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# Samoan Kids in the City:

## The Impact of Samoan Parenting Practices on Samoan Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity

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A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health

Doctor of Philosophy in  
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Nicola Tava'e Fa'avale

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# Abstract

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Physical activity (PA) is vital to the optimal health and development of children and in turn, independent mobility (IM) - outdoor play and travelling to destinations unsupervised - is an essential component of PA for children. There is a growing body of research on the extent to which children's daily IM and PA are influenced by parents' experiences and perceptions of streets and public spaces as safe and desirable – or otherwise. However, little is known about Samoan parents' experiences and perceptions of their social and physical surroundings and the associated impact on their children's daily IM and PA.

Extended families, traditional households and the village-based life of Samoan people are changing. For Samoan people in New Zealand, the transition from a traditional ad hoc and exchange-based way of life to a modern, more formal and cash-based socio-economic reality has seen Samoan parents increasingly living in a 'rat race'. This modern reality has influenced Samoan parenting practices in New Zealand.

This research is nested in and arose from the 'Kids in the City' (KITC) research project – a Health Research Council funded study of the independent mobility and physical activity of children, in relation to neighbourhood urban design and neighbourhood perceptions of safety in six Auckland neighbourhoods. The critical realism approach from KITC was used to identify the underlying mechanisms influencing Samoan parents' parenting practices and children's IM and PA behaviours. Three methods were used to collect the data: computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) with parents (n=36); semi-structured interviews with parents (n=14), follow up interviews with parents (n=8), and key informant interviews (n=6); as well as 7-day self-reported travel diaries kept by the children (n=37). Triangulating the data collection methods allowed varied perspectives on the influences of Samoan parenting practices to be gathered, as well as information on how their perceptions of their neighbourhoods were shaped, and how these perceptions then informed their decision-making around their children's activity behaviours.

Key themes that emerged from the findings were: 1) Samoan parenting incorporates Samoan practices with Western practices and the values and beliefs that underpin these; 2) Samoan cultural affiliation impacts on how parents perceive their social and physical surroundings as positive or negative; and 3) parents' perceptions of their surroundings largely informs where

children are allowed to go and not go – unsupervised. The findings make it clear that cultural perceptions influence the decisions Samoan parents make about where they will allow their children go without adult supervision, thereby rendering notions of IM to be of little value. They do not see the value of IM when the developmental benefits of being physically active can be achieved through collective family, church and other activities. Further, Samoan ontology and epistemologies need to be valued and validated in urban planning and design to allow a better understanding of how and why Samoan children interact with their surrounding social and physical neighbourhoods – independently or otherwise.

# Dedication

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of three special people:

My late grandparents who represented all the beauty of the Samoan culture and a true heart for Jesus:

Magele Fiamatai Tava'e  
(1 February 1939 – 17 August 2016)

&

Vaeluaga Pepe Tava'e  
(1 January 1939 – 8 August 2014)

My late great-aunt who was a parent in service, love and dedication; and was a true child at heart:

Tivinia Sameme Fred  
(20 September 1935 – 25 January 2017)

Finally this thesis is also dedicated to my husband and our three amazing children who show me every day the grace and love of our God:

Andrew Alosina Fa'avale

Auro Adelina Fa'avale

Felani Pepe Ta'otoga Fa'avale

Selemaea Tuala Tava'e Fa'avale

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*'Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.*

*You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.'*

*Hebrews 10: 35-36 NIV*

Without the strength and the grace of God, and the sacrifice of His son Jesus Christ, I would not be who I am and where I am today. I am so grateful for His abounding love and mercy through this process, and the privilege to steward this opportunity.

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I am so blessed to stand on the shoulders of many who have gone before me, many of whom I have referenced or shared their ideas. I stand on the shoulders of mine, and others' ancestors who have toiled on, and fought for, the lands on which we call home.

Fa'afetai tele lava. Fa'avae i le Atua

# Glossary

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'aiga	Family
Alofa	Love
Aoga Amata	Samoa bilingual language nest/early childhood education (ECE)
Ava	Respect
Fa'alavelave	An event or occasion that is a not part of everyday normal activities.
Fa'aloalo	Respect/Reverence
Fa'amagalo	Forgiveness
Fa'aSamoa	Samoa way of life. This encapsulates Samoa values, beliefs and
Fagogo	Traditional story telling
Fanua	'Land' as well as 'placenta'
Feagaiga	A sacred covenant between brother and sister, or between minister
Feau	Chores
Fonofale	Traditional Samoa meeting house
Lotonu'u	Maintaining/restoring pride
Lotu	Church
Malaga	Movement
Mama	Food masticated by the mother and passed to the baby as a means of
Matai	Chief/Chiefly system
Meaalofa	Gift/Present
Nu'u	Village
Pakeha	Maori term for a person of European descent
Palagi	Samoa term for a person of European descent
Pito nu'u	Part of the village
Tagaloa	Indigenous Samoa God of all living things on earth
Tapu	Sacred

Tautua	Service
Teu le va	To nurture or make amends – the sacred relationship between
Tofi	Inheritance
Toona’i	An important gathering or feast
Tua’oi	Dual meaning: ‘boundary’ and also ‘neighbour’
Usita’i	Discipline
Va	Sacred space that connects separate entities (people and things).

Samoa glossary derived from the following literature: (Lauta-Mulitalo, 1998); (Cowley-Malcolm, 2013); (Ng Shiu, 2011).

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# Prologue

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## INTRODUCTION

The challenge ... is therefore to look carefully at what we have before we dismiss it, to search for meaning and substance within ourselves before going abroad, and to watch for the clutters of life that can unnecessarily impede our focus on what really matters. What matters in the pursuit of indigenous Pacific knowledges is that it survives – and survives because it gives us meaning and belonging. Everything else is clutter. (Tui Atua, 2005, p. 68)

I was well into engaging with the research data for this study when I realised I was finding it hard to ignore its relevance in my own life, and that of my family's. Themes emerging from the interviews made me feel nostalgic and sparked my interest in re-evaluating my own life experiences.

Similarly, throughout this PhD journey major events in my life have helped give varied meaning to my interactions with the world and enrich my view of it, and also coloured my interactions with the participants of this research and their stories.

Following the honourable Tupua Tamasese Efi Tui Atua's opening quote, the lived realities (Pacific or Western) of the participants are the most important aspect of this research; everything else, if not providing context, is 'clutter' (Tui Atua, 2005). While I don't believe my story is 'clutter', the purpose of this prologue is to outline my personal account of the themes and then leave it here – so that the participants' stories can be at the fore. Presenting my personal account also allows for an understanding of the influence of my own biases.

The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others—to indwell—and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand. (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 123)

While reading the literature on Samoans in New Zealand, Samoan parenting, Samoan neighbourhood perceptions and Samoan children's independent mobility (IM), and conducting the interviews, I became aware of how these literatures and discussions resonated with me as well as my family. I reflected on the relevance of the historical context of the first Samoan migrants arriving in New Zealand, and the ensuing political and social change, for my grandparents who were Samoan migrants.

My Samoan grandmother, Vaeluaga Pepe Tava'e (nee Magele), from the village of Lufilufi, and my Samoan grandfather, Magele Fiamatai Tava'e, from the village of Tuana'i, personified the early Samoan migrants, who came to New Zealand to earn money for their families back in Samoa. My grandparents met not long after migrating and went on to have four children – my dad, my uncle and two aunties. Their commitment to provide for their families in Samoa now extended to include their children. They found solace in the early Pacific Islanders' Congregational Church, commonly known as PIC (Pacific Islanders' Church), where they were able to be Samoan – to express themselves in their culture, to speak their language, to practise their faith in God, and to communicate with others and exchange the intricacies unique to Samoan people.

As young single migrants, they both stayed with various family members who had already established themselves in New Zealand. After marrying, they moved to the Auckland suburb of Grey Lynn - then densely populated with Pacific migrants - and their first child was born there.

However, they were soon enticed to South of Auckland where houses were affordable, and they were able to buy their own home. They bought and settled in the suburb of Otara, amidst other Samoan and Pacific families. Their familiarity with neighbours allowed a strong sense of neighbourhood – and they afforded their children huge IM as a result. The 'neighbourliness' of the environment provided a safe space for their children and was reassuring to my grandparents, as they were often away working long hours at numerous jobs.

My grandparents did not really speak much about the impact or difference migration had made to them and their family. They never shared any experiences of racism or oppression, or cultural conflicts and hardships. The stories they told was the culture they created; one of hope and a future. I found their stories truly admirable.

My dad's childhood experience of Samoan culture revolved around family lotu and speaking the Samoan language at home, extended family visits, and PIC activities. Although home was

entrenched in Samoan culture, he was encouraged by his parents to learn the Western way in order to be successful in New Zealand society.

My dad's experiences of Samoan culture left him feeling somewhat ambivalent; he loved the value placed on family and respect for elders, and held strong values aligned with the Christian faith. But he disliked the monetary obligations involved in fa'alavelave (particularly to the church) that burdened his family and others, the 'deifying' of church ministers, and the way Samoan culture had become entrenched in and synonymous with church. To shield his children from the aspects of Samoan culture he did not agree with, he stepped away from the church and aspects of the "Samoanness" he grew up around. Tiatia (2003) and Anae's (1998) research participants shared the same feelings of ambivalence towards aspects of Samoan culture and the church (Anae, 1998; Tiatia, 1998).

Inevitably, my own early experience and later exposure to Samoan research has informed my perspectives on Samoan culture.

My mum's experiences of her Niuean and Tongan heritage were different again from my dad's experience of the Samoan culture. Henry Bourke, my Tongan grandfather from the island of Vava'u passed away when my mum was young. As a result, apart from catching up occasionally with my grandfather's family, her experience of the Tongan culture growing up was minimal. After my grandfather's passing, my Niuean grandmother, Anefe Bourke (nee Fred) from Hakupu, was left with eight young children to raise in a foreign land – and so had more pressing priorities than instilling Niuean culture in her children. In fact, she encouraged them to succeed in the New Zealand way, which indirectly gave them license to 'try out' aspects of New Zealand's popular culture at the time. It reflects huge credit on my amazing Nana and her younger sister Tivinia Fred, who came to help her that all her children did extremely well in their personal journeys.

My mum and her sisters were part of a Cook Island dance group as young teenagers, and represented Niue in many sporting codes, often at an international level and well into adulthood. My mum was in her thirties with three children – one a two year-old - when she represented Niue at the 2003 Netball World Championships in Jamaica. My Nana's intricate skills in weaving her baskets and crocheting her pillowcases and bed-sheets, and the Niuean nursery rhymes she sang with us, her grandkids, have slowly become diluted to the point where none of her lineage practise these Niuean ways today. However, my mum understands some Niuean language, and her siblings can hold a basic conversation in Niuean, but not

Tongan, and all of them are proud of their cultural heritage. Mum's close connection to her Niuean side has transferred to a strong Niuean identification in her children; my siblings and I have also participated in many Niuean activities, particularly sporting events.

The fact that I am Niuean and Tongan as well as Samoan has had impacts on my perspectives and affiliation with the Samoan culture. In some ways, my experiences resonate with those of half-caste Samoans (Anae, 1998) in that I have sometimes been "the other" at Samoan events because of my Niuean and Tongan heritage and lack of Samoan cultural influences, such as not knowing the language or cultural etiquette. This not knowing is something that has got me out of doing many feau (chores) – even to this day.

My father (Samoan) and mother (half Niuean–half Tongan) have never spoken to each other in their native tongues. However, they encouraged my two siblings and I to learn the languages of our heritage from our grandparents and in school cultural groups, as they know this is something they miss from their own upbringing. They have supported us through all our school cultural group activities, encouraged us to represent our cultures through sport, emphasised the importance of family and extended family, and encouraged us to learn from the wealth of cultural knowledge held by our grandparents. Although I am the eldest, I admit my siblings are much more proficient than I am, and I do not speak or understand enough Samoan, Tongan or Niuean for daily conversations. Our home is relatively Westernised, but we are proud of our cultural heritages – every one of them. We feel very fortunate to have had time with our grandparents, and still hold dear the cultural values they passed on to us.

My parents have allowed us the freedom to choose from these multiple cultural aspects and knowledges in navigating our own cultural identities, and provided us with opportunities to do so – for that, I am truly grateful.

When I first read Melani Anae's (Anae, 1998) description of the 'New Zealand-born Samoan', I felt as if she was describing me. She had put into words an identity that I had not previously been able to relate to when reading Samoan, Niuean and Tongan migrant literature. I finally had a sense of identity and no longer felt inadequate when claiming my heritage as 'Samoan, Niuean and Tongan'. I was able to accept that there are various ways of 'being' a New-Zealand born Samoan, Niuean and Tongan, and that these are fluid, not static or fixed – and most certainly not absolute. Understanding this changed my whole sense of 'self'. I was able to stop focusing on my inadequacies in relation to descriptions/measures of what it is to be Pacific, and instead became more open to learning about the traditional and evolving intricacies of

each culture – now giving myself permission to navigate my way through them.

Did I relate to them? Not always. Could I learn from them? Always.

These insights into my own identity have enabled me to remain consciously aware of my own biases, and how my evolving perspectives have influenced this research.

When I started this PhD journey, I was a single female living at home with my parents. I considered myself a young person; my major role was still as the ‘child’ of my parents. My responsibilities were therefore tied up with serving my parents (although it mostly went the other way) and helping with my siblings. Most of the data collection for this research was conducted in this particular season of my life.

Over half way through the PhD journey, I married my wonderful husband, moved to Australia, and had two beautiful girls. Along the way, I have developed an identity, not only as a wife and mother, but also as a Pacific wife and mother in a country where diversity is not always validated. It has been personally challenging to navigate the identity of being Pacific in Australia, being confronted by what this meant in comparison to my previous taken-for-granted assumptions and common knowledge of being Pacific in Auckland, New Zealand. These experiences have given me insight into challenges of being both a migrant and a member of a cultural minority - but also the hope and determination of a better future, especially for our children.

As was true for my grandparents and my parents, my wish is for a better life for my children. This desire informed my grandparents’ decision to stay and make a home in New Zealand, although they missed Samoa, and also informed my dad’s decision to shield his children from aspects of Samoan culture he believed would hinder our ability to achieve our potential. This is also why my husband and I have chosen to live in Australia. Protection and guidance are therefore strong elements of our parenting. My grandparents talked of a free childhood in Samoa, where they were able to move about independently, and my father had somewhat the same experience growing up in New Zealand. My children and I have enjoyed significantly less IM. Perhaps the evolving perspective of a better life and future for our children does not encapsulate the opportunities for IM? Answering this question is one of the purposes of this research.

My interactions with the participants and their stories have also been influenced by becoming

a parent myself. My personal interest was driven initially by a desire to understand Samoan culture, cultural identity, and its manifestation in this diaspora. My interest has evolved to include the motivations of parents in their decision making for their children, and research insights have evolved alongside my own personal journey.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research topic, describes the context in which the research is situated and then provides an overview of the research. Contextual information is presented about the three main concepts to be explored – Samoan parenting, neighbourhood perceptions, and children’s independent mobility (IM – outdoor play and travelling to destinations unsupervised). The conceptual framework developed to guide the exploration of these concepts is outlined, along with the unpacking of the relationship between them and a background to Samoan migration to New Zealand provided. Finally, the research rationale is laid out, followed by a description of the thesis chapters, to provide the context in which this research is situated, and an overview of the research.

## CONTEXT

Physical activity (PA) is essential for the optimal health and development of children (Hillman, Adams, & Whitelegg, 1990) and IM is seen as an essential component of PA for children (Hillman, et al., 1990; Shaw et al., 2015). The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child has recognised the importance of PA and IM for children in setting priorities for safe environments that not only accommodate, but also promote children’s right to play, leisure, and rest (United Nations, 1989).

Substantial declines in children’s PA levels have occurred globally and are associated with high childhood obesity rates (World Health Organisation, 2010). Children’s IM rates have also declined over the past decade (Shaw, et al., 2015). Although Pacific children’s activity levels have improved over the last decade (Ministry of Health, 2003b, 2015; Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), 2003, 2012), and they have high levels of IM compared with children from other ethnic groups (Ministry of Health, 2003b), the obesity levels of Pacific children are still above the national average (Ministry of Health, 2015). There is on-going debate around poor nutritional habits as contributing largely to these statistics (Rush, Plank, Davies, Watson, & Wall, 2003; Utter, Scragg, Schaaf, & Fitzgerald, 2006), while the role of PA for Pacific children



through IM remains relatively unexplored. Further, little is known about Samoan children's PA and IM levels apart from their contribution in findings for the wider Pacific cohort; the Samoan group form the largest Pacific population group in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2014; Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2011). Accordingly, this study will investigate how Samoan perceptions of parenting, neighbourhood, and IM impact on Samoan children's IM.

Samoans give little value to PA (Tuagalu, 2009) or play (Leaupepe, 2008), other than their contribution to everyday living and for their collective benefits. PA and play are seen both as incidental to everyday activities, and as an integral part of social gatherings and leisure activities.

In an attempt to address obesity issues, church based PA and nutrition programmes have targeted Samoan children and their families with the aim of improving health outcomes through weekly exercise, as well as providing regular education sessions to encourage being physically active and eating a balanced diet (Bell, Amosa, & Swinburn, 1997). This approach highlights the huge influence of church and family on Samoan children's everyday behaviours (Bell, Swinburn, Amosa, & Scragg, 2001; Simmons et al., 1998; Simmons, Voyle, Fou, Feo, & Leakehe, 2004; Swinburn et al., 2007).

The research literature acknowledges the influence of the family environment, and the fundamental role of parents as gatekeepers of children's activity behaviours (Crawford et al., 2015; Shaw, et al., 2015). The family environment is the first, most intense and enduring environment that a child is exposed to – and the most important source of socialisation for a child (Baker, Hanna, & Baker, 1986; Macpherson, 1978; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978).

How do Samoan parents act as mediators of their children's IM and PA opportunities and further, what role do cultural values play?

