal, social media can. From a research perspective, this has provided some fresh opportunities, particularly on this aspect of media development not yet explored within small emerging democracies. From a political stance, social media provides a secure environment for the majority to express their views freely. The risk of doing so compared to traditional media is much less. With that in mind, some have taken it to government head on, even if it means breaking all the rules, social courtesy reserved for a while. For example, the

concern on its long-term implication for the language and culture of '*va tapuia*' on the young and future generations is real (Tavita, 2018).

For the agitators, the message is clear, there are issues that are far more at stake than language and cultural concerns. The government has not much answer to the new challenge, if only a public display of outrage and promise to bring the culprits to justice. Unless of course, individuals like 'King Faipopo'[118] have the audacity to confront government openly; a strategy others will not prefer; they will continue to censure government activity in the way they know better. Rightly or wrongly, the unavoidable question to the debate is, what potential social media has for the cause of effecting changes in Samoan politics? How can this be mobilized for both political and social changes?

Finally, I imagine that it will be much harder for Samoa's independent media to compromise its hard-earned reputation for a life of political conformity suddenly. In the contribution of a few individuals, with the Samoa Observer taking the lead, Samoa's independent media is playing its role in spite of the challenges. While not enjoying the full support of a reticent populace, reassurances from the world media authorities have legitimized its contribution in Samoa's democracy already anyway.

The rationale of sustaining a free flow of information is bound to natural justice. In good government, an independent media is an integral part of the system; as the adage put it, the heartbeat of a democracy. How this should be realized ultimately in Samoa's own democracy, or at least respected by its opponents as essential in a healthy democracy, is a matter of wait and see. Perhaps in the power of the political will, or by education in the long run. Common sense is the most basic measure of any democratic rationale, and in a situation where opposition in parliament is almost non-existent, it is the media, with the people, that provides a sense of balance on behalf of such vacuum (Rosenfeld, 2014).

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[118] The name by which an anti-government blogger is known.

8.4   Political pressure groups & NGOs

Political pressure groups like the media are foreign institutions, both share the same types of challenges due to their foreignness and lack of political clout within society. It is even harder to identify one, apart from a latest overseas based group called the Samoa Solidarity International Group (SSIG), which sole aim is to put pressure on the government to repeal a law, which they believe breached the rights of the Samoan people pertaining to their lands. The group has stirred a bit of commotion in Samoa's political sphere, due mainly to the high-level interest of the subject. On the strength of the issue itself a new political party, called *Samoa First*, is launched, using it as its singular mandate in the coming 2021 elections. The SSIG relies mainly on the social media for its business as well as in canvassing support for the new political party.

The only other groups who sort of fit the role of political agitator were the Samoa Trade Union Congress (STUC) and the Samoa Public Service Association (SPSA). The latter displayed such a role during the noted 1981 strike. Since then, the reality could have been any different (Ah Chong-Fruean, 2010). With the change in the rules, now they have very little influence on employment decision at both national even organisational levels, to pose a challenge on the authority. With the promotion of the idea of a benevolent society, the overriding sentiment among workers is to maintain this image of Samoa as peaceful and quiet (ibid.). It is in the nature of the *faaSamoa* to tend to relations first and foremost and resolve human conflicts by peaceful means. For all these reasons, it is highly unlikely that Samoa will be turned quickly into a unionised society, Ah Chong-Fruean concluded.

Other groups attempt to remain neutral if not political by association. First, the *National Council of Women*, established in 1953 as a forum to express the women's opinion. While it has political clout through promotion of culture its impact is very much diffused. Through mutual collaboration with the state, it has served the interests of women and families at many levels. Another one, the *Samoan Umbrella for NGOs* (SUNGO) was established in 1997 to lend support to the vulnerable groups as well as implement government policy for achieving such purpose (UN Volunteer). Together the NGOs, alongside government, have provided for Samoa's development needs in a variety of services which include health, the environment, natural disaster relief, women and children's rights, even pastoral care (ibid.). The Oxfam, Caritas and Rotary, representing the international forum, have made own presence felt already. Not in the political sphere though.

Finally, the *O le Si'osi'omaga Society* (OLSSI) as the name suggests takes the environment as its purpose of service. It has become more political in the past decade, leading the debate on customary land issues where government policy is strongly implicated. As a member of SUNGO it also has clout at the regional level having own representative to voice Pacific civil society organisations at the Global Environment Facility. The OLSSI is perhaps the most vocal opposition of the government on the leasing out of customary land under the 2008 Act.

8.5   Conclusion

This chapter looked at the composition of Samoa's local government power relations in the context of the village polity. The village has been the space of traditional government or *faamatai*, that is now shared with the church. A detailed overview and analysis of each was given to provide a close look at the intricacies of power relations or the dynamics involved in each organisation ruling and hierarchy. As noted, I made a distinction between local government and civil society simply to highlight the two forms of government which share the same space. The demarcation is largely symbolic since both governments are interrelated at many levels. In the discussion, I reiterated the point that the key to unravelling the complexity of Samoa's power relations at work originates at the village level and its governments. First, the dynamics, the diverse networks of relationships where two authorities are both active in the same space. In many villages it is the church that has become more assertive politically.

Overall, all sectors of society are impacted directly and indirectly by the influence of the two governments – matai council and church – as well as other institutions of power such as the media, even the NGOs. Their interaction along with state institutions, and other forces of relations have moulded the public's perception of power, as this research attempted to find out. In other terms, a contemporary Samoan village hierarchy is not what it looks like due to the symbolic nature of power. As such, power has shifted gradually to the church leadership and hierarchy as it becomes more diffused. On the other hand, state influence reinforced hidden relations, through its programmes in villages, which can be interpreted as infusing them with more leverage in counterbalancing church power at least, by empowering the village matai council, who may have control over economic relations for example.

In the next chapter, the attention will be on the people's perception finally. In the views of twenty participants, the analysis will attempt to make connections between the research problem, the theory and the people's perception on power through their lived experience.

Chapter 9

THE FIELD RESEARCH: THE PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF POWER

In this chapter the field research data is analysed and presented using the frameworks and procedures stated. The data comprised 20 interviews of recorded responses transcribed verbatim. Ten open-ended questions formed the basis of interviews. The analysis is organised under five categories: 1. Power relations in the *faaSamoa* 2. Power relations between church and state 3. State and power relations 4. Civil society and power relations 5. Political perception and personal concern. In prompting and facilitating the analysis were the ten questions of the questionnaire; they were designed specifically for the purpose of gauging the participants in relation to the specific objectives. These were the questions the participants responded to:

1. What is your understanding of good relations?
2. Who has more say in your village?
3. Do you accept the view that church and state must be separated?
4. Do you support the view that church should contribute to the state upkeep?
5. Do you have any worries about use of power in the church?
6. Is church contributing to the task of maintaining good human relations in society?
7. Do you have any worries about the use of power by government?
8. Is government contributing to the task of maintaining good human relations in society?
9. Do you accept the view government is getting more authoritarian?
10. What are your concerns about Samoa's future in relation to this study?

Using the Thematic Analysis technique (TAT), with the support of Fairclough's Analytic procedure (FAP), prominent themes and sub-themes were highlighted in the responses (transcripts) both individually and collectively. Organised under five broad codings the analysis was not meant to be restrictive to any one category. The intention rather was to be as free as possible to think across and beyond the boundaries of

categorization. The ultimate goal was to effectively utilize data in order to provide a quality response to the four specific objectives.

The five thematic codings were:

1. Power relations in the faaSamoa

2. Power relations between church and state

3. Power in the church and church influence

4. Power of the state and state influence

5. Political perception and personal concern

For the purpose of analysis, the participants were referred to individually as Participant 1 or 2 (P1 or P2 for short), depending on their numbering in the Analysis. Names of actual people and places mentioned by the participants were replaced by pseudonyms. I have inserted my own words (marked by a parenthesis) to clarify intention in the gaps of speech or allusion for example. The English translations were marked in bold for purpose of contrasting effect only.

9.1   Power relations in the faaSamoa

Concerning power relations in the *faaSamoa* the first two questions featured highly in this search for the participants' opinions. The concept of good relations was easily translated by all of them in the social context of Samoan social relations which are multi-dimensional. Culturally, some of them attempted to define good relations' (va lelei) as: *1. O le alofa.* **It is love**; *2. O a tatou aga faasilisili.* **It's our values**. Others pointed out the way it is maintained, to imply they well understood its meaning: *1. E ala i le tausiga o le va nonofo.* **It is through maintaining the obligatory relations**; *2. I le va fealoaloa'i, alo mai alo atu.* **By respectful relations, face to face**; *3. E ala i le tiute o le matai i lona aiga.* **Through the role of a matai in his/her family**; *4. Tausi i upu ma tala.* **Maintain by words and narrative**; *5. E tausi i le ava ma le fa'aaloalo.* **It is maintained through deference and respect**; *6. E ala i le va nonofo ai o suafa ma faleupolu.* **It is through the obligatory relations between titular chiefs and orators**; *7. I le va nonofo ai o tagata o le ekalesia.* **Through the obligatory relations between people in the church.**

Three participants refer to specific groups of people by their titular names. These are actual orators whose own system of village government gives them the authority to deliberate on behalf of the principal chiefs and the village community. In one particular village two titular orators have such mandate to govern (convene and lead meetings), giving them distinct leverage in village power relations. Two other participants pointed out the complex nature of the *faaSamoa* as the reason why an understanding of power relations is not as simple and straight-forward as perceived.[119]

Participant number 4 provided a much more robust reply. '*E tausi i upu ma tala, e fāle ma fesaga'i mata. E faatino i le avafatafata ma le filemu. O le tausi o le va lelei o se galuega faatamalii, e saili i le finagalo e autasi i ai, e malilie i ai e tusa ma lona faatinoga.*' ***'It is maintained by words and narrative, deliberated inhouse face to face. Enacted through mutual respect and peaceful disposition. Maintaining good relations is an honourable occupation, a search for a common consensus, a uniform consent as of its maintenance.'***

His response provides the essence of Samoan social relations; first the pivotal role of oral communication; second, the decorum or manner by which such relations are conducted in communal practices and or daily habits and routines. The language is polite, as such the manner of making decisions is by mutual consensus. The upkeep of good relations is a moral preoccupation, meaning a commitment that involves individuals and even the whole community.

Social relations and their upkeep have been the core of the *faaSamoa* for so long, an inbuilt mechanism in all its traditional institutions (Meleisea, 1987). Beginning with family, 'kinship relations' is the primary basis of many other relations. Translated as power relations, the advantages are obvious however. For instance, functional relations of power have provided a solid basis of its social organisation and order (ibid.). A family unit thrives due to the strong social cohesion among its members upon which a village unit also depends. A family member can only aspire to great things because of the support of his or her kins. Participant 15 shared his story with regards to a close relative

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[119] While roles are defined generally in traditional power hierarchy Samoan discretion always determines the mood and tone of negotiations between equals or that between a major and a minor in power relations; sensitivity as not to be seen as arrogant or impolite invoked a manner of measured restraint. Unless of course one is challenged or provoked to the point of defining relations on the basis of seniority or power (Meleisea, 1987; Tamasese, 1988; Vaai, 1999).

(cousin) who needed his help with his political campaign. The relative is a titular chief in the same village as P15, who is also a titular orator and quite influential in its politics.

The former has been living overseas for quite some time, a lawyer by profession though a newcomer to local politics as implied. His appeal for assistance is acknowledgement of his cousin's political clout in the village, more significantly his influence to rally all members of the extended aiga (traditional family) to vote for him. Participant 15 felt that his kin's wish is too simplistic; there are other power relations to consider. The village council and general community cannot be sidetracked when matters of such kind are on someone's agenda. Experience has proven that whichever candidate has the village backing is the one to beat. The current member has had the village support from the start; he is a senior cabinet minister. His service to the village is grassroots and practical; for example, his family business in restaurants employs many local villagers. He contributes to the financial upkeep of all village church ministers on a regular basis. His workmen tidy up the village front regularly. Simply put, the village support for him can only be described as solid.

Participant 15 gave his cousin an informed advice based on experience: *Na ou fai i ai e sau e tautua, e leai se tagata e faavavau pea i le tofi. O Lautoa foi ia, ua vaai i ai ua gasegase; e iai le taimi a o la e faamasino mai le nuu. Ae sau e tautua. Sole, e fai atu i ai, na alu a totogi tupe alu i le palota.* **I told him to come and serve, no person can be forever [attached] to the role. Lautoa himself is sickly as you can tell; [your] time will come but the villagers are reserving their judgement. But come and serve. Boy, I was frank, he still went on and pay money to run**.

The result for the cousin was by all means disappointing. He tried for the second time and was still unsuccessful. Participant 15 was quick to provide his analysis: 1. His cousin came to the village just to rally family support for his candidacy; he didn't come to pay homage to the village and the collective interest. By contrast, the current representative, no matter his foibles has contributed immensely to the village welfare; not so much in his capacity as a politician but as a matai of good financial standing and close affinity to the community. 2. His choice to vote for the standing member instead of his kin was premised on the concept of tautua (service); on that basis Lautoa deserves his vote more than his own kin. 3. His cousin's challenge through the electoral process was disrespectful from the standpoint of reciprocal relations (*va fealoaloa'i*); he a titular chief is morally obligated to his peer and equal, by supporting rather than challenging

him. The most honourable thing for him was to bide his time and serve for a while, as his older cousin advised. Instead he chose to exercise his democratic right.

Participant 15's story provides an example of the way Samoan social relations manifest themselves basically. While the norm is serving the interests of your kins first and foremost, there are others, like P15, who have interpreted relations much more inclusively and ethically. In P15's case, such relations are interwoven, in family and village connectivity in the term 'collective responsibility.' Loyalty to a kin is tied in to the conception of *tautua*, the issue of who contributes more over nepotism or what Fukuyama called 'the tyranny of the cousins' (2014). Personally Participant 15 decried the fast-paced changes which had impacted negatively on the *faaSamoa*, particularly the individualistic values promoted by democracy.

More than half the participants did express their concerns more or less on this gradual diminishing of *faaSamoa* values due to the intrusion of foreign values and systems. Notwithstanding, the Samoan voters still vote on the basis of family kinship loyalty, pride in genealogical ties and achievement of kins, affinities to villages and group affiliations including the church. Hence the idea of the average folk voting on policy merits or moral conviction is mainly hypothetical.[120]

A few examples attest to the power of kinship relations. Participant 20 talked about a family kin who represented their constituency and whom all her household members voted for from beginning to end of his tenure. His political views may not represent hers and family's but their loyalty to him was total because he was 'aiga' (family kin)'. Such power to choose is reproduced. As implied in P20's response, a voter may not fancy government's policy but lends support anyway out of due respect for their *aiga* who is part of the government. Acts of kindness reproduce power through reciprocal relations. A voter turned up at his MP's office,[121] asking for assistance on a family funeral; the assistance rendered has since tied his political allegiance to the latter's own career for life. Power relations enacted this way makes an actor personable. P20's story among others, reaffirmed.

This idea of service as localised, present, familial and accessible very much conjures to the image of modern Samoan politics. Service is power relations at work among sectors and members of a community. Like *Lautoa*, his service to his immediate

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[120] Anecdotal evidence provided through the media can only substantiate the idea of vote preference based on political party loyalty. As P20 alluded to, voters vote mainly on basis of family kinship and strength of such relations.

[121] Two participants were quoted as to have personally approached the prime minister in his office with such requests; one other alluded to a close kin who sought the leader's help and was responded to favourably.

community can be accessed anytime. In his place of work, home, village, anywhere he engages the voters; and indirectly through his family members and senior employees. Unlike the Samoans overseas, whose claim to power relations as it were, needs to be reaffirmed and even reassessed, just as in the case of P15's cousin. Collectively, while Samoans of the diaspora think they have as much right to partake of their birth country's politics, the reality has proved otherwise. Reasons of distance and politics of demographics[122] are considered seriously in the equation of Samoa's transnational power relations.

In total any political impact on their behalf is largely symbolic no matter how significant their contribution is to Samoa's economy and overall development. What remains is an outgrowth of a power relations that is detached from the main, for reasons of distance and politics; slowly readdressing itself in a *faaSamoa* that is evolving outside the literal space. For some, part of such readdressing involves a new search for a new identity and sense of belonging in a dualistic and hybrid environment (Tuimalealiifano, 1990; Unasa, 2018). As Participant 5 asserted, *O lo'u faasinomaga o le mea ua ou nofo ai.* **My designation is where I live.**

Where designation is reserved for somebody's indigenous cultural heritage, P5 has viewed his in a new dimension. Not that P5 has shunned *faaSamoa* or his country of birth but rather his reassessment of power relations on the basis of his reality has changed his position. While he contributed to Samoa's development through remittances to family and donations through his church, it is the New Zealand government that cares for his needs more than the former.

The question of who has more say in a village was meant to discern any paradigm shift in power relations from the norm. The responses were predictable, the majority conceded that the matai regime has more say. Matai is denoted in various pseudonyms (*alii ma faipule. chiefs and counsellors; aiga ma faleupolu. families and orators; fono a matai. matai council; o le aufaitonu. the decisionmakers*). One participant mentioned the names of two titular orators specifically. Another demarcated between church and village authority, the former vis-a-vis church minister, the latter vis-a-vis collective matai authority. Still another pointed to an individual whose influence on the whole village is substantial.[123]

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[122] Western Samoans of the diaspora have almost equalled or in other sources outnumbered their peers in the home country. Samoa's total population stands at 199,955 in the 2019 count.
[123] Participant 20.

Samoan literature affirms the predominant role of matai authority in Samoa's power relations. Irrespective of the changes, the traditional understanding of matai authority is still upheld. As pointed out in the literature, the *faamatai* is Samoa's own traditional system of government. While it has undergone some sweeping changes since political independence, it still remains the bedrock of *faaSamo*a even the state system for that matter (So'o, 2007). Societal power relations is still perceived from the standpoint of matai authority. As long as it is central to the *faaSamoa*, its hegemonic hold on Samoan society is total. None of the participants questioned matai authority though some took issues with the changes brought in through democratic value systems, globalization, education and money. The consensus is, money has redefined relations at all levels of society, including *faamatai*; making it the new gamechanger in power relations.

Participant 15 has this to say: *Auā o le ala i le pule o le tautua a o le taimi lenei ou te le mā e fai atu o le ala i le pule o le tele o au tupe. Auā poo le a le fai mai ua afu lou soifua sa e tautua tuāvae, na ona filifili lava o le aiga, fai mai e aumai le tama la e atamai ma tamaoaiga sau e tausi le aiga. Ua tupu soo lenei mea.* **For the way to authority is through service but I'm not ashamed to say the way to authority [now] is by you having lots of money. For even when it's obvious you've spent your whole life serving diligently but when time comes for the family to deliberate, they will say bring that boy who's got knowledge and wealth. This has become a habit.**

Two of the pressing issues pertaining to *faamatai* is proliferation of matai and the splitting of titles (Meleisea, 1987). Such practices have become commonplace. Participant 15 commented on the prevalence of the practice of splitting major titles. *E le fuatasi i se afioaga; ia o le afioaga foi ia o le [Tauatama] toeitiiti 300 le suafa [Pulemaasina]; ae fai faatasi. Ia silasila, o tumutumu o afioaga; o le popolega la i la'u va'ai ua fai ai pisinisi.* **It's not confined to a village; now the village of the [Tauatama] almost 300 [are bestowed] the title [Pulemaasina]; all done together. Now ponder this. These [title] are pinnacles of a village; my concern as I look at it . . . . they have turned it into a business.**

The implications of such practice go against the values and principles of the *faamatai*, particularly in relation to *tautua tuavae* and deference to a senior candidate. The reality as it shows, anyone can be a matai if he or she can afford the allocative amount required by the sponsor(s). The sponsors are based in Samoa meaning that

overseas candidates need to travel there for the bestowal ceremony. The practice does affect families financially and emotionally. A case in point will serve to highlight. An untitled man took a major title without consulting his uncles and aunts for their consent as is the custom. Most of them reside overseas. The action on the part of the man has ruptured relations with his aunts and uncles; more so other clans/members of the extended *aiga* who are equally entitled to have a say. The fact that other aunts and cousins, who are based in Samoa, supported the plan, could only make matters complicated.

