Re-positioning the experiences and situation of single mothers: Accounts from Samoa

ROCHELLE STEWART-WITHERS

Abstract

Cultural values and societal norms can place a considerable burden on young women to be sexually non-active outside of a marriage, with the understanding that motherhood must occur within marriage. For those who deviate outside what is expected they may find themselves and their children labelled in negative ways and positioned as 'other'. Yet, some cultural and value based frameworks rather than stigmatising and discriminating against single mothers may also offer a contestable space. With this is mind, this paper draws on qualitative field research undertaken in Samoa in 2002, 2004 and 2006 to illustrate how the cultural framework of *fa'asamoa* (the Samoan way), *'āiga* (family) and the *feagaiga*, understood to mean balance within relationships and the brother sister relationship might lend themselves to support single mothers. It is also shown how engaging with cultural concepts such as f*a'amagalo* (seeking forgiveness) and *fa'ailo ga tama* (to mark or distinguish a child/accepting the baby) means single mothers are not stigmatised and ostracised as individuals or as a social group.

Keywords

Culture, fa'asamoa, single mothers, Samoa

Single mothers, especially in the West, have been held responsible in part for the demise of society. Single mothers have been accused of maternal neglect, providing inadequate discipline and poor role modelling of their children. They are blamed for creating living conditions which foster truancy, crime or teenage pregnancy, thus perpetuating the cycle of deprivation. The provision of state welfare for single mothers in the Western context is often quoted as enticing young girls to have babies. Stigma attached to single mothers is underpinned by the notion that motherhood must occur within marriage, and these ideas are perpetuated by communities, the state and the church (Arroba, 1996, p.11; Chant, 2003, p.4; Datta & McIlwaine, 2000, p.41; Edin & Lien , 1997; Reekie, 1998).

The idea that pregnancy outside of marriage is immoral remains pervasive in many societies. Accordingly, young women who become pregnant outside of marriage can face enormous psychological burden. Stigma and negative discrimination can enforce segregation, promote outsider syndrome and dehumanise people. Single mothers experiencing stigma and negative discrimination can find their ability to participate in society or their contribution is limited or restricted. They may find themselves in situations where their opinions are not valued. They can become socially isolated or marginalised as individuals or as a social group in that they are shunned by family, deprived of social dignity and labelled 'problematic' (BRIDGE, 2001, p.3; Broder, 2002; Oliver, 1996, pp.52-53; Reekie, 1998, p.11).

The aforementioned can become more complex in traditional societies where cultural expectations and societal norms situate young women in such a way that their sexual activity or chastity is explicitly linked to male honour and family pride:

> …a man's honor is often linked to the sexual 'purity' of the women in his family. If a woman is 'defiled' sexually - either through rape or by engaging voluntarily in sex outside of marriage - she disgraces the family honor (CHANGE, 2008).

The experience of Samoan women who become pregnant outside of marriage is generally one where women are also severely chastised and are deemed to have brought the family status into disrepute (Naseri, 2001; Shore, 1981). The sexuality of Samoan women is something that requires protecting and controlling; thus to remain a virgin is to comply with Samoan culture - that is, the principles of *fa'asamoa* (the Samoan way). To do so situates a young woman as a source of pride to her *'āiga* (family) (Tupuola, 2000).

However, culture is neither static nor monolithic (Radcliffe & Laurie, 2006). Although culture can aggravate women's vulnerability, it can also serve as a creative resource in that many traditional cultures also have restorative mechanisms (CHANGE, 2008; Stewart-Withers, 2007). Thus a perspective that is not given nearly enough thought is the idea that cultural frameworks while placing expectations on young women to be non-sexual hence 'pure' until married, which also stigmatise and discriminate against single mothers, also have a contestable space. This space is where identities as fluid and can be reshaped and the experiences which are multiple are subject to change.

With this in mind and by drawing on field work undertaken in Samoa during 2002, 2004 and 2006, whereby qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with single mothers and key informants such as *Matai*, teachers, church ministers, community development practitioners, representatives from the Ministry of Women's Development and members of the *Komiti Tumama* (women's committee), this paper explores how the cultural framework of *fa'asamoa*, the *'āiga* and the *feagaiga*, understood to mean balance within relationships and the brother/sister relationship might lend themselves to the position and condition of single mothers in Samoa. Consideration will be given to how aspects such *fa'amagalo* (seeking forgiveness) and *fa'ailo ga tama* (to mark or distinguish a child/accepting the baby) reshape and render the women's problematic status as subject to change, meaning single mothers are not stigmatised and ostracised forever. The cultural framework of *fa'asamoa* will now be explained.

The Samoan way: Fa'asamoa

Contemporary Samoan society has remained fairly reflective of traditional Samoan society (Holme, 1957, p.420; Meleisea, 1992; Ngan-Woo, 1985; O'Meara, 1990, p.15). Samoa functions according to *fa'asamoa* which is defined as "the manner of the Samoans; according to Samoan customs and tradition" (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1996:185). *Fa'asamoa* is also the social and organisational system which governs family life and the village. This system of chiefly rule is based on a system of rights and obligations which ensures that family members have rights to family resources (such as land), as well as having the opportunity to be the family chief. Family members in using these resources then work to achieve what is best for the family. *Fa'asamoa* is a system "based on divisions of power, status, labour and expectations – the prime motivational force being to safeguard the family status" (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996, p.4). "Service to the family is the key driving force in the family based system" (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000, p.99).

Mulitalo-Lauta (1998) suggests that *fa'asamoa* needs to be understood for its visible and invisible components. The visible components include the social structures of the *'āiga*, the *matai* (social and political system), *lotu* (religion), *fa'akerisiano* (Christianity), ceremonies, language and cultural practices. Invisible components make reference to ideas, beliefs, values, skills, moods, passions, attitudes and knowledge. Importantly, "all of these aspects are interdependent and cannot exist in isolation from one another" (Mulitalo-Lauta, 1998, p.29).

In support of this, Ngan-Woo further explains *fa'asamoa*:

> The social structure of Samoan society is held together and is actively maintained, by an adherence to unwritten but universally understood cultural conventions. These conventions govern the formalised giving and receiving of *ava* (respect), of *fa'aaloalo* (reverence), and *alofa* (love, compassion and concern). These practices are the basis of spiritual and cultural living. Respect, reverence and love are seen as qualities acceptable to God and hence necessary in the practice of *fa'asamoa* (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.9).