There is a growing body of research about the extent to which children's daily IM and PA are influenced by parents' experiences and perceptions of streets and public spaces as safe and desirable, or otherwise (Carver, Timperio, & Crawford, 2008; Crawford, et al., 2015; Shaw, et al., 2015). Busier lifestyles and increasing media coverage of crime have had huge impacts for safety-conscious interactions within neighbourhoods (Carver, et al., 2008). This effect has been compounded by rocketing house prices and urban development, which have combined in creating low SES communities of minority and migrant groups on the rim of urban city centres

(Kamphuis et al., 2010; Karsten, 2005). Low levels of home ownership are known to impact sense of belonging (Hammel, 2009), and frequent moves decrease opportunities to form bonds with neighbours – and the local environment. The term gentrification refers to “a process of neighbourhood transformation in which working-class and poor residents are displaced by an influx of middleclass residents” (Hammel, 2009). Gentrification and urban intensification of inner city areas in Auckland such as Ponsonby, Grey Lynn, and Kingsland in the 1970–80s (Collins & Friesen, 2011), and in Tamaki<sup>1</sup> more recently, have resulted in displacement that has specifically affected Pacific communities.

What is the impact of Samoan parents’ experiences and perceptions of their social and physical surrounding on their children’s daily IM and PA?

There is limited, but growing research on Samoan parenting practices (Cowley-Malcolm, 2013; Cowley-Malcolm, Fairbairn-Dunlop, & Paterson, 2009; Lusitini, Taylor, Cowley-Malcolm, Kerslake, & Paterson, 2011b). Lusitini et al. (2011) identified cultural ideologies as an important determinant of Pacific parenting in terms of shaping family types, attitudes and beliefs about parenting. According to Cowley-Malcolm (2009), Pacific parenting practices have been influenced by acculturation through living in New Zealand. Lusitini and colleagues identified the importance of examining “the impact that acculturation – the changes to an individual’s cultural patterns arising from continuous exposure to a different culture – may have on the parenting practices of migrants from various Pacific islands who have settled in New Zealand” (Lusitini, et al., 2011b, p. 1).

## **Conceptual Framework**

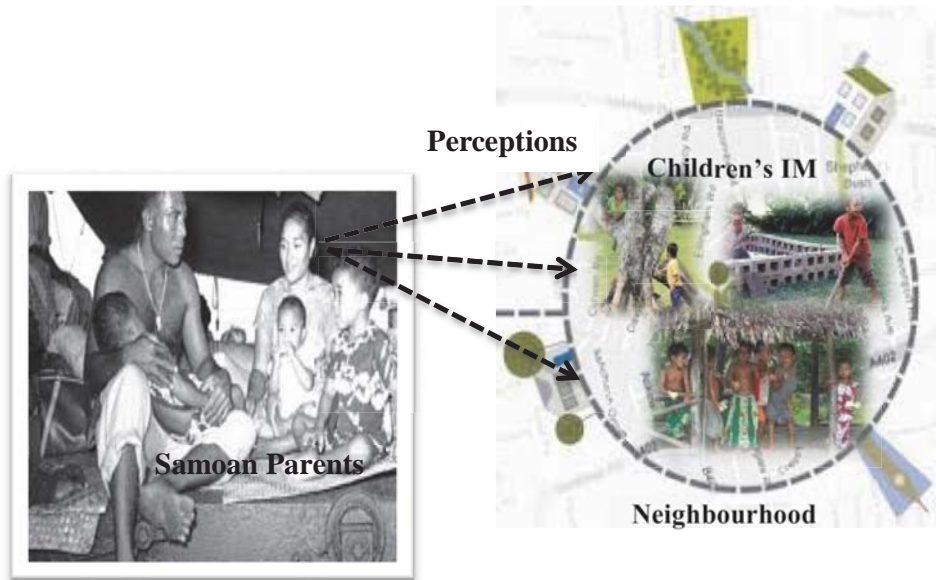
The following conceptual framework encapsulates the relationship between and exploration across the three concepts: 1) Samoan parenting, 2) Neighbourhood perceptions, and 3) Children’s IM.

Hau’ofa (1994) writes of the importance of perspective, in that the same object or reality can be seen differently by people with different perspectives, in his seminal work ‘Our Sea of Islands’ (Hau’ofa, 1994). He gives the example of Western perspectives of the islands in the Pacific Ocean as ‘tiny islands in a vast sea’, which are poorly resourced and isolated from centres of economic power and growth. In contrast, from pre-colonial Pacific perspectives the

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<sup>1</sup> see <http://theplan.theaucklandplan.govt.nz/aucklands-housing>

Ocean is a space connecting, not separating, these islands; it is a 'sea of islands' that is 'Oceania.'



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Samoan perspectives that inform their Children's IM & PA**

Pre-colonial Pacific views see Oceania as “vast, expanding, hospitable and generous, and it is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still” (Hau'ofa, 1994, p. 160). Oceania resourced the islands through its sea life, supported the adventurous and inherently voyager nature of its inhabitants; and supported their relationships with other islands in exchanging materials and ideas; further, it embodied Pacific people's resourcefulness, courage, skills, and tenacity. The vast ocean reflected the size of the Pacific and connected all the islands. Hau'ofa (1994) uses this comparison to remind us how important perspective is, and to show that by separating the Pacific from its Ocean, the Western perspective of the Pacific makes it different and smaller, and has affected the way Pacific people, particularly his Pacific students, perceive themselves. His perspective of a connecting ocean is empowering and acts to address alternative perspectives that hinder and belittle, and to encourage Pacific peoples to re-imagine the Pacific world, and their way of being (Hau'ofa, 1994).

This research acknowledges a similar perspective among Samoan parents of their surroundings as either connecting or separating, with associated impacts on who or what they allow their children to interact with.

## **RESEARCH CONTEXT**

Accepting the importance of ‘perspective’ as presented by Hau’ofa (1994), this section unpacks the journey of Samoans in coming to New Zealand to better understand some of the factors that impact how they perceive their culture (in relation to the wider society) and their surrounding physical and social environment.

### **Samoan Migration to New Zealand**

Most of the literature on Pacific people in New Zealand describes their influx as a response to New Zealand’s growing economy and demand for labour in the 1960s. While Mallon (2012) acknowledges the presence and contribution of Pacific people to New Zealand long before this period, the introduction of informal and formal schemes for education and employment of Pacific people in New Zealand provided strong incentives – and large numbers migrated as a result.

In 1899, Samoa was divided between the United States of America (Eastern Samoa) and Germany (Western Samoa). Following the outbreak of World War I in 1914, New Zealand troops occupied Samoa and in 1919, New Zealand was mandated by the League of Nations to administer Western Samoa – a move strongly resisted by Samoans. After World War II ended, New Zealand’s role changed to one of supporting Western Samoa in moving towards independence. Even after Samoan independence in 1962 (Anae, 2012; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009; Mahina-Tuai, 2012), the country continued to have a special relationship with New Zealand that included a quota of Samoans being permitted to take up residence in New Zealand. However, these quotas were only loosely enforced, as Samoan migration was beneficial for the New Zealand job market (Anae, 2012; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009; Mahina-Tuai, 2012).

Samoans seized the opportunity to earn money to send back to their families in Samoa as well as the chance to establish a better life for themselves and their children. New Zealand, ‘the land of milk and honey,’ was seen as a place providing opportunities for employment and education (Anae, 2012; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009; Mahina-Tuai, 2012).

In the 1960s, however, there were no specific state services to assist new migrants settling in New Zealand (Mahina-Tuai, 2012). Samoans therefore relied heavily on relatives who had migrated earlier to help them settle in New Zealand, which included getting them a job,

providing temporary accommodation, teaching them the new language, and often acting as interpreters (Mahina-Tuai, 2012). This reliance reinforced the strong traditional emphasis on family bonds and connections (Macpherson, 2012; Mahina-Tuai, 2012). The 'aiga continues to underpin Samoan values, relationships and 'collectiveness' in New Zealand.

The first wave of Samoan migrants was concentrated in the inner suburban areas of Auckland where rental accommodation was inexpensive (Macpherson, 1978). Migrants moved from small agricultural villages of Samoa to suburbs like Ponsonby, Newton and Grey Lynn in Auckland (Anae, 2001, 2012); areas which had become "by-words for urban decay and blight" following World War II (Latham, 2003, p. 1704). Gentrification from the late-70s/early-80s by young professionals – "a diverse group of young, socially liberal, tertiary-educated Pakeha" (p. 1704) – saw Māori and Pacific residents being pushed out by "rising rent and inflated housing prices" (Latham, 2003, p. 1704). This, coupled with schemes marketing affordable suburban housing, saw Pacific people strategically moved away from the CBD to suburbs to the southern and western parts of Auckland (Collins & Friesen, 2011; Johnston, Poulsen, & Forrest, 2008; Latham, 2003; Murphy, 2008).

Today, parts of South and West Auckland are home to the largest Pacific populations in New Zealand (Auckland Council's Research Investigations and Monitoring Unit, 2012), with almost half of the Auckland Pacific population (49%) living in three local board areas in the South of the city – Mangere-Otahuhu, Otara-Papatoetoe and Manurewa - and 10% of Auckland's Pacific population living in the Henderson-Massey local board in West Auckland (Auckland Council's Research Investigations and Monitoring Unit, 2012).

For Samoans, sense of belonging and choice of residence was heavily reliant on the presence of family in existing Pacific neighbourhoods (Witten, Kearns, McCreanor, Penney, & Fa'alau, 2009). This led to the establishment of strong Samoan church congregations in New Zealand, which closely imitated similar congregation in the villages in Samoa, and where Samoan culture was strongly upheld. Church allowed Samoans to express the collective and spiritual elements of Samoan culture, in contrast to a very individualistic and largely secular New Zealand society (Macpherson, 2012). Thus early Samoan migrants continued to practise and hold tight to their cultural attitudes and practices (Macpherson, 2012).

As the migrating Samoan community became settled in New Zealand, migrants sent for remaining family members in Samoa to join them in enjoying their new life and the opportunities that came with it. Between 1986 and 1991, the numbers of Samoans in the New

Zealand population aged over 60 years increased, suggesting early migrants were being reunited with parents coming from Samoa to join them (Macpherson, 1999; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009). Older migrants contributed largely to the continuation of traditional Samoan culture in New Zealand. They were particularly influential on younger generations whom they looked after while the parents went to work (Macpherson, 2012; Tui Atua, 2002).

### Early effects of migration for Samoans in New Zealand

Adjusting to cultural and environmental differences in New Zealand, 'the land of milk and honey', were not the only challenges for the Samoan migrants in the 1960s, as many of the jobs Samoans had come to fill began to disappear. As quickly as the industrial boom had come in the late 1950s, it then declined in the late 1960s, resulting in an economic recession. The number of Samoan workers now outweighed the number of available jobs. No longer were Pacific labourers welcomed for their hard work ethic, low demands at work, and inexpensive labour; job scarcity meant they were seen as taking the jobs of New Zealand citizens. This posed challenges for the Pacific community in New Zealand at large, when a Labour government struggling to stay in power used this opportunity to lay the blame for job scarcity on the increasing number of Pacific migrants, particularly Tongans and Samoans (Anae, 1998, 2012) – a tactic which was continued by the National Government which followed.

Racial tensions escalated in early 1974, when police and immigration officials carried out a series of raids on Pacific households, especially Tongan households, in early hours of the morning, forcibly demanding documentation, and arresting individuals who failed to provide it. The so-called 'Dawn raids' sparked outrage across the nation both in New Zealand – and overseas (Anae, 2012). Pacific people were labelled as 'overstayers' "staying in New Zealand beyond an individual's visa"; creating:

... public expression of racism and general resentment towards groups perceived to be taking employment from locals, threatening cultural homogeneity, boosting crime rates and adding strain to public resources such as housing, welfare and education (Anae, 2012, p. 221).

The raids that had begun in 1974 under the Labour government continued under National, receiving widespread public approval. Despite the large number of European 'overstayers', the Pacific communities were targeted as scapegoats for the economic recession, job scarcity, housing shortages and crime (Anae, 1997, 2012; Pitt & Macpherson, 1974).

These were unsettling times for Pacific people in New Zealand, and resulted in the formation of Pacific groups such as the 'Polynesian Panthers', who began to protest and acted as catalysts in the movement toward abolishing racism, discrimination and oppression of Pacific people in New Zealand (Anae, 1997). According to Anae (2012), much was learned from these 'dawn raid' experiences:

... as insulting and humiliating as this pivotal chapter in our history has been, it is rich in examples of the collective and radical action, taken by the Polynesian Panthers and like-minded groups, that brought down such discriminatory and oppressive tactics. The dawn raids and the immigration policies in the 1970s attracted attention in the wider Pacific, especially Samoa and Tonga. New Zealand's immigration policies and harsh treatment of overstayers was a fixture on the agenda of many [such as in] an annual South Pacific Forum during the decade.... [And] provided a platform for Pacific peoples and New Zealander's to re-evaluate the boundaries of national identity and the cultural definition of the nation. (Anae, 2012, pp. 236-238)

Despite these 'lessons', Pacific people continue to face discrimination in New Zealand (Loto et al., 2006; Tiatia, 1998). According to Loto et al. (2006), the mainstream New Zealand media portray Pacific people as predominantly "unmotivated, unhealthy and criminal others who are overly dependent on Palagi support" (p. 100). Loto and colleagues argue that such portrayals have negative impacts on Pacific peoples' views of themselves and their identities, and therefore consequential impacts on their health and social circumstances (Loto, et al., 2006). Previously, Hau'ofa (1994) had argued for the need to:

... focus on a currently prevailing notion about Islanders and their physical surroundings that, if not countered with more constructive views, could inflict lasting damage on people's images of themselves, and on their ability to act with relative autonomy in their endeavours to survive reasonably well within the international system in which they have found themselves. (Hau'ofa, 1994, pp. 149-150)

As Loto et al. highlight, a way of addressing the negative stereotypes of Pacific people in New Zealand is to not only encourage "more specialist Pacific media outlets, not just Pacific language newspapers and community radio stations, but to go beyond this so that Pacific

people can better represent themselves on their own terms in sites that have relevance to Palagi” (Loto, et al., 2006, p. 116).

Slowly, this is occurring. As Samoans reside longer in New Zealand, both as a culture and as individuals, their influence and position is imbedding the Samoan culture into mainstream society. Samoan artists are present in the galleries, theatres, on screen and through radio, (Pereira, 2012), and Samoan athletes are an integral part of New Zealand’s sporting identity (Mallon, 2012). A New Zealand-born Samoan identity is emerging as a generation and sub-culture of its own (Anae, 1998). In 2013, 62.7% of Samoans currently living in New Zealand had been born in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). New Zealand-born Samoan identities lie at the heart of large cosmopolitan, urban and industrial centres (Macpherson, 1999).

The longer Samoans reside in New Zealand, the more their experience and interpretation of their Samoan culture is altered. For the New Zealand-born Samoan, English is their main language and in many cases, they have more in common with other New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders than they do with Samoa-born Samoans – and those of their parents’ generation (Macpherson, 1999).

### **Samoan Values and Culture**

‘I’ does not exist. I am not. Myself belongs not to me because ‘I’ is always ‘we’, is a part of the ‘aiga’ a part of the nu’u, a part of Samoa – the idea that Samoa culture is a collective system; an individual is part of the ‘aiga/village/community – not an individual in silo. (Figiel, 1999, pp. 136-137)

In ‘Where we belong’, Sia Figiel (1999) presents a Samoan identity structure through the character of a 13 year-old girl, Alofa, who lives in Samoa. Her teacher gives the class the task of writing an essay on one of three topics – my village, my pet, or what I saw on my way to school. Alofa in particular finds this task difficult, finally concluding it is because “‘I’ does not exist.... ‘I’ is always ‘we’, is a part of the ‘aiga’...” (Figiel, 1999). This quote by Figiel highlights that in the Samoan world, the individual is but an extension of their ancestors, their village, their land and their ‘aiga’ (family) (Figiel, 1999).

The current Samoan Head of State extends this notion of the collective self to include the environment – the land, the seas, the skies:



I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies. I am not an individual, because I share my tofi (an inheritance) with my family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my belonging. (Tui Atua, 2009, p. 1)

As described by Tui Atua (2009), the Samoan sense of belonging is an intricately complex set of relationships with the natural world, family, and the past. The Samoan self and being cannot be acknowledged or considered without first understanding this complexity. The Samoan self is acknowledged by researchers as holistic, spiritual, and collective, which sits in contrast to the Western biomedical view of the self as individual, physical, and compartmentalised (Esera, 2001; Masoe & Bush, 2009). Understanding the intricacies of the Samoan culture and the Samoan self allows a stronger sense of this complexity.

Fa'aSamoa, the Samoan way of life, is the basis of Samoan culture. There are many important dimensions of Fa'aSamoa, but none greater than that of the 'aiga. Fa'aSamoa views the individual as an integral member of the 'aiga where, as previously noted, an individual is always 'we'. Other important dimensions of Fa'aSamoa are tautua (service), fa'alavelave (obligations), and fa'aaloalo (respect) – and an individual's place or role in the 'aiga is implemented through these dimensions (Macpherson, 1999). An individual is an active member of the 'aiga and must fulfil their responsibilities through service, obligations and respect regardless of where they currently reside (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009; Tui Atua, 2002). Place of origin is an important source of identity for Samoans, irrespective of where they currently live; thus many Samoan migrants remain firmly rooted in their identification with their place of origin (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009).

According to Macpherson (1999), the children of Samoan migrants began to re-assess what it meant for them to be a 'Samoan', and this understanding was in turn transmitted to their children:

...their judgments were influenced by where they expected to spend the rest of their lives and were reflected in the content and the ways they transmitted "Samoan-ness" to their New Zealand-born children. Some attempted to establish their language, lifestyle and worldview in their

children. Others attempted to distance their children from all of these.  
(Macpherson, 1999, p. 56)

He suggested that in relation to Fa'aSamoa language, beliefs and practices there are three types of Samoans in New Zealand: 1) 'traditionalists' who value and follow these principles; 2) 'rejectors' who place no value on them; and 3) 'integrators' who lie between the two; they value some aspects of Fa'aSamoa but not others (Macpherson, 1999). Emerging research supports the notion that Samoans in New Zealand are characterised by a continual shifting of territorial and cultural boundaries that is influenced by globalisation, media and popular culture (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001; Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003; Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004, 2009; McCallin, Paterson, Butler, & Cowley, 2001); their identities are therefore constantly being redefined by these influences (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003).

An example of this redefining of Samoan and New Zealand cultural identity is the use of remittance. Remittance was a motivating factor for Samoans moving to New Zealand and so the value of money is a big part of the Samoan culture practised in contemporary Samoa, and more especially New Zealand. Money – a Western commodity – has replaced the traditional exchange of gifts such as fine mats and vegetable or meat produce, and so has come to indicate status and prestige (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009).