This case highlights a new phenomenon in the way power relations unfold between family members who live in Samoa and those who reside overseas. There is a general assumption that only in Samoa can family matters be deliberated and settled, and in the case of titles, officiated and legitimized.

More than half of the total participants were wary of the consequences of such practice in the long haul. The fact that titles, especially major ones, are tied to family land and property as such, is concerning, especially the power of money which now corrupts the system (Transparency International).[124] Young matai with little knowledge in the way a village system operates is a threat to the upkeep of relations from the perspective of P15, a matai who has lived and served his village most of his life. The question is, How can such abuse be deterred? P15 believed it can be sorted out by the political will, through government, though he also felt wary of having too much state intervention on tradition.

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[124] Samoa is the 50th least corrupt nation out of 180 countries, according to the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International.

Analysis 1 - Summary

In summary, the interviews tended to reaffirm literature on the predominance of the culture in Samoa's social relations (Meleisea,1987; Soo,1987; Vaai,1999). It is not hard to understand why. A culture that is built on the strength of kinship relationships and institutions arising from is unassailable. Hence power relations are misrecognised (Bourdieu, 1979); hidden (Lukes, 1974), normalized (Foucault, 1979), in a society where social status, family honour, privilege and collective identity are considered far more important priorities (Weber, 1968). Due to the personal and subjective nature of the relations, it is open to abuse, as implied in the case of P15 and his relation; or subject to tacit acquiescence (Gaventa, 2003), as in the cases of P11 and P20.

The data also came out strongly on the immediate concerns such as the role of money as an instrument of power in changing existing relations and forging new ones; 16 participants referred to this concern both directly and indirectly. It also coincides with the literature (Soo, 2007; Tuimalealiifano, 2006). This concern on the part of critical theory will be examined further in the next chapter. Apart from a few, the majority of participants seemed to have taken their relations with their culture for granted; at least 15 strongly supported the *faaSamoa*. The other 3 with some reservation, and 2 being moderately critical.

9.2   Power relations between church and state

The two concepts, church and state, have been described earlier. Church stands for the collective identity and interests of the Christian religion as practised in Samoa by its many denominations. It stands to represent 98 percent of the population who practise its dogma under various labels and theological persuasions. State for Samoa refers to a modern system of government in which democratic means and *faamatai* are fused to become a system unique to Samoa. Two questions, 3 and 4 (refer page 219) have been designed specifically for this purpose, though the other questions also complement.

To begin with, I have already described in some details the historical relations between state and church, based on the literature and data collected for this research. I have stated the obvious in terms of the main consensus which previous research affirmed. I can only wish to underscore the major points briefly.

First, church-state relationship has been strong and stable from the beginning. Liuaana (2002) contended the fact of a close working relationship that is traced back to the nineteenth century, strengthened throughout the twentieth century, which outcome justified the means of such cooperation. Finding a common ground for both has been the focus of his study which points to Samoa's political struggle for independence as the impetus. Hence the forging of a strong bonding between the two, particularly during the early post independence phase, was apparent, as both applauded each own political emancipation from foreign rule.

Secondly, the argument can be extended from the perspective of cultural hegemony. Literature asserted the symbiotic relationship of politics and religion in pre-Christian Samoa as the binding tie. While time has drawn a demarcated line between the two, the ideological and theological imperatives which underpinned *faamatai* and *lotu* (ecclesiastical authority) remain unchallenged relatively speaking. Culture (aganuu) is still the bedrock of Samoan society, of which both the state and church are pivotal parts and through which both define themselves (So'o, 2008; Liuaana, 2002).

Thirdly, power relations within and among religious denominations is a complex subject; only a few studies have made reference to, mostly from a socio-historical perspective.[125] To critically understand the nature of current relations, and how each authority presents itself as a power player, one has to delve deeply into the past, which has been the focus of Chapter 2.

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[125] To publicly criticise a church is uncustomary especially that which is not yours.

Finally, the rift between the government and the EFKS authority on 'tax for church ministers' has highlighted the changing nature of modern power relations for Samoa. At this particular juncture, there is little to argue that government has dominated Samoa's power relations, commanding the majority of parliament, with little opposition in terms of governmental checks and balances, leaving itself to exercise freely its democratic mandate. As said earlier, the issue of the church minister's tax has been Samoa's political 'hot potato' since it came up. Previously debated in parliament in the sixties, seventies, and early eighties, the verdict was clear: the church and its workers must be left alone. Times have changed. The HRPP government could not see the fuss behind the staunch attitude against church ministers' paying taxes to the state (Samoa Observer, Issue April 4, 2018).[126]

Government is supported by a growing number of young Samoan taxpayers who've interpreted the world with democratic lenses of 'rights' principles and egalitarian values; as the data results of this study indicated also.

I will now proceed to analysing the data in relation to the two main questions:
Q1. Do you accept the view that church and state must be separated?
Q2. Do you support the view that church must contribute to the state upkeep?
Other questions are also relevant to the analysis.

Of the 20 participants, 13 agreed that the two authorities must be separated; 2 unconditionally, the rest conditionally. Separation means each having own system of government and jurisdiction – one ecclesiastical the other rational-legal.[127] The condition of working together echoed a strong sentiment in the relation that acknowledged the strong historical ties between the two. Leaders and people who run state institutions are the same people who lead in church government. There is a strong appeal to maintaining good old-fashioned relations based on mutual deference and courtesy. Participant 1 argued that there shouldn't be any separation at all. *E tatau ona feaiaa'i ma fefaamalumalua'i.* **They [state and church] must exert claims [on each other] freely and look after each other.** That sums up the overall mood regardless of the various ways of expressing it: *E fefaatuatua'i.* **They must trust each other**. *E tatau*

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[126] Samoa Observer Issue 4/4/2018. The prime minister responded to an earlier issue to clarify government stance. Quoted, "The law applies to the church ministers individually, not the church as a whole."

[127] Even so, it can be argued that Samoa was never a secular society in the term's modern nuance. As well, the line between civil and state authority is blurred due to culture accommodating.

*ona galulue faatasi. **They must work together**. E fesoota'i a. **They consult anyway**. E le i le pulega ae i le tatalo. **Not in administration but in prayer***.

It was interesting to note the responses of two church leaders, Participants 5 and 14; both conceded that there should be no separation. The first stresses the importance of trust in the relationship; the second the need to work closely together. Probing further, it was clear that the fuss is about trust or lack of between state and church. Government's action has violated that trust which has underlined the relationship, according to P5 and the EFKS hierarchy.

The political merits of separation of power as opposed to non-separation are aligned mostly with liberal democratic principles. As Participant 19 argued*, **"Separation ensures that the government makes decisions that are unaffected by a person's religious affiliation. Separation of church and state ensures that no single religious group will dominate the others. Separation of church and state makes sure that people who do not belong to any church are not disadvantaged."***

Separation here sounds reasonable for the fact that institutional Christianity in Samoa has monopoly of power in relation to other non-Christian religions. It may be true in the letter of the law only, yet its effect on power relations is subjective. Otherwise, the separation of roles at the local level has come out quite clearly in another context, that is, in the diasporic church. Participant 6 pointed out, *Ia te a'u ia, o le galuega a le faifeau e gata i le pulela'a*. ***To me, the work of a pastor is limited to the pulpit.***

Participant 6 expressed the general concern of some parishioners, that once the pastor delves into politics of a parish, village or even the state, then he has crossed the line. The traditional taboo reserved for them in the community is tied in to expectations of the role. As *feagaiga* (covenant) and a figure of prominence in the community he must refrain from mundane tasks, that includes politics. Apart from his role of officiating services he must keep to himself. The image of a village pastor as a stranger in the midst whose sustenance depends entirely on his hosts generosity still lingers strongly (Pala'amo, 2017, Muaiava, 2015).

Language to this effect is emotive e.g. *faafalelemalu* - living in a dilapidated house evokes images of a *tautua* (untitled man) and his shanty hut made of *laufao* leaves in his plantation; is part of Samoa's power relations rhetorical narrative (Fairclough, 1989). For the uninitiated, any expression of Samoan modesty and self-effacement is an exercise in linquistic illusions, when reality is just the opposite of the utterance.

The government leadership has expressed the same concern of Participant 6, separation means the pastor must keep to the 'pulpit' and spiritual matters only. *'Tu'u pea polokiki i le 'aufaipolokiki o la latou matafaioi.* **Leave politics to the politicians, it is their prerogative**.

The speaker is Samoa's prime minister, a message resonated many times over in his public speeches.[128] The politics of paying tax according to the prime minister is the sole business of government through the ministry of Inland Revenue, he argued. It is not for a religious denomination or a board of elders to determine. In response through a letter, the EFKS authority countered on the basis of a founding theological principle. Two questions were raised here, first, whose principle? Secondly, can the EFKS principle be sustained in the state's court of law? (Samoa Observer, Issue August 28, 2019).[129] Both issues address the dilemma of power relations between the two on a number of fronts. First, traditional legitimacy. The church and its officers have a special place (and treatment therefore) in society; which is now challenged through state legislation. Secondly, citizenship; the fact that all Samoans, irrespective of status are constituted under the authority of the state. Thirdly, the rule of law or one rule for all irrespective of status in society.

This leads to the second question, should the church contribute to the state upkeep? Sixteen participants agreed with conditions for some; for instance, two conceded, though through any other means but money. It seems that the participants were very much aware of the issue at hand (the proposal of government to impose the tax on pastors) and responded accordingly. Participant 9 proposed that church can help in any other way but not in the form of paying taxes to the government. Participant 5 agreed; he believed church support has been there from the start. He argued that long before the state the church has provided leadership and order. The church has been proactive in Samoa's development in many and various ways, and still shares the workload of social responsibility which would have been costly to the state on its own. Not surprising is the fact that the three main objectors to government's proposal were

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[128]In response to the issue of pastors' tax that is still unresolved and the prime minister's point that 'taxes' are for the government to decide on, not the church authority.

[129] Samoa Observer Issue 28/8/2019. In response to a court decision dismissing charges against 19 EFKS ministers, the prime minister has vowed that the matter has not been settled yet. Foucault talked about truth as prerogative of power regimes, even so the general politics of truth adopted by society. The Samoan state has redefined 'truth' on the founding principles of the Constitution. Hence the idea of a [alternative] liberating truth is an illusion. As in Taylor's words, 'There is no truth that can be espoused, defended, or rescued against systems of power. On the contrary, each such system defines its own variant of truth. And there is no escape from power into freedom, for such systems of power are coexistence with human society. We can only step from one to another" (Taylor, 1984; p. 152).

older matai of experience in the culture and of good standing in the Samoan church too; two based in New Zealand, one in Samoa, all are proactive in their church communities. All responded emotionally with a resounding No to taxes for the pastors.

Participant 2 argued that since church ministers are not employees of the state, that is why the idea of taxing them is illogical. *E le o ni tagata faigaluega a le malo. E le pei o le PIC iinei e o tupe i totonu fai mai lea e le board le totogi o le faifeau. A o tatou e le totogia faifeau. O le mea na amata mai ai i matua, e fai le umu, ave lea le suavai a le faifeau. E le se totogi, o le alofa*. ***They are not government employees. Unlike the PIC here which money goes in and the board determines the pastor's wages. But our pastors aren't paid. What our parents initiated, with the processing of the umu (cooked food in an open oven) from which a pastor's share is served. It is not pay [for his service] but done out of love***.

His point resonates that of the EFKS church hierarchy who interprets financial offering the same as food, all as love offering. The second objector insisted on maintaining tradition. *Alofa i le tagata ese*. ***Love the stranger***. The third, Participant 11, viewed such support in theological terms, church ministers' service of 'feeding the flock' cannot be compensated enough with what the parishioners offered them willingly; government must take its hand off what is sacred, she argued. This participant commended government highly on its achievements but for this issue alone. P11 believed that the matter could have been resolved amicably through *soalaupule*; that is between government and the church; as well, all the denominations that constitute the Christian church should have reached a consensus beforehand.

Participant 4 agreed. *O le tali sa'o e talia e faifeau. Peita'i ua sau i le power, pei a o le 'onā na ona taia lava faasaga atu loa avau loa*. ***The truth is pastors [would have] accepted it. But it was meted out in power, then like a drunk when ruffled turned around and responded abruptly.*** Both P11 and P4 were concerned with the image of the church as divided on an issue that should have been handled better.

Three participants represented a sample of the young population whose worldview is different from their parents. Participant 10, alluding to the issue of pastors paying taxes, agreed strongly with the Samoan government. ***Yes because that is fairness***. His peers, Participants 12 and 13 conceded as well. P12 viewed such contribution in terms of the common good: *A tatou fua i ai poo fea le mea lea e feoa'i ai taavale. It's fair i nai tagata e le tutusa le income*. ***If we assess on how vehicles commute. It's fair to those whose incomes are less***. Participant 13 sees the merits in

everyone doing his/her share of the work. *E tatau ona galulue uma tagata.* ***Everyone needs to take part***. In spite of, she still wishes to identify herself with her 'church' [EFKS] stance on the issue. Participant 6 argued that considering the amount of money they get [*alofa, peleti*] they can afford to pay government tax. ***They earn far more money***, she said. Others, including a church leader and two government ministers, contend that paying taxes to the state is both a citizen's duty and a moral obligation for the common good.

Participant 15, a practising Catholic, also supported taxes for pastors, alluding to the fact that their own ministers also pay their due; even though the stipend they get on a monthly basis is far less compared to the other churches. *A gasegase e o uma i le falema'i.* ***When sick, we all go to the hospital***. His reference to equity for all is obvious. Participant 4 interpreted the term tax as a form of financial assistance to a country's development. Samoan society revolves around church nowadays, he reasoned, and the fact that village parishes have become centres of capital reproduction whether it be fundraising or any other form of financial activity. For that reason alone, the government is interested in having its share, P4 argued. P4 is of the view that once a pastor/church demands money from the people then it is no longer a freewill offering but a coercive act on the former's part; it implies that he is not content with the offer.

The emotional fervour on the part of some participants was noted. The allusion by Participant 1 to equal treatment under the law was abrupt: *O lo'u a lagona e tatau ona fai a latou lafoga. Auā e maua peleti ta'i tolu afe. E au a i le fa poo le lima afe i le masina.* ***My own opinion is they must pay their taxes. Because they get pledges of about three thousand. Even four or five thousand [tala] a month***.

P1 is of the opinion that some people are motivated on the basis of material benefits. *O tagata atamamai uma su'etusi loia ua o e su'e faafaifeau; auā ua latou iloa e 'ai fua e leai se mea e totogia. Ona olopala ai lava lea o i tatou a o latou la e sa'a i ma'omalie.* ***All the intelligent people, accountants, lawyers, seek for pastorship because they know it's free lunch, no bills to pay. Then we are continually crushed while they are having a ball***.

The prevalent stereotype that equates all pastors with such an aura of material riches is strongly disputed; several pastors referred to own personal struggles, some eking a living out of the land and counting on relatives' ongoing support. Only a small percent of parishes can afford to enrich their pastors through *alofa*; this is the group that government is interested with, notwithstanding the differences in opinions on the matter.

The traditional view was voiced by Participant 11: *E le tatau. E le totogia le alofa o le Atua.* **It's inappropriate. God's love cannot be purchased.** *E le faatauina le upu a le Atua.* **God's word is not for sale.**

In total however, the response proved to be in favour of the view that church needs to contribute to the upkeep of the state. The payment of pastors taxes is part of helping out in the country's development. Participant 5 believed that people's kindness to the *faifeau* is due to their high reverence for God. *"E leai se nuu e nonofo nonofo faatau se taavale taugata ma se tamalii o le nuu; na o le faifeau e fai i ai.*" **No village can stay awhile and decide to buy an expensive vehicle for the high chief, only on the faifeau's behalf."** [130]

The subject of power relations between church and state has never been highlighted in the way it now does with the issue of the 'pastors' taxes' and the marked divisions among the various religious communities unfolding as a result. First, the conflict has brought into direct attention the essence of the relationship. Before the issue of pastors' tax emerged, the line between the two authorities was blurred. The culture could not distinguish between the two authorities theoretically. Granted, that while one acknowledged the other's traditional role: the church focusing on the spiritual, the state on the temporal, yet none was tempted to draw the line until now. Each side has attempted to rationalize own stance which result was a mudslinging match in theological self-aggrandizement.

The government tends to have the moral edge due to the support of 30 odd other religious denominations, not to mention the enormous political leverage it has already. It appeared that some of these other denominations have been acquiesced into siding with government for reasons only themselves know. A leader of one of the smaller groups was adamant that pastors mustn't pay taxes to government, contradicting his own church's official stance. Another church leader was diplomatic. While his church assembly take issues with the government's proposal, the law needs to be respected still, he reasoned. Still another church leader has called for a temporary cessation on behalf of the obliging group until the matter is resolved ultimately in court.

The middle view comes from Participant 10, 28 years of age. He argued that both sides will benefit from helping each other. They need each other, especially in times of disaster. Participant 14 supported: *O le mea a ia e tatau ona galulue faatasi. Auā o*

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[130] This is disputed by reports from the media that many of these initiatives are instigated by the elder deacon and a few to which the rest of the members acquiesced out of respect for higher authority.

tagata e tasi, a o pulega a le ekalesia e le aia mai le malo; e oo foi i le finagalo o le malo i tulafono ma mea faapena, o mea ia e pule ai le malo. A o le mea foi lea e taua ai le lafoga. Ia sa i luma foi o le matou ekalesia le lafoga; e te'ena e le ekalesia, ae leai se isi i luga o le tulafono. E faataunuuina pea le tulafono. O matou nei i le ofisa o faia'oga ma tama'ita'i uma nei e toeitiiti maua le selau o faifeau e fai le matou payroll, e pay le matou tax vagana la le aufaigaluega e tausinuu. Ia a maoa'e a le lafoga pe sefululima tala, pe sefuluono tala, o la ua iai se mea e fai mo le malo. Auā e tele galuega lea ua fai nei e le malo, e fa'aaoga i ai mea nei o lafoga.

> ***Working together is the way it should be. People are the same even when administrations are different; government doesn't interfere with the church; the same with government policy, it is their business. This is why tax is important. The matter of the tax was perused by our church; the church declined but no one is above the law. The law must be carried out. We in the Office are teachers and ladies and almost a hundred faifeau are in the payroll; we pay our taxes except for those in the villages. The maximum to pay for tax is about $15 or $16 at the most; but at least you've done something for the government. Because there is a lot of work that government is doing, and this is how tax money can be used accordingly.***

Participant 14 also referred to the contribution of his church during the South Pacific Games 2019, to argue his point that the relationship between state and church is based on mutual cooperation.

Analysis 2 - Summary

In summary, the exposure of the relationship between church and state through a dispute on tax, has brought out into the open the issues of power and privilege in Samoan society (Bourdieu, 1986). Power according to Weber is derived from traditional authority, that underpins both the church and state (Weber, 2015). The power of God is part of this claim by both sides who believed that they are agents of his will. As well, both church and state lay claims on the rational-legal authority, identified with the rule of law, as basis of their jurisdictions and constitutions. But as the data showed, there is a strong misunderstanding between the two on the issue of jurisdiction. For instance while some participants cannot see a political demarcation between the two, yet they can demarcate economically by insisting that *faifeau* be exempted from paying taxes. Participant 3 prefers a separation; while he agrees that both are mutually dependent, the church can still stand on its own feet. *E le tau faamamalua le Ekalesia*. **The Church needs no companion.**

Some aspects of the changes hauled in by the government may be radical by *faaSamoa* standards, though they may have also been expected. These coincide with the growing rationalizing effect of liberal democratic values and globalization on the public through government institutions and the media As the data showed, such influence can be felt in the way government has moulded the political environment to influence perceptions; the outcome of which is reflective of the choices and actions of the younger populace. Even then, while the government does successful politics, due to having an enormous leverage politically,[131] the EFKS would argue that its decision was binding on the overwhelming number of its adherents, more so the backing of traditional tapu in favour of exemption.