In Mulitalo-Lauta's (1998, p.32) opinion, *fa'asamoa* is understood to have various key components, for example, the 'Samoan heart', which has to do with a person's emotional and spiritual being. The 'Samoan heart' encompasses feelings, attitudes, skills, knowledge and spirituality. Or, the 'Samoan way', which describes the manner in which Samoan people should behave. It relates to the way a person verbally communicates, performs a particular act, or carries out one's commitments or obligations. On the whole it is about "the philosophy which compels living one's life for others" (Mulitalo-Lauta, 1998, p.32). It is also about cultural practices such as *ifoga* (the ceremony of public apology), *fa'aleleiga* (reconciliation) and *si'i* (the tradition of donating goods, money or food) when someone is facing *fa'alavelave* (crisis or ceremony), so as to demonstrate concern and love (Mulitalo-Lauta, 1998, p.32).

Moreover it encompasses 'protocol and values'. These are the unwritten rules and customs that regulate the social behaviour of Samoans. Protocol refers to the formality and conventional rules of *tu ma aga mamalu a Samoa* (dignified customs and practices of Samoa) relating to custom, tradition, personal dignity and etiquette. Some examples of Samoan protocol are *fa'aaloalo* (courtesy, respect and politeness), *feagaiga* (cultural code between the brother and sister), or *sa* (sacredness). Examples of values are again *osi 'āiga* (proactive in support of the family), *amio fa'akerisiano* (Christian behaviour), *loto mauālalo* (being humble), *amio tamali'i* (diplomacy), *alofa* (love/sensitivity), and *loto nu'u* (having a sense of community) (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000, pp.17-21). Finally, Mulitalo-Lauta also refers to the 'structures and institutions' that are the Samoan frameworks, for example, the *'āiga*, and *fa'amatai*, noting these to be visible in nature.

Mulitalo-Lauta (1998) argues that any endeavour with Samoan people must consider both these invisible and visible components of *fa'asamoa*. It is important to incorporate values, ideas, beliefs and practices which are Samoan: such as, *ava* (respect), *fa'aaloalo* (reverence), *alofa* (love, compassion and concern), *fa'amagalo* (forgiveness), *fa'alavelave* (to solve a problem), *lotonu'u* (maintaining/restoring pride), *tapu* (sacred bonds) and *tautua* (service) as well as understand the need to include the *fono* (the village council, which is comprised of *matai*, the head of the various *'āiga*), and the church.

Mulitalo-Lauta's (1998; 2000) definition of *fa'asamoa* is very complex and in-depth, and for outsiders it may not be understood; however, for those who are part of *fa'asamoa* its workings and value are clearly understood. My point in presenting this definition is that I wish to demonstrate just how holistic and all encompassing *fa'asamoa* is, and that *fa'asamoa* determines how and what a person in Samoa might think, feel and therefore do. This comprehensive articulation is important for understanding also what the statement 'according to *fa'asamoa*' might really mean in relation to the family, and what this might potentially mean for single mothers. As stated above, all of these aspects are inter-dependent and cannot exist in isolation from one another and as I intend to demonstrate it is the *fa'asamoa*, 'Samoan heart', the 'Samoan way', certain elements of the component 'structures and institutions', various 'ceremonial practices', and finally, certain 'protocol and values' that will ensure single mothers are not isolated as individuals or a social group, and that according to *fa'asamoa* neither will they be rendered to a fixed category (single mother) where they remain as 'other'. The concept of family will now be discussed in more detail.

The ʻāiga

Prior to contact by colonial settlers, and the introduction of *fa'akerisiano* (Christianity), the family was where most social interaction and activity occurred (Grattan, 1948, p.10; Saolotoga, 1995, p.18). Traditionally the *ʻāiga potopoto* (large extended family) was the central force of Samoan life, whereas nowadays, the Samoan family while still being extended, is smaller in nature (Maiava, 2001, p.80). Regardless, while activity and socialisation now occurs further afield than just the family; especially as people are in paid employment, belong to church organisations, sports groups and/or educational institutions, the family still has primary social importance.

All Samoans have their roots in two extended families. That is, the family of their mother and the family of their father (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.9). The "family is the principle focus of identity and social location" (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991, p.54); the family unit and its position in society is where one derives one's status from (Maiava, 2001, p.79; Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.9; Saolotoga, 1995, p.20), as well as one's self-esteem (Maiava, 2001, p.79).

Samoan's take enormous pride in their family connections (Davidson, 1967, p.29). In explaining the cultural significance of family identification and relationships and the importance of identifying with a family, as part of a strong Samoan system, a widespread goal is to be a part of a well respected family who are well positioned socially (Maiava, 2001, p.79). Therefore, "all of a Samoan's interest and emotion is centred on his or her family and from there to the family's place in the community" (Maiava, 2001, p.79).

All members of the family have a special place and an important part to play within the family. Any addition to individual status will add to the status of the family. For example, while individual achievement in higher education is seen to strengthen and add to the family's status, any deviance may also bring the family into disrepute.

Such is the importance of family in Samoa, it has been suggested that to understand Samoan culture one needs to start with the family, as opposed to rank and status because the *ʻāiga* (family) "motivates all behaviour, including purposes involving rank and status" (Maiava, 2001, p.79). *Fa'asamoa* means that everybody understands what is expected of them in the family and of major importance is the notion of service, "service is the way family ties and feelings of identity are nurtured and is the major means for status raising" (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2000, p.99). *Fa'asamoa* means that people also understand what is expected of them by the village. Just as this excerpt suggests, *o Samoa o le atunu'u ua 'uma ona tifi* (Samoa is an already defined society), meaning every member knows their place, the expectations of them and their duties (Lay, Murrow & Meleisea, 2000, p.15). The concept of feagaiga is the "metaphorical foundation for the ideological structure by which order is maintained in Samoan society" (Schoeffel, 1995, p.98).[1]

The feagaiga, brother-sister relationship

Feagaiga means agreement, contract or covenant (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991, p.72), and the relationship between the brother and sister is a *feagaiga* relationship. Whether formalised or not, it involves distinctly ascribed statuses and roles that are quite different, while being complementary (Schoeffel, 1979, pp.19-21). Thus it is considered that women as sisters are the holders and transmitters of sacred power and men are the holders of secular power and authority (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991, p.72). Hence, the *feagaiga* is a contract whereby the brother holds the authority and the sister is understood to hold the honour of the family. It is a contract because the rights, privileges and obligations that correspond to both are clearly spelt out and understood according to custom (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996, pp.7-9; p.186).