Samoans in New Zealand acknowledge the advantages of adopting the Western way, while most also acknowledge their Samoan heritage (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009). Samoan parents' position on this continuum of 'traditionalists' through to 'rejectors', influences not only their own cultural identity, but also their children's. Parents choose to create an environment for their children that encapsulate the cultural values that they wish or do not wish to pass on to their children, so acting as gatekeepers for the influences that validate or contradict these values.

### Non-aligned worlds

Many researchers have discussed the non-aligned worlds of Samoan culture and Western culture (Tamasese, Parsons, Sullivan, & Waldegrave, 2010; Waldegrave, Tamasese, Tuhaka, & Campbell, 2003). In her article 'Non-aligned worlds of home and school', Kearney (2011) cites examples of these conflicts in belief systems, expectations, roles and responsibilities, and communicative practices. The impact for a Samoan child navigating between these two worlds can be problematic for their educational outcomes as well as for the child's wellbeing

(Kearney, Fletcher, & Dobrenov-Major, 2011). Some examples of ways in which Samoan discourses do not align with dominant Western discourses are:

1. Collectivism v Individualism (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005)
2. Subsistence v Capitalism (Tuagalu, 2009)
3. Spirituality v Secularism (Masoe & Bush, 2009)
4. Custom v Democracy (Levine, 2003)
5. Oral Traditions v Written Instruction (Ochs, 1988)
6. High Context Language v Low Context Language (Duranti, 1992)

Given the non-alignment of their worlds, it is quite challenging for Samoans to negotiate different ways of being which are dependent on what is valued and validated at that particular time and place (Tamasese, et al., 2010).

### Negotiating non-aligned worlds

There are various issues in New Zealand impacting Samoan families and consequently Samoan children and which exemplify these non-aligned worlds. These impacts include educational and health issues, and other stress factors.

Health problems have become an issue for Samoans in New Zealand and in Samoa. Traditionally, Samoan lifestyles were simple and lived predominantly in tune with nature. The staple diet in Samoa was taro, green banana and fish, and PA was a natural part of mobility/transport, cultivation and domestic chores (Macpherson, 1999). Materials and resources that were previously unknown, or very scarce, became accessible as mobility increased in Samoa and globally. Canned beef, bread, fried foods, coconut cream, cars, machinery, cell phones, television, refrigerators are all now common features of Samoan life – both in Samoa and New Zealand. People can store food and they can contact the outside world from inside their home, but they are less active and have poor food security (Tamasese, Waldegrave, & King, 2012).

As a result, physical inactivity, obesity, poor nutrition and non-communicable diseases including diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, now affect many

Samoan families in New Zealand (Bell, et al., 2001; Ministry of Health, 2016; Simmons, et al., 2004). 'Traditional' medicine – a synthesis of indigenous and introduced theories and practices – is widely used in New Zealand, and includes faith healing and various other new religious practices. However, the notions of preventative health care and 'wellness' ideals in relation to diet and exercise held by middle-class New Zealanders are becoming more widely known and accepted in Samoan communities (Bell, et al., 2001; Ministry of Health, 2016; Simmons, et al., 2004)

Stress factors that are having effects for Samoan families in New Zealand include work commitments, financial difficulties, accessibility to and abuse of substances such as alcohol, and gambling (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009; Iusitini, Gao, Sundborn, & Paterson, 2011a; Iusitini, et al., 2011b). These factors can lead to domestic violence, crime, adultery, and strained family relations. Research on Samoan youth offenders shows they are offending at a later age than the general population, but their crimes take more violent forms – predominantly aggravated assault and robbery. Suggested influencing factors include alcohol and drugs, and poor family relations (Ioane, Lambie, & Percival, 2016). In traditional Samoan culture, councils of chiefs discussed immoral behaviour, and would assess the seriousness of the crime and the appropriate punishment. Punishments ranged from a fine to be paid in material goods, through to temporary or permanent banishment from the village. Fear of public shame motivated people to try and contain and deal with crimes within their own families and prevent misbehaviour, particularly by youth. In New Zealand, the adoption of more individual lifestyles has reduced the potential for community intervention. If someone breaks the law or violates social conventions it is much more difficult for families to deal with the transgression, and they often feel honour-bound to conceal it from public knowledge. Public figures such as police and social workers are treated with suspicion and are only approached as the very last resort (Anae, 2012).

Education is another area where non-aligned worlds collide, particularly for the children of migrating parents. The New Zealand school system is individually based and rewards students who articulate their ideas and challenge ideas, a concept foreign to Samoan children who have been socialised to learn 'passively' by observation and imitation, and are discouraged from questioning elders. These styles of learning are interpreted by their teachers as showing no interest, and hinder their performance in the New Zealand school system. This is reflected in the low educational attainment rates and high unemployment among Samoan young people in

New Zealand (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2009).

Samoan parents want their children to succeed in school, to get a good education, to get a good job, and to have financial security. However, many Samoan parents are not aware of the issues faced by their children at school as they lack the confidence to get involved and interact with their children's teachers. This lack of involvement stems from language barriers, lack of knowledge and a complete reliance on the teachers and the education system to teach their children. Due to these factors, Samoan children lack family support in their studies (Kearney, et al., 2011). This manifests in high rates of truancy, tiredness from fulfilling home duties, incomplete homework, and family and church commitments which conflict with school (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2010; Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2005; Teaiwa, 2007).

The effects of these non-aligned worlds impact on social, educational and economic outcomes for Samoan children. Understanding Samoan beliefs, knowledge systems, attitudes and practices may lead to approaches, which support improved Samoan participation and outcomes in the dominant 'palagi' world of New Zealand (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2010; Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2005; Teaiwa, 2007).

### **Samoans in Auckland, New Zealand**

Despite these issues, Samoans continue to migrate and to make a way of living in New Zealand. Most continue their own social structures in the form of close bonding 'aiga and churches. Although assimilating or negotiating some Western ways of living, there has been resurgence in efforts to maintain traditional Samoan cultural values and practices, including language. This resurgence is motivated both by New Zealand born Samoan attempts to learn more about their cultural heritage, as well as Samoan elders passing on their cultural knowledge to younger generations in an attempt to maintain the culture (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998). This is evident in the prevalence of speakers of the Samoan language in New Zealand. After English (95.6%), Samoan (4.5%) is the next most common spoken language in Auckland, and the third (2.2%) most commonly spoken language in New Zealand (after English (97.8%) and Maori (3.8%) respectively) (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

It is hard to ignore the presence of the Pacific population in New Zealand today – and especially in Auckland. The Pacific population has risen from .01% in the 1960s to 7.4% in the 2013 census (Auckland City Council, 2014), making it the fourth largest ethnic group in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010). Auckland, the largest

city of New Zealand, is home to the largest Pacific community in the world with 14.6% of Aucklanders identifying as Pasifika (Auckland City Council, 2014). Auckland hosts nearly two-thirds (65.9%) of New Zealand's Pacific population (Auckland City Council, 2014).

Nearly half of New Zealand's Pacific population is of Samoan descent (48.7%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), with 95,916 Samoans residing in Auckland (Auckland City Council, 2014), a third (36.5%) of whom are children aged 0–14 years (Auckland City Council, 2014).

A large proportion of Auckland's Samoan population currently live in the Counties Manukau region, also known as South Auckland. South Auckland's boundaries are "more symbolic in nature than material" and it is 'a place synonymous with crime, poverty, danger, delinquency and negligence ...yet it is also perceived as a place of vibrancy, energy and diversity" (Borell, 2005, p. 9). The contradictory discourses described by Borell (2005) in relation to her Maori rangatahi<sup>2</sup> (youth/young people) participants are congruent with Samoan parents and their children living in South Auckland. The existing stereotypes of living in an impoverished, crime-ridden area (Williams, 2003) force parents to use restrictive parenting techniques to ensure their children are safe.

Questions remain about the success of Samoan integration into New Zealand. Although almost three quarters of Samoans aged over 15 years have a formal qualification (73.3%), their median income is only \$20,800 compared to the national median of \$28,500 and Pacific people in general have the lowest median income overall, at \$19,700. Despite Samoans' median income being relatively higher, they are still far below the national median income.

Half of the Samoan population live in high deprivation neighbourhoods in South Auckland and less than a fifth own their home (19.2% compared to the national average of 49.8%). Samoans have also lower access to phone or internet than the national average<sup>3</sup>, and are twice as likely as the NZ population to have no access at all (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

These statistics show a large, urban Samoan cohort with underwhelming socioeconomic indicators. Despite this, there is growing literature that acknowledges a Pacific, and more specifically Samoan, sense of belonging in New Zealand (McCreanor et al., 2006; Witten, et al., 2009). The large and growing number of Samoans are evidence of Samoans' secure and grounded identity in New Zealand. More than half of Samoans in New Zealand are New

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<sup>2</sup> Maori word for youth/young people

<sup>3</sup> Samoan versus National Average (%): Cellphone/mobile – 85.4 versus 86.9; telephone – 77.6 versus 86.5; internet – 65.2 versus 82.0; no access to phones, fax and internet – 2.8 versus 1.3.

Zealand born (62.7%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), and have a deep connection with New Zealand (Anae, 2012). The church continues to play a large part in Samoan integration and remain a place of cultural identity and safety. Eighty three percent (83.4%) of Samoans affiliate with at least one religion, compared with 55.0% of the total NZ population (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

Whether Samoa or New Zealand born, most Samoans continue to have a connection with their cultural heritage and Samoa. This is reflected in the growing number of flights to Samoa to visit friends and relatives (6,243 people in 2002, increasing to 16,787 in 2011) (Statistics New Zealand, 2012a, 2012b).<sup>4</sup>

Samoan by birth, New Zealand by choice – the perception of New Zealand as the land of milk and honey is the reason many Samoans have chosen to make their home here. New Zealand by birth, Samoan by choice – New Zealand born Samoans have chosen to learn about their cultural heritage in a context that often differs from its origins. Wherever their birthplace, and whatever the reason for residence, there is solidarity in the belief that Samoans in New Zealand are both Samoans and New Zealanders, and are striving to find the best of both worlds (McCallin, et al., 2001).

## **RESEARCH CONTEXT: KIDS IN THE CITY**

This research is nested in, and arises from the ‘Kids in the City’ (KITC) research project (Oliver, et al., 2011) – a Health Research Council funded study which investigated the IM and PA of 9 – 11 year-old children in relation to neighbourhood urban design and neighbourhood perception. KITC used geographic positioning systems, accelerometry and trip diaries to measure the IM and PA of children living in six South and West Auckland neighbourhoods. Children’s and parents’ perceptions and experiences of their neighbourhood were explored using qualitative and quantitative methods. Findings have been disseminated via publications and reports, available through the KITC website ([kidsinthecity.ac.nz](http://kidsinthecity.ac.nz)), as well as at conferences and workshops. Further research continues to build on the findings from the original project (Oliver et al., 2015; Oliver et al., 2016).

This study uses KITC data collected from Samoan parents and their children. Further data

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<sup>4</sup> Statistical analysis by Statistics New Zealand conducted for this research. This is based on Statistics New Zealand’s data, which are licensed by Statistics New Zealand for re-use.

collection with Samoan parents and key informants provided more in-depth information on how Samoan parents' perspectives of social and physical surrounding impacted parenting practices in ways that influenced Samoan children's IM and PA.

### **Sources of Data Collection**

The data for this research derive from the following sources:

- CATI survey data from Samoan parents (Qualitative data) (2011)
- Data from Samoan children's travel diaries (2011)
- Interviews with Key Informants (2012)
- Interviews with Samoan parents who participated in the CATI survey (2012)
- Interviews with a snowball sample of Samoan parents (2012)
- Follow-up interviews with parents (2013)

### **RESEARCH AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

This thesis will investigate the impact of Samoan parenting practices on their children's IM and PA.

The key objectives of the study are:

1. To understand how Samoan perceptions of parenting influence their children's IM and PA;
2. To understand how Samoan parents' perceptions of their neighbourhood influence their children's IM and PA;
3. To investigate Samoan children's IM and PA.



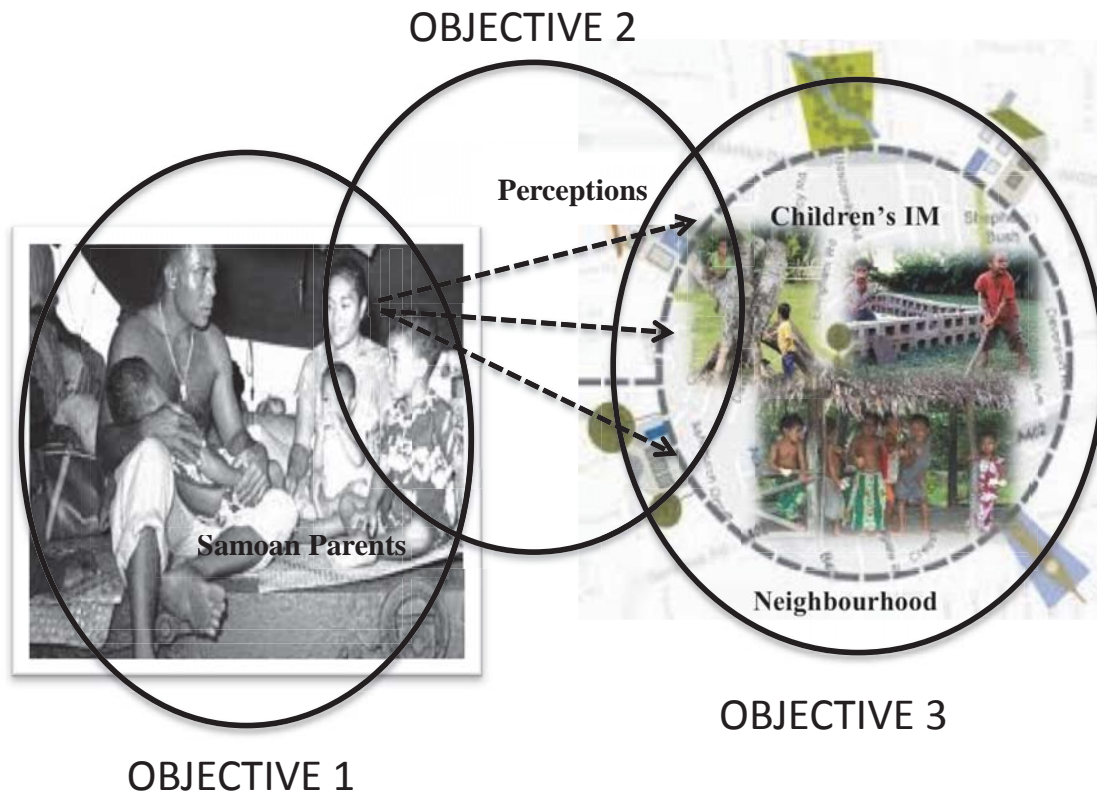


Figure 2: Research Objectives for investigating Conceptual Framework elements

## RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to produce an ethnic-specific angle on the relationships between Samoan parents' perceptions of their social and physical surroundings, and their children's IM and PA. Significant cultural issues faced by Samoan parents in New Zealand are examined with this frame.

This study aspires to contribute Samoan experiences and voices to relevant policy and neighbourhood planning and to ensure their health and wellbeing are kept to the fore at all stages.

## **THESIS OVERVIEW**

The chapter outlines are as follows:

The prologue provides background on myself as researcher, and both an insider and outsider; I also reflect on my own journey through this project.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Chapter 1 introduces the research by providing a brief background to the research including contextual information about Samoans and their journey to, and in New Zealand. It also introduces the research aims and objectives. Finally, a brief description of each chapter is provided here.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Chapter 2 positions this research in the existing body of knowledge. This chapter provides a review of the literatures on Samoan parenting practices, neighbourhood perceptions, and children's IM and PA.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

Chapter 3 provides information on the research design and methods used, and the rationale for using these methods. This chapter describes the research lens, and how the research is positioned, as well as the positioning of myself as researcher – as both insider and outsider.

### **Chapters 4–6: Findings & Discussions**

Chapters 4–6 present the research findings and discussions thematically.

#### **Chapter 4: Samoan perspectives of parenting**

Chapter four presents the findings from Samoan parents' and key informants' data, and discusses the differences and/or similarities that exist between parenting in Samoa and parenting in New Zealand, and differences in parenting between New Zealand born and Samoa born parents. This chapter provides insight into factors that influence-parenting decisions

made by Samoan parents, which affect their neighbourhood perceptions and their children's IM and PA.

#### **Chapter 5: Samoan parents' neighbourhood perceptions**

Chapter 5 presents findings from the Samoan parent data on their perceptions of their neighbourhood as both a social space and a geographical place, and discusses how Samoan parents give meaning to these spaces and places, and how these meanings influence their interactions with their neighbourhood and their children's IM and PA.

#### **Chapter 6: Samoan children's IM & PA**

Chapter 6 presents findings for Samoan children's IM and active travel over a 7-day period based on their movements to and from destinations as recorded in self-reported trip diaries. Follow up interviews with parents a year and a half later explored IM changes or similarities over time. Rationales given for these allowances/restrictions are presented. This chapter discusses the consistencies and discrepancies between parents and children's accounts of their IM, and discusses the importance of IM for Samoan children's activity behaviours given the context of their collective environment.

#### **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

This chapter provides concluding statements on the key issues and themes that emerged from the findings.

#### **References/Appendices**

The last section comprises a list of the references used in this research. Information sheets, consent forms, and question guides are attached as appendices.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

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## INTRODUCTION

The following chapter reviews the literature on children's independent mobility (IM) - unsupervised play and travel - and the role of parents' perceptions of their social and physical environment, particularly for Samoan parents. The chapter begins by examining literature (including grey literature – relevant reports, policy documents etc.) on the health benefits for children of being physically active, the role of IM as an integral component of physical activity (PA) behaviour, and its contribution to Samoan health statistics. The literature recognises the role of parents as mediators of their children's IM and PA behaviours. It acknowledges the influence of perceptions of neighbourhoods as safe, desirable or otherwise on people's interactions with their social and physical surroundings. The chapter also examines literature on some of the practices and underlying beliefs that shape Samoan parenting practices, and considers how these practices and beliefs inform decisions about children's activity behaviours. This chapter recognises Samoan perspectives on physical activity and children, some which challenge Western concepts, and explores whether perspectives around independence similarly challenge the concept of IM.