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[131] The overwhelming majority of churches, 34 in all, according to the prime minister.

9.3 Power in the church and influence

I begin this part of the analysis with the assertion I started out with, that the way power is perceived in the church is quite relevant to my probe for answers to the research objectives at a deeper level. This is the bottom line.[132] And it rests on the claim that all power on earth is derived from God, sums up the overall perception of all so-called religious denominations in Samoa.[133] Why the church? Because it is arguably the only institution in the country which influence on the people is immediate and highly impacting at many levels (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2011; Tuiai, 2012); Thornton, et al. 2010).

As touched on previously, the new regime was successful in the consolidation of the new power in an elite group. Like the *ariki* system of old the priestly class was refashioned in a new form, in the concept of *faifeau* (God's servant). The *faifeau* is the messenger/ orator of the divine will, the intercessor on behalf of the community, deferred to as God's visible representative. Culture had him placed as *feagaiga*, which has grown to be a prominent position in Samoa's modern power relations.[134] The *faifeau's* triumphant ascent in the social hierarchy is attributed to a number of factors, but there's no strong counterargument against the power of a belief in a sovereign being in Samoa's worldview; this being is all-powerful, hence he deserves the respect and adulation of humans. From such a stance of power, it is incumbent that his ministers [earthly representatives] can be conceived the same way too.[135]

In engaging public opinion through the participants, three questions were presented: Question 1. Is the church contributing to the task of maintaining good relations in Samoa? Question 2. Do you have any worries about the use of power in the church? Question 3. Which of government and church has more influence over the people?

For question 1, at least 13 participants conceded that the church is contributing to the task of maintaining good relations. The gist of the responses revolves around the pastor's role as spiritual intercessor on behalf of the nation. Their prayers accounted for the country's overall wellbeing. The power of their prayers and sermons are real. Participant 7 recalled an incident of a cargo vessel that ran aground in Apia's shallows;

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[132] Referring to the organised Samoan Christian community under various registered names.
[133] The original claim is attributed to the founder of Christianity itself. In the account of the Gospel of John 19, of a reported conversation between Jesus and a Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. Jesus challenged Pilate's claim to power, asserting the supremacy of God's own [from above] even on earth and human temporal affairs.
[134] See Tuiai research (2012). See also Samuelu (1999).
[135] Acceptance of such elevated status became the norm when the Christian message was subsumed under the culture.

every attempt was made to pull it back to the deep. The vessel's misfortune was brought to the attention of a convent of Carmelite nuns who prayed; next morning it was released from the clutches of the reef and was free to travel on. His assessment was interesting, effective prayer is not the sole privilege of the *faifeau* or *patele*[136], the lay ministries including government leaders pray fruitful prayers too. Such allusion to an overlap in roles seemed to be intentional on the part of P7. As minister of the state, he is ready to acknowledge the nuns and church ministers who contributed positively; whether in prayer or paying their taxes to the state. The allusion to deeper meaning of 'good relations' is not to be missed.

The church's contribution is also described in terms of pastoral leadership. Participant 2 related, *O la e fesoasoani le ekalesia, auā o le galuega a ia faatala'i a le aufaigaluega ia faamanatu i tagata ia iloa Iesu ma lana Tala Lelei. Ia ma le va lava o tagata e pei 'ana leai le ekalesia e le iloa e tagata le nofolelei ma le va fealoaloa'i.* ***The church is helping out, on the basis of the [its] workers who remind the people to know Jesus and his Gospel. Also [maintaining] relations among the people it appears that if it weren't for the church they would not know how to live well together and cordially.***

Participant 9 agreed. *E tele. E le i tupe a o lea e iai la latou fesoasoani e o mai e failotu i luga o le 2AP ma le TV. O auauna a le Atua lea e faia. E le o totogia latou. O le tausiga o a latou aulotu. E iai le fesoasoani a faifeau, e le gata o le faaoloaina faaleagaga o tagata o le atunuu, a o lea foi e fesoasoani e a'oa'o amio a tagata. E amata lava i le lower age right up to the top. Ma tagata matutua e oo lava ina maliliu, e o e fai oti. A'oa'o mai pepe se'i oo i luga, tanu oti, papatiso tagata, tele le latou galuega fai i le soifua o le tagata ola.* ***There's a lot. Not in money terms but they help out, pastors lead church services on 2AP and the TV. The servants of God lead all these. They're not paid. The nurturing of their congregations. The pastors do help out, not only with the spiritual enrichment of the people in general but instilling good virtues in them. From the lower age right up to the top. And the older folks too right up till they die, they go to bury them. Babies are instructed right up to becoming grownups, [they] bury the dead, baptize people, their work is extensive in the life of a living person.***

Contributing to good relations is also interpreted in terms of the role of the church in the collective task of social responsibility. While each denomination has own policy, they all complement the state's own in many and various ways. For the EFKS, it was in

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[136] Faifeau is pastor, common designation for Protestant churchmen; patele is priest for the Roman Catholic tradition.

the area of education through which it made its mark. To reiterate, the legacy of the LMS missionaries was perpetuated for all the positive reasons, including the use of the native language that transformed the literacy landscape through *a'oga faifeau* and mission schools profoundly. The impact on Samoa's national development was unquestioned.[137]

The pride in maintaining such a heritage underscores the commitment of donors (adherents) to continue to fund through annual donations (taulaga). Tuiai (2012) looked at the issues and policies of the EFKS within a forty year period, with special mention of the church's education policy and implications. For example, the financial burden on the church as a whole had seen such a greater bulk of its annual budget going to maintaining it's schools alone. Mission schools, including EFKS's own, account for about one-third of secondary enrolments. For this commitment to education alone, there is little to argue against EFKS's claim that it is contributing positively to maintaining good relations.

Participant 5[138] countered the rationale of giving more than a person can afford for *taulaga* and *alofa*. In his church he enforced the policy of *foa'i i le loto malie* (freewill offering). "*O mea uma nei [falesa, hall, fanua, fale o le faifeau] na maua i le loto malie. E le'i su'ea i ni faiga siva, poo ni housie, o le taulaga lenei o le loto malie. E le faia ni a matou housie. E foa'i le tagata i le mea na te mafai. O loo tumau a la'u faavae lena e oo mai nei. E le talitonu tagata e mafai e le loto malie ona fai mea uma nei.*" ***All of these [church, hall, land, pastor's house] were acquired through freewill offerings. It wasn't gained by running socials, housies, it was an offering of pleasure. We never run housies. Rather a person gives whatever he/she can afford. That policy of mine still stands today. People could not believe that all of these have been done by freewill.***

Maintaining good relations with the state is one thing; with other community groups within or outside the church proper is another. Participant 17 was vocal with his criticism of the church on its stance against certain groups; accusing the concerned authorities of holding onto 'archaic and dated beliefs.' His own words in English: ***The church was introduced into Samoa via the colonization process introduced by foreign powers. The values and beliefs expressed by the church in Samoa is archaic and dated and more aligned to those views held by the European people in the 18th and 19th***

century. Such views include gender and sexuality issues such as Women's Rights, Gay/ homosexuality, Health and Social Issues such as disciplining of children. History has shown that Church has misused its powers in Europe and throughout colonial expansion. The only difference now is that instead of palagi missionaries/ colonists, we have Samoan people in [those] roles. The church has permeated the Samoan political, socio-cultural and faaSamoa that it is hard (but can be done) to separate them.

Participant 17 concluded that church is doing some good but they are taking more from the people than necessary. Participant 20 believed there's a strong perception in the church authority that it is doing a lot of good for the people; the reality is, the relationship needs a lot more quality commitment from church. Like P17, P20 is concerned with the church's strong stance against people with different lifestyles. P17 represents a sector of the Samoan population which relations with the church is problematic to say the least. The Vasey & Bartlett study (2007) looked at the role of *faafafine* and their fight for prestige in a conservative religious community.

Part of the problem lies in the fact of ignorance, as well, the diverse mechanisms involved in their relations with other genders. Like the issue of women's rights, it is the government that is taking the lead on behalf of the state. The government may have seen the merits of promoting both *faafafine* equality and women's rights, acknowledging not just their traditional roles as homemakers and assistants to their husbands, but in building their leadership capacity also. At state level, a 10 percent quota for women parliamentarians is passed into law. While this does not reflect the women's total percent per population, it is viewed as the first step in the right direction.[139]

But the credit must go to the women themselves, Participant 16 stressed, the individuals who took the lead in politics and other fields. As a senior parliamentarian, P16 has been in parliament for many years and witnessed the entry and exit of a few 'strong women' whose leadership qualities were outstanding. Her regret however was the transient nature of their political careers, which says something about their support at the grassroots level or the environment that is politically partial to men. Her collegial advice to her new peers: the equality of the genders is premised on their shared status as matai with their male counterparts; no more no less.

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[139] Called the Samoan model, it is first in the Pacific; Samoa Observer 1/11/2018. See also Baker, K. 2019. Pacific Women in Politics. Gender quota campaigns in the Pacific Islands. Hawaii Press.

O le paoa a ia o le natura o le lalolagi i le faafeagai ai o kenera e lua, pei o le tala ia Atamu ma Eva; ae ia a'u ia o la'u tala e fai i sui tama'ita'i, o le faavae o le faipule Samoa o le matai. E tatou te ulufale uma mai a o tatou o matai. Ia manatua lena mea, ia e tu i lou tulaga o oe o le matai. ***Power is natural in human relations where two genders are involved; like the story of Adam and Eve; for me I tell the ladies that a Samoan parliamentarian's own standing is the matai designation. We all made entry as matai. Let's remember this, you stand in your designation as a matai.***

Such political empowerment is not part of the church narrative and in the Samoan context very much understood. The three main churches do not ordain women, which means that no woman will become a leader of one of the three in the near future. Rather they have been designated to subordinate roles, just as tradition would also expect of them. The proponents of the village model would like to argue that women are very much involved in the politics of the community, in their roles as *fautua* (counsellors to their matai spouses) among others (Tuiai, 2012; Meleisea, 1987a)

Contemporary women leaders like P16 could only distinguish a leader by his/her performance in whatever career they choose. Samoa's constitution is quite clear on the equal status of both genders in terms of roles and life's opportunities. This gives the state a step ahead in power relations where genders and issues pertaining to are involved or implicated. This leads naturally to the second question. In response, all 20 participants are worried about the use of power in the church basically. It is not the use but the abuse that concerns most of them.

Participant 3 sums it up, *O le pule latou e lelei le pule; e sese loa le fa'aaogaga ona afaina lea o se faamoemoe.* ***Power is good; but only when abused then a purpose is jeopardised.*** Participant 9 sounded Foucaultian, ***Everything should have power. Even in your family, they should have a leader who has that power***. P9 believes that a leader should be fully empowered in the body, mind and spirit to be able to exercise power in a positive way. Participant 10 believes that the whole purpose of power is to do good. ***Yes, I do worry sometimes if it's not used in a good way; cos there's no point in having so much power if not using it for the good cause you don't just represent yourself, you represent God's mission in other ways. The same thing with government because whether you are a faifeau or minister of the government, you should be able to play a role to help the people; because if you make the promise of helping the people, lift up their livelihood, you should be humble doing what you've been told to do.***

On that basis, power is good as long as it is shared; the Samoan concept is *soalaupule*. Power is abused when one person or a few make a decision. In relation to the tax dispute with EFKS, supporters of the government pointed the abuse directly at the leadership of the EFKS General Assembly.

Participant 8 expressed his concern, *O le mea lena ta te atugalu ai, o le fa'aaogaina o le pule. Auā o lo'u talitonuga iai o le malosiaga lea e iai i totonu o latou ta'ita'ifono ma le laulau o i latou ua na o ni tausimea. O mea a le ekalesia e tatau ona taiala i finagalo o le ekalesia, ae pei e ta te vaavaai atu ua fa'aaoga sese. O le faalavelave foi e le o manino lelei a le mea la e i le finagalo o tagatalotu ta'ito'atasi. E le o manino lelei a i la'u matau atu i taimi o fetufaaiga i le fonotele i Malua, ma manatu e fa'aali; e tele ina taotaomia ai isi lagona ae musu e faalogo mai isi tagata e le lagolago i le mea lea e fai atu ai le faifeau. Pe fefe ne'i te'i ua faamalaia. Ae leai, o le Atua e faia le faaiuga lena, faapefea na malaia ae silasila mai le Atua e sese.*

That is my own concern, the way power is carried out. For in my own opinion, this authority that rests with the chairman and board is understood in their roles as trustees only. They are not bosses but trustees. The business of church must be directed on the basis of the parishioners consensus, but as I've observed such authority has become abusive. The trouble is nothing is clear about what each individual has in mind. It is not as clear in my own estimation during hours of deliberations in the Malua general assembly; the opinions expressed; they are subjected, mainly for fear that others will hear yours is opposed to the minister's own opinion. Or even scared that they may be cursed. But I'm afraid, only God can do that; how can that be when God knows it is not right.

According to Participant 13, one of the merits of sending delegations to *Malua Fono Tele* is to deliberate as a body and at the end agree as a collective, rather than one person making a decision on behalf of everyone. Participant 14 reassured. ***O le malo o tatou o le malo temokalasi; e soalaupule. Our state is a democratic state; we exercise power by consensus***.

Thus power concentrated in the hands of one person or an elite group is shunned. Participant 15 is worried about the involvement of their church leader in a land surveying scheme. It has come to his attention that so-called 'church land' in their village has been surveyed supposedly for valuation for sale. *O uta i le mea lea ou te galue ai, e tau a i uta i le [telefoni], o lea ua fua e faatau; ua oo mai i ai le to'asa o le ta'ita'i o le matou ekalesia. Ioe, ua alu uma fanua o le lotu. O lea la ua ou tali sa'o atu lava, e tele le*

popolega i le pule lea ua i le matou ekalesia. ***Inland where I'm working, right up to the [telefoni], it has been surveyed for sale; the wrath of the leader of our church has come upon it. Yes, all the church land. Now I reply frankly, there's much to worry about with this power in our church.***

P15 was direct with his comparison of the current with the former leader; the modest and selfless approach of the predecessor against the alleged favouritism of his successor. P17 could not see the difference; such malpractices in the history of the church, tracing it back to Europe and forth during the colonization of the Pacific, is entrenched. The only change, he said, is the fact that the Samoans have taken over the roles from the *Palagi* (Europeans); the malpractices and attitudes involved haven't. The church's staunch attitude against transgender and same sex marriage for example has always been a concern for this sector of the population, of which P17 is an advocate on their behalf.

Participant 19 is worried about the rights of the religious minorities. ***Yes, an all powerful church can infringe on the rights of people who do not believe in religion or who are members of different religions eg. Muslims, Buddhists, etc.*** For the rest, the concern revolves mainly on the individual or the *faifeau* in his role as spiritual leader in a village context. A number of issues were raised of which differences in opinions were highlighted; mainly on how the *faifeau* should carry out his role.

On the last question of which one has more influence on the people, the state or the church, eleven (11) participants support the latter, that the church has more influence. The nature and extent of such influence varied according to each participant. All agreed however that the church, due to its immediate presence in the life of the community carries more clout. At least three thought otherwise, it is the government that has far more influence though they also acknowledged the role of the church having as much impact nonetheless. P11 represented the fatalistic view, because God has all the power, he alone can influence events through both state and church. *E tasi a le pule o le Atua.* ***The only power is God.***

Analysis 3 - Summary

In summary, there's a strong consensus that the church is contributing positively to maintaining good relations in society. Proponents of the church, represented by more than half the participants, point this out on the basis of evidence, with literature supporting. Through its many roles: spiritual caregiver, community developer, education provider, the church has made a substantial contribution. The question of the quality of this contribution on certain issues is linked to the second question of the worries about the use of power in the church. It's not the use but the abuse of power that is the main concern. Abuse of authority by an individual or an elite group goes against the spirit of *soalaupule* which *faaSamoa* stands for.

The rigidity by which some participants have portrayed the church and its systems implies there's a lot to be done to improve relations within sectors of the church itself. The government on the other hand has taken the lead on the improvement of the women's democratic rights, children and marginalised groups such as *faafafine*. In politics, the Samoan quota[140] is touted as a first in the Pacific. The two different approaches or in other words, one's proactive stance on behalf of the disadvantaged, has put the state in good stead as a moral rights leader. On the other hand, the church has own group of strong advocates in Participants 2, 5 and 11, pointing out the church's own contribution.

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[140] Quoted from Pacific Women in Politics: In June 2013, the Samoa Parliament unanimously passed the Constitution Amendment Act (2013) in Parliament, that introduced a 10% quota of women representatives into the national Legislative Assembly. The system proposes a "floating" five reserved seats for women. If no woman is elected during the elections [of 49 contested seats], the amendment is activated and five seats are added to the Assembly. This will mean a Samoan parliament with a total of 54 seats. If one woman is elected then four seats are added and parliament has 53 seats, and so on. When extra seats are added, they are filled by women who have already run in open constituencies. The unsuccessful women candidates who receive the highest percentage of votes in the election will fill the requisite number of reserved seats.

9.4 Power of the state and influence

As would be noted, the same questions about the church were used for this purpose also. The questions were meant to gauge both the intellectual and personal capacity of the participants, also being aware of the variable factors involved in the nature of responses and outcomes. How the Samoan state through government appropriated power has been touched on earlier through literature. This part of the analysis will focus on the data with the hope to draw some parallels in the lived experiences of the people, through the selected participants, particularly the influence of the state in traditional power relations. To begin with, the majority of the participants agreed that the government is contributing positively to the task of maintaining good relations. Fifteen (15) altogether conceded against five who disagreed.

The most positive was Participant 11. *O la e fesoasoani le malo. O le uiga o le fesoasoani a le malo e auala i le ofisa o leoleo. A valaau atu le nuu poo le a se faafitauli ua tupu poo ni feeseeseaiga ona valaau lea i le ofisa o leoleo; tasi lea fesoasoani a le malo. A lua silasila ia tatou tauga apu ia e ave i fafo, tasi lea fesoasoani a le malo. Fesoasoani le malo i le atunuu, maua le va lelei ma le nofo lelei o aiga. Pei o a'u, a ou valaau i le koluse mumu mo se fesoasoani o le koluse mumu la e i totonu o le malo, e tali mai le koluse mumu. Iai ni tagata mama'i valaau i le falema'i la e tali mai le malo. Ia o le upu lava lea faapea o le malo. O le malo la e iai tagata, e leai se atunuu e ta'u o se malo, e leai se aiga e ta'u o se malo. O le malo la e iai tagata, lea e iai le palemia, lea e iai tagata. O le malo e iai le palemia, kapeneta, koluse mumu, matagaluega, falema'i. A lea e valaau atu tali mai le falema'i, fai tui; a mama'i le atunuu e o i le falema'i. Falema'i a ai? falema'i a le malo. Na ou ma'i a lea na tali mai le koluse mumu. Na ave a'u i le taavale fuimu. Vaai la iai. Ioe e tele, matua'i tele le fesoasoani a le malo. Masalo o le mea lea ua faaola ai a'u e le Alii se'i ou sau e fui le mu.*

The government helps out. For instance government helps through the police department. When a village calls whatever trouble besets or differences then they call the police; this is one example of government help. You would have noted our apple pickers overseas, this is another way government helps out. Government is helping the country with the upkeep of good relations of families. Like me, if I call the red Cross for assistance, they are in government, the Red Cross responds. There are patients in the hospital – government helps. Now I take issues with the word government. A government is made up of people, no country is called government, there's a prime minister, there are people. A government has a prime minister, cabinet,

Red Cross, departments, hospitals. When you call the hospital responds, they do injections; when the country gets sick they go to the hospital. Whose hospital? Government's hospital. When I was sick the Red Cross responded. I was taken on the fire department's truck. Now see. There's a lot that government helps out with. I suspect this may be the reason why God has spared me, so I can come to quench the fire out.