According to Samoan ideology, the *feagaiga* also represents balance within relationships. For the brother/sister relationship this balance is between the political power of the brother and the moral power of the sister (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991, p.72). Cribb (1999, p.4) argues that it is this *feagaiga* bond between the brother and the sister that allows women a complementary amount of power. "The brother/sister relationship is understood to be one of mutual support and formal, mutual respect, in which precedence in certain matters is given to the sororal party" (Schoeffel, 1995, p.88).[2] The notion that secular actions require moral or spiritual support is also essential to the feagaiga. "A contrast is drawn between sacred power or moral authority and secular authority and action in which sanctity attributed to one party lends dignity and legitimacy to the action of the other" (Schoeffel, 1995, pp.86-87).

This means that while a brother may have the authority to make a decision he also needs his sister's approval – indeed, she may have the last say. This complementary power means sisters can assert influence within the family decision-making process, whether it is about controlling money or bestowing *matai* titles, and they can assert influence in the conflict resolution process, or in terms of resource allocation (GoWS/UNICEF, 1996, p.8). The *feagaiga* relationship also offers a woman protection. As the *aualuma* (daughters of the village) sisters are considered to be very important in safeguarding the dignity and standing of the *'āiga*, hence a sister is seen to rank higher in status than her brother. This requires a brother to be of service to her.

This is further supported through the socialisation process of child/adult respect which occurs from a very young age, whereby children learn to obey and serve their parents without question (Maiava, 2001). Meleisea (1992, p.64) refers to the "iron discipline and conformity" that is a part of Samoan society. This is also reinforced with reference to the scriptures, with 90 per cent of Samoans being Christian. Disobedience is often punished quite severely: "Obedience and love are equated at an early age" (Maiava, 2001, p.81). Maiava (2001, p.81) referring to Freeman (1984, pp.275-76) goes on to write about the ambivalent love/fear, resent/respect type of relationship that many Samoans have with their parents because of this strict approach. Many Samoans, even as adults, continue to be fiercely loyal to their parents, hence they live their lives obeying, serving and giving to their parents (Freeman, 1984, pp.209-10; Maiava, 2001, p.82; O'Meara 1990, p.78; p.170). Even when married, a man or a woman may listen to the final say of their parents, as opposed to their spouse. For family members this can transpire to mean that, whether they want to or not, they will provide for and care for each other. According to *fa'asamoa*, in terms of obeying one's parents and maintaining the status of the family, and accorded by the feagaiga relationship, the brothers will care and provide for their sisters should they require it, whether they want to or not.

Under a *feagaiga* relationship, brothers are obliged to serve and protect their sisters as well as any of her offspring for life (Holme & Holme, 1992, p.30; also see Meleisea, 1992, p.14; p.26; Ngan-Woo, 1985, pp.23-24; O'Meara, 1990, pp.103-09 for reference to the *feagaiga*, brother/sister relationship). Meleisea (1992) observes the Samoan proverb '*o le teine o le 'i'oimata o lona tuagane* – which means a girl is the inner corner of her brother's eye (p.14). This means that a sister is likened to the most vulnerable part of the eye, as opposed to the English saying 'apple of his eye' (Meleisea, 1992, p.26; also see Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.24 for reference to a brother's eye). Therefore, it is a brother's role to protect his 'vulnerable' sister, and as women play an important role in upholding the dignity and the prestige of the *'āiga*, which is linked to sexual behaviour, this means their virtue and purity also require protecting (Dunlop, 1999, p.54). Relationships between young men and women prior to finishing high school are therefore not promoted, and even upon finishing school relationships remain tightly monitored (O'Meara, 1990, pp.103-9; also see Schoeffel, 1995, p.8). Premarital sexual relations are "condoned in boys, and forbidden to girls" (Schoeffel, 1995, p.89).

On one hand this obligation to protect and serve may offer a woman a sense of security, while on the other hand it may be problematic should she deviate from the expected norm, for example, by getting pregnant outside of marriage. There is some reporting that single mothers are negatively stigmatised, discriminated against, and ostracised because of their circumstances. By exploring the general attitude towards sexual relationships and pregnancy outside of marriage, the likelihood of single mothers in Samoa being stigmatised and ostracised will now be considered.

Disrupting the harmony of the family

While keeping the family honour seems pertinent, there are certainly mixed messages in the literature about what the appropriate sexual behaviour for Samoan girls might be. It was reported, famously, by Mead (1928) that Samoan girls had considerable sexual freedom. Holme (1957) conceded, "promiscuity is condemned by the church but winked at by the family" (p.411). O'Meara (1990) disputes this, making reference to the double standards attributed to boys and girls (pp.107-08). Young men are encouraged to have affairs, while the same activity is forbidden of their sisters: "Most families go to great lengths to guard and restrain their young girls" (O'Meara, 1990, pp.107-08). While this study did not examine the sexual freedom of girls and women, it did suggest that the *feagaiga* may mean an unwed pregnant woman is not beyond forgiveness. However, before the process of forgiveness is explored I will discuss some of the responses an unwed pregnant woman may be confronted with.

When an unmarried woman's pregnancy becomes known some are treated badly, indeed some are even violently chastised (Naseri, 2001, pp.135-42). Yet, in any given situation where the family was angry with a young pregnant woman, it seems they were just as angry with the supposed father. O'Meara (1990) recounts the story of a young burly man who broke the jaw of another young man who he had caught sitting under the breadfruit tree with his twenty-year old sister. O'Meara reports that he thought the response was "a bit hasty and over protective", however nine months later the sister of the burly young man gave birth to twins (O'Meara, 1990, p.105; also see Schoeffel, 1995). 'Taking matters into your own hands' to handle sexual indiscretions was seen as a viable option:

> If she gets pregnant, well this is very unfortunate. The family would be very cross, her dad and her brothers, her mother and her sisters, they will all be disappointed in what she has done. I think her brothers will beat him up (Mose: Matai and retired school teacher, Nov 2004).