## METHODOLOGY

An electronic search was conducted through these databases, specific online journals, internet search engines and websites: Medline, PubMed, American Medical Journal, New Zealand Medical Journal, Google Scholar, Ministry of Health, Statistics New Zealand, and Ministry of Pacific Peoples (formerly Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs).

Keywords were combined as follows in the phrases used in the search: 'physical activity', 'Samoa physical activity', 'Pacific physical activity,' 'independent mobility,' 'Samoan independent mobility', 'Pacific independent mobility', 'activity behaviours', 'Samoa?', 'Parenting practices', 'Samoan parenting', 'Pacific parenting', 'Cultural parenting practices',

'neighbourhood perceptions', 'child safety', 'active transport', 'free play', 'children's play', 'New Zealand-born Samoan'.

The search pulled up literature published from 1884 to 2017, comprising 257 books, articles, reviews and reports.

## **CHILDREN'S PA**

PA is essential for the healthy growth and development of children (Ministry of Health, 2003b; World Health Organisation, 2010). There is evidence that PA has many health benefits (Lee et al., 2012) particularly in combating obesity and cardiovascular disease (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2010) and is also acknowledged for its associations with good mental health and social interaction (Hassmen, Koivula, & Uutela, 2000; World Health Organisation, 2010). For children and young people in particular, PA is also closely linked with psychological benefits related to social interaction and integration, healthy self-expression, and self-confidence (World Health Organisation, 2010), and also encourages social cohesion and social wellbeing (De Bourdeauhuiji, 1998).

The health and developmental benefits of being physically active are important for children, particularly Pacific children. In the New Zealand Health Survey 2013/2014 (Ministry of Health, 2015), one in four Pacific children aged 2-14 years was obese compared with the national average of one in 10 children in the same age range. After adjusting for sex and age, Pacific children were 3.2 times more likely to be obese than children who were not (Ministry of Health, 2015).

The Ministry of Health (2015) has set increasing PA as a priority for reducing the risks of obesity and cardiovascular disease (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2010). In 2001, inactivity contributed to 8% of all deaths in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2013), and low activity as measured in 2006 accounted for about 4% of all illnesses, disability and premature mortality (Ministry of Health, 2013). PA has been rated second only to smoking as a modifiable risk factor for poor health in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2003a).

Research has shown that adults and children living in socioeconomically deprived areas do less PA than those who living in the least deprived areas (Giles-Corti & Donovan, 2002). Females

and ethnic minority groups do less PA than males and dominant groups (Fischbacher, Hunt, & Alexander, 2004; Foster & Giles-Corti, 2008; Owen et al., 2009). Children of physically inactive parents are less likely to be physically active than children whose parents are physically active, and this association increases with age (Ministry of Health, 2008b).

The WHO (2010) recommends a daily accumulation of 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous intensity activity for children aged 5-17 years. Types of PA described by WHO (2010) include '*play, games, sports, transportation, chores, recreation, physical education, or planned exercise*'. The literature on the PA levels of Pacific children draws diverse conclusions as to whether they meet the recommended PA requirements. This is mostly due to the different measures of PA used. Survey methods of PA mostly look at children's participation in sport and active transport to and from school (Ministry of Health, 2008a). However, there is increased interest in children's PA levels through informal activities such as play and active travel to non-school destinations (Oliver, et al., 2015; Schoeppe, Duncan, Badland, Oliver, & Curtis, 2013).

The New Zealand Health Survey 2013/2014 (Ministry of Health, 2014b) examined children's time spent watching TV, as an indicator of sedentary behaviour (Ministry of Health, 2003a, 2003b). New Zealand guidelines recommend that children aged 5-18 years have spent no more than two hours per day of screen time (TV, computers, game consoles) outside of school time. One in two New Zealand non-Pacific children aged 2-14 years (50%) watched two or more hours of television per day, compared with 67% of Pacific children. Pacific children were found to 40% more likely to watch two or more hours of television a day than non-Pacific children, after adjusting for sex and age (Ministry of Health, 2014b).

The SPARC survey (from 2003 onward, with the most recent being 2016) examined children's PA levels through their participation in sport and active leisure activities in the two weeks prior to data collection. These included "over 100 different physical activities which people do in their leisure time, ranging from gardening to New Zealand's most popular national sports" (Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), 2003; p. 53). The non-inclusion of activity as part of transport, employment or incidental activities, such as chores or work around the house, has been acknowledged as a limitation of the study.

The 2003 SPARC survey found that 52% of Pacific young people aged 5-17 years were active compared to their Maori (71%) and European (70%) counterparts. Eighty-four percent of

Pacific young people enjoyed some sport or active leisure activities, less than Maori (92%), Europeans (93%) or 'Other ethnic group' (90%) young people. Pacific young people were active for less than six hours a week, the same as young people from the 'Other ethnic group(s)', but less so than European (6.5 hours per week) and Maori (7.7 hours per week) young people. There were no differences in activity levels between Pacific boys and girls (53% and 52%). Pacific young people aged 9-15 years were the most active age group (9-12 years: 55% and 13-15 years: 56%) compared with Pacific young people in other age groups (5-8 years: 48% and 16-17 years: 52%) (Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), 2003).

A 2010 national survey of New Zealand children and young persons (Clinical Trials Research Unit, 2010) used mixed methods to collect data on their PA (accelerometer, computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI), and computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) follow ups) and dietary behaviours (CAPI and CATI). In contrast to SPARC's report of Pacific children's low PA, this later national survey reported that 78.8% of Pacific children and young people aged 5-24 years met the daily recommended PA guidelines for their age group (60 minutes for children aged 5-14 years, 30 minutes ages 15 years and older) compared to the 67.4% for the total population (Clinical Trials Research Unit, 2010; p. 54).

Surprisingly, they found that these adequate levels of PA were attained through organised sport instead of play and active transport. Pacific children spent more time per day in organised sport (average of 32.0 minutes versus 29.3 minutes) and less time in passive transport (driven in a vehicle including public transport) (39.8 minutes versus 45.6 minutes) than children in general. Pacific children spent less time per day in free play (average 68.8 minutes versus 77.6 minutes) and active transport (38.7 minutes versus 43.0 minutes) than the total average (Clinical Trials Research Unit, 2010; p. 56). The finding that Pacific children spend less time in passive and active transport suggests that children's PA through organised sport is school based.

PA levels from children were collected by accelerometers over a 7-day period. Their modes of activity were collected through self-reported surveys recalling activity over a total of three days; a 24-hour recall during a CAPI with children and parents, and a 2-day recall with only parents through CATI. It is possible that children's self-reported modes of activity were heavily influenced by parents' perceptions for both the CAPI and CATI data, and children's recall bias in the presence of their parents during the CAPI. Due to this, it is likely that independent activities

through play and active transport could have been missed.

Duncan et al (2006) investigated the PA level and body composition of children aged 5-12 years old in New Zealand, using pedometers and body measurements (height, weight and hand-to-foot bioelectrical impedance analysis), to measure children's activities beyond their participation in sport, including PA achieved through active travel and play. In comparing their findings with three other large international studies, the authors concluded that New Zealand children were relatively active. The study found significant differences due to time of week, gender, age, ethnicity and socioeconomic group.

Children were more active in the weekday than the weekend, boys more active than girls, and weekend activity decreased with age and increased with socioeconomic status: Polynesian children (Pacific and Maori children) were the most active during the weekdays, and European children most active during the weekend. This suggests European children's high weekend PA may be related to their higher socioeconomic rating (51.0%), compared with Asian (42.3%) and Polynesian (8.4%) children (Duncan, Schofield, & Duncan, 2006). They also found an association between body fat percentage and PA (measured through step counts). Polynesian children had the highest body fat percentage, but had higher fat free mass and lower fat mass at certain BMI levels than European children. The researchers concluded that body fat percentage is more closely correlated with PA than BMI (Duncan, et al., 2006). Rush et al. (2003) concluded that activity-related energy expenditure, an indicator of PA, does not explain high rates of obesity in Maori and Pacific children, so supporting Duncan et al's (2006) interpretation that body fat percentage is a better indicator of PA related benefits associated with childhood obesity, particularly for Maori and Pacific children (Rush, et al., 2003).

Utter et al. (2006) used self-report surveys to examine the nutritional and PA behaviours of children aged 5-14 years old in New Zealand. The survey included children's play and active travel behaviours, as well as sports participation over the previous two weeks. They found that in many instances Pacific and Maori children were more active than European children, suggesting Pacific and Maori children's high obesity and overweight rates may be attributable more to poor diet than inadequate PA. They identified a high percentage of children's activity took place during school hours and recommended PA initiatives be targeted to encourage activity outside of school hours. They also recommended that efforts to improve PA reflect cultural perspectives and preferences with regard to PA options (Utter, et al., 2006).



## PA Programmes for Pacific Children

Barnfather's (2004) report to the Auckland Regional Public Health Service on childhood obesity in Auckland concluded there was a lack of awareness amongst providers about children's PA, and nutrition programmes available in the Auckland region. One aim of the report was to review Auckland programmes and increase awareness (Barnfather, 2004). The following table details information for PA programmes for Pacific children then available in Auckland. Although Barnfather's (2004) report gives a comprehensive review of PA (as well as nutrition) programmes for children in Auckland, these were not specifically targeted at Pacific children and so are not included in the table below.

**Table 1: PA programmes for Pacific children and families in Auckland**

Programme/ Organisation	Target Group (age & setting)	Interventions	Locality
Active Families/ Green Prescription (GRx)	School aged, overweight, poor eating habits, support of family, referral from health professional (open to any ethnic group but there is a specific target for Maori and Pacific children and families).	Free community based health programme to increase activity and improve eating behaviours. Coordinated physical activities and collaborated goal setting.	Auckland
Enua Ola/ The Fono	Pacific Community (All ages)	Fitness, exercise and nutrition services for Pacific church and community groups	Waitemata District (WDHB)
Pacific Well Child Promotion Service to Pacific Communities/ Health Star Pacific	Pacific children 0-5 years	Implement PA programs in early childhood education centres, churches and other appropriate Pacific settings	Auckland District (ADHB)
Health Villages Action Zone	Pacific Community (All ages)	A government-community partnership. A church-based program of weekly exercise classes.	Auckland and Waitemata Districts (ADHB & WDHB)

Further to this, many community-based PA programmes specifically for Pacific families are run through churches and sports clubs by community members. The following table gives some examples in South Auckland. Some of these programmes are funded by churches and local community grants, thus by councils, sports clubs or businesses (e.g. Lion Foundation) (personal communication with local community based PA providers and members, December 2015).

**Table 2: PA, community based programmes for Pacific peoples in South Auckland**

Programme Name	Activity/Service	Location	Participation group	Funding/Pay per service
Big Boys and Big Girls Health Programme <sup>5</sup>	Group Fitness Activities including calisthenics, aerobics, and boxing	Run from a private gym in Manukau, South Auckland as well as local parks and clubs	Morbidly Obese/Obese men and woman. Large Pacific participation	Funding and minimum pay per service
Zumba	Dance style aerobic group activity (derived from South American dance)	Churches and recreation centres in South Auckland	Community members and families. Large Pacific Participation.	Pay per service mostly <\$5 Some groups have small funding grants for cost of running the program.
Faith City	Group fitness activities including running, boxing, and circuit training	Faith City Church in Manukau as well as local parks and clubs	Community members and families. Large Pacific Participation.	Pay per service.

These programmes are promoted by word of mouth and sustainability is an issue (verbal communication with programme leader, December 2015).

### Auckland projects to address Pacific obesity

There are many community-based, PA programmes that have delivered positive health outcomes for Samoan and other Pacific communities.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntn3zBP2vdY>

One example is the Ola Fa'autauta Project (Samoan Lifewise Project), a partnership of three Samoan churches and the University of Auckland, investigated the effectiveness of nutrition education and an exercise programme for weight loss amongst adults in three Samoan churches in Auckland. One church was the control group, while the other two churches were part of the intervention. They found that adults from the intervention churches lost weight after a year compared with adults from the control church, who gained weight. Although nutrition education had little apparent impact on attitudes or behaviour, there was a 10% increase in the number of people who were vigorously active in the intervention group compared with a 5% decline in the control group (Bell, et al., 2001).

Swinburn (1997) has emphasised the importance of engaging key influential community leaders as the “critical factor in the success of the project” (Swinburn, Bell, & Amosa, 1997; p. 20). Auckland District Health Board (ADHB) and Waitemata District Health Board (WDHB) have similarly identified the need to engage and collaborate with key stakeholders in the Pacific community in order to improve the health of the Pacific population in these districts. For example, ADHB and WDHB have partnered with the Pacific community to develop and implement a five-year Pacific Health Action Plan<sup>6</sup> – the Pacific plan for a long, healthy life. One of the plan’s six priorities is that Pacific people “eat well and are physically active”. Another is that Pacific children are safe and their families are free from violence. Children’s safety is a right acknowledged in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, along with the right to an environment where they can play and rest. This thesis explores the idea that both priorities of the Pacific Health Action Plan can be achieved by an increase in children’s PA levels through active travel and play.

This aligns with 'Ala Mo'ui – Pathways to Pacific Health and Wellbeing 2014-2018, the national framework for Pacific health, which aims to decrease the number of Pacific children (2-14 years) who are obese. According to 'Ala Mo'ui framework, Pacific children are more than twice as likely to be obese than the national average (27.1% vs. 11.1% respectively) (Ministry of Health, 2014a).

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<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.waitemataadhb.govt.nz/assets/Documents/action-plans/Pacific-Health-Action-Plan-feedback-report.pdf> 7 December, 2016.

## International Program for Pacific children - example

The Good Start Program for Maori and Pacific Island children and families in Queensland (GSP), Australia addresses childhood obesity and associated chronic health disease for Maori and Pacific Island children in Queensland through nutrition and PA programs in schools, church, and community settings. The GSP uses a family-centred approach to engage Maori and Pacific children, as well as to ensure that their nutrition and activity behaviours are supported and reinforced through their family. This approach acknowledges the fundamental role families play in shaping children's lifestyle behaviours, as well as the important value of the whanau/fanau/'aiga as a support and nurturing system for Maori and Pacific people (Mihirshahi et al., 2017).

## Children's Independent Mobility

IM is an integral form of PA for children (Hillman, et al., 1990; Shaw, et al., 2015). It is described as outdoor play and travelling to destinations unsupervised, with an emphasis on children being allowed to enjoy autonomous decision-making and the influence of this on their activity behaviours (Morrow, 2003; Proshanky & Fabian, 1987; Shaw, et al., 2015). IM is seen as an important component of establishing physically active habits at a young age (Kuh & Cooper, 1992). The developmental benefits are seen to be the social, spatial and problem-solving skills gained through this decision making process, as well as the physical, psychological and emotional benefits of being active, healthy and independent (Shaw, et al., 2015). According to Holt (2008), restricting children's play and IM inhibits their interactions with others and the environment, and therefore impacts on their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development (Gordon-Larsen, Nelson, Page, & Popkin, 2006; Holt, Spence, Sehn, & Cutumisu, 2008; McDonell, 2007).

There is an array of international data indicating the decline of children's IM since 1970 (Hillman, et al., 1990; Shaw, et al., 2015). Since Hillman et al's landmark study into children's IM, further evidence of a reduction in children's IM has emerged in Australia and New Zealand (Carver, Timperio, & Crawford, 2012; Collins & Kearns, 2001; Freeman & Tranter, 2011; Tranter, 1995; Witten, Kearns, Carroll, Asiasiga, & Tava'e, 2013), as well as England (Taylor & Kuo, 2006) and other countries such as Sweden (Sandqvist, 2002), Denmark (Fotel & Thomson, 2004), Finland and other Scandinavian countries (Kytta, 1997, 2004). Children's IM data are

also now starting to emerge from Japan (Drianda & Kinoshita, 2011), African nations (Behrens & Muchaka, 2011; Larouche et al., 2014), and Tanzania (Malone & Rudner, 2011). All of these studies report largely restricted levels of children's IM.

Stone et al. (2014) conducted research through Project BEAT (Built Environment and Active Transport) in Toronto to examine the relationship between children's IM and characteristics of PA behaviour, associations with place of residence, gender and type/period of day (weekdays, after-school, weekend). The study found that children who had high IM levels had more positive PA behaviours through the school week, including after school and over the weekend, and were less sedentary. It also found that children's IM seemed to "matter more in urban neighbourhoods for boys and suburban neighbourhoods for girls" (p. 1), providing evidence of a difference in children's IM behaviours depending on gender and place of residence (Stone, Faulkner, Mitra, & Buliung, 2014).

There has been extensive research on factors that influence children's IM (Kytta, Hirvonen, Rudner, Pirjola, & Laatikainen, 2015), including children's age and maturity (Johansson, 2006; Timperio, Crawford, Telford, & Salmon, 2004); the child's sex (Hillman & Adams, 1992; Kytta, 1997; O'Brien, Jones, Sloan, & Rustin, 2000); family socioeconomic status (Behrens & Muchaka, 2011; O'Brien, et al., 2000); ethnicity (O'Brien, et al., 2000); trip chaining and convenience (Johansson, 2006; Witten, et al., 2013); environmental characteristics such as street connectivity, green space, distance to school and other places (Giles-Corti et al., 2011; Holt, et al., 2008; Rothman, To, Buliung, Macarthur, & Howard, 2014); social issues such as trust between neighbours (Rudner, 2012); traffic related issues (Carver, et al., 2008; Hillman, 1997; Johansson, 2006), and parents perception of safety (Carroll, Witten, Kearns, & Donovan, 2015; Witten, et al., 2013).

An international comparison study was made of children's IM in 16 countries, in response to declining IM rates over the last 40 years. It was the first study to gather children's IM data globally and compare the results. The countries with the highest children's IM rank scores were for Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Japan and Denmark, with Finland and then Germany far outperforming the other countries. The lowest scoring countries were France, Israel, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Ireland, Australia, Portugal, Italy, and South Africa. England was in the middle of these two groups (Shaw, et al., 2015). New Zealand was not included in this study.