Participant 11 for one has had a positive experience with the system. Now at this point of the Analysis I wish to underscore her case as a micro probe into the intricacies of power relations at the village level. For the purpose of this discussion, I will call this village Lau.

9.4.1   Participant 11. A woman pulenuu:[141] her story

Participant 11, in her early sixties, is a woman matai of her village. In her mid-fifties, she became the first woman to hold the title of *pulenuu*[142] of Lau. It was such an accomplishment at many levels, given the hold of tradition; first culturally, on a political environment that is the dominion of males; secondly on the religious front; a village which is predominantly Catholic, which own tradition is patriarchal and issues with women leaders are all common knowledge; but she made it with the support of her own faith and family. On the plus side there were women matai before her, one in particular who really stood out in both local and national politics. No doubt her legacy has made a difference on the cause of others to emulate. P11's own father was a former *pulenuu*, when she was a young villager.

P11's standing in the *faamatai* also made a difference. She carries one of the two titles of principal orators whose authority on her village politics is unrivalled. Culturally the two titles belong to two groups of families basically.[143] As dual ruling cohorts they govern out of mutual deference to one another. For instance in choosing a speaker to represent both on events/gatherings they normally defer to a senior or elder; unless of course a senior is willing to return the courtesy of a younger peer; or in the case of choosing a *pulenuu*, alternate between the two groups. Even then P11 knew she wouldn't take such an honour for granted, particularly in a male-dominated environment. While she has as much right to claim her place as a matai, she has tact to

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[141] The new title is sui o le malo. I used the old designation as this was her address during her tenure.

[142] The position of pulenuu is government's own, traced back to the colonial administrations as government's representative in villages. They represent government in the council as spokesperson and facilitator.

[143] Members of the two families traced lineage to the two progenitors directly or indirectly.

negotiate her terms her own way. For example, upon deliberations among her own group as to who will assume the *pulenuu* role, she bid her chance, only when a senior peer decided to pull out. And particularly so when the senior suggested that the chance to choose be offered back to the other group. Participant 11 took her chance and with tact and a lot of experience in matai ettiquette, put her case through, 'Let me have a try, I want to be useful for the service of our village.'[144] The senior favourite changed his mind, conceded to P11's offer; consensus was reached among all members of the cohort and she assumed the role.

Participant 11 described her experience in the *pulenuu* role as positive overall and spoke candidly of her contribution to her village development as highlights of her service to her community. It was during her tenure that roads connecting the village to its inland periphery and plantations were widened and tar-sealed. The water piping networks was extended to cover the whole village, including the isolated fronts for the first time. Getting things done quickly requires diplomacy and skills in public relations, in an environment that is competitive and the demand for the attention of the concerned authority is high.   She had these skills and quickly established a good working relationship with government services. The workers were fed on a daily basis, by the village or out of her pocket. She could see the connection of a good job done and personal satisfaction through good nourishment, she admitted.

Part of her role was to facilitate for the sake of law and order in the village. Lau village is strict when it comes to enforcing rules, particularly those which ensure peace and harmony. Penalties for offenders were harsh, considering the financial situation of an average family. Meted out mainly in terms of foodstuff, a fine for being drunk and showing disorderly behaviour in the village can cost a family between $500-$1000 in Samoan tala. Fines depend on the seriousness of an offence; those which involved a serious crime (murder for example) is reserved the ultimate punishment of banishment. The culprit is banished from the village permanently or in some cases the whole immediate family. Even adultery is dealt with along that category of serious offences.

Participant 11 was very much aware of the effect of village penalties on the average families. Granted it was a son or daughter who commited the offence but it is the parents and even extended family that pay the fine. As a matter of fact this was the

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[144] Speaking in council (village, etc) has own mannerism of techniques e.g., tonal articulation, gestures, posture, etc., unique to Samoan art of oratory. The overall impression is that of deference and respect. Even arguing a point is done in an unenforced manner where tact makes a distinction between the novice and the experienced. The ideal orator is the one who has mastered these techniques, with key oratorical skills in poetic language and village honorifics.

true intention of all village fines, that the family be punished, hence serving as a deterent for would be offenders. P11 thought of a way to help out and through her village networks encouraged parents to come with their troubles, so they could find solutions for, before they ended up in the matai council meeting. In that way a heavy penalty can be averted. So a new procedure was put in place: a parent or parents were encouraged to come see her, then their son or daughter who committed the offence was summoned after; who occasionally would be given a typical verbal admonishment – Samoan style - by P11. Her idea of a fine was to do community service. For being drunk and behaving irrationally, the fine was to do community work. Such work revolved mainly around tidying up the village front. While done in a punitive atmosphere, her relationship with the offenders was by far cordial and patronising. By offering them food items from her store now and then was proof of her belief in restorative practice. She admitted though that her approach to justice was dictated more by her motherly instincts.

Participant 11 talked candidly about the positive effect of her initiative on the families and young offenders both economically and behaviourally. One case in particular involved a couple whose marriage was in serious trouble. The concern for the parties involved was the severity of the case and the likely chance of its disclosure at the matai council meeting; the consequences for the offender if it had gone that far. The shame of being exposed in the public was averted, not to mention a heavy penalty in monetary terms. According to P11, none of the offenders that she dealt with offended again while she was in office.

Apart from roads and water, she also played a leading hand in the facilitation of other government projects in Lau, like the upgrade of vegetable plantations, promoting the women's lot through teaching them skills in cooking and home economics. The Lau village also invested in a *tilapia* fishing project which they still maintain to this day. Participant 11 was endorsed by her group for the second time around in the role but declined politely due to ill health.

As could be judged by her responses to the questions, P11 tended to have a balanced if not lenient assessment of the role of government, based on her personal experience as a former *pulenuu*. For her, the role has given her the opportunity to prove her potential as a leader of her community. She insisted that the *pulenuu* role must be apolitical. A *pulenuu* is a representative of the government in the village and vice versa, and mustn't use the office to promote government propaganda or their own personal political views. They must be neutral, operating as good and fair facilitators on behalf

of both sides, but mainly on the promotion of the government's social policy, in cooperation with the matai council.

Since its inception during colonial rule, the position of *pulenuu*, now renamed *sui o le nuu*, in terms of functionality and relevancy is still evolving. The dilemma for a position holder is striking a balance in terms of own position of legitimacy. Some villages may frown on a holder whose minor matai title in a village hierarchy counts against them. But as proved in the case of P11, even holding a principal title still requires tact and own bit of subtle manoeuvring. A *pulenuu* must also be sensitive to the political environment, the fact that loyalties to political parties or belief systems are divided. He or she must keep own view where national politics is involved, P11 advised. By any appearance*, pulenuu* are easily prone to prejudgement due to the dual nature of their role. The fact that they are part of government's payroll is a test on their resolve to remain neutral.

Finally from the perspective of village power relations, the reality is that the role of *pulenuu* has grown into the culture. While village protocols still maintain a strict hierarchical order, and recognition based on status of one's title, a *pulenuu* can make up for that simply on performance. Together with skills in public relations and personal appeal, a candidate can be quite influential in determining the relations of power in a village. The subject of *pulenuu* deserves own study, suffice to say that issues pertaining to have been reported by the media now and then. There are cases of villages banning the *pulenuu* for overstepping his authority.[145] Some villages have split and the *pulenuu* is blamed. A report of a *pulenuu* who fell out of favour with the government blamed the authority's high-handedness.[146] These cases serve to highlight the fact of its presence in village power relations and politics, and political implications due to the peculiar nature of its authority (Riddle, 2006).

Participant 1 interprets the question in terms of the government's role in national development. He is of the opinion that the government is not without faults, but he described its overall performance as progressive. *Ia, ona o tagata lava, a o le mea la ou te tilotilo i ai o la e laalaa Samoa i luma. E le o nofo. O le taimi lenei a leai ni aitalafu a se malo e le mafai ona ola; tala moni a. O tatou a Samoa e faitioa se mea ua tau amata ae pei o le pese foi lea a vaai atu ua tau 'a'e i luga ae alu atu toso i lalo. E leai se lagolago i le malo. E leai se mea lelei e aunoa ma ni faaletonu. E iai a mea le tonu ma*

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145 Personal communication with source.
146 Personal communication with source.

*le lelei. **Well, it's human nature, but my own view is Samoa is moving forward. It's not sitting put. Nowadays if a country doesn't have debts it couldn't survive; that's the truth. We Samoans always complain when something is about to start, like the song on [someone] climbing and [others tried] pulling him down. No [desire to] support government. Nothing good is without blemishes. There will always be unjust things and bad.***

Agreeing with P1 is P7, a government minister, who used the same language, *Samoa la'ala'a*, which meaning is Samoa moving steadily forward. P7 spoke at length about the state of Samoa's economic situation before the HRPP took power, using strong language (malodorous poverty) to argue his point that the HRPP has transformed Samoa for the better. And there was also another crucial dimension tied in to leadership according to P7, the willingness to take risks. P8 agreed.

Participant 8, with a background in economics and Samoa's political economy, had this to say: *I lo'u talitonuga e leai se atunuu e mautupe sona malo, e leai foi se atunuu e tuto'atasi sona tamaoa'iga. E fesoota'i lava mea uma; o le tulaga foi lea ou te tilotilo i ai, o lea e aga'i i luma atina'e a le malo. O lea e fai mai tusitusiga i le tele o le aitalafu, ae a leai se aitalafu e leai se atina'e. O le isi mea lea ou te mataua i o tatou tagata o le fefe i le mea e le iloa; o le popole poo iloa e le malo le latou mea lea e fai. E faapea e totogi e fanau ma le atunuu. Ae ao ona silafia, soo se lamatiaga tuga, o iai foi le taui e sili atu. O le maualuga o le lamatiaga o le avanoa foi lea e tilotilo toto'a ai ma avatu i ai se tali malosi. O le mea i le malo i la'u matau o ni e naunau e toefuata'i mea, e le nofoa'i ona faapea o le mea na sau ai. E leai se iuga e sa'o atoatoa, ae maua mai le tonu sili ona lelei ina ua faata'ita'i, ua sauni e laasia lamatiaga.*

In my opinion no country is fund-proof, no country either is economically independent. All things are interconnected; the way I see it, government development is on the move. There are reports about the large debt, but without debts there is no development. One of the things I've noted about our people is the fear of the unknown; the concern about whether government knows what it's doing; thinking that their children and the country will pay. It needs to be reminded that for any high risk venture there is high benefit as well. The higher the risk the better we analyse the situation and attempt a response accordingly. My own observation of the government is, they are pro-reformists. They don't sit back for old time's sake. No decision is perfect but the ideal solution is found sometimes in trial and error, when we have taken the risk.

Such a willingness to take risks can be applied to probe government's attitude to the issue of leasing customary land for development. The debate has been going on for quite sometime between government and the objectors. Apparently the issue on its own has launched a new political party that will contest the government in the 2021 elections. Like any risk taking venture there is a great deal of confusion involved. A number of participants and respondents have subscribed to this 'fear of the unknown,' mainly the fear of losing out to foreigners who may take over their natural possessions one day. Even Participant 15 and Participant 1, both strong supporters of government, are worried; P15 about the growing amount of Samoa's foreign debt; P1 about the speculation of loss of family land as propounded by the objectors on the law that was passed in parliament.

P9 expressed her strong disapproval with part of the law that gave a principal matai (sa'o) the right to negotiate on behalf of the family members its properties. *O le pule faasa'o foi lea i fanua o aiga, ia te a'u e valea valea lena mea; o ni mea fou nei ua faasau.* **The authority to be vested in the sa'o concerning family land is to me a stupid stupid thing; these are new stuff pushed through**.[147] Participant 16, a government minister, has reassured that the causes of these fears are unfounded. Apparently it may allay the fears of risk-takers but not everyone, including P9.

Participant 4 was quick to point out government's role in creating employment for the young population. The fruit picking scheme for example has offered many of them jobs and providing material benefits for families and communities. *Ioe, o loo maua avanoa o seila mo galuega i fafo. Galuega faavaitaimi i fafo atu o Samoa. Atina'e a le malo e ala i a'oga, falema'i ma le faaleleia o mea e faatino ai galuega. Taaloga, auala, femalagaiga, itu auala ua suia ua tofu taavale uma ai aiga.* **Yes, [our] sailors have found jobs overseas. Seasonal employment outside of Samoa. Government developments in education, hospitals, and the upgrading of work facilities. Sports, roads, immigration, the shift in the side to drive, every family has a car now.**

Participant 20 mentioned government's role as a diplomatic facilitator, by which its citizens are taken care of in terms of their international human rights and safekeeping. On the adverse were P2, P3, and P6, who believed that relations have become worse.[148] This leads to the second question, Do you have any worries about the use of power by government?

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[147] P15 stated that the *pule faasa'o* does not apply to his village; rather the *pule faasuli*; therefore the law has no effect on their village land tenure.
[148] Both P2 and P3 are strong advocates of the church and traditions. P6 had this to say, They're dividing us.

Eight participants do have worries. Participant 4 is concerned about the dominant position that government now holds in power relations. With relatively unchallenged power it is apparent that people feel uncomfortable. P4 is worried about the *va lelei* (good relations) that has bound Samoan society, the potential in power itself to unleash damage when push comes to shove and the consequences thereof. *A fai loa le pule a le malo ona tutupu lea puapuaga i le atunuu. O le fesili, O fea o iai le filemu o laugaina e faifeau? O fea o iai le usita'i o loo laugaina i fanau? O fea le loto maulalo? O so'u lagona e le mativa ai lava le faifeau i lena pasene e toese ae iloa le mativa i le faaleagaga pe a papa ni fana i le afioaga.* ***If government exercises its power then there will be trouble for the country. The question is, Where is the peace that is preached by the preachers? Where is the discipline that is taught to the children? Where is humility? My own assessment is a pastor can hardly be put in dire poverty due to a percent deducted [from his alofa] but spiritual poverty will be shown when gunshots are heard in a village***.

Participant 17 is worried about the issues of accountability and transparency. P3 and P13 were of the opinion that because power has become more concentrated in one person or the leader, that is very much the worry.[149] As mentioned earlier, the unresolved issues as far as the objectors were concerned, leasing of customary land for example, revolves around this fear of the unknown, at a time when government has the power to enact legislation with little opposition.

P10's worry is not using power to do good. P9 thinks that such use of power is yet to be realized by some sectors of society. She complained about her district's road system which has been neglected by government authority for quite some time. She believes that the average folk, many live in rural areas and inland, who need basic necessities such as electricity, water, good roads, are the ones who've missed out.

Those who support government aren't worried, including a church leader and two government ministers. This was the church leader's response: *E leai so'u popolega i le taimi nei o loo to'afilemu Samoa; o loo lagolago foi le ekalesia e pei o taligamalo lea o fai nei i taaloga*. ***I have no worry at this time, Samoa is peaceful; the church also supports government like the hosting of the games that is going on now***.

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[149] P15's concern is not so much that an individual wields so much power but the fact that there's no other person who equals his calibre as a leader. P7 agreed.

For the final question, there is a split in opinions, supposedly influenced by each participant's own interpretation or even personal prejudice. Participants 2 and 3 believe that government has more influence on the people in a negative way; Participant 1 was positive, while Participant 4 responded to the question on the basis of performance. The government has more influence on the people through political socialization, not only in terms of resources but employment opportunities offered. As a work provider the young generation will look up to the state for their future, P4 argued. Participants 5, 13 and 17 think that both the state and the church influence the people the same anyway.

The rest concurred that it is the church which has a commanding influence on people more than government. The general understanding is, church is much closer to the people. Such influence is immediate; though in terms of impact it may well depend on the level of the parishioners' education, Participant 20 argued. Many of the parishioners have been accustomed to own type of civility; part of which is not to answer back to authority. In P20's words, ***All are followers. They don't see how their opinions impact on them tomorrow.***

Analysis 4 - Summary

In summary, there's a strong consensus among the participants that government is contributing positively to the common task of maintaining good relations. The adverse view pointed out the gaps which in many ways reflect Samoan politics at the moment. The concerns are serious, particularly so with the uncertainty, government with own interpretation of the argument, the objectors have own version. The most strident view was that of Participant 6, who commented that government is dividing us.[150] Her reason, the HRPP has been in government for too long. Another example of this is the issue of power given to principal matai of families (*sa'o*) to deal exclusively with land matters on behalf of the extended aiga.[151] At least three participants expressed strong opinions, pointing out its implications in the context of *faamatai* and *soalaupule*. **"Rights to family land has always been a collective undertaking, every member has a say, the sa'o is only a trustee and guardian,"** P6 argued. **"We can only see trouble and division coming,"** P6 predicted strongly.

Some critics of government have taken it to a whole new level in which social media techonology is recruited; one of these unseen critics has become a household name.[152] Quite a growing number of the Samoan public – local and overseas - identify themselves with its views.[153] Others have expressed their concerns by physical threats or attempts to do so against certain members of the government leadership.[154] There is a case pending of some individuals implicated in an alleged plot to assassinate the country's prime minister (Samoa Observer, Issue August 13, 2019). Shaming and vilifying certain individuals known to be in the government circle, in the security of modern social media networks, has introduced a new form of discourse into Samoan politics.

The severity of such reaction needs to be put into perspective. As indicated in the responses, at least 15 participants believed that government is contributing positively to good relations. Yet such indication of optimism (75%) failed to show up where the issue of customary land leasing drew the consternation of 12 (60%). This is quite a statement when considering the fact that 15 participants ruled in favour of government's proposal to tax church ministers. What can be made out from this is that the two issues

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[150] Participant 6: 'By its politics the government is dividing us.'
[151] Sixteen participants strongly opposed the idea.
[152] The government has promised to track it down and bring it to face justice.
[153] The expressed views are self-evident and aimed at government leadership and entourage of supporters/associates.
[154] Public opinion is divided along traditional allegiances involving religion, politics, families, etc.

have impacted the participants quite differently. While the majority sided with government on the pastors tax, they opposed it on the land leasing legislation with as much zeal. Those of the public who've resorted to extreme tactics done so with much risk to themselves and others. So does it mean that government has been doing fine all along, to use P1's own words[155], until this particular issue came up?

Finally, the question of how government exerts its influence on the general population is much the same about the church and its own hold on people in many ways. The means of doing so may be quite different on each though. Through the participants' responses we have been able to probe deeper into the Samoan society's own mindset, in its diverse networks of functionality and expressions. The role of *pulenuu* was highlighted in the figure of Participant 11, providing us with fresh insights into the intricate nature of power relations at the village level. In this instance, the Lau village on Upolu Island. P11's case stood out in terms of gender perspective, in a context of a very unequal power relations, first, between the two genders, secondly, between women matai and untitled women.

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[155] P1's own words: O la lava e sa'o le mea la e fai e le malo. The government is doing the right thing.

9.5 Political perception and personal concern

In this final part of the analysis, the focus was on two things. First, to find out how the public perceive power in the role of the government. Both questions were matter of fact and quite straightforward; nothing was assumed or taken for granted in the participants' responses. The first question appealed to their past experience. The second question concerns the future and their level of trust in the government, in the current climate of uncertainty.

1. Do you accept the view that government is getting more authoritarian?
2. What are your concerns about Samoa's future in relation to this study?

As would be expected of the first question, some frank responses were given. Out of 20, 6 agreed with the view that government is getting more authoritarian, against 6 who objected. Those who agreed comprised of 2 matai in their 70s, 1 teacher in his 50s, 1 senior churchman in his 70s, 1 homemaker in her 70s, and 1 public servant in her late 20s. The objectors comprised of 2 matai in their 60s, 2 government ministers in their 60s, 2 mature students, one in her 30s the other in his late 20s. As would be noted, the majority of those in the first group were the same who objected strongly against government taxing church ministers. Four had identified themselves with the EFKS church. One of them, a young public servant, while supporting government on taxing pastors, agree with the objectors that the latter is getting more authoritarian. The question is, How authoritarian?