In recounting the discovery of her pregnancy, Leausa recalls how angry and ashamed her family were:

> My family was so angry with me. Yes they were so angry, they were so angry with me because I was young at that time. My brothers were so angry with me because my pride was taken away. They were shamed by other boys; their friends laughed, did things like that (Leausa: Single mother, Dec 2001).

This anger could also be seen in the story of Rika, who went on to marry her partner, and is now separated:

> Rika: Everybody called me names, it hurt so much
>
> Rochelle: When they were angry with you did they ever hurt you physically?
>
> Rika: No they just said bad words at me, and this was so hard but they never hit me. I think that all families try to act like this (Rika: Single mother, Jan 2002).

While being on the receiving end of bad words as opposed to physical abuse may seem that a person has been let off lightly, it is well noted by Macpherson and Macpherson (1987) that

words can have an extremely harmful effect. Samoans have a saying: *e pala le ma'a 'ae le pala le 'upu*, that is, stones may be reduced to sand, but words never decay; similarly, *e sola le fai, 'ae tu'u le foto*, that is, the stingray escapes, but leaves behind its barb (p.311). Both of these sayings suggest that harmful words can have a long lasting if not permanent effect, especially if it is considered that a person has brought shame to the family. Various proverbs that date back to pre-Christian Samoa, as well as those drawn from the scriptures, reinforce the idea of shame. For example, *fa'ato'ilalo le 'āiga* (causing the family to sink), *toso i lalo le 'āiga* (to bring the family name down), *māasiasi* (guilty for having brought the family into disrepute) (Macpherson & Macpherson, 1987, p.311). When this is coupled with the idea that what is done is not forgotten, good or bad, then for some young women suicide may seem like a viable option, or lead to ideas about taking the life of the unborn child because they are unable to face family members and the consequences of their actions (Fiti-Sinclair, 2003, pp.54-55).

While Maia, an unmarried mother, had never considered suicide herself, the shame of her pregnancy had a heart-felt impact. Maia became pregnant with Leilani, a child that was later diagnosed with a disability, after she had a very short-term relationship:

> He told me that he loved me, and so I went with him and then he said [later] that the baby wasn't his (Maia: Single mother, Nov 2004) [my insert].

Maia reported that she felt so devastated and ashamed. Maia was also very worried about what her family would say, because this was not her first pregnancy outside of marriage:

> I took some Samoan medicine to try and get rid of the baby, to kill the baby. Then the baby was born and she had a disability. I thought that God was punishing me for trying to kill the baby, I was so angry at myself; at everyone… all I did was cry. I felt so very bad, so ashamed about what I had done. I hated myself so much. You know for the first month Leilani seemed normal, looked normal and then her face, her look, her features became apparent. I was so sure that God was punishing me and so I believed that I deserved it (Maia: Single mother, Nov 2004).

While most women have no intention of bringing shame upon their family members O'Meara (1990) notes that crossing forbidden sexual ground is a way that girls can covertly express feelings of anger and hostility that they are generally not able to express. "One young mother told me that she had an affair and became pregnant because, as she said, 'I wanted to do something to hurt my parents'" (O'Meara, 1990, p.108).

In talking about single mothers and pregnancy, Yvette thought this idea of hurting one's parents was also very probable, but as a general rule people might just want to be together and have a baby anyway:

> We had a friend at University in Australia well she got pregnant. We all felt sorry for her having to tell her family because we knew they would be cross at her, really cross at her boyfriend. They didn't know her boyfriend. They had lived together before this, that made her family angry too, but they just did it anyway. I think that a few young women do get pregnant; I have wondered why they don't use birth control, so maybe they want to get pregnant, and to just get married. Perhaps that is what they want, what they know; to be in love, get married and have a family (Yvette: Tertiary educated young woman, Nov 2004).

Yvette also raised the idea that having a baby when you are not married is not really such a bad thing, but it is just made worse through the gossiping or seems bad because of where you come from:

> In Apia we are more progressive in our thinking, we accept things easier. They are really traditional in Savai'i, so maybe what you think depends on where you are from. I think in the villages it gives people something to gossip about (Yvette: Tertiary educated young woman from Apia, Nov 2004).

It is commonly said that 'something that has happened on one side of the island in the morning will be well known on the other side by noon' (Pers. Comm. 2002, 2004). As observed in

Maia's story above, and Teresa's tale below, gossip or bad words can be very harmful to the individual as well as the family's status:

> Yes people they gossip, even your family can, and it can be really hurtful. A few years ago my stomach well it was getting bigger and bigger, it looked like I was going to have a baby. But I was sick I had a tumour in my stomach, some of my family came to the hospital with me so they could see the truth, they thought that it was a baby and they didn't believe me that it was a tumour. So when I had the tumour removed, well after that they were very sorry about what they said (Teresa: Young, unmarried village woman, who works in Apia in the public sector, Nov 2004).

Yet this rebuke by the family and society for the most part appears short-lived, with a number of strategies available for making amends. These will now be discussed in more detail.

Cultural strategies for making amends

Fa'amagalo: Seeking forgiveness

When an unmarried woman discloses she is pregnant she can obviously tip the balance and disrupt family harmony, especially as according to the *feagaiga*, a sister holds the dignity of the family with her. Most importantly though, the *feagaiga* means an unwed pregnant woman is not beyond forgiveness. *Fa'asamoa* recognises that harmony or relational bonds disturbed by deviation can also be restored. "Fa'asamoa recognises human fragility and is willing to forgive" (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.24; also see Lui, 2003, pp.2-3). A person can seek *fa'amagalo* (forgiveness) by undergoing the process of *fa'atoesega* (formal apology) or in extreme cases, by the offending person and/or their *'āiga* performing a public act of apology and penance called an *ifoga* (Lui, 2003, p.2; O'Meara, 1990, p.121). The couple, or the girl and boy separately, can apologise. For Samoans "this act of humility and self-abasement is profoundly moving" (O'Meara, 1990, p.122).

Maia, reflecting back to her first pregnancy, recounted:

> Maia: Well I was 20 years old when I had my first baby. I took a big apology to my dad for what I did. Because that boyfriend is the boy of my village so my dad knew who he was.
>
> Rochelle: Did anything happen to the boy? Did he have to apologise? Do you know?
>
> Maia: Well he was really afraid so he just hid.
>
> Rochelle: He just hid?
>
> Maia: Yeah, and then afterward he came to me and he said he has to come to me [to take responsibility and ask me to get married]… and I said no. My dad said that I was not allowed to marry him. So I said no and my dad said no too… Dad did not want me to marry him. So I accepted this, so I stayed alone and had that baby.
>
> Rochelle: So they didn't want you to marry him?
>
> Maia: Yeah that's right.
>
> Rochelle: So he went away?
>
> Maia: Yeah he went away and he married another lady.
>
> Rochelle: Wow, did that make you sad?
>
> Maia: Yes (nods), but not really, I accepted it because that is what my dad said (Maia: Single mother, Nov 2004) [my insert].