Although Finland showed the highest level of children's IM across the 16 countries, there was still a marked and rapid decrease in children's IM in Finland from 1990-2010 (Kytta, et al., 2015), most noticeably in small town and rural village settings. A suggested reason for this result was the closure of small town and rural schools, meaning children were more likely to have to travel to school in nearby cities. Distance to school is a major determinant of children's IM (Carver, et al., 2008), and it seems possible that the increase in distance to school compromised children's IM due to carpooling or trip chaining (Kytta, et al., 2015).

The study found that the most significant concern for parents in relation to letting their children move about independently was traffic (Shaw, et al., 2015). Parents expressed strong concerns that their child would be at risk of being injured in a traffic incident. Age was another factor in children's IM, with increasing IM as age increased (and significant restrictions for under 11 year-olds). The study found a weak correlation with 'stranger danger', and no significant difference for gender. Nor did household car-ownership significantly impact on children's IM. Both car ownership and gender have been associated with lower IM in other studies (Fyhri, Hjorthol, Mackett, Fotel, & Kytta, 2011; Prezza, Alparone, Cristallo, & Luigi, 2005; Rudner, 2012). The findings of a low association between children's IM and perceptions of stranger danger also differed from other children's IM studies, where this is a high indicator of children's IM (Behrens & Muchaka, 2011; D'Haese et al., 2013; Ding et al., 2012; Fyhri, et al., 2011; Prezza, et al., 2005; Rudner, 2012).

The study found discrepancies between children's and their parents' report of IM levels such as children reporting more IM than their parents, or vice versa. They concluded that these discrepancies might be attributable to:

...response bias resulting from social motivations, such as children boasting or adults feeling pressured to appear responsible to their peers, as well as cultural differences, lack of parent-child shared understanding of permitted and practised behaviour, and different groups interpreting the questions differently. (Shaw, et al., 2015, p. 14)

In response to increases in traffic, Sharpe and Tranter (2010) questioned the necessity of children's IM due to its correlation with children's active transport. Parents were hesitant to separate themselves from their children, which reduced opportunities for children's active

transport. Sharpe and Tranter (2010) concluded that a shift from the focus on children's IM as a means to increase children's active transport may need to be considered – and that a family centred approach, which encourages both adults' and children's active transport, could be more feasible given the strong resistance from parents towards unsupervised play and travel for their children. They suggest, "...to take both children's rights and desires seriously, as well as to take into account the concerns of parents, the active transport needs of both groups must be addressed simultaneously" (Sharpe & Tranter, 2010, p. 284).

Benwell (2013) similarly questions the concept of IM in his research with children in Cape Town, South Africa. He concluded that:

Studies exploring children's use of outdoor space could be more sensitive to adult imposed structure rather than essentialising it, almost ideologically, as the hegemonic expropriation of public space as adult space. Such theorisations need to avoid routinely reinforcing the 'adults versus children' narrative that has so often prevailed in the social studies of childhood literature. The behaviour of adults does not always and everywhere impinge upon the lives of children in negative ways . . . . (Benwell, 2013, p. 42).

Neither Sharp and Tranter (2010) nor Benwell (2013) deny the benefits of IM and children's agency through autonomous play and travel. Their research rather considers promotion of children's active transport through family activities, given the context of parents' fears for their child's safety (through traffic and stranger danger), parents' desire to spend time with their children, and the subsequent benefits of family bonding and family norms around PA (Benwell, 2013; Sharpe & Tranter, 2010). This is a fitting model for promoting Samoan and Pacific children's PA behaviours given the importance of the role of family and the collective nature of Samoan and Pacific cultures (Macpherson, 1994).

### **Pacific and Samoan perspectives of IM and/or PA**

Tuagalu (2011) explored Samoan perspectives and experiences of PA to uncover barriers and enablers to being physically active. He surveyed Samoan students from five secondary schools and a tertiary institution in Apia, Samoa. He found that Samoan young people value PA as important for their physical health, but did not mention wellbeing or the psychological

benefits. The most common perception of the benefits of PA was weight loss. More than half the participants reported a desire for weight loss. The most important enabler of increased PA was seen as encouragement and help from friends and family. Although many of the participants said they were physically active, only 32% of respondents actually met the recommended daily requirement (Tuagalu, 2011).

The three most common barriers reported by the respondents were family responsibilities (82%); too much housework to do (69%); and religious customs (68%). Being bored (67%); finding a PA programme too hard to stick with (64%); deciding PA takes too much effort (63%); and feeling uncomfortable with PA (50%) were other common barriers reported. Tuagalu's (2011) findings revealed that PA was seen as a means of attaining and maintaining healthy weight and a reduction of obesity related illnesses. This perspective appeared to be insufficient to change behaviour. This could be due to the Samoan respondents' perspectives that they already were physically active, even though this perspective did not align with the global standards for what constitutes adequate PA.

Tuagalu (2011) recommended that PA initiatives for Samoan children and young people aim to improve Samoan perspectives of PA that encompass more than the physical benefits. This would require a collaborative effort between families, schools and government agencies (Tuagalu, 2009, 2011).

Pereira (2006) noted Samoan parents' perceptions that physical education, as part of the school curriculum, was a "waste of time" or a "distraction from getting good exam results" (p. 69). Pereira's findings highlight a need to promote PA as positive for physical, cognitive and social wellbeing, and as necessary not just for Samoan young people, but their parents as well (Pereira, 2006). Samoan teachers and students became more positive towards physical education in the school curriculum when it was examinable. Otherwise, physical education was seen as play and not taken seriously by the school, teachers, students, and parents (Rasmussen, 2010).

## Play

Play is a common part of early childhood educational programmes and is defined as allowing children to learn naturally about themselves and the world around them (Ailwood, 2003;



Bruce, 2001). Play is a source of unsupervised enjoyment and pleasure that offers an opportunity for children to explore and acquire knowledge (Ministry of Education, 1996). It is also an indicator of IM (Wen, Kite, Merom, & Rissel, 2009). A key element of the Te Whāriki framework, the Early Childhood framework in New Zealand released in 1996, is exploration – encouraging children to learn through active exploration of the environment. The framework goals are for children to grow more confident in and about their bodies; learn strategies for active exploration, thinking and reasoning; and develop working theories for making sense of the natural, social, physical, and material worlds (Ministry of Education, 1996). This view of play and its benefits is not always shared by Pacific peoples, who may view play as of little value (Leaupepe, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013).

Leaupepe (2008, 2009, 2010) found that generally Pacific peoples see little value in play in relation to learning and education; however, teachers understood and increasingly believed in the practice of play (Leaupepe, 2009). The tension for them was about allowing development through play while staying “abreast of parental expectations, such as the maintenance of language and culture through traditional ways of learning (see for example Tanielu, 2004; Tuafuti, Pua, & van Schaijik, 2011). Added to this dilemma are government aspirations of improving the early literacy and numeracy skills of children” (Hughes, 2004; Mara & Burgess, 2007; Mauigoa-Tekene, 2006; Ministry of Education, 1996) (Leaupepe, 2010, p. 28).

As play was not seen as something of value for the collective, children would have to make ‘play’ a part of their work or chores (Leaupepe, 2010).

### **Pacific and Samoan children’s IM and PA**

Studies on children’s IM among minority groups show mixed findings. Some literature state that children from minority groups experience less IM due to less social cohesion with their neighbours, or less familiarity with the physical environment (O'Brien, et al., 2000). Other literature suggests children from minority groups who experience higher deprivation are more likely to be independently mobile due to less opportunities for passive, chaperoned transport, or the lack of funds to participate in organised sport/activities (Behrens & Muchaka, 2011; Larouche, et al., 2014).

The Ministry of Health (2003b) suggested that SPARC’s surveys on New Zealand sport and PA (1997/98, 1998/99 and 2000/01) that found Pacific children were less active than other

groups, did not take into account Pacific children's higher rates of incidental activities (such as walking to/from school, informal play etc.), and lower rates of participation in organised leisure and sport, which is what SPARC measures. The Ministry of Health's 2002 National Children's Nutrition Survey found Pacific children had relatively high levels of incidental PA although they participated less than other groups in organised leisure and sport (Ministry of Health, 2003b). The survey also found that Pacific children were more likely to actively travel (walk, bike/scooter or skate) to and from school (male 52.2%, female 46.0%) compared to the children in the general population (male 38.4%, female 36.0%), and were likely to be more active than European children (Pacific male 28.0% and female 20.4%; European male 27.7% and female 12.9%) (Ministry of Health, 2003b). The Ministry of Health's 2008 survey reported that Pacific boys were 20% more likely than girls of the same age to use active transport (walk, bike, skate or other forms of PA) to get to and from school. Active transport was not determined by neighbourhood deprivation, nor did it appear to be the result of parental perceptions. Although the survey found that Pacific parents were significantly more likely to report dangers 'for reasons other than traffic' as a barrier for their children using active transport to school, than parents of children of European, Maori and 'Other ethnic descent', Pacific children continued to have higher levels of active transport than the national average (Ministry of Health, 2008a).

Safety issues influence parenting practices and increasing media coverage on crime has hugely impacted on safety-conscious parenting practices (wanting to be a 'good' parent), as has parents' busier lifestyles (Crawford, et al., 2015; O'Brien, et al., 2000; Timperio, et al., 2004; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997).

What is clear from the literature is that parents are gatekeepers of their children's IM behaviours and that a mix of social, physical and psychosocial and environmental factors influence parents' decision-making for children's IM. The following section examines literature on the ways parents' perceptions of their social and physical surroundings influence the level of IM they allow their children. There is a growing corpus of literature on the impact of neighbourhood perceptions on children's IM (Prezza, et al., 2005; Shaw, et al., 2015; Shaw et al., 2013; Valentine, 1997).

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PERCEPTIONS

### Defining neighbourhood

Neighbourhood is defined in many ways, including as an arbitrary area for which data can be collected and made available, using mesh blocks (Pearce, Witten, & Bartie, 2006) or census boundaries (Booth, Pinkston, Walker, & Poston, 2005). Perceptions of neighbourhoods have largely been investigated with the assumption that they “reflect actual, objective neighbourhood circumstances” (Kamphuis, et al., 2010, p. 744). However, people vary in their uses and perceptions of neighbourhoods (McCreanor, et al., 2006). For instance, Witten et al. (2009) defined neighbourhood as “proximity to a range of community resources, both social and material” (Witten, et al., 2009, p. 2893). It has thus both geographical and social dimensions (Kamphuis, et al., 2010).

There is growing understanding that perceptions of neighbourhood are heavily influenced by the demographic and psychosocial factors of the residents (Kumar, 2009; Ladd, 1970; Orleans, 1967)<sup>7</sup>. This includes residents’ cultural epistemologies and worldviews. For Samoans, the social aspect of neighbourhood has more influence on their sense of belonging to place than the actual location (McCreanor, et al., 2006). To our knowledge, there has been no research on how Samoans define neighbourhood in New Zealand.

### Neighbourhood activity

There is research evidence that perceptions of a neighbourhood as safe, desirable or otherwise, impacts on residents’ PA (Panter & Jones, 2008), particularly on adults walking or running in the neighbourhood for leisure or exercise (Panter & Jones, 2008; Weinstein, Feigley, Pullen, Mann, & Redman, 1999), children’s outdoor play and exploration (Mackett & Paskins, 2004; Witten & Carroll, 2015), and active transport use for all residents (Panter & Jones, 2008). IM is an important factor for children’s PA levels because children are more active when outdoors (Mackett & Paskins, 2004; Sallis, Prochaska, & Taylor, 2000) and in their informal play and travel with peers, rather than with adults (Mackett, Brown, Gong, Kitazawa, & Paskins,

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Kumar, 2003

2007)<sup>8</sup>.

## **Children's IM**

As discussed already, many factors influence children's IM levels (Shaw, et al., 2015). One of these is parents' perception of their neighbourhood as safe, desirable or otherwise, and the associated perceptions of risks for their child's safety (Mackett, et al., 2007; Prezza, et al., 2005; Valentine, 1997). These perceptions include traffic danger, stranger danger, crime, and social norms of what constitutes 'good parenting' (Prezza, et al., 2005; Valentine, 1997; Veitch, Bagley, Ball, & Salmon, 2006).

Parents' concern about the risk of automobile danger is largely responsible for children's decreased use of active transport (particularly IM), and an increase in travel by automobile (Fyhri, et al., 2011; Hillman, et al., 1990). Shaw et al. (2015) discusses the social trap parents fall into where they drive their children to school to avoid their child's potential risk from traffic danger, while contributing to the very traffic that they are fearful of (Shaw, et al., 2015).

Fear of stranger danger is also a major concern for parents in letting or restricting their child's unsupervised movement in the neighbourhood. Specific fears of stranger danger include bullying, kidnapping, sexual assault, or other coercion of some sort from strangers, teenagers or local gangs (Pain, 2006).

Furedi (2001) describes fear for children's safety as 'parenting paranoia' and therefore unjustified, and as creating unnecessary anxiety about supervising children, shifting everyday parenting culture towards children's safety being an individual rather than a societal responsibility. For example, parents no longer take turns watching each other's children, nor intervene in disciplining them for fear of judgement and accusations of abuse (Furedi, 2001). Hillman (2006) claims that paranoid parenting is endorsed by the media and is largely unjustified by real dangers in urban settings (Hillman, 2006). Taylor (1995) also argues that fear of crime is only partly reflective of the local crime rate and mostly exacerbated by mass media (Taylor, Koons, Kurtz, Greene, & Perkins, 1995).

Weinstein et al. (1999) provided evidence that physical inactivity is higher among those who

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<sup>8</sup> Mackett et al, 2007 provided evidence that boys use more calories when unaccompanied than with an adult.

perceive their neighbourhood to be unsafe because of crime. They also argued that hearing about a crime second-hand through people, media or social media networks, is more common than direct experience of crime (Weinstein, et al., 1999).

Foster and Giles-Corti (2008)<sup>9</sup> conducted a literature review to investigate the evidence linking crime-related safety (both real and perceived) with PA enablers and constraints. While concluding there was insufficient evidence to link crime-related safety (both real and perceived) with levels of PA, their results showed that feeling unsafe was associated with inactivity in women, older adults, ethnic minorities, and those with lower educational qualifications (Foster & Giles-Corti, 2008). Kamphuis et al. (2010) reported that those with low socioeconomic status are more likely than those with high socioeconomic status to perceive their neighbourhood as unattractive and unsafe, largely due to the objectively less aesthetic and safe neighbourhoods associated with lower levels of PA. They also concluded that low socioeconomic groups' unfavourable neighbourhood perceptions were also partly due to perceived low social neighbourhood cohesion and adverse psychosocial circumstances, such as depression or a stressful life event (e.g. a death of a loved one, divorce, or loss of job) (Kamphuis, et al., 2010).

A number of authors suggest that perceptions of crime are the result of weak neighbourhood relations and restricted use of neighbourhood spaces (Prezza, et al., 2005; Taylor, Schumaker, & Gottredson, 1985); and that lower fear of crime is associated with strong neighbourhood social ties (Ross & Jang, 2000), a strong sense of cohesion and community (Chipuer, 2001), and sense of belonging to place (Brown, Mackett, Gong, & Paskins, 2008).

A Play England survey (Shaw, et al., 2013) examined barriers to children's outdoor neighbourhood play. They found that parents were fearful of being judged unfavourably if they let their children play unsupervised outdoors, and felt that to do so risked problems with neighbours. They suggest such social norms are a huge barrier to children's IM.

## Influences on neighbourhood perceptions

Safety issues influence parenting practices, which then impact on children's utilisation of their

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<sup>9</sup> They found few studies included a social environment measures such as sense of belonging and sense of community, when examining a relationship between safety and PA.

social and physical surroundings (Veitch, et al., 2006; Weir, Etelson, & Brand, 2006).

Children from low socio-economic areas have higher levels of IM than children from high socio-economic areas, who are more likely to be chaperoned to and from places (Carroll, et al., 2015; Freeman & Aitken-Rose, 2005). For low socioeconomic families, neighbourhood affordances provide important alternatives to high cost recreational and leisure opportunities (Carroll, et al., 2015; Elsey, 2004). Samoans in this study tended to live in lower income areas, however more research is needed to ascertain whether these results are due to ethnic or socio-economic causes.

There is a wide corpus of evidence that shows beneficial links between social cohesion and health (Ministry of Health, 2008b). It has been found that societies with diminished social cohesion have higher mortality rates and worse social outcomes than those with high levels of social cohesion (Stansfield, 2006). Therefore, neighbourhoods that nurture social cohesion have wide-ranging benefits locally and nationally.

Neighbourhood social relations impact on parenting behaviours, and in turn influence children's interaction with their environment. Parents who experience belonging and cohesive neighbourhoods are less likely to use restrictive parenting techniques (McDonnell, 2007). This is also linked with social norms around 'good parenting' (Shaw, et al., 2015).

### **Samoan neighbourhood perceptions**

Although there is no existing research to our knowledge that investigates Samoan perspectives of their neighbourhood and its influence on their children's IM, one research project looked particularly at Samoan caregivers' perspectives of their physical and social surroundings that influenced their sense of belonging to place (McCreanor, et al., 2006; Witten, et al., 2009).

McCreanor et al. (2006) found that although Samoan caregivers identified their various facilities such as parks, beaches etc., they did not mention any of these places as significant to them. A strong connection to local residents was an important aspect mentioned as significant by all ethnic groups, including Samoans. A main reason for residing in the area given by Samoan caregivers was the proximity of family members. Their family members provided a support network for them and contributed to their strong neighbourhood connection.

According to McCreanor, et al., (2006):

For Samoan participants there is a strong sense of the familial and cultural connections that constitute community with much less emphasis on the significance of the actual location. Family and friends, often from a church context, were the contacts and networks within which a sense of belonging was constituted. (p. 205)

The church was a strong source of support for Samoan caregivers, regardless of whether it was within the immediate neighbourhood or beyond. Witten et al. (2009) similarly found that Samoans were more likely than Maori and European New Zealanders, to travel outside of the neighbourhood, to churches, village church associations, rugby teams, and 'aiga (family) (Witten, et al., 2009). According to Cowley-Malcolm (2013), the church is the modern-day Samoan village in New Zealand and a medium in which cultural practices and values are exchanged and validated (Cowley-Malcolm, 2013).

Residential stability is higher for parents who have local family ties. Social capital is measured in terms of participation, social trust and reciprocity, and has emerged as a predictor of physical health. Social capital necessitates greater mobility and physical independence such as attending local clubs. Social support is perceived as support of family and friends and indicates a strong relationship with positive mental health (Gidlow, et al., 2010).