By its immigration policy. She has strong views on the presence of Chinese nationals and businesses in Samoa. Participant 6 can only look at Samoa's political predicament in terms of the pressing issue, the unequal balance of power in state government. ***Yes, dictatorship I'm thinking we're getting toward there. And that's because they have no good opposition; there's no one to challenge their policy.***

Participant 4 described an attitude*. Ioe, ua pulepuletutu e ala i lana faatinoga. Leai se logoina muamua i se ala e aloa'ia ai e ekalesia. Ae ua fa'aaoga lana pule. Ua pule lava ma le saua ma pule ma le manatu maulalo i faifeau. Lea la ua oso ai loa faifeau i lona itu tagata e fai ona lagona ae tuu lona itu faaleagaga, o le onosa'i i mea tiga, auā o tua atu o loo iai le olioli. **Yes, they are being authoritarian. No consultation in a way that makes it receptive to churches. It uses its power. It exercises authority harshly and rules with not much regard for church ministers. Now the pastors have**

reacted humanly by their emotions and [thus] forgotten the spiritual, that is patience against the odds, and expect joy in return.

The abruptness of the responses from some in the first group can be understood in the context of the current situation, the impasse in which church and government are involved on the pastors' tax; where lines are drawn on the basis of loyalty to either church or state, depending on one's positioning in the power relations arrangement. Knowing some of the consenters personally, they have been avid supporters of the government prior to this falling out between the two sides. I can only presume that this might not have been their type of responses at all were it not for their circumstances as described. The clear implication is, there is a stronger personal aspect of relationships that influences opinions more than ideas or the most rational view. In this case, their affinities to the church are stronger. It seemed that they have placed themselves favourably with the relations of power in the church, not in the government.

The same thing can be said of the group that supports the government. Participant 1 for instance, thinks that this idea of authoritarianism is foreign; introduced into Samoa. *O finagalo ia e avatu i fafo. Latou te le iloa le mea la e tupu i totonu o Samoa. O la lava e sa'o le mea la e fai e le malo; a o tatou e pei e faitau i itu faapena.* **These are opinions introduced from overseas. They don't know what's going on in Samoa. What government is doing is fine; but it's us taking accounts of such stuff.**

It wasn't surprising that the term authoritarian (equated with Samoan *pulepuletutū*) is personified in an individual, as Participants 2, 3 and 13 alluded to respectively. The leader of the government has been the object of rebuke and blame since the matter about pastors' tax' emerged. Along with other issues of importance to the general public that still haven't been amicably resolved, only compounded. The notion that only one person makes the call in Samoa's power relations has been reinforced in the social media by the governments' critics and enemies alike. The Samoa Observer Newspaper, leading the fourth estate, felt the same way, pointing out the leader of government as a wielder of much power (Samoa Observer, Issue November 20, 2017).

Participant 7 disagreed. He argued that Samoa would not have been in a position of economic wellbeing and political prestige if it weren't for the current leader. P7 could see the merits of being authoritarian in a good sense; it can make things happen, he argued. Such allusion to the good side of being authoritarian is supported by Participant 8, observing the rise in Samoa's economic and development growth under the HRPP watch. The positive outcome is due to the self-assured approach of the party leadership.

Participant 19 rationalizes accordingly: the reality of emerging states, and the process of change from subsistence to a cash economy, along with the need for stronger authority to pull society together, demands such leadership. The implication was that the demands of change coincide with more laws and which need a stronger government to hold things together. Participant 20 was more direct, it is in the nature of politics to be authoritarian, she argued. *Any government would do exactly the same. Take for example the [New Zealand] Labour Party. It is difficult for them to be authoritarian because they have other parties. If you're in authority you do exactly the same. You're playing the game well.*

Participant 16 believed that the main issue here is about people not understanding what it means to live by the law. *O le mea ou te popole ai a'u, taatia le malosi o le pati a le malo; o le le malamalama o tagata i le mea lea o le pule faaletulafono; living by the law, o se lu'i tele lava lea. E amata atu lava i le vasega o faipule. Fai foi ma faata'ita'iga le issue talu ai nei, le faamasinoga o le pelesetene o fanua ma suafa. Na ou faalogo i le faamatalaga e faapea o le palemene o le faamasinoga sili lea. Ia a'u ou te le taliaina lava. O lea e iai le faamasinoga. Ma a fai loa e le palemene se faaiuga o lena ua faapolokiki, e le se mea amiotonu lena. I so'u la taofi o le mataupu aupito taua lava lea mo Samoa i le aga i luma. Ia tausisia le mea lea o le ola i le tulafono. Ia, auā i le matou foi [faafaletui] na iai faipule na tutu i luga fai mai o lena ua uma faamasinoga a papalagi, a o lea ua oo mai i faamasinoga a Samoa. Na ou faapea ai lea, o lona uiga o faamasinoga ia e iai e le o ni faamasinoga Samoa; ae o loo autovaa le atunuu i le faamasinoga. E iai a le sa'olotoga o tagata ae iai foi lona pa puipui. O le tagata e gaoioi i totonu. A tia'i le tulafono ae fai le loto o le tagata o se mea mata'utia lea*.

My own concern, never mind the strength of the party in government; it is lack of understanding about what it means to live by the law; it is a big challenge. We politicians must take the lead. Take for example the issue of the president of land and titles court. I heard this rumour that parliament is the highest court. For me I would never agree to it. There is a court of justice. And once parliament does that role then it is political, it's not justice. So in my own opinion this is a very important issue for Samoa moving ahead. Living by the law must be heeded. For even among our own [peers] there were parliamentarians who stood up and pronounced that European justice stops here, it is now Samoan justice. I wonder whether the justice we're doing is not Samoan justice. And all this while the people go to the court for justice. There

will always be human freedom but there is a boundary also. People operate inside it.
The most dangerous part is when the law is thrown aside and a person does own will.

Participant 16 went on to talk about the importance of having checks and balances in a functioning democracy. There should be no chance of one branch of a three-tier democracy taking over the role of another. Participant 12 supported P16, blaming the confusion on lack of understanding on how the system works.[156] Participant 17's own take is based on his experience in New Zealand politics; mainly the high standard of accountability and transparency under which its government is put through, due to the many checks and balances placed within and outside the system.

Now we come to the final question. All except three have their concerns about Samoa's future. First, the two pressing issues of land being leased out and the uncertainty attached to; secondly, the relationship with the Chinese government and the issues pertaining to. Participant 1, a strong supporter of government had his suspicions. *O lo'u popolega ina ne'i te'i ua taunuu le mea lea o loo lauvivilu ai si o tatou atunuu i mea tau eleele. Ina ne'i te'i ua iai se tulaga ma faamautu. Auā e le iloa atu i totonu o le faigamalo. O la foi e faalilolilo a latou mea. E popole ai i le tulaga lena ina ne'i faoa le mama i le gutu; ina ne'i faoa mea totino a si o tatou atunuu, ona faaleiloga lea o le soifua ma le ola; auā ua tatou iloa le aga i lalo e le maualuga. E leai se isi e tu faamauga, ae popole ai la i fanau lalovaoa a si o tatou atunuu.* **My concern is lest the greatest rumour comes into fruition about land matters; lest a situation turns out this way and become established. We cannot see through government. They keep their own secrecy. And this is the worry lest the food be taken from the mouth; lest our possessions are taken off us, then living will diminish; because we know that the way down is not high. No one stands as a mountain, but the concern is with the young ones of our dear country.**

The presence of the Chinese nationals running businesses in Apia and around the country is a concern of both P13 and P20. P20 said: **My biggest concern is the fast-paced increase of Asian migration in Samoa. It really bothers me. The idea of local development for the locals is slowly diminishing.** Both issues and concerns directly implicate the reality of power relations or government monopoly on foreign policy. The fear of the unknown or the consequences pertaining to are stronger for some, despite assurances from the government. Participant 15's own is much closer to home. *Ou te*

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156 P12 supports government's loan policy which she believed has own checks and balances entrenched in the system.

matua'i popole lava. E tau i ai lo'u mafaufau i le tele o taimi ou te nofo ma ou manatunatu talofa e; talofa i le suiga lea ua ofi mai. O le mea moni lava, o mea nei o suafa tetele o aiga, ua malepe, e fiu e toe taumafai atu ua masofa. Ia silasila o le pine faamau o le La'ei ma le Pale [suafa]. O le a le mea lea ua iai nei, ua ta'i 20, 30, 40, ua pei o se mea e ta'a'alo ai. Ua pei o se mea ua noa. I la aso e fotutupu le La'ei e tasi; e pei se faaulufalega. O le upu e masani ona ou lafoa, le tatou nuu 'aua ne'i fa'aaogaina sese le paoa. **I am greatly worried. Many times it crossed my mind as I sit down to reflect I feel piteous; piteous [due to] the change that's been brought in. The reality is, these big titles of families, now they are debased, however much we try they are debased. A point to prove is with the titles of Pale and La'ei. What we see now, 20, 30, 40 [title holders], it is like a game. Like any ordinary thing. In those days the La'ei title was bestowed upon one person; [the occasion was] almost like a church opening. I used to say this word [to our village in council], 'our dear council, do not abuse the power.'**

Participant 5, a senior churchman, is concerned about the breakdown of traditional *faaSamoa* and customary ettiquette which had long served as the moral fibre of society; as well, his worry about the induction of new churches to an already crowded environment. Participant 6 too is worried about the loss of cultural values and impact on the future of *faaSamoa.* Another senior churchman and leader of Samoa's fourth largest church, was optimistic, *E leai se mea e popole ai*, **There is nothing to worry about**, reinforcing government's own response.

Analysis 5 - Summary

In summary, each of the 20 participants was free to express own opinion based on the two leading questions. The first question was meant to identify a pattern in the participants' own political behaviour or orientation in relation to the state. By their responses, it allows the researcher to locate such pattern(s) in terms of the participants social backgrounds and standing in society. Thus a participant's perception of the government depends largely on their relations to power. Those whose positions of power and statuses revolve around the state can see the merits of an authoritarian government better than the others. They are more accepting of government lapses and style of leadership. Even joining the dots for a few whose own affiliation to government or leader is personal, is a subtle task though expected. Others who see differently may also benefit from taking such view more than those who prefer not to.

Part of the pattern that came out strongly was the issue of trust. Those who trust in government's leadership and the others who could not. It was interesting to note that some of leading supporters of government in this study seemed not to trust government all the way. One of them, P1, reserved his doubts on the issue of Samoan lands being leased out. Participant 15 has own doubts about the *faamatai* and its future. They indicate the mood at this point in Samoa's power relations, that of doubt and mistrust. Perhaps part of the doubt was that pointed out by Participant 16, the lack of understanding among the people about living by the law. An inference which means that, if people understand what it means and the consequences thereof, then the doubts will disappear. It seems the average folk still define living in traditional power relations in which *soalaupule* means everyone in the council agrees; not just a group who deliberate. It means consensus not majority rule. The fact is, Samoa now operates under the latter. The risk as P16 pointed out, is the tendency to shift from one side to the other whenever it suits someone's situation, especially the powerful of society.

For Samoa, the dilemma of its present power relations is underscored by the fact of a very unbalanced distribution of power. The irony itself, Samoa has voted the HRPP in, leaving little to chance. Now it has little to respond back with when it comes to matters of utmost importance to them. As Participant 6 alluded to, the voters can be blamed for not having an Opposition in parliament, not the HRPP. So the argument that government is getting more authoritarian goes back to the voters. It was to be expected in such a situation according to Participant 19. Participant 20 was outspoken, any government would do the same in order to consolidate power. Or perhaps the dilemma

would not have presented itself if we had answered the simple question: Which power? While democracy and its proponents can assert such claim of 'unbalanced distribution of power' confidently, the government may not perceive it that way, themselves proponents of the *faamatai*. Either way, *faamatai* has own knowledge system of power relations.

The fear of the unknown seems to be pervasive and disquieting. The witnessing of old structures and tradition gradually giving in to modernity is a collective concern. The people look up to the leadership for solutions. Sometimes the appeal is as personal as it gets. '***Lest the food be snatched from our mouth; lest our possessions are taken off us.'*** Or it can be a note of optimism with a streak of risk-taking**, *'the government is doing just fine', 'the government knows what it's doing.'*** All citations are from the same participant. This is another fitting example of the ambiguous nature of Samoa's power relations unpacked through the language.

9.6   Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to provide a comprehensive analysis of the data. The Analysis was organised under five broad categories: 1. Power relations in the faaSamoa 2. Power relations between church and state 3. Power in the church and church influence 4. Power of the state and state influence 5. Political perception and personal concern.

From the participants' collective perception, power relations have changed dramatically with the inception and influence of new power agents and instruments on old relations. The impact of money for example was transformational to say the least. The relationship between the church and the state has long been taken for granted, underscored by old *tapu* systems of society. The issue of the pastors' tax has unravelled the vulnerability and complexity of the relation both politically and ideologically. By the same issue, it exposed the core of the dilemma, that is, the difficulty of applying a code of law in the backdrop of a living culture.

The ascendancy of the state due to the assertive character of the government is countered by the church's own influence on the people, creating therefore a dilemma of perception, an older generation supporting the status quo, the younger interpreting relations in the lenses of democratic principles. In total, the people's perception of state power highlighted some of their topmost concerns. By means of the participants voices, the overall responses indicated a partial split of political tendencies in terms of their support or otherwise of the government.

An extension of the above analyses is collated in the next chapter, with the main findings along with a discussion and some implications of the findings for future research.

Chapter 10
FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

In this chapter I present the findings. I wish to begin with the three prime findings.

1. That there is ample evidence of a strong correlation between literature and the data results in support of the hegemonic influence of the culture in Samoa's power relations.
2. The data results revealed the decisive role of the political will, in association with culture through its institutions, in facilitating the processes of assimilation, normalization and rationalization of democracy and all other systems introduced into society.
3. The third is the state of political inertia, brought forth because of the tussle between progressive and conservative forces of society. Such inertia is emblematic of the reality of the power relations dilemma, which critical theory has traced to a well-managed regime of subtle control. Both cultural and state *tapu* have been successful in producing docile bodies and minds, hence a tacit acceptance of the status quo (Foucault, 1991).

The three findings basically sum up the outcome results of the research. Herewith is an elaboration in total with the purpose to evoke further discussions.

10.1   Summary of findings and discussion

1.   The study has reaffirmed previous research of the prevailing influence of the culture on the whole base and superstructure of the Samoan society. Using a Marxist notion of society to explain, the term *aganuu* stands to represent the base, by which the concept is an incorporation of many relations: capital in various forms: cultural, economic, ideological, technological. The superstructure comprises the cultural institutions alongside civil society and the state's own. As summed up in Analysis 1, the point of difference lies in Samoa's own emphasis on social and cultural capital as ideological underpinnings of *faaSamoa*. I stated, "A culture that is built on the strength of human relationships and institutions arisen from is almost unassailable." A culture which power relations are hierarchical and fixed is very much taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1986), especially in a society where social status, family honour, privilege and collective identity are considered far more important priorities (Weber, 1968). As such, all

cultural institutions stand to uphold the supremacy of *faamatai* in authority legitimation whether it is in the family, the village, the church, country, including the state. There is little to differentiate between the state and civil authority in this respect, nor any marked boundary between the base and superstructure. This is hard evidence in support of the influence of traditional culture on all spheres of the Samoan society (Le Tagaloa, 1996; Tofaeono, 1999; Simanu, 2002).

2. Literature attests to the predominant role of the *faamatai* in society as impacting and deeply embedded in the Samoan psyche (Le Tagaloa, 1992). The figure of the matai as 'the sole authority' is reproduced at all levels of the power hierarchy. While the practices pertaining to may have changed, the belief system remains intact however. The *faamatai* still provides the moral tenets for all types of secular authorities; the binding force that pulls society together. This includes the state, even the church. Such domination through assimilation and enculturation can be explained. While the state may seem like a new matai in the house (authority), he is in fact the same guy in his other title. The state hauls in a new worldview of all classes unified in a new hegemonic script, under a new form of constitution, though in essence it is an extension of the old worldview. Gramsci used the term cultural hegemony.

A transformation though not a complete replacement (Ramos, 1980). Agreeing with Bourdieu (1979) and Weber (1968) on the culture's predominance over economic relations, Gramsci viewed ideology as a key tool, a binding force of society by means of complex arrangement (Ramos, 1980). This can even be used to advance the cause of the subaltern groups. The successful incorporation of the state into the superstructure consolidated the unbroken link of past and present.

In the founding of the Samoan state there was no complete replacement of the previously dominant worldview (traditional ideology comprising of *matai, mana, tapu, va*, etc.). Rather, a modern worldview was refashioned out of these existing ideological elements, also championed by the subaltern groups in their discourses (Ramos, 1980). These were accepted as 'common sense' values of the new state (Gramsci & Forgacs, 1999). Thus the concepts of *tulafono, mana, tapu, pule* were retained for their flavour, like the proverbial old wine repackaged in new skins. As new *tapu* these were

manifested in various forms such as government authority, legislations, policies, ideas, positions. The new *mana* is acquired through the church, for example.

3.   Institutionalising social relations has made the culture an impregnable force. Because, as Foucault argued, power exists only in human relations, culture then is power internalized. As he claimed, power is everywhere; it is diffuse; everyone can execute power (1980). Applied in the Samoan context, there is much relevance to be had. Symbolically, power is seen to be very much shared. Every family claims power through their leader(s): their matai in council, their state representatives in the *sui o le nuu* – village mayor or the *faipule* - parliamentarian; all of whom are matai. It is claimed through one's *fa'asinomaga* (cultural identity) or *tamaliiaga* (nobility/dignity): the family title, family lineage, family possessions, kinship relationships, family stories, social status, villlage status and so forth (Tui Atua, 2018; Bourdieu, 1986). Symbolic power very much defines the *faaSamoa* which places such virtues as honour, prestige, pride, collective identity on top of the list (ibid.).

All of these connect an individual to the system at a personal level. Psychologically it provides a strong sense of belonging. There is always the mutual understanding that the traditional way of doing things, while oftentimes may benefit a few, were done in the best interests of the collective. Due to this appeal at a personal level, there is empowerment (Anae, 2020; Bourdieu, 1979). In the *faamatai*, for instance, the meritorious criteria involved in choosing a family matai is viewed as egalitarian and therefore favourably. So much is taken for granted that whatever its faults, culture and its institutions are hardly taken to task.

4.   As the proponents of critical theory strongly implicated, the taken for grantedness may have been long due for a rethink (Fairclough, 1992; Geuss, 2008). As Participants 6 and 17 pointed out, tending to the *va* has become burdensome. Problematic. First, politically. Second, economically, and so forth. Because while *va* appeals to the noble virtues of humanity, modern power has found other ways to utilize it for political motives (Burns, 2007; Brown, 2016). This is done through politics of *tapu* in which systems of ideology, practices, rules, norms, specialized knowledge all join forces to uphold the status quo (Gaventa, 1982; Ramos, 1982). Those in power may or may not see it this way because they are the beneficiaries. Even those without power

may not see it too because they are devoid of critical consciousness. The concept critical consciousness as proposed by Paulo Freire (1970) describes the ability to recognize and analyse systems of inequality, more so, the commitment to take action against. The implications as Freire put forward powerfully is that, a system that is devoid of critical consciousness must not escape scrutiny. People can be empowered to reflect critically on their situation through education (ibid.).

5.   The three key findings correlate. As this research proposed, in order to fully understand power we need to uncover and unpack its hidden relations. First, in the way power is situated in the heart of *faaSamoa*: the family/kinship relations. The *va* or Samoa's notion of relations between people has been well addressed in the literature as an approach to studying Samoan social ethics (Anae, 2016; Tui Atua, 2018). But as the literature also implied, and data affirmed, not much has been said about the flip side of *va* tending. Critical theory talked about the hegemony of a system which caused for minor narratives to stall, for some relations to stay unrecognized or remain hidden (Bourdieu, 1886), all being parts of a successful normalization of the system (Foucault, 1999). Secondly, the research affirmed how power is recognized in the various processes of governance. Rather than merely hinder, Samoa's multiple systems of government (*faamatai*, democracy, theocracy, elitist, oligarchy) have served the political purposes of power where necessary.