Marriage is seldom forced. As seen in Maia's story, families prefer to have an unmarried moth-

er rather than taking into their midst a man they do not particularly like or who would not make a suitable husband (Holme, 1957, p.411).

Fa'ailo ga tama: Accepting the baby

The restoration of harmony can also occur though the *fa'ailo ga tama* (to mark or distinguish a child or young one). According to *fa'asamoa*, the arrival of a new baby warrants the process of *fa'ailo ga tama*.[3] This is an official acknowledgement of the newborn baby by the parents of the two *'āiga*. This process gives formal recognition to the social and cultural connections that the two *'āiga* have through blood (GoWS/UNICEF, 1996, p.6; Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.14), thus consolidating the relationship between the new baby and the father's family.

Ngan-Woo's (1985) detailed account of *fa'ailo ga tama* illustrates that the process of *fa'ailo ga tama* involves the preparing and presenting of food and other gifts, such as 'ie toga (fine mats), money, or gifts for the baby, from both sides of the family to one another. By presenting gifts, the father's side demonstrates that they are a family that has wealth, status, credibility and prestige (p.14). On the mother's side, the presenting of gifts demonstrates that the family understands and practices the values of *fa'asamoa*. In doing this, both families acknowledge that they have a commitment to the newborn, and even in years to come they will honour their obligations. This commitment to family is even extended to the wider family of the baby (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.14).

For a child that is born outside of wedlock, once the *fa'ailo ga tama* has been performed then the baby is no longer considered illegitimate. The newborn baby is generally welcomed unconditionally, without being stigmatised (Holme, 1957, p.411). As Ngan-Woo writes:

> The process of fa'ailo ga tama gives the child a place within the 'āiga of both the father and mother. All support systems will be made available to the child and no attempt will be made to morally condemn the mother or the father because the child has been born out of wedlock (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.14).

Fa'ailo ga tama is also a means for achieving reconciliation between the two families. This is a necessary process if the couple are not intending to marry each other (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p.14).

Caring for children

As mentioned earlier, babies in Samoa are regarded in a positive light – whatever the birth circumstances. Everybody in the family pampers, cuddles and greatly cares for babies especially for the first two years of their lives (Maiava, 2001, p.80; O'Meara 1990, p.77; p.169). With adult sisters, brothers, cousins, aunts, and uncles all living in close proximity, a functioning extended/immediate family not only means that the elderly are taken care of, but also that small children are cared for (Lay, Murrow & Meleisea, 2000, p.15). A number of authors highlight that the elderly also play a major role in caring for small children (Holme & Holme, 1992, p.97). The care of small children is also delegated to younger children, usually girls of about six to seven years of age. This care may include carrying them around, entertaining them, stopping them from disturbing others, especially adults, and protecting them from other children (Grattan, 1948, p.165; Holmes, 1957, p.402). In light of the above, there are obviously many hands around to help with the care of small children, especially babies. A note from my fieldwork journal also reiterates this:

> I got the bus this morning; it was very, very, crowded. A young woman got on with a very tiny baby. The baby only looked a few days old. The old man in the front seat tapped the woman, said something, put his hands out and she passed him the baby. She went to the back of the bus and sat down. Twenty minutes later the old man got off and handed the baby to an elderly woman. Ten minutes later the young woman walked down the aisle to get off the bus, she made a noise to get the old woman's attention and she smiled, nodded, collected her baby and got off the bus. Later when I spoke to Savalia (Savai'i research assistant) about this, I asked whether

> the woman with the baby would know the people on the bus and she said 'probably not, but it doesn't matter because everybody likes babies. Everybody wants to hold, cuddle and help with babies' (Field notes, Nov 2004).

Freely available childcare is a very useful asset to have access to, especially for those single mothers who might require childcare because they are in formal employment. Chant (1997) noted the childcare difficulties that single mothers report having (pp.45-46). Whether it is not being able to access childcare, afford the cost of childcare, or being forced back into the workforce when they would rather be at home with their children, childcare is often a number one issue for parents (also see Mädje & Neusüss cited in Chant, 1997, p.40; Oliver, 1996, pp.52-53). As a general rule however, obtaining childcare so one can attend work, study or generate income does not seem to be an issue in Samoa.

The restoration of harmony

Regardless of a woman's tumultuous beginnings into motherhood, once people come to terms with a young woman's pregnancy, any negative attitudes tend to settle down. As a general rule, Samoan society does not admonish these women for life. Savalia states:

> When the baby is born they will forgive her. The family might be cross – feel ashamed, but they will love the baby (Savalia: Savai'i research assistant, Nov 2004).

It is not the habit for the new mother or the family to abandon the baby. Soma, an elderly village pastor and *matai*, supports this by saying:

> Well you know there are a lot of girls who have children with no father and you know we all hate it. It disgraces the name of our family; it disgraces the name of our mum and our dad. However, this lady who has no husband, who is pregnant, well we will all look after that lady and the child. In my family, while we were never cross, we felt very sad. But the thing is… the baby and her, well we feed them, we look after them, and we do everything especially for the baby. The blood, the bones, and the flesh this is what is most important (Soma: Elderly village pastor and matai, Nov 2004).

The restoration of harmony when deviance occurs is fundamental to social functioning. This need to restore harmony has been applicable in a couple of instances in Maia's family. Maia told me about when her younger sister decided to become Mormon, to change religious denomination, and how her brother and father were very angry about this, as were her sisters. The family had always belonged to the Samoan Congregational Church and the Samoan Congregational Church was the first Samoan Church to be established. The family had a long history with the church and they were proud of this history and the relationships that they had built up over the decades:

> There was so much disharmony in the family at this time, there was crying and fighting, and I remember my brother hit my sister. They didn't speak for ages (Maia: Single mother, Nov 2004).