McCreanor et al. (2006) described Samoan caregivers' attachment to place as "focused on their familiarity, perceived safety and level of comfort in their surroundings, and the closeness they felt with local people" (p. 201). Relationships were often described as "being like an extended family always 'looking out for each other'" (McCreanor, et al., 2006, p. 201).

Perceived child safety was influenced by the perception of physical neighbourhood features such as the condition of parks, playgrounds and public spaces. Social support, levels of public services and amenities, exposure to danger, residential stability and poverty were also neighbourhood factors that influenced parenting practices. In neighbourhoods perceived as cohesive with high levels of mutual aid, parents were less likely to use restrictive and punitive parenting techniques (McCreanor, et al., 2006). According to Witten et al. (2009), Samoan parents mainly shared parenting matters with family members, with community relationships predominantly through church and family. Samoan parents also stated that the "presence of

other ...Pacific people in the area made it a more comfortable place to be and contributed to their sense of belonging” (Witten, et al., 2009, p. 2903).

### **Samoan sense of place in New Zealand**

Samoans’ relationship with the environment is evident in their indigenous beliefs, their subsistence living, and the culture/language. As traditional subsistence dwellers, respect was given to natural materials, with myths often describing them as living entities, like Papa – the land, and Lagi – the heavens/sky. Because the land produced food, there existed a reciprocal relationship between Samoans and the land. Wildermuth (2012) explains how her research came about from Samoan film-maker Steven Percival’s commentary on his project ‘Exploring the use of Natural Fibres in Samoa’, where he spoke of Samoans “deep connection with the environment that before harvesting a tree, a ritual would be performed to ask permission and convey respect for the tree” (Wildermuth, 2012, p. 9).

Wildermuth (2012) investigated Samoan people’s relationship with the environment pre and post Christianity. Samoan indigenous religion recognised Tagaloa “was the ancestor of all living things on earth” including humans (Wildermuth, 2012, p. 6). There was interconnectedness between humans and nature. There are examples in Wildermuth’s study of sacred rituals performed when planting or cutting down a tree and showing respect by acknowledging the tree itself as a part of nature’s life cycle, but also ensuring that the spiritual/natural balance was maintained (Wildermuth, 2012). The Samoan word for land is ‘fanua’, which is also the word for placenta. In this one word, humans and land are mutually connected. Wildermuth (2012) states this traditional perspective of the environment, land and nature shifted post-Christianity where the power was no longer shared/equal but now under man’s control.

Despite this shift, connection to land is still an important element of Samoan identity. It is evident in the custom of burying the placenta of a newborn baby (fanua) into the land of residence (fanua). The placenta, which provided sustenance for the growing foetus, is returned to the land, which will now provide sustenance to the growing baby (Wildermuth, 2012).

A ‘place’ includes numerous social relations that can give rise to various forms and degrees of ‘belonging’. Today, large numbers of Samoans reside in New Zealand, Australia and the United States. According to Lilomaiava-Doktor (2009), place of origin is an important source of identity for Samoans, irrespective of where they live. Traditional reasons for travel were to



seek resources to supply gifts at important events – births, marriages and funerals – thus fulfilling fa'alavelave. Contemporary reasons include education, health and economic opportunities, still with intentions to fulfil fa'alavelave to their 'aiga. Despite large migrations to and residency in rim countries, Samoans still move back and forth to maintain connection with 'aiga (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009).

Liki (2001) suggests that the "'aiga forms the basis and meaning of one's particular identity" (p. 77). Although connections with 'aiga originate from both maternal and paternal villages, it is not restricted by physical location. Rather the 'va' (space between people) connects 'aiga regardless of their country of residence (Liki, 2001). The Samoan concept of the 'va' is important; as a sacred space that connects people and place, the 'va' determines the interaction and the role each entity plays; it determines how each acts, speaks, touches one's place in the social order and much more (Wendt, 1999). Lilomaiva-Doktor (1996) suggests that the va is epistemologically coded with the concepts of respect, service and hospitality, which are important for maintaining "'aiga status and a 'socially well-located family'" (p. 18). Underpinning this is participation, obligation and reciprocity. She says that in this sense, "economic power and social power are inseparable" (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009, p.18).

Although the 'aiga still plays a fundamental role in Samoans' everyday life, cultural globalisation has seen Samoan families becoming smaller, less fluid and increasingly adopting Western consumer goods, services and lifestyles.

For the contemporary Samoan, "being Samoan in New Zealand involves making a conscious effort to achieve a balance between the two worlds of fa'asamoa and New Zealand society" (McCallin, et al., 2001). Fairbairn-Dunlop (1998) agrees, stating that all Pacific groups in New Zealand are characterised by a continual shift of territorial and cultural boundaries that are influenced by globalisation, media and popular culture. Pacific identity is therefore constantly being redefined by these influences – constantly evolving – and neither static nor absolute (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1998).

Lilomaiva-Doktor (2004) criticised Connell (1990) and Shankman (1976) as showing a lack of understanding of the values and purposes of the Samoan cultural milieu. The latter described fa'alavelave as a customary practice that squanders economic gains and resources. Lilomaiva-Doktor (2004) argues that fa'alavelave is the active way of fulfilling responsibility to the 'aiga

and may involve movement to and from New Zealand and Samoa. Furthermore, making clear profits in fa'alavelave is not the ultimate goal, but rather it is fulfilling a social, political and economic obligation. Thus, she suggests, "economic power and social power are inseparable" (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009, p. 18). She suggests further that the practice of remitting money or goods is profoundly cultural. Migration scholars have suggested remittance was an attempt of the migrant individual to retain kinship ties, but Lilomaiva-Doktor (2004) argues remittance is *because* of these kinship ties (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2004).

Understanding traditional Samoan parenting practices is important to understanding the epistemology of Samoan parents' perspectives of their social and physical surrounding. The next section looks into traditional Samoan parenting practices in relation to Samoan parenting practices in New Zealand.

## **SAMOAN PARENTING**

### **Traditional Samoan Parenting**

McNaughton (McNaughton, 1996) quotes Valsiner's (Valsiner, 1988) view of culture as "at the level of a community as a structured causal system embodied in such things as institutions, meaning systems and social norms" (p. 176).

Samoa culture is collective in nature, with the individual viewed as an integral part of the 'aiga (family) and wider community (Suaalii-Sauni & Mavoa, 2001). Samoa culture is also hierarchical, where status and rank determine authority and roles of individuals (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009). This profoundly influences child-rearing patterns (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009). Parents construct their parenting practices within the cultural collective framework (McNaughton, 1996).

In Pereira's article (2010), she wrote that Samoan parenting practices "are assembled from a mix of traditional social values and beliefs" (Pereira, 2010, p. 100). Ritchie and Ritchie (1978) described the characteristics of Samoan child-rearing as 'multiple parenting' where the burden of parental duties is shared among the wider family (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978). This reduces the stress for parents while allowing their involvement from a distance, and as a consequence reduces the risk of incompetent parenting from both parents and the wider family network

(Cowley-Malcolm et al., 2011).

Samoan parenting is described as authoritarian (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998), particularly in using physical discipline (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998; Paterson, Feehan, Butler, Williams, & Cowley-Malcolm, 2007). Samoan children find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy and are taught at an early age to obey authority figures unquestionably and to be *tautua* – of service – towards their elders, and to do so with respect, deference and obedience.

Cowley-Malcolm, et al. (2009) note that:

Children are raised to know their roles, to act on them diligently in the 'service' or *tautua* to their 'aiga. They know when to speak and not to speak, how to look and not to look, who to speak to and not to speak to, how to address and not address; their actions are always guided and directed by the knowledge they have been given by the adults about their ancestors (this is how it was for your mother/ father/ grandparents), and this knowledge acquisition is always under the perusal of the parents and in the first institution of learning, [the] 'aiga. (p. 27)

The duty of a good parent is to instil respect and deference in their child, so that they become responsible and caring adults. It is also the duty of a good parent to assert their authority to maintain boundaries and ensure children respond and behave appropriately (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009; Iusitini, et al., 2011b; Pereira, 2010). Failure in disciplining a child and allowing them to behave in disrespectful ways is seen as the parents' failure to love them (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009; Pereira, 2010; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996). It also ultimately brings shame on the child and their family (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009; Iusitini, et al., 2011b; Pereira, 2010; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996). Enhancing or maintaining the family's reputation (and avoiding shame) provides a motivation for Samoan children to behave appropriately (Suaalii-Sauni & Mavoa, 2001).

Samoan children know their role in the social structures of the 'aiga and its extension. As Silipa writes, "Within the 'aiga there is always a conscious awareness that we are under the watchful gaze of our adult kin. This conscious awareness lies behind the silence of the child in the presence of adults and people in authority at home and in public" (Silipa, 2008, p. 15). Mageo

(1988) goes further to suggest that this therefore is a performance by children to act and behave appropriately but is not a reflection of their true emotions. Their true emotions are revealed in the absence of adults or are suppressed and manifested negatively later in adulthood (Mageo, 1988).

Silipa (2008) illustrates the traditional Samoan context of parenting, where it is spatially closed and open, and socially exclusive as well as inclusive. The village context meant extended family were all involved in each other's everyday activities, including parenting. Children were free to move in and out of places, but still under the close supervision of family members (Silipa, 2008).

Samoa culture is intertwined with post-colonial Christian values and the Bible is often used to instruct and justify Samoan parenting practices. This includes the use of physical punishment (Cowley-Malcolm, 2013; Pereira, 2010); for example – “Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them”<sup>10</sup>. Pereira's (2010) research acknowledges the Samoan belief in this biblical principle where her participants attributed problems with children, particularly Western children, to their parents' inability to discipline them. Lusitini's (2011) research on paternal parenting practices found Samoan fathers were low in nurturing scores due to their belief that to show open affection or overt emotion for their child was to risk spoiling them, creating unruly, proud behaviour (Lusitini, et al., 2011a; Lusitini, et al., 2011b).

This contrasts with reports of traditional Samoan child-rearing practices by early missionaries and anthropologists, where physical discipline for Samoan children was rare. Kramer (1995), whose ethnographic work was conducted in the late 1890s, describes the traditional childhood as a 'pleasant life' for Samoan children, where parents rejoiced in their contribution to build and enhance the advancement of the larger 'aiga (p. 60). Turner (1884) writes similarly that children in Samoa were given considerable freedom to be children with very few restrictions (Turner, 1884). Mead (1928) records Samoan parents as carefree and non-restrictive in their parenting (Mead, 1928). Ochs (1988) explains that because of the oratory nature of “Samoan language and socialisation practices, punishment was more likely to comprise oral reprimanding [rather] than harsh physical discipline” (Ochs, 1988; p. 145). The Samoan theologian Vailaau (2005) agrees, saying that Samoan children are “reared according to the

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<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 13:24

Samoan principles of teaching with words and [through] showing [them] as illustrated in the Samoan proverb, 'O fanau a manu e fafaga l fuga o laau, a o tama a tagata e fafaga l upu (The young ones of birds are fed with nectar; the children of people are fed with words)' (Vailaau, 2005, p. 15).

Following colonisation, harsh use of discipline for children who were considered bottom of the hierarchy is described (Freeman, 1983; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998), though few studies record the specific use of harsh discipline in Samoan child rearing. Mageo's (1988) account of Samoan child rearing reports that babies are nurtured and pampered until about 6 months and are then taught their place in the social order with increasing use of physical discipline as they mature (Mageo, 1988). Pereira (2010) found that physical discipline was used as the last resort, when other forms of discipline did not appear effective (Pereira, 2010). It is clear then that children's behaviours are largely controlled to conform to the expectations and cultural norms for their place in the social hierarchy (for example as a child, as a female or as a male). This is relevant for independent mobility, as it would be expected that Samoan parenting practices also enforce control over children's activity behaviours.

Samoans are from an oral and folk-telling culture and this is evident in their parenting (McNaughton, 1996). Traditional techniques such as fagogo (story telling), and mama (chewing food for the baby), encapsulate a spiritual exchange between parents and children that is embedded in cultural values and beliefs (Tui Atua, 2002).

Fagogo was used by elders in Samoa to help young children go to sleep or settle for the night. They were usually told by grandparents, and usually moral-laden/parable type stories and not purely for entertainment (Cowley-Malcolm, 2013; Masoe & Bush, 2009; Tui Atua, 2002). Through fagogo, cultural knowledge and traditions were passed on through songs, stories and etiquette. Fagogo resulted in a close relationship between the elder and the child.

The Mama technique, generally used to wean the child from their mother's breast milk, maintains the close bond between the mother and child. Cowley Malcolm (2013) summarises this through the Samoan saying, "ai lava le tagata i le mama a lona matua" (you derive sustenance and direction from the mama of your mother) (Cowley-Malcolm, 2013, p. 142). It was also seen to pass on the spirit of the mother including all her values, beliefs, traditions, and cultural identity, to the child.

For most Samoan parents, it is a priority to ensure their child has a strong sense of Samoan identity, particularly in New Zealand, where the environment is not aligned with Samoan beliefs, values and practices. Literature on how Samoan parents and their children navigate their Samoan teachings and identity, as well as thriving in New Zealand, is discussed in the next section.

### **Contemporary Samoan Parenting in New Zealand**

Current research on Samoan parenting unpacks the impact of migration on parents and the impact of this for their children, especially in regard to the church, religion and cultural identity (Anae, 2001; Mila-Schaaf, 2010; Tiatia, 1998). Inter-generational differences exist between Samoan born parents and their New Zealand born children, who are ambiguous about some of the Samoan cultural practices of their parents (Anae, 2001; Mila-Schaaf, 2010; Tiatia, 1998). Historical accounts of Samoan parenting are conflicted. Some suggest that children were spoilt and speak of a relaxed, unrestricted way of parenting, while others talk of harsh physical discipline where children are taught the social order from a young age. Contemporary research gives evidence of both types. However, both sides acknowledge the community values of Samoan children as integral members of the collective community.

Experiences and practices of Samoan culture (or Fa'aSamoa) in New Zealand are evolving (Siauane, 2004), and so are parenting practices. For instance, Cowley-Malcolm et al. (2011) provide insights into some of the impacts of migration and acculturation for Samoan parents in New Zealand, where place of birth (New Zealand or Samoa) and residence, age, education and income have strong associations with differences in parenting practices (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2011). For Samoan parents in New Zealand, there is a conflict between keeping the Fa'aSamoa of collective identity, and beliefs, 'aiga (family), while still incorporating the Western/New Zealand values of getting a good education, getting a good job, financial stability and a 'better way of life' (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1984; Ioane, et al., 2016). Samoan parents in New Zealand are seen to be flexible in their practices and are willing to incorporate the parenting styles of the dominant Western culture (Ioane, et al., 2016).

The church is pivotal in the maintenance of Fa'aSamoa in New Zealand, and many Fa'aSamoa activities are carried out through the church (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998). The early Samoan migrants had an almost utopian view of New Zealand as the '*land of milk and honey*', only to

meet sets of problems and hardships. This produced a longing for their homeland that is evident in novels such as Albert Wendt's *Sons for the Return Home* (1973), in Samoan poetry and popular Samoa songs that '*portray the village as the place in which people live correctly, behave well to one another, and life is good*' (Macpherson, 1994, p. 84). Many Samoan communities try to reproduce this cultural milieu through the church. There is also a growing attempt to revitalise the Fa'aSamoa for New Zealand-born or raised children outside of the church, through preschool language nests which contribute to cultural practices and learning of the Samoan language (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998). In addition, many families continue their daily routines of lotu (family devotions) and speaking the Samoan language at home (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1984).

Research shows differences in parenting styles between Samoa born and New Zealand born parents, with New Zealand born parents more likely to merge New Zealand Western parenting practices with traditional Samoan ones, with an emphasis on communication and interactive techniques, while still maintaining some of the values and beliefs that underpin traditional practices (Cowley-Malcolm, Paterson, & Williams, 2004; Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2010; McCallin, et al., 2001; Paterson et al., 2007). However, regardless of place of birth, it is important for most Samoan parents to ensure Samoan values and beliefs underpin Western practices.

As described by Lauta-Mulitalo (1998) these are;

- *ava* (respect);
- *fa'aaloalo* (reverence);
- *alofa* (love, compassion, and concern);
- *fa'amagalo* (forgiveness);
- *fa'alavelave* (problem solving);
- *lotonu'u* (maintaining/restoring pride);
- *tapu* (sacred bonds); and
- *tautua* (service). (pp. 50, 165, 219, 229).

McCallin et al (2001) interviewed New Zealand born Samoan parents who described parenting, which combined traditional Samoan culture, and Western practices in a way that suited their life in New Zealand (McCallin, et al., 2001).

Cowley-Malcolm (2009) found many Samoan parents faced acculturative stressors such as financial pressures, work pressures, and behaviours such as drinking alcohol, smoking, gambling, and excessive technology use, which contributed to aggressive and violent behaviour (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009). One obvious example is the use of physical punishment as a form of discipline. In Samoan culture there is a strong focus on obedience and respect for adults that underpins parenting practices (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996). Cowley-Malcolm (2009) found that various stressors accompanied with immigration to New Zealand could intensify or exaggerate such disciplinary practices (Cowley-Malcolm, et al., 2009). The Pacific Islands Families Study (PIF) found that parents in Samoa rated significantly higher for nurturing than Samoan parents in New Zealand, and rated lower for harsh discipline (Iusitini, et al., 2011b). Harsh disciplinary practices are often underpinned by a concern that their children will lose their cultural beliefs and identity due to acculturation within the host country, as well as parents wanting to maintain control of their children's behaviour.

## SUMMARY

There is no research to my knowledge that investigates the link between Samoan parents' neighbourhood perceptions and their parenting practices, and the impact of these on their children's IM.

Macpherson (1994) acknowledges the close supervision of early Samoan migrant parents/in loco parentis (acting parent) which:

... was not seen, at least initially, to be an unreasonable restriction on freedom by either parents or their migrant children. Most migrants accepted that supervision was appropriate at the time and that it was no more or less than they would have expected in Samoa. (Macpherson, 1994, p. 91).

However, research has shown the child's perspective (recalled as adults) of this 'excessive supervision' and the impact of this on their beliefs and attitudes towards the Samoan culture, which subsequently informed their behaviours (Macpherson, 1994; Tiatia, 1998). What underlies this level of supervision? Is it still practised by Samoan parents on their children, even non-migrant Samoans? And what are the effects of this on Samoan children's IM? These questions will be explored through this research.