As instruments of power the government has managed to have made good use of the choices offered. Thus political action is recognized in a regime of legitimate processes; in democracy where majority rule is required to maintain power; in *faamatai* where consensus rule can support national development; in church where theocracy serves to the interests of the clergy; in political parties where elite interests are promoted. The culture enveloped the whole in a cloak of symbolic conformity. As a consequence, there is a tacit resignation to the whim of power. Thirdly, the question of how power is organised and exercised by those who wield power. Suffice to say, it is so much easier the task of organising power when the people could not distinguish themselves from that image of power as a collective identity.

6.   Samoa is perceived as a strong state. Both literature and data affirmed. As noted earlier, the word 'strong' is highly nuanced. One group argued in support of a strong

centralized authority; the other expressed concern and worry with its political implication. Two participants of the research argued in favour, eight represented the latter who were worried. Implicitly, 15 at least agreed on the basis of government's positive contribution to the maintenance of good relations. When asked if government has become more authoritarian, 6 objected against 6 who agreed. The responses can only relay mixed signals. Can strong be authoritarian in the sense that things get done and political stability maintained? Or strong as measured against the voters concerns about accountable governance? Or the notion of strong where human rights are upheld and factored in the government's social policy? Supporters of government were quick to point out evidence of the good works done already. Participant 7 has attributed this success to the strong leadership of the leader of government. In response therefore to the question, how strong; it can be argued that it is strong enough to ensure that democracy has a chance to attain its full potential, from a progressive long-term viewpoint at least.

The reality is Samoa has posed own dilemma of opting for a strong state at the expense of a weak checks and balances system (So'o, 2008; Iati, 2012). So far the strong state has secured the perpetuity of democratic institutions for now. The onus is on traditional authority and civil society to fill this void in power relations that now tilts more in favour of the state. As mentioned earlier, P6 lay the blame squarely on the voting public for the Opposition's demise. Other than that, either the state or the people has to recreate from within or outside the system, some new forms of counter balances, that will provide for this gap urgently. Fukuyama (2014) contended that for a well-ordered society we need three building blocks: a strong state, the rule of law and democratic accountability. We need three of them together, he maintained. A strong state can guarantee the survival of democratic institutions, the rule of law can safeguard the peoples rights and provide security for stable government. It can be added, that the idea of strong is a reflection on the moral leadership of those who wield power – secular or religious (Burns, 2007).

7.   Politically, the HRPP has held onto power for quite a while that somehow implies that relations created or arisen from have been legitimized and sanctioned by the people. This is to be expected when looking back at its formation and development as a political party. It was ushered in on a promise of changing unequal power relations economically and politically for the average citizen. On that pretext, a series of political

reforms have been launched, the significant of which involved the country's Constitution. The HRPP government also pursued a bold development policy that benefited the general populace and incidentally served to diffuse public disaffections that arise in the relation. Viewed as a political strategy, it has proven to be successful, considering the voters favourable responses during election times. Indeed, physical evidence of change are self-evident, and people are more convinced by what they see and make own judgements. The data reflected such positivity, with more than half the participants supporting the view that government is contributing positively to maintaining good relations. By any assessment, the average citizen is more concerned with the basic necessities of living than assuming power, or attempt to exercise their political rights to make things better. The mindset is, it is the politicians who can deliver because they are leaders, it is their sole responsibility.

8.   The HRPP has run a very successful normalization programme. Learning from the experience of the past, it was evident that in order to activate power, the people needs to be part of its strategy. As said earlier, it is good for any government to be seen as standing in solidarity with the people. Seizing the opportunity to make drastic changes in the name of the average citizen was vital for the sake of power itself. Normalization then was possible with the consolidation of power through legislation and the people's support (Malielegaoi, 2017). It comes with a new symbolism, the launching of political parties; the HRPP as archetype, after weathering the course proved its mettle as a *tautua* of the people. With the transcient presence of a strong opposition government, there is no other choice for the voters. Democratizing the system was normalized by the HRPP and now has become the norm however. Its tendency for infrastructural development is standard. Foucault referred to the disciplinary power of the state whereby normalization is a tactic, a way of exerting maximum control with the minimum expenditure of force; a means of constructing ideals, a conduct, a new way of doing things (1998).

9.   The most basic principle of Samoa's power relations, the *pule-tautua*, has changed dramatically as the evidence showed. While more than half of the participants conceded to the traditional understanding of acquiring *pule*, there is a strong admission of its becoming a moral liability (Tui Atua, 2001, 2018). Simply put, the cultural idea of service that underscored such discourse is getting more irrelevant. The most relevant explanation is the power of money which has reevaluated Samoa's power relations,

according to P15. The way to acquiring power is through personal wealth, he said. Serving from afar is called *'aitaumalele* (Tui Atua, 2001) or *tautua mamao* (Tominiko, 2014). While the matai lives in Samoa his/her servers (tautua) live in Auckland or Christchurch who send money over for family or village *faalavelave* on his/her behalf. By the same token, the state, as *matai pule* (secular prime authority) is well served by its global diasporic community who've appealed that their *tautua* (service) be acknowledged through the vote, is still denied. This is uncustomary but understood in the context of power politics. Tui Atua (2018) referred to the predicament of the *tautua tuāvae* tradition for example, where money has become a critical factor (2018) in the reevaluation of services rendered or the choice of candidates. The Gramscian proponents talk about disarticulation and rearticulation of existing ideological elements; or in this case the devaluation and reevaluation of *tautua* in money terms and political interests, at the prize of old value systems.

10.   The concept of *tautua* has evolved in the church too. Because God is the Prime Chief (Matai Sili), all are servers under his will. All power is derived from God, as the founder of Christianity claimed[157]. The participants were unanimous that the source of all temporal authorities is God. The Samoans have enculturated Christianity, even the message, thus making the church a reckoning force and *faifeau* a very powerful institution on behalf of both. The irony in the title *faifeau* (servant) cannot be missed in a critical evaluation; through *tapu* of the culture the *tautua* (servant) is transfigured into a new *pule* through the modern power arrangement. Everyone else (secular authority included) are *tautua* (servers) of God through the church and its ministrations. The cultural transformation also impacts on Christian theology (Latu, 2017)[158], whereby the manner of doing *tautua* (service) is cultural. To serve the *matai* and the *aiga* is done through good works to the extent that the message, salvation by works is propagated; which contradicts with the Protestant's core belief in salvation by faith alone.[159]

Hence the term *tautua lotu* (serving the church) has become more a rallying call for the followers, honing the message home that a person's good works (*tautua*) is a matter of priority in his/her multiple relationships. The cultural pressure on both the clergy and

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[157] Jesus is quoted in John 19:10-16 as he exchanged with Pontius Pilate; in response to Pilate's claim he has the power to crucify him, Jesus asserted that the source of all power, is from above (God).
[158] Generally, from the Protestant viewpoint.
[159] Ephesians 2:8-9. Some churches though believe in the merits of good works as part of the salvific work in Christ.

laity leadership to maintain church reputations can be demanding. The consequences of their decisions on the average churchgoers are quite obvious when it comes to raising funds for the national body or committing a parish to an expensive project (Sila, 2012; Tuiai, 2012; Maliko, 2012; Nofoaiga, 2017; Latu, 2017).

11.   In church too, while power is vested in the collective (general assembly), disciplinary power rests ultimately on a group or figure which decision is final. The hiring and firing of the church's personnel is the prerogative of the authorities in a system that can be described as disciplinary. There is little room for an appeal to reconsider. Some would think that this is uncanny for a system which power relations should be seen to model transparency, fairness and tolerance. Suffice to say, the way power operates in the church at national level is strictly hierarchical and very much depends on those who wield power in groups or individually. So for any *faifeau tautua*, the *tapu* of the *va* implies not challenging authority, or even taking the initiative which may not be to his senior's liking. Because the relations involve social status and livelihoods, the risks are high for the servers (*tautua*). The fact that one of its denominations is taken to a secular court by grievants of its own system, can only serve to prove the critics' viewpoint. It also serves to further highlight the dilemma of power relations for Samoa, due to having a plural system of government.

Participant 6 aptly described the dilemma: "The young critical thinker, with academic credentials, who enters politics or church mission, vowing to transform society for the better, yet once dressed in the attire of matai and power, is entrapped in the complications of own power relations. Once entrapped, then he is another subject, who ends up being an advocate of the system" (Foucault, 1982). To relate to power means conforming. Conforming means *tautua gūgū* (serving silently). For the sake of family honour and livelihoods, there is little to gain by being critical of authority.

12.   Power relations between state and church under HRPP's tenure has never been exposed as much before. The issue of pastors taxes no doubt has shown the vulnerable nature of relationships, even for a renowned partnership. The impasse between the government and EFKS has brought to light the hidden aspects of power relations, in traditional *tapu* that was reserved for the church through the *faifeau*. It is an unwritten pact between state and church sanctioned by culture. Until the current government

decided to redefine the relationship by removing *tapu*. The EFKS cried foul, which seemed to have legitimate grounds traditionally; as well, very much part of the state narrative from the start (Meti, 2002). As noted in this research, while people were free to speak privately on the assurance of confidentiality, not many would be willing to criticize *faifeau* in public. And if the state, with its own *tapu* be viewed likewise, then we can understand also why public officials hesitate to criticise the government publicly while in office. In other terms, the idea of exposing issues, institutions or high profile people publicly is a delicate undertaking for reasons of symbolic *tapu* involved. The risks of prestige, reputations are real. So are integrity and truth.

As mentioned in the Analysis, the results in favour of government's tax proposal said a lot about the changes in Samoa's power relations. First, the influence of education and a growing rationalization by means of liberal democratic values on the public, especially the younger generation. Secondly, the assertiveness by which government has pushed its plans ahead, even if that comes by breaching *tapu*. Thirdly, the strong implication of denominational rivalry; where the opposing denomination is singled out by the adherents of other denominations, whose pastors pay taxes to the government. The taxing of pastors is perhaps symbolic of the larger issues or societal concerns: social, political, economic and psychological, to which the church as a body can make a difference, in terms of how it can use its influence to address social injustice and discrimination for instance.

13.   Power relations in the church, among its denominations and faiths are by and large symbolic. The three mainline churches, as the three most senior and populous, procure the most power in that sense. While the ecumenical spirit has drawn the 'smaller churches' into the circle, it is mainly tokenism not substance, as each prefers to hold onto own beliefs and independence. In fact the internal squabbles between the old guards and the new are mainly subjective, though they revolved around an old allegation that the latter stole the sheep from the formers folds. Which explains why their numbers have dwindled by the years. But even the relations among the 'three' have always been vulnerable if not entirely problematic. Behind the facade of cordiality and symbolic posturing lies the hidden power relations at work, the human intent to be competitive. The emergence of the row between the EFKS and the government on 'tax' seemed to have tested this supposition. Instead of standing together in solidarity, the other two

decided to support the government. The data results came out strongly to prove how people rally behind own church and their position in the argument. It has more to do with loyalty and allegiance to a religious identity than trying to be impartial. Saying that, all three churches argued that their stances in the argument were principled.

14.   The village relations, particularly between matai authority and church authority, have also drawn much interest. Samuelu's study (1999) highlighted a trend in many villages where church authority tended to have more influence in the relationship. It is the church that now organises people, replacing old cultural structures along with rituals and belief systems, with its own. Traditional *faataulele'a* is morphed into *autalavou* for instance. This is evidential in the urban areas and will continue with the emergence of new village developments in the Apia vicinity. Such a new community model has own version in Samoa's growing overseas community. The church authority is the sponsor of the *faamatai*. The *faifeau* is the head of a new government – a fusion of the spiritual and cultural; *faamatai* and its cultural representatives are free to practise own custom and rituals within the new space, on the understanding that *faamatai* and *faalelotu* complement each other. Would this be the future model for *nuu Samoa*?

Figure 5 (page 186) depicts a symbolic model of a new village *saofa'iga* (new arrangement), a Post Mission Village Model based on the reality of the power relations. Gradually, the church hall has become the situation of power at the village level, from a power position, posed a serious challenge to the traditional *fono* house (Samuelu, 1999). The undeterred ascendancy of the church and *faifeau* in village power relations signifies this huge paradigmatic shift in Samoan organisational restructuring both physically and symbolically.

15.   Of the relationship among the three arms of the state, it is fair to say that the boundaries have blurred as the evidence suggest. Particularly so with the HRPP taking full control of parliament. Symbolic relations maintained nevertheless. The truth is, political manoeuvring is a game of power politics and control, as P20 interpreted the situation quite frankly, it is in the nature of politics to be authoritarian. "If you're in authority you do exactly the same. You're playing the game well," she commented. In Samoa's case, the checks have become more a sacred trust of one branch of the government – the Executive. Strategically, the war of positions according to Gramsci is

fought on the ideological front, and by the way things turned out, the HRPP government is at a vantage position to call the shots, politically speaking.

16.   Lack of political awareness among the public is a key issue. The voting public seemed immune to intellectual concerns such as checks and balances, which is alien to most of them. Like P1, who, when asked whether the government has become more authoritarian, responded, 'these [ideas] were imported stuff.' While European models have been adopted and indigenized, the government is blaming the opposition for thinking as palagi.[160] Thus the common law is viewed as *palagi* and foreign while customary rule is pure Samoan. In other words, the reality for some can be quite different. Participant 16 is adamant that there is no such thing as *palagi* or Samoan. P16 bemoaned the fact that many still cannot comprehend what it means to live under the rule of law. P16 even alluded to own parliamentary peers who think that there are two 'laws', the European and the Samoan. So out of ignorance or intent a politician or leader can shift from one to the other, depending on which one accommodates his/her best interests in a situation. In other words, understanding democratic accountability in this context of doubt, confusion and even misinformation has been problematic for both leadership and the voters. The average citizen with little knowledge of the law is the most disadvantaged.

Political awareness is directly linked to political participation. Having lived under the rule of *faamatai* for generations, it may take a long while for the average folk to rationalize the notion of living under a democracy, in the sense that they can participate meaningfully in their country's politics. Even the idea of a grand democratization is bedevilled by the uncertainty. With current developments of the government showing a frank leniency toward communal rights over the individual, it begs the question: Which end would any such undertaking serve? Would the law to have all citizens vote be only for the purpose of upholding the status quo and elitist power interests (Toleafoa, 2017)? Or would it turn out to be the key to the full emancipation of the people through democracy that Gramsci envisaged? These are valid questions.

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[160] In reference to the current row between government and the Samoan Law Society on the three pieces of legislation that will transform Samoa's Judiciary.

17.   A critique of participatory theory has equated symbolic participation not with social change but social control (Brouwer, 2011). Cleaver (1999) talked about the myth of social changes due to open communication and consensus; the promotion of what Cooke & Kothari (2004) called, naïve assumptions about the authenticity of political motivations and behaviour in participatory processes. As found out in their study, the *tapu* of power relations turned out to prevent the marginalized from participating, while the very process legitimizes the voice of those in power. The impact of such an arrangement on the powerless is political inertia, meaning that either they have acted out of ignorance, fear of reprisal or given up on the system already.[161] Hence it follows that the common complaint against participatory democracy is, it is not participatory enough. The opposition maintained that the government no longer speaks for the people but the policies of own party. The evidence they said, government shied away from committing serious issues for the assent of the people because they would not risk the outcome (Tupua, 2020). In the same vein, the concern about the influence of partisan politics in villages where a 'small group' of influential matai dictate the power narrative on behalf of the council and all village members. It raised the issue of authenticity especially when it comes to electing candidates for parliament by consensus, as if everyone agreed with the decision.

As argued earlier, democracy has been appropriated more as a useful instrument to serve the whim of power politics rather than its true purpose, that is to govern by. Through its institutions a bureaucracy is maintained on behalf of the state, the same intent upon which power legitimation is processed through the electoral system. *I polokiki lava ia, o numela a le mea taua, o isi mea o teuteu.* ***In politics [getting] the numbers are all that matters, the rest are ornaments,*** Participant 3 interpreted. As Bates also diverged, "Parliament and polling booths are mere forms, the real content of which is determined by effective control of the cultural organizations, of the line of communication in civil society" (1975).

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[161] UIA defines political inertia: Lag in political attitudes and legislation with respect to the demands of economic and technological or social change reflects the unwillingness of certain powerful groups with a vested interest in the status quo to change or to relinquish current benefits. It may also be a function of an outmoded or cumbersome political structure or of inadequate traditionalist opinions. It produces a barrier to economic, social and political progress and serves to maintain existing inequalities and injustices, ranging from poverty to pollution. Political lag can occur on either the national or the international level. UIA. The Encyclopaedia of World Problems and Human Potential Website.

18.   There is potential for traditional authority and civil society to countervail, as a few observers of Samoan politics would like to propose. Whilst we are quickly reminded of the complicated nature of the political environment; the hegemony of the culture and kinship relations, the overlapping of roles and interests between state and society, the competing interests on the resources, factionalism, and more potently, the concentration of power with a political party, there is hope in the fact that democratic institutions still can sustain a challenge, however. It has also become more obvious the fact that the input of the local 'organic intellectuals' is needed at this stage (Gramsci, 1992). They have the capacity to articulate public opinion ever more clearly on behalf of the people. The belief is that government can be countered with reason, with the logic of a good counterargument, to the extent that the people's voice is heard and accorded with respect. There is also an appeal to the common sense that leadership is empathetic with the *tautua* because he/she has been a *tautua* once. *E au i le tauola e au foi i le fagota.* **He is a master fisherman who has been a basket carrier once.**

19.   Social commentators, some of them matai themselves, have denounced the self-destructive path taken by the *faamatai* in the past 40 years or so. This is the predicament, that if the *faamatai* in the long run, cannot save itself from its own demise, then the state may as well do so on its behalf. The dependency on the state can be noted in the almost total reliance of families and villages on state institutions such as the Land and Titles court in settling their lands/titles disputes. There is much to risk in Samoa's economy of knowledge, wrapped in the language, and the question of whether such task be given to the state, considering the pros and cons of doing so (Salesa, 2018). It appears that the goal of the current government is to appropriate culture, as much as culture incorporate the state. Participant 15 for example stands to represent a common concern as an insider, that the state may take advantage of such vulnerability to advance own political interests (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 2020).

The lure of money will always be a challenge if not the challenge. The fact that social and cultural capital are commodified, equated with 'money power' means Samoa's *measina* will be susceptible to political manipulation (Ratuva, 2009; Bourdieu, 1986). In the final analysis, if *faamatai* can no longer sustain a moral mandate for the sake of the *faaSamoa* and its *measina* in future, then the final hope lies in the state. The same can be said of other sectors of society if the leadership cannot deliver morally for the

people. Either way, the risks in terms of unequal power relations are clearly evident, politically speaking.

20.   Considering all possibilities, the search for balance in power relations, which ultimate goal is the betterment of all groups of the citizenry, and which liberal democratic ideals promised to deliver through checks and balances mechanisms, is almost won over to the political will, that is the government. To reiterate why, critical theory suggests that Samoa's power relations are well hidden by the *tapu* of culture – old and new. Any attempt to uplift some of the *tapu* is emancipatory from a social critic viewpoint. A case in point is the improved lot of women in politics and social issues, which came about by the strength of the political will.[162] On the other hand, defending certain *tapu* is still the right thing to do for many. The dilemma is in the choice. In Samoa's case, it seems that government has found a way to navigate among these *tapu*-based relations at will, recreating new forms of relationships, or old forms rearticulated or else disarticulated mainly through state legislation along the way (Ramos, 1980, 1982).