O'Meara (1990) notes while many villages are divided between two or three religious dominations, each with its own church and pastor or priest, some villages are noted for discouraging straying or converting to another domination, not only because of spiritual conviction but because they fear religious divisions will disrupt village harmony or family harmony depending where the division occurs (p.43). In Maia's opinion her family were very angry about this; indeed it seemed they were angrier than when she got pregnant. Maia thought her family forgot the fact she was pregnant pretty quickly.

Other accounts from the field also suggest that there were various means available for restoring harmony. Given the power of sisters according to the *feagaiga*, a young woman might go to an older sister or a natal aunt if they found themselves pregnant and unwed because the *feagaiga* may mean these women would weild more power to calm the family:

> With my first baby it was difficult for me to tell my dad, because I had that first baby when my mother died. My mother never knew. So I told it to one of my extended family, my aunt… so I talked to her to make it easy for me (Maia: Single mother, Nov 2004).

> Yes they were very angry at me, but I apologised. My parents were away at this time, and I was living with my grandparents, so my aunt she did the talking, so did my grandmother. My older brother he came. I could tell they were so disappointed like they had lost hope in me or something. Then my boys were born. My grandfather and the twins, well they are inseparable. My grandfather is old now. The twins keep him living, he says (Logo: Single mother, Jan 2002).

A young girl may also draw on the mediation, strength and advisory skills of her mother:

> If her dad is cross with her, her mother will mediate and advise. There is a process that will occur to work it out (Mose: *Matai* and retired school teacher, Nov 2004).

The couple themselves may seek to marry legally, or start co-habiting as in a common law marriage. These hidden relationships may be seen by some as part of the courtship process that leads up to marriage (O'Meara, 1990, p.105). The family may also insist that they marry, however if marriage is not considered to be a viable option the family may send the young woman away to live with relatives in another village. Sometimes young couples also elope and will return once the family has calmed down and accepted the marriage (O'Meara, 1990, p.105).

Embeddedness

Other members of the immediate or extended families may also informally adopt the babies of those women who do not marry. There are various instances where the family pulls together and the mother and the new baby become embedded in the wider family network:

> Maia: If somebody sees that you are just pregnant without a husband, well they talk and they talk… you know like that. But on the whole they understand because it didn't just happen to only me, it happens to all the girls. So that's why they calm down and left me alone. In the end I don't think that they treated me any differently. They knew that it could happen to anyone.
>
> Rochelle: Where did your first baby go? Did someone adopt your baby?
>
> Maia: Well firstly with my dad until I got stronger, and then when he died… then my younger sister and her husband adopted her… this was while I was in American Samoa. At that time I was with other family members, as a baby sitter. This baby is the girl who is in Apia now attending school.
>
> Rochelle: Were you okay about adopting?
>
> Maia: Ah yeah, the baby went to my own sister I was very happy about this (Maia: Single mother, Nov 2004).

These decisions are made by the family as a whole and appear to be made based on what is best for the entire family:

> Of course the family will help care for her – sometimes children might go elsewhere. Sometimes a baby goes to other members of the family. A young girl might go to Pago [American Samoa], New Zealand, or Australia. She does what her parents say. Parents decide what is important (Josef: Elderly *matai*, Nov 2004) [my insert].

Adoption may also occur covertly, meaning some women and children became so embedded within the immediate family that it is difficult to tell which women gave birth to what babies as the family would just refer to them as their children. This was reiterated when Diana stated:

> Sometimes you don't even know in a family whose baby is whose. They [the family] won't tell you, and they will just say the baby is a cousin or a sister or a brother. But the baby will still be loved (Diana: Divorced woman, Nov 2004)[my insert].

This was also confirmed by Bronwyn the Apia research consultant that I worked with during

the second fieldwork period when she told me:

> Parents of a young girl will often tell you that the baby is theirs, that it is their youngest child. This is the great thing about having so many available hands around to help (Bronwyn: Research consultant, Apia-based, Nov 2004).

This care for children of the extended family is based on the value accorded to children in Samoa: "A Samoan family's greatest resource is its children. The only assurance of support that people have in old age" (O'Meara, 1990, p.79). Those that have few or no children usually adopt, whether it is temporarily or permanently from close relatives (O'Meara, 1990, p.79).

Even though adopted out, many women continue to have relationships with their children. Accounts from Maia about her first born who was adopted (informally) by her extended *'āiga* suggested she still had a solid and loving relationship, even though she had not been a central feature in her daughter's up-bringing. Moreover, it appeared that her daughter had not experienced any deprivation because of her birth circumstances. As noted in my field diary:

> Maia is planning to take the early ferry this Friday to Apia, to attend her first daughter's school prize giving. Her daughter is receiving a prize. Maia seems very proud (Field notes, Nov 2004).

It was consistently restated that regardless of predicament, no-one would be left to fend for themselves and neither would they be rejected for the rest of their lives by society or their family:

> Well yes it is better to have a husband. But we know they don't though. I know I have seen pregnant girls. They go to the hospital. You see them getting bigger and bigger and then the baby is born and her mother, and her sister, even her dad will care for this baby (Lea: Village woman, living in husband's village, Nov 2004).

This point is also confirmed by Tina in discussing her brother who has a baby to a girl in a neighbouring village:

> Boy, when our mother found out she said to him 'you get over there and marry her, care for her and this baby.' She was cross at him, really cross (Tina: Tamaese's sister, Nov 2004).

Tina's brother, Tamaese informs me later that they are not married yet, they are living in-between both families:

> I love my son, I really want more children. They are a gift. It would be good to have another son. My mother has stopped being mad with me (Tamaese: Untitled man fathered a child outside of marriage, Nov 2004).

Neli, a private business woman and spokesperson on gender issues, spoke about her own personal experience as an unmarried mother from years ago:

> Well in my case I am an example of a woman who had this thing happen. I had a baby that was born out of wedlock… I was alone and with the baby. In the beginning when my father found out that I was pregnant he didn't say anything to me… he wouldn't speak to me. My family has a chiefly title, and for my father it was a very hard thing to accept this kind of thing. We came from the village where the culture is very strong and so I didn't even tell him that I was pregnant, I just left it like that and I led a normal life and when he found out that I gave birth to a baby boy, although he was ashamed about this kind of thing, when the baby was born he was the first one to come to the hospital and he wanted to take the baby with him… So you see the anger and the hatred in the beginning, all of the words like 'we have lost hope in you', well when my family saw my son all of that was gone, gone, gone (Neli: Business woman and gender expert, Nov 2004).