The research question stems from a desire to understand Samoan parenting practices that influence their children's IM and PA, in light of the complexity of issues that inform their parenting perspectives and decision-making.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the lens through which the research has been approached, conducted, and presented. I discuss how this research acknowledges and empowers indigenous theorising, while also examining Samoan knowledge and 'being' in a Western, New Zealand context. The concept of negotiated space is used to understand Samoan negotiation of Western paradigms and frameworks, through Samoan indigenous discourse and belief systems (Mila-Schaaf, 2009). A critical realism approach compels the researcher to recognise the importance of understanding Samoan being (ontology) so as not to reduce it to Western knowing/knowledge (epistemology), which can be a common practice in cultural research (Alderson, 2013). The research draws on a critical realist approach to investigate the values and beliefs that underpin Samoan parenting decisions that inform children's IM practices and, in turn, to shed light on Samoan perspectives of reality. This chapter describes the five phases used to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data. The data gathered and analysed across the five research phases highlight diverse perspectives and provide insight into the influences on Samoan parenting practices, their neighbourhood perceptions, and their children's IM. A description of the participants, details of the data analysis, and the way in which ethical commitments were achieved, will also be presented in this chapter.

## APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH

### Negotiated Space

For researchers who are engaged in searching for meaning, in communicating nuance and giving form and substance to knowledge, the existence of a common language and the need to preserve that language are critical. (Tamasese, et al., 2005, p. 68)

Understanding the Samoan way of being and knowledge production is important to understanding what informs their perspectives (Hau'ofa, 1994). Pacific researchers acknowledge the transformation of Pacific being and 'knowing' in the changing contexts of time and place which then shape identity, sense of belonging and perspectives (Anae, 1998; Mila-Schaaf, 2010) – including for the diasporic Samoan (Anae, 1998). As seen in the research literature, Samoans in New Zealand are striving to negotiate the best of both the Samoan and Western worlds (McCallin, et al., 2001). As these are non-aligned worlds, skill is required from the Samoan parent to interrogate each knowledge system and negotiate the best for their family given the context – time, place, or circumstance.

Mila-Schaaf (2009) describes this as the 'negotiated-space' and how this concept is most relevant, indeed necessary, for diasporic Samoans and other Pacific people. Her work acknowledges:

... there are different ways of learning, different ways of knowing and different ways of seeking and validating knowledge. ... [that] "knowing" is culturally specific, ... [and] may be considered a cognitive perceptual process in which the entire body is involved – not just the mind. (Mila-Schaaf, 2009, p. 35)

This makes sense in terms of Samoan and Pacific person's collective/holistic self, as represented in the Fonofale model (Pulotu-Endemann et al., 2007). All four pou (posts) of the Fonofale model are essential, active elements for full health and wellbeing.

The negotiated space is defined as "an intermediate stage in the process of encountering,

understanding and then incorporating new knowledge into a worldview, and provides a means of examining the nature of this knowledge exchange” (Tuhiwai-Smith et al., 2008, p. 6).

The research around negotiated space acknowledges and empowers indigenous theorising (Mila-Schaaf, 2009). De-colonial expert Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) advocates for the indigenous voice as an active participant in research:

Privilege indigenous knowledge, voices, experiences, reflections, and analyses of their social, material, and spiritual conditions... This shift in position from seeing ourselves as passive victims of all research to seeing ourselves as activists engaging in a counter hegemonic struggle over research, is significant. (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999, p.5)

Her work stands in response to the power of the dominant, Western discourse that subtly and unobtrusively silences the voices of those who do not fit within or provide a neat contrast to this dominant ontology and epistemology.

Similarly, Mila-Schaaf (2009) writes of the importance of the indigenous theorising/voice, that “is especially important within a context where local knowledges have been disqualified as illegitimate and subjected to a theoretical hierarchy which filters and orders what is valid, empirical and most true” (Mila-Schaaf, 2009, p. 26).

While acknowledging this, the concept of the negotiated space is not however to “restore or revitalise indigenous Pacific ways of knowing with an agenda of reproducing an authentic version of ‘what has been’ [as this is] inadequate in itself” (Mila-Schaaf, 2009, p. 28). That agenda does not acknowledge the importance of the context that Samoans/Pacific people are now in a different place as well as time, and are a product of Western as much as Pacific lived experiences.

The negotiated space is “a transformative project which source the indigenous reference and honour the weave of ancient logic, yet are open to, and enabling of, knowledge innovation stimulated by genuinely engaging with contemporary, complex and changing Pacific realities” (Mila-Schaaf, 2009, p. 28). The solution for those within the diaspora is to gain the necessary tools to give a voice to the indigenous self, while incorporating the Western knowledge systems in which they live.

This research acknowledges Farrelly (2009) who described an essential component of research as the “relatedness, expectations, assumptions, values and protocols’ of what it is to be Pasifika. Wendt writes further, ‘important to the Samoan view of reality is the concept of the va. ... the space between” (cited by Mila-Schaaf, 2009, p. 33). Therefore Samoan concepts, especially the va, are important to understanding Samoan perspectives of reality.

Affiliation to fa’aSamoa, commonly described as the ‘Samoan way of life’ (Siauane, 2004), is often an indicator of the strength of a person’s Samoan cultural identity (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009). Siauane (2004) concludes that “the concept of fa’aSamoa continues to evolve within the Samoan migrant enclaves”, and although it does so in various contexts between individuals, generations and social class, fa’aSamoa “maintains its principles, customs and traditions” (Siauane, 2004, p. 131).

In this discussion of fa’aSamoa, and the necessity of examining participants’ cultural identity, the notion of negotiated space situates Samoan being and knowing as the ‘base’ to which aspects of non-Samoan, particularly Western, being and knowing may add value. While this research acknowledges that ways of Samoan being and knowing may be differently nuanced, there are also likely to be common and unchanging realities. Mila-Schaaf (2009) acknowledges the importance of first examining the “fundamental operating principles and epistemological underpinnings of [Pacific culture]” (p. 11). She goes on to state that in order to “understand the beliefs, ideas and values that influence and inform the behaviour and experiences of Pacific peoples... we have to understand the corresponding Pacific indigenous knowledge system from which some of these beliefs, ideas and values are derived from” (Mila-Schaaf, 2009, p. 11).

In working to achieve this understanding and approach, this research has been guided by the Pacific Health Research Guidelines (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2014), which detail essential elements when conducting Pacific research. Ng Shiu (2011) summarises these effectively in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 HRC Pacific Research Principles**

<i>Relationships</i>	<i>build and maintain ethical relationships (p. 60)</i>
<i>Respect</i>	<i>demonstrate respect (p. 60)</i>
<i>Cultural competency</i>	<i>seek ethnic specific and context specific advice on culturally competent practice (p. 60)</i>
<i>Meaningful Engagement</i>	<i>effective “face-to-face” consultation is critical (p. 61)</i>
<i>Reciprocity</i>	<i>build the health knowledge of participants and reimburse costs. Disseminate research findings so that they are accessible to Pacific communities (p. 61)</i>
<i>Utility</i>	<i>address priority health issues and the usefulness of the research to improve health outcomes (p. 62)</i>
<i>Rights</i>	<i>recognise that participants must be properly informed in order to consent (p. 62)</i>
<i>Balance</i>	<i>aim for equality in relationships, partnerships, and benefits from research (p. 63)</i>
<i>Protection</i>	<i>acknowledge that the ownership of primary knowledge lies with participants (p 63)</i>
<i>Capacity Building</i>	<i>build Pacific health research capacity and capability (p. 63)</i>
<i>Participation</i>	<i>participation of Pacific peoples at all levels of research (p. 64)</i>

Table derived from (Ng Shiu, 2011, pp. 88-89).

Following Ng-Shiu (2011), this research has worked to address these key elements of Pacific research understanding. Among the points listed, equality and balance in the researcher-participant relationship have been particularly important to this research in remaining constantly mindful of the discrepancy between researcher/researched power that potentially occurs in research projects. This was achieved by expressing to participants how valuable and important their cultural and parenting capital and contribution were to this research through their unique knowledge and experience, and especially in relation to my limited cultural knowledge and non-parent status at the time. Reciprocity was also important and expressed not only through a mealofa (gift) to compensate participants for their time and hospitality, but also through a talanoa (culturally nuanced dialogue) where I shared parts of my cultural lineage and place in the social order, which meant that I wasn't just 'taking' their story, but sharing and exchanging parts of myself also. Above all, in this research I have strived to be respectful throughout; to ensure participants were well informed of their rights and their decisions and information respected through privacy and acceptance of their particular views

and perspectives; to ensure that all involved felt valued and validated as people first, then as cultural beings; and that people's views, perspectives and experiences were acknowledged and if need be, challenged respectfully and in a culturally appropriate way.

After first acknowledging and embracing Samoan being and knowing as the first point of reference of this research, the research then attempts to draw together Samoan knowing and Western knowing. Tui Atua (2008) writes: "Increasingly, the Western world is taking real cognizance of indigenous knowledge of the natural world. Similarly, indigenous societies are finding Western scientific discourses about nature less abrasive. Often finding common ground requires the operation of grace" (Tui Atua, 2008, pp. 1-2).

Mila-Schaaf (2009) summarised Hudson and colleagues' (2008) principles of negotiating space and how people are able to negotiate:

- "Their relationship with existing cultural knowledge;
- Their relationship with new cultural knowledge;
- Their relationship with different systems of meaning and knowing;
- Their relationship with culturally distinctive parties; and
- How individuals manage cultural choices that arise from having awareness and access to more than one culture" (p. 30).

Mila-Schaaf (2009) describes this as the negotiated space that allows for "creative and effective integration...of Pacific indigenous and western scientific knowledge systems, [and stresses that these are truly an integration and not competitive [or] warring faction" (p. 31).

This research has used this concept of negotiated space to interpret and analyse parents' values and beliefs as a way of accounting for both Samoan and Western paradigms in approaching and acknowledging the integration and differences between the two cultures and 'ways of being'.

## **Critical Realism**

This study adopts a critical realist paradigm. Critical realism is a Western framework that allows for knowledge production to take account of the differing ontologies adhered to by research participants. It is the ideal framework for this research, which seeks to fully understand how Samoan parents negotiate the spaces they inhabit. Critical realism acknowledges that research

is value-laden - an important platform for understanding Samoan behaviour and practices that are largely underpinned by cultural values and belief systems. It is one of the first research projects to use this paradigm in Pasifika research.

Critical realism is a 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophical approach based on the work of Roy Bhaskar who viewed the world as a stratified reality. This approach both critiques and steers between positivism (philosophy of science) and constructivism (philosophy of social science).

Bhaskar (2008) argues that positivists and interpretivists (constructivism) make the same mistake by reducing 'being' (ontology) into knowing/knowledge (epistemology), and things (objects, people, events structures) into thoughts. He calls this the 'epistemic fallacy':

Positivists concentrate on their methods, on rigour, design and avoiding bias in projects such as meticulously controlled clinical trials, 'validated' questionnaires, carefully 'cleaned' and coded databases, and intricate statistical analysis (Alderson, 2013, pp. 48-49).

Positivists believe that experimental conclusions conducted in a controlled environment can be replicated and predicted in the fluid, ambiguous, and changing natural and social world. Alderson (2013) notes that:

Partly in reaction, interpretivists are deeply and explicitly concerned with epistemology. They search for validation in their theoretical analysis, and in complications of how we perceive, interpret, imagine, reconstruct and report. In these ways, social researchers rely on their knowing to provide guarantees and criteria of truth, instead of relying on the being of the objects and events originally researched (Alderson, 2013, pp. 48-49).

According to Bhaskar (1978), critical realism is the combining of the natural and social worlds, whereby reality is independent of individual experience and knowledge of it (Sayer, 2000). Sayer likens this to human knowledge of the earth; the earth maintained its spherical shape as humans caught up to the reality that it is spheroidal – rather than flat as was first believed (Sayer, 2000). As critical realism distinguishes reality from our knowledge of it, it also distinguishes the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality (ontology) from the nature of knowledge, justification, and the rationality of belief (epistemology). Critical realism argues that an individual's being (ontology) cannot be explained or measured in the same way as the



individual's knowledge of the world around them (epistemology). Therefore, social research from the perspective of critical realism seeks "to investigate and identify relationships and non-relationships, respectively, between what we experience, what actually happens, and the underlying mechanisms that produce the events in the world" (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 36).

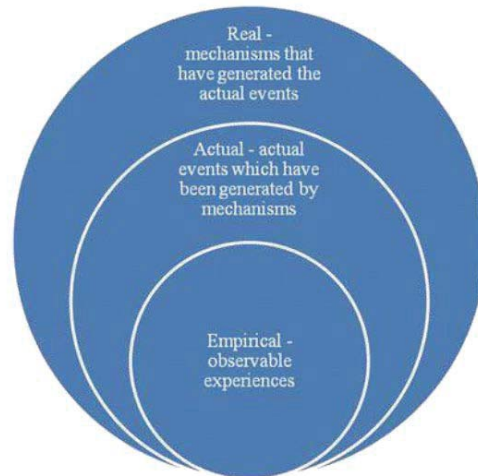
A major concept of critical realism is 'natural necessity', which in the social sciences:

involves the study of human agency and meaning, and of how knowledge is produced through social processes, including the engagement between knowing subjects and the real world they address. In critical realism, these social mechanisms exist across time and space, whether we are aware of them or not (Alderson, 2013, p. 60).

'Natural necessity' refers to the layering of reality into three strata: 1) the real domain; 2) the actual domain; and 3) the empirical domain (see Figure 3). The *real* domain is the underlying structures and mechanisms of this world that cannot directly be observed. Examples given are human nature, emotion, or the law of gravity (Foster, 2013). The *actual* domain is concerned with events or behaviours that occur as a result of the structures and mechanisms of the *real* domain. For example, we can observe the law of gravity in an object such as an apple falling to the ground. The *empirical* domain is where the observer is situated. This domain is concerned with how they observe the events or behaviours in the actual domain, and make sense and give meaning to the underlying structures and mechanisms in the real domain. According to Foster (2013), the dimensions culture and society, both objects of post-modernist interest, are dynamic and fluid. In the social world, culture and society inform the structures and mechanisms that impact human behaviour, which in turn informs culture and society. The relationships are therefore strong and fluid, but vary according to context and time.

By using a critical realism approach, this research is acknowledging the underlying causes and mechanisms that impact on Samoan parenting practices and their children's IM. Parenting practices and IM – the event or behaviour – are a result of these underlying causes and mechanisms. This research is concerned with how and why these underlying structures and mechanisms inform Samoan children's IM. Further, the underlying structures and mechanisms in focus are not only related to parenting but also to Samoan culture situated in a Western context.

Critical realism acknowledges that our knowledge of reality is fallible. The objectivity central to positivist approaches is not seen as possible in a critical realist approach, which acknowledges and accepts the bias and shaping experiences of the researcher in the research process.



Recreated from Mingers and Willcocks (2004)

**Figure 3: Diagram of Critical Realism Theory according to Roy Bhaskar**

According to Foster (2013), the best way to approach objectivity (while conceding that perfect objectivity can never be achieved) is through triangulation, in other words using various robust methods to obtain diverse perspectives - and so eliminate potentially influencing subjectivity as far as possible. Foster likens this to the academic field where many researchers critique each other's work so that knowledge can be scrutinised, validated and evolved through this process of 'natural selection'. This research approaches objectivity through triangulation by incorporating varying research methods and participant perspectives in examining Samoan parenting practices and their influence on children's IM (Alderson, 2013; Foster, 2013).

A key tenet of natural necessity is the concept of 'absence'. Alderson (2013) describes absence as "void, [an] empty space [that] is essential because a world too tightly packed for movement prevents change" (p. 60). Critical realism "emphasises that change into the new depends on losing or absencing the old. If absence is overlooked or denied, change cannot fully be recognised or understood" (Alderson, 2013, p. 60). In terms of research, absence is defined by explaining what is not. For example, childhood is often defined by the absence of adult competencies. In denying absence, researchers and philosophers deny the reality of

independent being, and instead reduce 'being' into their own beliefs and knowing. This epistemic fallacy still informs Western philosophy and research, which "favour empirical and actual, visible levels (the actual and empirical levels) over the invisible, and therefore seemingly absent, real level 3 (empirical level) of natural necessity" (Alderson, 2013, p. 65) (refer to Figure 3: Diagram of the Critical Realism Theory).

This has relevance for this research in acknowledging the absence of non-Western ways of being and knowing (not just the absence of Samoan being and knowing) in urban design and planning, and the built environment. It is not 'void' of culture, but is largely based on the dominant Western discourse. An acknowledgement of the absence of non-Western being and knowing at the real level (level 3) can help further understand manifestations at the actual (level 2) and perceived (level 1) level (refer to Figure 3: Diagram of the Critical Realism Theory) for Samoan parents and children. There is also a recently acknowledged absence of children in urban planning and design. As members of vulnerable young and minority groups, the Samoan parents and their children are affected by urbanisation and globalisation and the dominant discourses that inform them.

In critical realism, there is strong acknowledgement of the role 'power' plays in research and in reality. Power is both positive and negative. The positive version of power is emancipatory power that encourages and allows for transformation and liberation. On the other hand, power is also coercive and oppressive. This power makes "both the dominated and the dominator unfree" (Alderson, 2013, p. 61). Both these concepts of power are explored in this research in terms of how Samoan parents and their children exercise, experience, and are impacted by forms of power. Further, the impact of power as viewed through a cultural lens, for example Western discourse and/or Samoan discourse, and also parent-child relations will be explored.

Critical realism acknowledges that social science is value-laden (Alderson, 2013). Accordingly, the researcher needs to be a strong driver in acknowledging first their own values, and then emphasising the values of their participants. Bhaskar (2008) criticises authors who:

...claim to work reflexively and critically with all their subjective views, or to have set these aside when we cannot wholly fulfil either of these aims, and, if we could, we would not need to warn readers about these problems (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 36).