21.   Insofar as the struggle for political hegemony tilts more in favour of the state, it is not difficult to work out who dictates the political narrative. For Samoa, such narrative is powerful due to its propagation in the people's own language. Language and social reality are related (McGregor, 2003; Habermas, 1981). The critical theorists conceded that a country's political discourse must be fought and won in the realm of ideology, embedded in the language and its media (Habermas, 1981; Horkheimer, 1982; Fairclough, 1992, 1989). The creative nature of the Samoan language has enabled its people to enjoy its multi-dynamic expression in rhetoric, the insights drawn from deconstruction and metaphoric discourses for example (Ricoeur, 1978; Degenaar, 1997). Some of the fiercest opponents of the HRPP government, who have employed English as medium mainly, cannot match government in terms of engaging and thereby influencing the vast majority of the population using the power of the home language. The leader of the government is noted for his plain use of Samoan; a preferred style by others over the familiar eloquence identified with the proverbial politician who relies on smooth talk but would not deliver; and with his own blend of sardonic humour have proven to be

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[162]Opinions differ on the quality of such improvement; in fairness to the women's cause there were studies that need to be consulted in order to form a balanced judgement. A study be Meleisea et al. (2015) is one.

effective political tools in promoting government directly to the voters (Siikala, 2014). But as critical theory also reminded, language is far from being politically neutral – or simply amusing for that matter (Shore, 1982). Critical theory asserted that language is very much the essence of society's ideological activity, and therefore should be the main focus of power analysis. Words operate within a structure, within a set of power relations that affirm or condemn, appreciate or deny, praise or ridicule (Ricoeur, 1978; McGregor, 2003; Fairclough, 1989).

22. By the same token, the religious narrative is well entrenched through the home language. Basically, Samoa's religious narrative is the prerogative of institutionalized Christianity within the context of *faaSamoa*. The narrative is dominated by the church leadership in the clergy. This monopoly is defining because of its power to not only make people think as one but the ability to exert such power on the minds of many (Degenaar, 1997). After 190 years since the English missionaries arrived, it can be argued that the clergy-led religious narrative, first nurtured by the missionaries has not changed much. Years of normalization has it entrenched deep within the culture and language to the extent that it has been taken for granted. Hence the hegemony of any narrative - religious, cultural, economic, political - when it is no longer open to review; because it is declared *tapu*, predetermined as truth, its terms are considered non-negotiable. Critical theory challenges any such human imperatives (Linklater, 2007).

Degenaar (1997) reminds of the role of the church in power relations as crucial. He refers to the common term religion in its associated meaning, legere, like a censor who reviews society. Applied it means it is not satisfied with one or two readings but continuously. It means that social discourses were not meant to be fixed or predetermined but must continue to open to reason and reinterpretation. This is contradictory with the nature of political power though; both secular and religious leadership are more partial to sustaining discourses that uphold the status quo, for as long as the latter works for their purposes.

Indeed, there is political inertia in the political sphere, one may also boldly assert that religious inertia has taken deep roots in Samoa's own church sphere in these many years. Suffice to say, resistance or the reluctance to change has caused a whole lot of issues for contemporary ecclesiology, including Samoa; some of the issues raised in this discussion. Any sign of a prompt rereading may not be forthcoming at this stage given the current situation of power in the church.[163] The simple truth is that only by honest and critical reflection can society and its institutions be made more amenable to constructive changes, and the only way for any *tautua* to stay relevant in a modern world.

The gradual shift in church demographics from the three mainline churches to the other competitors has been a marked trend for church observers in the past fifty years. The LDS has been making great strides as the stats proved (See Table 2, p. 182). The third largest in the country, its ascendancy is noteworthy for comparative and qualitative purposes. Future projections will see the LDS cross paths with the Roman Catholic and EFKS within a decade or so. A number of factors are singled out. This includes the situation of power, embodied in the Samoan culture, upon which the three mainline churches have invested heavily, and which the LDS has developed a quasi-committal relationship with, making things less constrained politically and even socially conducive for growth. Its tithing system is viewed as sustainable, a fair strategy in church maintenance for all members based on individual affordability; its proactive proselytising work in the community has been consistent and has shown no sign of wavering.[164] Apparently, the equation of church power relations will be totally different in the not-so-distant future, if the existing trend stays the course.

23. The impasse between the government and the public on the LTC proposal highlighted a number of things. First, the delicate nature of the issue of leasing customary land now passed into law, and the furore it has created among various sectors of the community, still hovers heavily like the proverbial darkened clouds over the land. As the data revealed, the participants were divided on the issue, even ardent supporters of the government expressed grave concern and worry. The feeling of uncertainty came

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[163]Misreading on the other hand is part of the religious inertia phenomena. Jesus accused the pharisees of misreading the Law for own purposes. Perceived by the people as advocates of the system, they were in fact perpetrators through neglecting the parts that matter most (Matthew 23, Luke 11). Unless there is a genuine rediscovery of scriptures - by which a refutation of state sponsored truth(s) is crucial to its reestablishment - which could only be delivered at a cost, just like any high-risk rediscovery of scriptures, as in Luther's epitomistic act, or the Christ himself, with his life.

[164] Called *misiona* (mission) or *galuega tala'i* in Samoan.

out strongly in the data. Now with another bill that relates to land, it only exacerbated the doubt, especially the clash in differing opinions, one from the legal fraternity that contradicts government's own. Secondly, the circumstances by which the three legislations have been introduced. While promoting a programme on its own merits, the process has been questioned. With power at its disposal, the government has been accused of side-stepping the norms, at least *va fealoaloa'i*. Like the issue of the pastors' tax, P4 strongly believed that this issue also could have been handled a lot better.

Thirdly, the call for a pause if not a stop in the way the government is pushing changes through at such a pace (Samoa Observer, Issue April 20, 2020). And some have added, at quite a wrong 'hour.' (Samoa Observer, Issue April 29, 2020). The concern of the public with establishing another state authority with not much assurance of the normal checks and balances installed is real (ibid.) Now they seemed to be up and armed (democratically) to prove their point. It may or may not be enough. Fukuyama (2014) talked about 'external shocks' that rouse democracy from its occasional slumber. For this perhaps, the public may have the HRPP to thank for providing the ideal circumstance; now Samoa has some potential competitors in the power contest come the next election; and in a backdrop of evidence of a severe disaffection in the HRPP party for the first time since Tofilau's tenure, could be concerning for its supporters, while encouraging for others. Ultimately, this may be the HRPP's true test of power legitimation and proof of invincibility, or else a precarious move that may in fact save democracy.

24.   The unleashing of a new power in the field of information dissemination, utilizing the social media, has posed a potential threat to the media establishment. Caught in the middle is the average folk whose response to political action is dependent on the whims of information power at play. As the data revealed, many factors account for the people's perception of power. Such perception is shaped by traditional *tapu* of culture, religion and language. The fact that online disseminators are no longer answerable to the *tapu* of culture and own standards of human decency, will have far-reaching political implications on the future of Samoan politics (Tavita, 2018). Words to the effect of threatening to harm physically, emotionally, psychologically could no longer be taken for granted; already modern Samoan power relations had breached *tapu* violently with a minister's murder, not to mention many other incidents of similar description, mainly at the village level, when ruptured relations could not be mended quickly. For worse,

this new power could only compound on a massive scale. Public opinion is polarized. The government talked about imposing *tapu*. Left alone, there is little doubt that this new power will find its place in the future of Samoa's power relations, with all its risks and potentials intact (ibid.).

25.   Samoa's international relations is another topic. What can be said is, such relations have served the country well at many levels. The benefits of mutual cooperation are self-evident, particularly in the building of its national infrastructure, economic and social development. By means of global obligations to the United Nations and its agencies, it serves the moral purpose of a wider consensus on issues where the people's concerns and minorty rights can be articulated and given attention. The gradual emancipation of women and children is attributed to these instruments of power that wouldn't have been envisaged under the current status quo. With the absence of democratic means of checks and balances, the United Nations and its agencies have provided a new layer of checks and balances, at least in the form of policy advice or requirements.

Adversely, the disadvantages of being dictated to by these global powers are real, as research attested to (Long, 2017; Tuia, 2013). Unequal power relations is a price to pay by small countries, given also the fact these are the main donors in its economic upkeep. Not much can be done, particularly where issues of utmost urgency such as the climate change that require regional solidarity. Meanwhile the world leaders have been reminded by Mother Nature herself of the grievous cost of non-cooperation. Security-wise, the active presence of China against the growing animosity of traditional allies has the potential for destabilising power relations on both fronts, which may directly affect Samoa's own security long-term (Noa Siaosi, 2010; Ratuva, 2019).

26.   The rise in domestic violence against women will have direct implications on power relations that is not only gender biased but tacitly legitimize violence against them. This is due mainly to an uncritical acceptance of misogynistic scripts introduced and became part of Samoa's common sense (Meleisea et al, 2016; SOO/ NHRI, 2018). The *feagaiga* principle has been the subject of much research interest, there has been a gradual critical unpacking lately. First, physical and emotional, where women are the target; second, symbolic, where the church and high society are implicated by not

speaking up (ibid.). While some research provide a glowing description of the *feagaiga* rationale, the reality couldn't be further from the facts. The talk has hardly materialized as a powerful public discourse or guideline for societal change (ibid.). The deficit discourses associated with the *faiavā* and *nofotane* institutions have come to redefine relations from a position of power and continue to do more harm than any good. The crass portrayal of the *nofotane* in the cookhouse as propagated in popular ballads stereotyping is undeserving, when viewed in the context of a sacred *feagaiga*. The irony is, that since the time the *feagaiga* status was shared between women (sister) and the village pastor, it has worked wonders for the latter and proved fateful for the former. The question of why this unequal treatment will need another research to unpack. Symbolic violence refers to an unconscious acceptance of such practices or introduced scripts (Burt, 2013; Bourdieu, 1986).

27.   Talking about violence brings to the fore the whole issue of the people's mental and psychological well-being. As noted earlier, Samoa's stats on suicide has been well documented since the late seventies to the early eighties when she became the 3rd highest in the world and 1st in the Pacific on suicide committers per total population (Samoa Observer, Issue June 12, 2018; Issue December 19, 2015).[165] Since then, numbers could only fluctuate; the lowest was in 2009, 4 victims; though when put into context it is still a concern for a small country. Along with other modern youth related problems, root causes behind sexual abuse in the home, domestic violence affecting women and children, abandoning new-born babies for example, are no easy fixes. Suicide is an act of desperation by an individual and a strong indicator of the state of a country's mental health and emotional well-being. All of these pose a moral predicament for a Christian country and culture that revel in family and good relations.

28.   To this end, there is logic in the argument that certain *tapu* need relooking considering the context of social reality and the human condition from time to time (Ramos, 1980; Bourdieu, 1999; Fairclough, 1992; Smith, 1999). It may not be good ethics the promotion of the *feagaiga* principle to justify an argument in favour of a male-dominated cohort, at the expense of the women who ironically were the original *feagaiga*, who are being disadvantaged in the power relations. The same can be said of

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[165] Samoa Observer. Issue 12/06/2018. Faataua le Ola is the authority in Samoa on suicide prevention programmes.

deficit narratives that need disarticulation because they support *tapu* that are no longer relevant to the overall well-being of a people. Outdated beliefs about mental illnesses implicate old *tapu* about angry *aitu*, have a direct bearing on the usual put-downs of those who suffer in silence. Even the coaxing by a church minister of some young male parishioners to strive to be like him (*tofi faifeau*)[166] sends the wrong message that the whole purpose of becoming a village pastor is for prestige and to be secured materially in life (Latu, 2017; Sila, 2012). This is reflected in P1's own take on the supposed motive behind the educated elite joining the church ministry (refer page 224). The shirtless antics can only reinforce a negative perception of the role of *faifeau* in society. The message as it stood since Martin Luther's Reformation, God called everyone to the service of his kingdom, by means of every useful skill utilized for the common good, not by social status (Nofoaiga, 2017; Tupua, 1989).

29.   A point was made earlier about the dilemma of having multiple narratives, and the impact of this on social relations and to that extent, power relations among different levels of organisation. Most of these narratives are institutional and introduced. Due to differences in ethos and belief systems, they create tension and discord rather than bring the people together. Thus, when it comes to government – secular or religious - the question of which truth or corpus of knowledge we need to follow is both ethical and political. As knowledge becomes more an appropriation of the modern state, the premise is that under the state, it can be harnessed and handled much more effectively and responsibly (Foucault, 1997b). While the rational 21st century world assumed truth as relative and multi-dimensional, all leaders - secular and religious - have a moral obligation to the people in the maintenance of peaceful relations. Interpreted one-sidedly, the risks could not be greater, as we have witnessed the dire consequences in genocides and ethnic strifes globally. The way some of the world's leaders responded to the Covid-19 clearly demonstrated the power of deficit narratives, identified with poor leadership.

30.   Thus it couldn't be more emphasised the role of leadership. Leadership is crucial in good government (Tuimalealiifano, 2007). There is a presumption that leaders with prior life experience of hardships relate more to the people and their needs than those who were born lucky. The Samoan terms for this life of privilege is *'ai lelei ~ eat well,*

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[166] Reported by a reliable source, the pastor allegedly impressed upon his listeners the merits of being a *faifeau*; the material benefits attached to. In the pastor's terms reportedly, 'one sermon is worth one thousand dollars.'

moe lelei ~ sleep well. Others may dispute such logic. Still the question of which kind of leadership is more connected to the people is relevant. The majority of the people are daily strugglers economically, they can answer for themselves, though many will not come out in public and say what they really want to say. In many developing democracies, the economic disparity between the haves and the have nots is growing steadily according to the UNDP figures (UNDP, 2008).[167] The proof is the income gap between the highest salary in the land and the lowest bracket (Samoa Observer, Issue Sept 28, 2016).[168] The cost of living remains one of the toughest challenges in Samoa today, particularly for the low wage earners (Samoa Observer, Issue November 5, 2017). As said earlier, the tax is viewed as biased against this particular group due to its regressive formula (OECD, 2019). For Samoa, the highest share of tax revenues is derived from value added taxes/good and services tax (40.1%).

Talking about the marginalised, education has become a game-changer for many who weren't born lucky. They may not be acknowledged in the traditional hierarchy but within the state and the church. Holding a state or church position has gained more prestige, thus education puts everyone on an equal footing however.

31.   Gramsci still believed that full emancipation can be achieved through the democratic processes. He still prefers politics over any other course of action to arrive at a successful resolution (Ramos, 1980). As a choice democracy, inspite of its weaknesses, has the appealing features to the younger generation who've come to define relations more in equitable and ecological terms (Hayward, 2012; Va'ai & Casimira, 2017). They are the future leaders. As the data showed, choices cut across ideological boundaries and group loyalty. Talking with members of the community, especially the young voters, I quickly got the hint of the current mood in intergenerational power relations. In other systems of government, including *faamatai*, healthy power relations (if not equal) depend wholly on the high morals and benevolence of leadership (Tupua, 1987; Teachout, 2015).

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[167] UNDP 2008. Samoa: A report on the estimation of Basic Needs, Poverty lines, and the Incidence and characteristics and hardships & Poverty Analysis of the 2008 Household Income & Expenditure Survey.
[168] The head of state is the highest paid at $200k plus per annum; the minimum wage is $WST3.00 for the public service.

32.   I have subscribed to the argument that the original concept of *malo* was partial to the *faumalo* narrative than the discursive acts of struggle for freedom. Any freedom narrative is a power on its own, nurtured by the people that inspires and empowers (Pettit, 2003; Mandela, 1994). While governments vie for authority and do politics for sake of all citizens, they too are morally obligated to sustain this narrative for sake of societal well-being. For balance, both the *malo* and the people's freedom narrative need always to encounter each other courteously as in *soalaupule* or using Nafanua's *tafesilafa'i* strategy (Stuebel, 1976).[169] As in the Nafanua narrative, even in troubled times, tapu of *va* can be sustained for sake of family or ethnic preservation for that matter. To choose to remove or maintain old *tapu* requires good judgement. As a wise counsel put it, 'Whenever a fence is removed, it is wise to pause and ask why it was put there in the first place.' [170]

At the same time, breaching of *tua'oi* by the Matunas[171] of the world is punishable for sake of law and order. Salvaging for old time's sake may not be the entire solution. Yet telling the difference between things requires tact and wisdom, a noted theologian reminded.[172] No state can survive without discipline, Foucault inferred, yet the consequences of an overly disciplinary society are grievous and must be avoided as much as possible (Fukuyama, 2014). As argued earlier, the rationale behind any good government must be shown in its attitude to freedom; narrated by the people in their problems; it demands local empathetic leadership (Vaai, 2015; Nofoaiga, 2012; Sila, 2012; Tuiai, 2012). To be shown to be a freedom fighter for the people is better for any authority secular or religious. Finally, it is for the sake of good government that these freedom narratives be nurtured continuously (Malietoa-von Reiche, 2011; Anae, 2020).

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[169] According to the legend, Nafanua was briefed by her father, Saveasi'uleo, king of the underworld (Pulotu) not to cross over the boundary of Fualaga (pa i Fualaga) in deference to family (Seali'itumatafaga). Nafanua herself laid out the war plan which the Matuna couple failed to follow and were punished accordingly.
The four clubs were both literal and symbolic, according to Participant 3; each symbolized a war strategy. For example, Ulimasao was more than a strategy, indeed a military mobilization, the traversing back and forth between the two worlds and the risks involved; the invoking of Pulotu spirits through prayers to rally to the war effort. Tafesilafa'i was a moral and benevolent strategy on behalf of family. Fa'auliulito stands for courage and righteous power represented by the unseen hosts; and Fa'amategataua refers to the closure of the conflict and the final resolution. The interpretation for this research purpose is moral - the regaining of the balance of power on behalf of all people. See also Sio (1984) retelling in MESC Tapasa o Folauga I Aso Afa.
[170] Attributed to the political philosopher and theologian, G. K. Chesterton.
[171] In the Nafanua narrative, it refers to the couple which name is shared – Matuna and Matuna, who failed to follow the war strategy and were punished by Nafanua. 'Aua le to'ia le va' means do not cause injury to the good relations, as the Matunas had done by breaching tapu.
[172] Attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr, American theologian. 1892-1971. Called the Serenity Prayer:
"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

33.   Arguably the story of the independent state of Samoa has been dominated by a political party for the better part of its 58 year history. Since holding power the HRPP party has embarked on a quest of consolidating power. It could be argued that the HRPP is the most ambitious regime to have ever ruled Samoa politically. With its success so far the question is, can other parties also do the same? Chances are with good organisation and strong leadership they can thrive too. Now someone posed the question of whether this pathway is good for Samoan politics is ethical, but from a political standpoint, this may be the only way forward for the voters and democracy. The appeal for an urgent redistribution of power evenly has been strongly felt lately, with the commotion brought about by the induction of a potential rival overnight. It was interesting to note the aggressive rallying of the diasporic Samoan community to the cause of a new party.[173] With another strong party negotiating in power, this may redress the power imbalance. It may also generate some new thinking about power sharing at this day and age.

34.   Lastly, it was obvious the subheading of this thesis, that the hold of the culture on the Samoan society is indeed hegemonic by Gramscian understanding. What also needs to be reaffirmed equally and strongly is, that there is still a lot that *faaSamoa* can offer for the Samoan people in terms of its aspiring ethics and social appeal which has made it enduring and almost indomitable. That such part of *faaSamoa* can be salvaged for its sake is less arguable. Because family and kins constitute lasting relationships their upkeep is almost guaranteed; and because part of the Samoan culture is big on identity, dignity, and political empowerment through *faamatai*, *teu le va,* reciprocity, and so forth, these are emancipatory ideals in their own rights. But as critical theory dared to challenge, the price for their upkeep has become an expensive exercise, mainly for reasons that have little to do with their moral underpinnings.

Critical theory reminds that no culture is immutable, nor should it be idolized to the extent that it cannot be scrutinized. It is people who made cultures – secular or religious - and it must always be a concern of responsible citizens when cultures which refuse to readjust ended up dictating the terms arbitrarily. Critical theory is opposed to empirical

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[173] In money terms the estimation is in the hundreds of thousands of Samoan tala (dollars) since the party appealed to Samoans overseas in a short span of time for help, and still counting. Such a powerful response is interpreted by many as a political swipe at the HRPP leadership by the diasporic community for belittling their transnational status and contribution to their home country's development. See also Samoa Observer report Issue 20/3/2021.

claims about the social world and its structures as immutable. Immutability implies that structured inequalities of power and wealth are supported whereas in principle they can be altered. Critical theory promotes the idea of a new form of political community in which individuals and groups can achieve higher levels of freedom and equality (Linklater, 2007). Thus, the need to check every now and then, especially when rituals, practices, narratives pertaining to turn into oppressive and uncaring systems.