Hence women who have babies outside of marriage appear not to be ostracised forever.

Discussion

Overall responses to single women with babies were ultimately positive. On one hand when a child was conceived out of wedlock, while many Samoans expressed shame, anger and grief and without a doubt this issue posed great moral concern for many Samoans, a process of for-

giveness, acceptance and reconciliation occurs. Any small baby, regardless of circumstances is seen to be a 'gift from God' (Maria K: Samoan academic, Nov 2002), therefore the needs of the baby, as well as the woman, will be met. On the whole, the women in this research did not feel that they were discriminated against or stigmatised because they had had a baby outside of marriage. While everyone had an individual story to tell about their experience, there appeared to be no longer-term ramifications. They did not believe that their position as a single mother had a bearing on themselves or their children.

While some women felt this week's gossip might include themselves, this did not mean they would be next week's gossip. There always seemed to be some story somewhere, about someone or something, which provided new amusement or entertainment. Moreover, because Samoan people were fairly mobile and because people's overseas relatives moved about the place regularly there was often something occurring, for example a *fa'alavelave*, as a distraction.

On the whole, *fa'asamoa* accords Samoan women an expected degree of security and certainty, and since it is within the family that the *feagaiga* exists, it can be argued that the family is potentially very valuable to the single mother, for ensuring her own wellbeing as well as that of her children. Moreover because *fa'asamoa*, attributes importance and value to all of the family members, regardless of their non-marital or marital situation, assurance is thus given, meaning single mothers are not stigmatised or discriminated against and isolated as individuals or as a social group.

There are a number of systems, processes and structures with both invisible and visible components that determine how a Samoan person behaves within and outside the family, so as to achieve the goals of the family and safeguard the family status. There are clear expectations outlined by *fa'asamoa* which ensure various members look out for other family members, as is especially noted in the *feagaiga* brother/sister relationship. According to *fa'asamoa*, a sense of *tautua* (loyalty and service) to the family is also very strong. *Tautua* (obligations and duty) to the *'āiga* are extremely important (Ngan-Woo, 1985, pp.10-11).

The extent to which single mothers are embedded in their families and wider communities requires exploration, before any assumptions can be made about their situation. This is especially so as no individual lives in isolation under *fa'asamoa*. Single mothers need to be situated within the wider socio-economic, political and cultural context in which they live their lives as women, sisters, daughters, mothers, as an employee with a professional qualification and income, as the owner of a business, or in terms of their position as the family income generator within the informal sector. Single mother need to be understood according to the role they are fulfilling or in terms of the many and varied ways they play out their lives, as opposed to the label.[4] To focus on this category alone would merely place a small part of a person's identity over and above who else they are as a person.

While attitudes and ideas about single mothers have certainly come a long way since the forced adoptions and the hiding away of single mothers in convents and mental institutions, there continues to be a normative discourse which sees single mothers as problematic. As noted at the start of this paper, for single mothers living in a Western context, especially if they happen to be poor and non-white, they continue to be seen in terms of a deficit model. Yet in the context of Samoa, the valued-based framework of *fa'asamoa* provides a space whereby single mothers are instead seen for their various roles, their contributions to the family and wider committee, and their achievements, such as maintaining the home-base, succeeding in education or providing financially for the wider family rather than the label single or solo mother. *Fa'asamoa* is unique unlike any Western framework because of the aforementioned reasons and because it also accords single mothers and their children a sense of security and certainty

that needs will be met, and that they are not stereotyped and marginalised as an individual and/or as a social group.

Conclusion

While pregnancy outside of marriage can disrupt balance within the Samoan family, the framework of *fa'asamoa* also provides cultural options such as *fa'amagalo* and *fa'ailo ga tama* for restoring this balance. In discussing the above-mentioned and the notion of embeddedness within the wider family network, it is shown that regardless of their start in life, single mothers and their children are not stigmatised, nor do they face ongoing discrimination as individuals or as a social group. The overriding importance of the family and the invisible and visible components of *fa'asamoa* can also work in a way where they provide protective factors, ensuring single mothers are not stigmatised, ostracised and discriminated against because of their circumstances:

> We forgive her, even if she doesn't have a husband. When the baby is born everybody will look after her and the baby. This is what *fa'asamoa* is (Mose: *Matai* and retired school teacher, Nov 2004).

Because *fa'asamoa* continues to set the appropriate status and roles for Samoans a woman's circumstances as a single mother is not how she is primarily defined. Rather, each woman continues to be understood in relation to the cultural framework of *fa'asamoa*, which situates her and her children within her family, natal village and the wider community.

This paper illustrates clearly that while cultural frameworks can position women in such a way that non-martial sex and pregnancy outside of marriage are seen as immoral, thus the family is seen as being shamed and brought into disrepute, there is often a contestable space where other cultural values, behaviours, practices and protocols can be drawn upon thus ensuring women are not rendered to a position of problematic 'other' for good.

DR ROCHELLE STEWART-WITHERS is a lecturer with the Institute of Development Studies, School of People, Environment and Planning at Massey University. This paper draws on ideas from her PhD based in Samoa. Rochelle's research interests are female-headed households, gender and development, qualitative research methodologies – feminism, and indigenous epistemologies in the Pacific. Rochelle is currently building a new research platform focusing on sport for development. Her research includes an NZAID funded project which looks at how sport, particularly rugby league, can provide greater economic and social opportunities in PNG and Fiji.

Notes

1 Historically the institutionalised divisions of the *feagaiga* was expressed in many villages as the *o le nu'u o tama' ita' i* (Village of the Ladies) and the *o le nu'u o ali'i* (Village of the Gentlemen). These divisions differentiated the realm of influence of the *aualuma* (daughters of the village) and the *ali'i* (chiefs) (Schoeffel, 1995, p.98).

2 See Schoeffel (1995) for an in-depth account of the *feagaiga*, in particular the historical rights and responsibilities accorded to brothers and sisters in relation to property (p.92).

3 In the document 'A situational analysis of children and women in Western Samoa' the ritual is referred to as *fa'afailelegā tama* (nurturing the offspring) (GoWS/UNICEF, 1996, p.6).

4 Also see Koloto and Sharma (2005) for examples of the many roles that even New Zealand based Pacific Island women (including Samoan women) play.

References

Arroba, A. (1996). A voice of alarm: A historian's view of the family. *Gender and Development 4*(2), 8-13

Briefings on Development and Gender (BRIDGE) (2001). *Gender and poverty: Briefing paper on the 'feminisation of poverty'*. BRIDGE Report No 59. Sussex: IDS. Retrieved on 13/10/2002 at http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/femofpov.pdf

Broder, S. (2002). *Tramps, unfit mothers, and neglected children: Negotiating the family in late nineteenth-century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

CHANGE (2008). http://www.infoforhealth.org/pr/l11/l11boxes.shtml#culture

Chant, S. (1997). *Women-headed households: Diversity and dynamics in the developing world*. Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd and New York: St. Martin's Press

Chant, S. (2003). *Female household headship and the feminisation of poverty: Facts, fictions and forward strategies*. New Working Paper Series No 9. London: London School of Economics Gender Institute

Cribb, J. (1999). Being bashed: Western Samoan women's responses to domestic violence in Western Samoa and New Zealand. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography 6*(1), 49-66

Datta, K., & McIlwaine, C. (2000). Empowered leaders? Perspectives on women heading households in Latin America and Southern Africa. *Gender and Development 8*(3), 40-49

Davidson, J.W. (1967). *Samoa mo Samoa: The emergence of the independent state of Western Samoa*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press

Dunlop, E.R. (1999). *Pisinisi laititi: Samoan women and the informal sector*. Palmerston North , New Zealand: Massey University, unpublished Masters Thesis

Edin, K., & Lien, L. (1997). *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive welfare and low-wage work*. New York: Russell Sage

Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. (1991). *E au le inailau a tamaitai: Women, education and development in Western Samoa*. Sydney: Macquarie University, unpublished PhD Thesis

Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. (1996). *Tamaitai Samoa: Their stories*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific

Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. (2000). Women NGOs within the new governance agenda: Are they still based on alofa?. In E. Huffer & A. So'o (Eds.). *Governance in Samoa: Pulega i Sāmoa* (pp.97-112). Canberra: The Australian National University, Asia Pacific Press

Fiti-Sinclair, R. (2003). Women and suicide in Samoa. In P. Fairbairn-Dunlop (Ed.). *Samoan women: Widening Choices* (pp.49-56). Samoa: Institute of Pacific Studies University of the South Pacific and Samoan Women Graduate

Freeman, D. (1984). *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The making and unmaking of an anthropological myth*. Canberra: Australian National University Press

Government of Western Samoa /United Nations Children's Fund (GoWS/UNICEF) (1996). *A situational analysis of children and women in Western Samoa*. Suva: Quality Print Limited

Grattan, F.J.H. (1948). *An introduction to Samoan culture*. Papakura, New Zealand: McMillan Publishers

Holme, L.D. (1957). Ta'u: Part 1: Stability and change in a Samoan village. *Journal of the Polynesian Society 66*(4), 398-435

Holme, L.D., & Holme, E.R. (1992). *Samoan village: Then and now* (2nd ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers

Koloto, A., & Sharma, S. (2005). *Pasifika women's economic well-being study - final report*. New Zealand: Ministry of Women's Affairs. Retrieved on December 1, 2008 from: http://www.mwa.govt.nz/news-and-pubs/publications/pasifika-womens-wellbeing-final.html

Lay, G., Murrow, T., & Meleisea, M. (2000). *Samoa*. Auckland: Pasifika Press Ltd

Lui, D. (2003). *Family: A Samoan perspective*: Mental Health Commission Occasional Paper No 4. Retrieved on October 5, 2004 from: http://www.mhc.govt.nz/publications/2003/A%20Samoan%20perspective%-%20Email.doc

Macpherson, C., & Macpherson, L. (1987). Towards an explanation of recent trends in suicide in Western Samoa. *Man 22*, 305-330.

Maiava, S. (2001). *A clash of paradigms: Intervention, response and development in the South Pacific*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Mead, M. (1928). *Coming of age*. New York: William Morrow and Company. Inc

Meleisea, M. (1992). *Change and adaptations in Western Samoa*. Christchurch, Macmillan Brown Centre

Mulitalo-Lauta, P. T. III M. T. (1998). *The role of fa'asamoa in social work in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University, Unpublished Masters Thesis.

Mulitalo-Lauta, P. T. III M. T. (2000). *Fa'asamoa and social work within the New Zealand context*. Palmerston

North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press
Naseri, A. (2001). Adele Naseri. In T. Mulitalo (Ed.). *My own shade of brown* (pp.135-160). Christchurch, New Zealand: University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts and Shoal Bay Press
Ngan-Woo, F. (1985). *Fa'asamoa: The world of Samoans*. New Zealand: The Office of the Race Relations Conciliator
Oliver, A. (1996). Child care and the benefits trap. *Gender and Development 14*(2), 52-53
O'Meara, J.T. (1990). *Samoan planters: Tradition and economic development in Polynesia*. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc
Radcliffe, S., & Laurie, N. (2006). Culture and development: Taking culture seriously in development for Andean indigenous people. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 24*, 231-248
Reekie, G. (1998). *Measuring immorality: Social inquiry and the problem of illegitimacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
Saolotoga, F.S.M. (1995). *Feminism and the changing roles of women in society and the church in Samoa*. Suva: Unpublished Bachelor Thesis, Pacific Regional Seminary
Shore, B. (1981). Sexuality and gender in Samoa: Conceptions and missed conceptions. In S. Ortner & H. Whitehead (Eds.). *Sexual meanings: The cultural constructions of gender and sexuality* (pp. 192-215). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
Schoeffel, P. (1979). *Daughters of Sina: A study of gender, status and power in Western Samoa*. Canberra: Australian National University, Unpublished PhD Thesis.
Schoeffel, P. (1995). The Samoan concept of feagaiga and its transformation. In J. Huntsman (Ed.). *Tonga and Samoa: Images of gender and polity* (pp.85-105). Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury,
Stewart-Withers, R.R. (2007). *Contesting development: The experience of female-headed households in Samoa*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University, Unpublished PhD Thesis.
Tupuloa A. (2000). Learning sexuality: Young Samoan women. In A. Jones, P.Herda & T.M. Suaalii (Eds.). *Bitter sweet: Indigenous women in the Pacific* (pp. 61-72). Dunedin: University of Otago Press.