10.2 Limitations of the study

As will be noted, the emphasis of the analysis has been on the macro level of probing and critical commentary. For instance, the caution to cite substantial evidence or names of people for cases that would have been considered too obvious to the reader or interpreted as culturally sensitive or politically motivated. Indeed, taking such things for granted may be counted as a weakness of the research, but I believe good judgement must prevail. As mentioned, the rationale behind taking a selective approach was a matter of personal judgement by the researcher. The intent was, that the focus had to be solely on issues and the subject matter, not the people or personalities.

Also, the *tapu* of language in the Samoan culture was upheld. Hence my decision to be restrained with quoting highly offensive remarks for evidence. This too may be counted another limitation, especially when considering the crucial role of language in critical theory. Hence the role of the Samoan *faafaletui* in the interpretive process, that due consideration be given to the unique context of the study and the delicate nature of the topic. I believe there is much to lose than gain when such cultural *tapu* are ignored.

Power relations is a huge topic, for example, the church's own has not been explored fully in its finer details; not to mention state institutions and relations in their own rights. What has been offered is a compact and comprehensive overview of the dilemma of power relations at the macro level mainly. The gaps for future research are obvious.

Chapter 11

CONCLUSION:

RISKS & POLITICAL CONTINUITY

The Samoans take their relationships very seriously. Indeed it is the essence of their culture and custom of reciprocity. Tending to those relations is every Samoan's preoccupation (Anae, 2016; Tupua, 2009). Commitment to family, village, church, district, country can only be described as a moral investment en masse, driven by this powerful impulse of cultural identity. Which is why the concept *va* (relational space) has the connotations of power, risk, fragility and hope all at once (Read & Shapiro, 2014). As power, it has mobilized Samoans overseas to send millions of dollars in remittances to families and villages in their country of birth every year. All of these at the backdrop of a national over-representation of Pacific peoples in low skill, low pay and insecure occupational groups in the New Zealand workforce, and other places for that matter (Pasifika People in New Zealand, 2017 report).[174]

Overseas remittances continue to be Samoa's largest form of foreign exchange earner (Samoa Observer, Issue February 16, 2019).[175] A power relation unto itself, it helps stabilize Samoa's economy (ibid.). The economic impact of remittances as a leveller on the whole society cannot be underestimated. The editor of Samoa Observer, Lesā wrote: "The simple truth is that without remittances, many of the families here would find the cost of living unbearable. Remittances are putting food on the table, paying for electricity, water, land, housing, health and so much more. It's putting petrol in cars, giving buses good business and so forth" (ibid., Editorial page).

Tending to the basic necessities of living, from afar, which also include family projects such as new houses, cars, businesses, etc., to the village's own in the maintenance or erecting of new churches, houses for pastors, is a moral duty. This is the power of the *va* at work for Samoa in money terms. In time and labour. And much more.

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[174] Pasifika People in New Zealand. How are we doing? 2017 Report. Pasifika Futures. www.pasifikafutures.co.nz

[175] For the 2017/18 financial year, $503.73 million tala in earnings was recorded.

11.1 The risks

Thus the risks are personal. For example, the closure of a small business that was meant to sustain a family livelihood, forced a couple to return to New Zealand, leaving the parents vulnerable to public ridicule (Personal communication with source). It has put families in debts due to cultural pressure (Families Commission Report 2012 Wellington). Tending to the *va* has put pressure on the *tautua*, particularly the vulnerable, in village projects, family *faalavelave* or church commitment. Reports of individuals harshly punished by authority without a fair hearing; a family decided to leave their church because it's become unaffordable financially; children missing school because fees aren't paid due to cultural priorities; children being abused under the watch of church organisations, the cover ups.[176]

This is the fragile face of power evaded as much in the power narrative. Unless this unappealing aspect of power be addressed nothing is guaranteed. People will continue to be subjected or simply submit as docile subjects of the system; others will resist or opt out altogether (Foucault, 1997; Gaventa, 1982; Tupua, 2001, 1989).

I have mentioned the spread of *faamatai* globally, with the church as the leading sponsor (Anae et al., 2020; Hunkin, 2007; Lafoa'i, 2007). Such an offshoot on new soils is thriving. Since the fifties the overseas Samoans have been doing their *tautua* for families, church and country of birth, yet they have to negotiate boundaries now and then for sake of maintaining relations (Tupua, 2018). While it is love of family, country and patriotism that motivate the giving, this may not last. Participant 6 speaks on behalf of a growing number of New Zealand born Samoans who have found Samoa's cultural franchise becoming cumbersome, doing *tautua* out of respect for their parents, oftentimes by coercive tactics (Taule'ale'ausumai, 2018; Tunufa'i, 2005; Tiatia, 1998).

Unless the *pule* are prepared to invest in relations seriously, then the essence of *teu le va* can no longer be sustained and ultimately risks ingratitude (Bourdieu, 1986). Such investment implies the crucial role of *tofa saili* in the leadership that moderates the *va* between the culture of extravagance on one hand and that of principles on the other, for the sake of the powerless and marginalized (Vaai, 2015; Nofoaiga, 2017).

Secondly, the risks involve the future in the face of the current uncertainty. First, the impasse between the government and the opposition on what the latter labelled as a campaign at dismantling the constitution. The government's move to promote communal rights and matai authority is described as a pretext which true motive is to exert more

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[176] Anecdotal evidence from reliable sources directly acquired in personal testimonies or published media.

control on the village government apparatus (Samoa Observer, Issue February 13, 2021). The leader of the new FAST party has reiterated her disquiet about the future, that Samoa could be in danger of revisiting history, when any ambitious leader is free to follow own whim of interpreting government as they like. The risks of meddling with the customary rights of heirs could not be higher. For example, the promotion of the notion of *pule faasa'o* as opposed to *pule faasuli* is a no-no when it comes to making decisions on family titles and lands or any such matter, according to more than half the participants. The risks of such a move are highly consequential in a culture which governing principle is *soalaupule.* This move is divisive, biased against Samoans living overseas, according to Participant 6.

The growing concern about the abuse of power by a few matai who tend to influence decision-making in a village, especially when they become partisan politically, came out strongly during the 2021 election campaigns, when some of these groups asserted their power over the fundamental rights of other village members.

But the risks of political instability are far more serious. Power politics has driven the government's political agenda, according to the opposition. For example, the push to take advantage of its majority in parliament by enacting laws with such haste is partisan and political. Such development has manifested in the current mood of uneasiness. The fear is more radical reforms can only translate to more uncertainty and inertia. A lot is at stake with the failure of a state (Brooks, 2005). Beyond power politics, the pervading sentiment shared among patriotic Samoans the world over is that the state that bears its name will last. Critical theory supports the argument that democracy cannot be sustained by *tapu* of restrictions for long; instead, political stability is a by-product of transparent and accountable government (Habermas, 1981).

Lastly but just as important, the moral risks. During this discussion, the line between secular power and religious was fine and even blurred. The language strongly affirmed. This is the reality of Samoa's political narrative. Thus, we can only make sense of this reality as it appears. First, God's impartiality to all manners of human categorization, where class, status, religion, race, culture, genders, politics, systems make societies; as long as humankind heed his will: 'see that justice is done, let mercy be your first concern, and humbly obey your God' (Micah 6.8, Holy Bible, CEV). The modern state would not hesitate to draw parallels. But as the evidence suggested, the search for balance from a power position is always an elusive business (Haugaard, 2012; Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index, 2017).

For example, *tapu* pertaining to an invocation of God to justify any human activity – least of all, politics – is such a risky business (Tui Atua, 2018; Mills, 2016). Using God's name to demand more from the *tautua* is not only unethical but unprincipled theology (Tuiai, 2012; Sila, 2012; Maliko, 2012). Even an atheist's assessment makes sense, that power cannot be held as one's possession, meaning that nothing is guaranteed (Foucault, 1997, 1991). It is the Covid-19 that reminded us of a profound historical lesson yet again, that whatever power has installed and claimed as *tapu* today may be uprooted by tomorrow's own types of power.

Tapu pertaining to family relationships are just as riskier when talking about the ethics of *alofa faimeatonu* as opposed to *fai ma sē e tau i ai*. The fundamental rationale behind the modern state, that was to rid government of nepotism, cronyism, corruption and so forth, cannot be guaranteed in a real world, particularly in societies where the patronage system is alive and thriving (Fukuyama, 2014; Teachout, 2015). In developing democracies therefore, it takes much courage for any leadership to uphold the line of defence against these common enemies of good government (Tuimalealiifano, 2006, 2007; Transparency International, 2020; Larmour, 2005).

11.2   Political continuity

At the beginning of this study I wrote, "Last but not least, this research ponders on the question that is on the minds of many Samoans locally and abroad, the political continuity of the Samoan state. There's a price to pay for Samoa's political stability (Iati, 1998; Toleafoa, 2013); the vulnerability of small island nations to dominant forces such as globalization and corporate capitalism, is compounded by a moral uncertainty, fuelled by social media over certain issues of vital interest to the voters: the leasing of customary lands and legal matters pertaining to."

I concluded, "With the general election around the corner, it will certainly provide some clarity at least to the current confusion. If by any chance a change in government happens after the 2021 elections, then it would be a clear sign of the people's power. It would be an affirmation of democracy at work and a solid reassurance that the people only have the final say in democratic processes. But if at the end the HRPP continues its rule into the next decade, with not so much effort, then this will help answer the question of why Samoa's power relations continue to behave the way they do for Samoa's democracy."

The HRPP has approached the 2021 elections with a lot of self-confidence. Another landslide win is predicted by its leadership (Samoa Observer, Issue March 26, 2021). Given the experience of living under the HRPP watch for almost four decades, continuity under the same political party, with another assured majority presumably, will have the people respond any more or less differently; though the new reality is it will be a different political landscape apparently; most likely an HRPP government (which numbers may not be as close to the total as predicted) will continue to choose to take ultimate risks. Granted politics is about risks yet the stakes for any political party having a strong leader unchecked, in that sense unsupported, at least by docile colleagues, couldn't be higher, and are factored into this analysis. Taking this option for granted can be detrimental for own development and future political investments; a point that may be argued further if the HRPP loses the election.

One emerging reality that needs careful attention is the call from overseas Samoans for their voice to be counted through the vote.[177] The implications of saying yes can only be imagined, that such relation if prudently harnessed can benefit Samoan democracy; first, as a potential player who can leverage power from outside the system.

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[177] While the HRPP government has made its intentions known about the matter, even passed legislations to discourage it from happening, Samoans overseas have been adamant, based upon a good number of legitimate reasons.

To continue to say no may no longer be the best political option. A brisk demonstration of power by the overseas Samoans, in lending financial support to a party that is vying to replace the government, has sent a clear message to future governments, that is, its diasporic community is set to play a part in its politics for a long while. Invoking such a relation by offering the vote however, that will involve some high-stakes risks in logistics and demographics, is a challenge for a new government, to say the least.

Most importantly, the people's consent. While power relations may have been passed on from one generation to the next as heritage or fixtures under old systems and human means of self-preservation, their relevance to organising modern societies must depend on the needs of the people (Panikkar, 1991; Tupua, 1987). The rule of consent is in Article 21 of the United Nations 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It says, "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government" (UNDP, 1948). Given the options, it seems that only democracy and rule of law can provide a better deal – in spite of own weaknesses (ibid.).

Samoa's former head of state was quite as hopeful, whilst in the spirit of being remindful. In his address of an important Pacific symposium in 2013, he said: "Admittedly, we will not transform ideas into meaningful policy or action with smart retorts. We need to probe our premises, fundamentals, values, and visions carefully and continually. We need to understand our biases and prejudices, strengths, and weak-nesses. We must have languages and ways of doing, teaching, and knowing that can speak to our minds and souls. We must be able to know when to adapt the old or take on the new; when to learn from our mistakes and share our successes. And we must do all this with humility and the right tools. It is this kind of careful deliberate continual searching (the *tofa saili*), and building and rebuilding of our foundations, that will allow us to fly" (Tui Atua, 2013).

Like the uncaged canary referred to in his foreword, political freedom is para-mount, upon which Samoa's own search in *tofa saili* is safely grounded, in its nation building and rebuilding into the future (Tui Atua, 2013).

11.3   Final comments

The political dilemma of power relations will always be a feature of the modern state regardless of the nature of power contestations (Foucault, 1989). Such a dilemma, posed in situations, states and effects of power relations, needs to be detected and explained critically by its root causes, in any context of good governance, the people's well-being, and most importantly, political freedom. The fact is there will always be those who do governance in terms of directing and controlling the conduct of the governed; the latter are as much involved in the process (Foucault, 1991). This is achieved through cultural hegemony, according to Gramsci, in which both sides share a common understanding at least of such a political arrangement; more notably the latter's consent to the maintenance of the status quo. Bourdieu (1986) could see right through and pinpointed cultural capital as the essence of this type of hegemony; hence symbolic power is real power embodied, objectified and institutionalized in most societies.

For Samoa, modern power is well placed in the politics of a reconfigured culture in which the state, the church and the rest of power holders stake much interest. Foucault interpreted these politics in terms of strategies or those which both the governors and governed reproduced as if playing a game of life, which cardinal rule is to minimize the domination of one by the other as much as possible (1991, 1997b).

The reality of power politics implies that the relationship between the governors and governed is never static but shifting and strainful though it can be accommodating too (Foucault, 1997b). In such a dynamic state, dilemmas of power are reproduced and manifested outwardly at times, in various acts of protests by the governed, or lapsed into a subjective, suppressed state such as political inertia or moral uncertainty. Placed in such a situation, the majority of the governed seemed to have tacitly accepted their lot, for less known and talked about reasons this research was keen to examine and critiqued in the lenses of critical theory (Linklater, 2007).

The approach to a resolution, as Foucault suggested, is political, pragmatic and ethical. He said, "The problem is not to try and dissolve them [power relations] in the utopia of completely transparent communication, but to acquire the rules of law, the management techniques, and also morality, ethos, the practice of the self that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible" (1997b, p. 298).

As in sports, players play hard but compete fairly, upon a common understanding that no one is put at a disadvantaged position any more than the others. Despite the reality of the systemic imbalance of power in many developing democracies, the belief

is, there are ways to counterbalance within a democracy; that each and every citizen can make a difference in this most basic and significant of human activity: forming government. Electing and sustaining good government is a collective effort, succinctly conveyed in the Samoan wisdom saying, *E le sili le ta'i i le tapua'i. Those that wield the weapons are only as effective as the supporters who will for a better outcome*.

Interpreted, the Samoan ideal of governance (*pule*) has always been inclusive, liberating and hailed as a moral responsibility (Turner, 1884; Habermas, 1981; Mesle, 2016, Tui Atua, 2013). In consensus with democracy, it is the 'people power' that matters, especially when choices are well-informed and free from political, social and cultural constraints, even if they have to work hard at it sometimes (Geuss, 2008). Perceived this way then, power can become an agent for good as Foucault envisaged; and in that sense, a tool of the divine will (Matthew 6.10).

In summing up finally, the risks of power, irrespective of country, type of government or dilemmas, cannot be separated from the hope in power to deliver for all citizens.

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Dilemma of power relations in Samoa:
A study of cultural hegemony in a developing democracy
: Consent Form for Participants

Include a statement regarding each of the following:

□ I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

□ I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.

□ I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal of participation will also include the withdrawal of any information I have provided should this remain practically achievable.

□ I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher [state who else may have access to the data, if appropriate] and that any published or reported results will not identify the participants [or their institution, etc., if appropriate]. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library [delete if necessary].

□ I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after [five/ten] years. [include an additional statement if the data is to be stored indefinitely].

□ I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed.

□ I understand that I can contact the researcher [researcher name and contact details] or supervisor [supervisor name and contact details] for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

□ I would like a summary of the results of the project. [if your research is anonymous, you will need to find another way of making a summary of results available to your participants, e.g. a website link where you will place a summary of results]

□ By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name: _____Signed: _____Date: _____

Email address *(for report of findings, if applicable):*

Information Sheet Template

Department: Pacific Studies/ Arts
Telephone: +64 3–*382-6674*
Email: ltavita8@gmail.com
12 September 2018
HEC Ref:
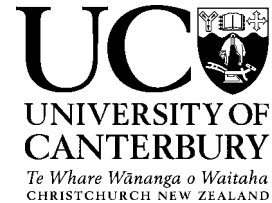
Power relations in Samoa: A study of cultural hegemony in a developing democracy
Information Sheet for Participants

Talofa. My name is Levi Tavita. I am doing a research on power relations and political continuity in Samoa. It is about the role of government in the execution of power and maintenance of state authority. Such role is crucial to the nature of power relations and understanding power dynamics in the state of Samoa, and more importantly how it impacts on Samoan society. Any findings will contribute to a better understanding of the topic and will benefit Samoan citizens in terms of public information that needs to be shared.

With due respect you are formally invited to take part in this study because your opinion as a Samoan citizen is important to its aim and objectives. It is your choice whether or not to take part. If you don't want to take part, you don't have to give a reason, and it won't affect the care you receive. If you do want to take part now, but change your mind later, you can pull out of the study at any time. I respect your decision all the same.

This Participant Information Sheet will help you decide if you'd like to take part. It sets out why we are doing the study, what your participation would involve, what the benefits and risks to you might be, and what would happen after the study ends. This includes the issue of what to do with your raw data. We will go through this information with you and answer any questions you may have. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in this study. Before you decide you may want to talk about the study with other people, such as family, friends, or cultural mentors. Feel free to do this.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form on the last page of this document. You will be given a copy of both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep.

Be also informed that part of your interview involves video recording and taking photos of yourself and space. If this may bother you, please feel free to discuss this with me.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation. Your identity will not be made public without your prior consent. I am happy to discuss this further with you and clarify any issue of concern. A document (thesis) that comes out of this study is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

Please indicate to the researcher on the consent form if you would like to receive a copy of the summary of results of the project. A copy of this summary will be sent to you when the research is complete.

The project is being carried out as a requirement for the PhD degree by Levi Tavita under the supervision of Professor Steven Ratuva who can be contacted at steven.ratuva@canterbury.ac.nz. He will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

Interview questions

1. What is your understanding of good relations?
O le a sou silafia/malamalama i le uiga o fāiā/so'otaga lelei?

2. Who has more say in your village?
O ai e faia upu o le tou alalafaga?

3. Do you accept the view that church and state must be separated?
E te talia le taofi e tatau ona maioio/tu eseese pulega faalelotu ma faalemalo?

4. Do you support the view that the church should contribute to the state upkeep?
E te lagolagoina le taofi e tatau ona fesoasoani le lotu i le atina'e o le malo?

5. Do you have any worries about the use of power in the church?
E iai sou popolega i le fa'aaogaga o le pule e le lotu?

6. Is church contributing to the task of maintaining good human relations?
Fa'amata o fesoasoani le lotu i le tausiga o le va lelei?

7. Do you have any worries about the use of power by government?
E iai sou popolega i le fa'aaogaga o le pule e le malo?

8. Is government contributing to the task of maintaining good human relations?
Fa'amata o fesoasoani le malo i le tausiga o le va lelei?

9. Do you accept the view government is getting more authoritarian?
E te talia le taofi ua tauau e pulepuletutū le malo?

10. What are your concerns about Samoa's future in relation to this study?
O le a sou popolega e tusa ia Samoa ma lona lumana'i e faatatau i lenei su'esu'ega?

The dilemma of power relations in Samoa:

A study of cultural hegemony in a developing democracy

Supervisors:

Professor Steven Ratuva

Professor Bronwyn Hayward

University of Canterbury,

Christchurch, New Zealand