I will not attempt to make such claims. Rather, I will heed Bhaskar's critique and Alderson's advice to:

...distinguish between being and knowing and to recognise their vital differences. To separate the [participants'] independent, sheer, irreducible being (ontology) from researchers' very different knowing (epistemology) is to avoid the epistemic fallacy. [This] begins by seeing the world existing independently of our knowledge of it. [Researchers] who avoid the epistemic fallacy can combine empirical certainty about the existence of the intransitive objects and casual relationships being researched, with interpretivist awareness of observers' subjectivities (Alderson, 2013, p. 50).

A brief account of my position and epistemology within this research is given here, in an attempt to avoid succumbing to the epistemic fallacy of reducing the participants' ontology into my epistemology.

## **RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY AND EPISTEMOLOGY**

### **Insider/Outsider?**

The role of the researcher plays an important part in qualitative research (Kvale, 1996). They come with their own set of assumptions, perspectives, and biography, which take a place in the planning, implementation, data collection and analysis, and reporting stages of research. The researcher's role in this qualitative study will be looked at through the terms 'inside' researcher and 'outside' researcher (Bartunek & Louis, 1996), keeping in mind the fluidity of these identities within and at different stages of the research (Ng Shiu, 2011).

The role of the researcher as 'outsider' has been described so as to gain an understanding of the insider perspective through interviews and observations. This approach has been criticized when the researcher does not treat or see their participants as co-researchers, but rather as those 'researched' (Bartunek & Louis, 1996). The 'outsider' has no connection with the community in which they research, and are thus somewhat removed from the true essence of the community. They risk not being able to find common ground with the community and its members, and consequently have difficulty in building a rapport in which members are able to openly share their genuine views and opinions (Bridges, 2001). Somewhat removed from the

community in which they research, these researchers do not hold as much responsibility nor attachment to the outcomes as the 'insider' researcher does. However, this removed state gives the outsider an objective view and approach that may be otherwise overlooked by an 'insider' researcher (Bridges, 2001).

The researcher as 'insider' has insights into the community that the 'outsider' researcher does not – gained through the ability to establish rapport, gain in-depth knowledge of underlying causes, and feel a vested interest in the community whereby they can involve community members as co-researchers throughout the research process; they also have a huge responsibility. Their responsibility lies in ensuring that the community they are researching within/with, the very same community they are from, is protected throughout the research process and also in the reporting and dissemination of their information (Mila-Schaaf, 2010). 'Insider' researchers, more so, have an intangible responsibility to ensure that they do not impose their own ideas and opinions onto the community members, and ensure that their members remain autonomous. However, 'inside' researchers risk thinking that, because they are from that community, they know everything about it. They also run the risk that because they are from within the community, community members may not feel comfortable expressing their true opinions or experiences for fear that their (researcher) peer does not share these, or that their information may not remain confidential (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

According to Bartunek and Louis (1996) and Asiasiga (2007), the positions of the insider and outsider researcher, once perceived as mutually exclusive, are now seen as potentially more fluid than fixed (Asiasiga, 2007; Bartunek & Louis, 1996). Ng-Shiu (2011) discusses the power relation that exists between the researcher and the researched, using Mohammed's (2001) two-fold definition of the power in this relationship; namely difference or sameness:

Difference is articulated through an objectifying distance, whereas sameness is where the researcher and the researched are in the same position and the same social location (p. 104).

Mohammed mirrors the concept of difference and sameness with that of the insider/outsider researcher. Through her own reflections as an insider, and an outsider, in her research as a Samoan tertiary student with other Samoan tertiary students, she concludes that the "insider/outsider concept as a binary has limitations in [that it] fails to adequately reflect the multiple ways in which indigenous researchers can be an insider and an outsider [and so]

needs to be reframed to represent [this] fluidity in identity” (Ng Shiu, 2011, p. 92).

This applies to my biography as the researcher for this study in which my role as a Pasifika researcher reflects my status as both an insider and an outsider, with a fluidity that moves between these statuses throughout the research.

I am a female, born and raised in South Auckland, New Zealand. I have Samoan, Tongan and Niuean heritage. I was in my mid-late twenties (at the time of the research), a Catholic who had attended Catholic primary and secondary schools, and later participated in tertiary education. During the first half of the research I was a non-parent, and a ‘child’ - according to the Samoan social hierarchy. I am now a wife, a parent, a Christian, and a migrant in Australia. I am an insider to those who can identify with any of the above. I am an outsider to those who do not.

At the time of conducting interviews, I did feel that my age and my cultural affiliation limited my ability to build rapport and communicate with some Samoan parents, particularly those who were born in Samoa and were older than myself. Their view of me was as a young New Zealand-born, Samoan researcher rather than a peer. These differences, however, have worked to my advantage. Although strongly connected to my Samoan grandparents (as well as to my Niuean grandmother and her sister) from birth, my knowledge of the Samoan culture is limited, and Samoan parents enjoyed educating me about their experiences and knowledge of the culture. They enjoyed sharing with me the customs and traditions that were important to them, and the values that underpin them. New Zealand-born Samoans felt comfortable sharing with me their ambiguity towards the Samoan culture, knowing that I had not been through some of these experiences and so would not judge whether these experiences were valid or not. In critical realism, this is described as emancipatory and liberating power; and it was present at these early stages, so reducing the oppressive power dynamic that is common in researcher-participant relationships (Bhaskar, 2008). As noted by Lester (1999):

The establishment of a good level of rapport and empathy is critical to gaining depth of information, particularly when investigating issues where the participant has a strong personal stake (p. 2).

Initial interviews were conducted while I was not a parent, which was beneficial at the time – my perspective of parenting as an ‘outsider’, without the preconceptions and expectations or

experiences that I now hold as a parent and an 'insider'. The parents felt as they did with the Samoan culture, that they were educating me about parenthood and the joys, concerns, struggles, and excitement that awaited me.

When I later conducted follow-up interviews with these same parents as a parent myself, my approach and understanding of parenting was hugely different by this stage; accordingly, the research has been strengthened by the shift in my perspective from non-parent to parent.

My role as 'insider' and 'outsider' researcher has also been fluid and transitory according to the situation and the role needed to establish a rapport with the participants (Mila-Schaaf, 2010). Being open and honest about my positioning made the parents more aware and therefore comfortable in knowing where I stood so enabling them to decide what they wanted to share with me and how. It was important for me not to be who I was not, not to try and be 'more Samoan' than I am, or 'less New Zealand-born', or 'older' than I was, which would have been uncomfortable for the parents and myself. Being open and genuine is important to both roles as an 'insider' and 'outsider' researcher.

I chose to approach this research and the parents as 'people' first, and then 'Samoan parents'. Regardless of cultural values and protocols, respect and courtesy were the values that underpinned my approach as, first and foremost, a person doing research with people (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

## **METHODS**

### **Mixed-Methods**

Mixed methods research methodology integrates quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in a single study. The purpose of using this methodology was that it provided a better understanding of the research problem than either of the research approaches would have been able to provide on their own (Creswell, 2003). This mixed methods approach explored Samoan parents' perceptions and experiences of the research topics through qualitative interviews, and also examined children's recordings of their active and independent travel in travel diaries.

Quantitative research can be described as a method of investigation void of confounding

factors as far as possible. Quantitative research aims to collect the most reliable data possible through methods such as surveys, questionnaires, experiments, and randomised control trials (Patton, 1990).

Qualitative research involves capturing in-depth insights into the perspectives of participants. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used in the qualitative component of this study to capture the experiences and perspectives of the Samoan parents and key informants on the research topic (Lester, 1999; Patton, 1990). As noted by Rubin and Rubin (1995):

Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds. Through qualitative interviews you can understand experiences and re-construct events in which you did not participate (p. 1).

According to Siedman (1998), interviewing:

...provides access to the context of people's behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour. A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience. ...Interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding their action (p. 4).

Mixed methods as applied in this research recognises the existence and importance of both the physical world and the social world; whereby knowledge is both constructed and based on the reality of the world we experience and live in. This methodology recognizes the impact that human experience and interpretation of experience has on our interaction with other people and the natural world, and the inter-connection of human experience in action.

Using mixed methods enabled further insight into the influencers of Samoan children's IM, by adopting more than one viewpoint.

## Quantitative Research Methods

Two data sets from the KITC project were used for this project; a 7-day travel diary completed by children participating in the KITC project, and a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview



(CATI) with their parents. The travel diaries gathered information on children's movements in their neighbourhood over a 7-day period including information about whether the travel was accompanied, mode of travel, time of day, and destination. CATI gathered information on parents' perceptions of their neighbourhood, where and why they let their children move about, travel accompaniment, housing type, car availability, and information about their travel to and from school when they were children themselves. More detail about these data methods is given later in the chapter.

## Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research focuses on the perspectives of the person/s of interest; gathering information based on experiences, viewpoints and issues as seen through the eyes of the individual (Patton, 1990). It delves deeper into 'why' and 'how' such experiences and perspectives occur. Qualitative approaches therefore, aim to ensure that the person/s of interest's views are gathered and interpreted as genuinely as possible, while ensuring that the participant autonomy and wellbeing is respected.

## Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to gain insight into the participants' experiences and perspectives on Samoan parenting, perception of neighbourhood, and Samoan children's IM. As mentioned previously, the Health Research Council's Pacific Health Research Guidelines guided this research (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2014; Ng Shiu, 2011). Ethical approval was obtained from Massey University Human Ethics Committee (see p. 36, section 'Ethical Commitment').

All the initial interviews were conducted face-to-face, in English (as agreed by participants' prior to interviews), and at a time and place requested by the participant. Refreshments were provided for the interview and a mealofa given to the participants following the interview. Both of these acts of reciprocity acknowledged the participants' time and valuable contribution to the research. The interviews were guided by an interview schedule (Appendices 5-7). Transcripts of the interviews were sent to the parents to give them the chance to change, extract or challenge anything in the transcript, and to return it (posted envelope provided) with comments.

The qualitative research interviews were conducted in three groups of interviewees: key informant experts in Samoan parenting and related fields; Samoan parents who, alongside their children, participated in the KITC project, and a snowball sample of Samoan parents who had children aged 9-12 years old and living in neighbourhoods close too or similar to those of the Samoan parents from the KITC project.

All the Samoan parents (sample 1 and 2) were contacted via phone, text or email, to participate in a follow-up interview and given the option of participating over the phone, virtual face-to- face (via video camera program such as Skype or Google hang outs), or via email. Eight of the 14 parents agreed to participate and all eight parents chose to have the questions emailed to them - and responded likewise. Specific questions for each participant were derived from their first interview to further unpack some of their perceptions and whether these had evolved, changed or remained the same two years on. Questions were sent and returned via email.

## **RESEARCH CONTEXT**

This research stems from a larger research project called 'Kids in the City' (KITC), in which I had participated in collecting data, and preparing publications and conference presentations. This section provides a more detailed description of the KITC project than was given in the introduction chapter, with a particular focus on the methods and participant demographics.

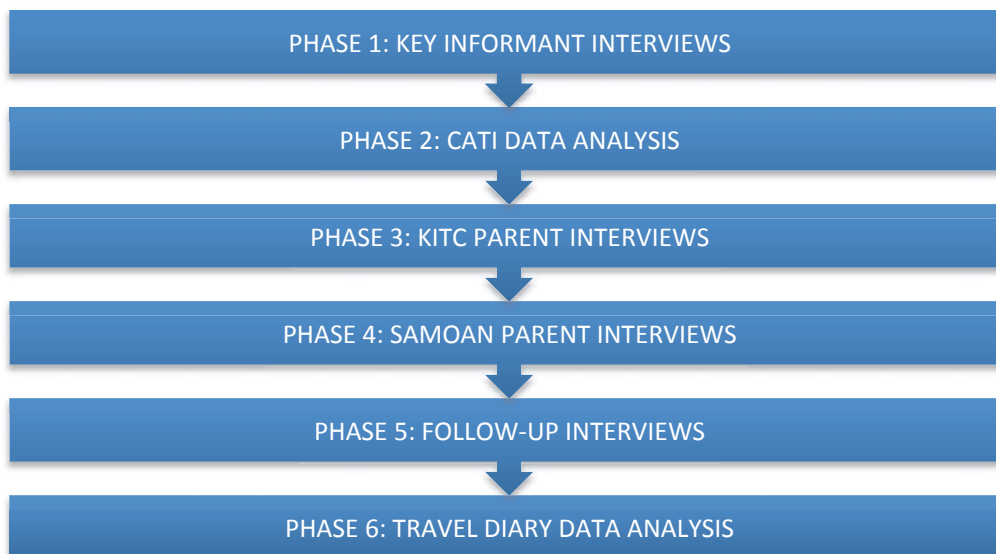
### **Kids in the City (KITC)**

The KITC project investigated the urban design of neighbourhoods in relation to the IM and PA (PA) of children aged 9-11 years in Auckland, New Zealand. The purpose of the KITC study was to investigate how the social and physical attributes of urban neighbourhoods could facilitate children's IM, and how this influenced PA levels and participation in daily life. The suburban component of the study began in August 2010 and was conducted in six suburban neighbourhoods with diverse urban design attributes (walkability and accessibility). Approximately 160 children aged 9-11 years and their parent/caregiver participated. Ethnicity composition was Maori 17%, Samoan 24%, Other Pacific Islander 27%, European 12%, and Indian/Asian/Other 20%. The project used a mixed-methods approach using GPS, accelerometers, and travel diaries over a 7-day period to collect objective measures of IM, PA

and neighbourhood environments.

A CATI survey with parents and go-along interviews with children were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data on neighbourhood perceptions and experiences (Oliver, et al., 2011). Go-along interviews involved the child-participant taking the researcher on a neighbourhood walking tour, during which in-depth qualitative interviewing techniques were used to explore their perceptions and experiences of their neighbourhood. Student interviewers were recruited to conduct the go-along interviews as they shared local knowledge, and would encourage rapport building through ease of dialogue due to being close in age. These student interviewers were recruited from the local secondary school, and were matched to the sex of the child (see Oliver, et al., 2011 p. 7). Go-along interview data, travel diary data and CATI qualitative data were used from the Kids in the City research project with permission from the project's principal investigator.

## RESEARCH DESIGN



### Phase one: Key Informant Experts

It was advantageous for this research to speak with key informants who had expertise in Samoan research, and worked with or conducted research with young Samoan children and

their families, as well as having an understanding of the Samoan community in New Zealand (Marshall, 2005). These interviews were designed to provide an initial understanding of the experiences and issues facing Samoan children, their parents, and their families in New Zealand. These interviews, along with a review of relevant literature, informed the interview guide for the next phase of the research; the parent interviews. The semi-structured interview guide can be found in Appendix 5.

Key informants were identified and recruited via the snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling is a method of recruitment in which social networks are used to recruit participants that are “‘hidden’ due to low numbers of potential participants” (Browne, 2005, p. 47). Browne (2005) acknowledges that using “interpersonal relations and connections between people, both includes and excludes individuals” (Browne, 2005, p. 47).

The social networks used were through the researcher’s university/research department, church, and school community connections, and the primary supervisor’s connections. Research experts, academics, aoga amata teachers, and primary teachers were invited to participate. Six key informants participated in this research; these included senior Samoan academics, researchers, an aoga amata teacher, and a primary school teacher. Some were parents also; all were of Samoan descent. The diverse backgrounds of these key informants provided an array of experience, perspective and knowledge. All were women.

Interviews took place between 19 July and 28 September 2012, and lasted between 32 and 108 minutes. All the interviews but one took place at the key informants workplace. One was conducted at a key informant’s home.

## Participants

**Table 4: Key informant experts demographic details**

Key Informant	Vocation	Organisation Type
Key Informant One	Researcher	University research group
Key Informant Two	Manager/Academic	Pacific Family Organisation
Key Informant Three	Teacher	Primary School with high Samoan student participation
Key Informant Four	Teacher	Aoga Amata
Key Informant Five	Researcher	Government Organisation
Key Informant Six	Academic	University (Pacific Sector)

### Phase two: CATI analysis

#### CATI

A 75-item CATI survey was conducted with 153 of the participating KITC children's parents between March 2011 and June 2011; interviews lasted between 20-30 minutes. They were conducted in the parent's language of preference: English, Samoan, Tongan, Chinese or Korean. The questionnaire included questions about the following areas: child, parent and household demographics; perception of neighbourhood physical and social environments; child's mode and accompaniment to and from school; IM to other settings; parent's neighbourhood safety concerns; and household car and bike availability.

Only the CATI qualitative data with the Samoan parents was used for this study. The CATI qualitative data explored neighbourhood places where parents expressed concern letting their child go alone, and the reasons for this. They were also asked what they believed would make their neighbourhood a better place. These qualitative questions in the CATI were open-ended questions and parents' responses were recorded verbatim.

Data analysis will be discussed in the data analysis section further in this chapter.

## Participants

The following two tables show the demographics of the whole CATI cohort for the suburban only KITC sample.

**Table 5: KITC participating children's ethnicity**

Child's Ethnicity	No: (%)
Maori	26 (17.0)
Samoaan	36 (23.5)
Other Pacific Island	42 (27.5)
Other (incl. European, South East Asian, Asian, African)	49 (32.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>153 (100)</b>

**Table 6: KITC participating children's sex**

Child's Sex	No: (%)
Male	61 (39.9)
Female	92 (60.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>153 (100)</b>

## Samoaan Parent's Information

This research focuses on the Samoaan parents of the CATI survey. Samoaan parents were asked about where they went to school, how they travelled to school, whom they went to school with, and a comparison of the distance to school for them as children compared with the distance their child has to travel to school. Four out of five Samoaan parent participants were female (see table 7), which highlight a higher participation rate of mothers than fathers for both the CATI survey and the qualitative interviews conducted in this research. They were also more likely to be born and raised in Samoa (see table 9).

**Table 7: Sex of CATI participating Samoan parents**

Parent's Sex	No: (%)
Male	6 (16.7)
Female	30 (83.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 (100)</b>

**Table 8: Sex of CATI participating Samoan children**

Child's Sex	No: (%)
Male	17 (47.2)
Female	19 (52.8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 (100)</b>

**Table 9: Responses from parents about whether they went to school in the same area as their child at the same age**

Place of school	No: School in a different area (%) n = 33	No: school in same area as child (%) n = 3
Samoa	24 (66.7)	
Other International	1 (2.8)	
South Auckland	3 (8.3)	2 (5.6)
Auckland (not South)	2 (5.6)	1 (2.8)
Outside of Auckland	3 (8.3)	

**Table 10: Parents mode of transport to school at the same age as their child**

Mode of transport to	
Walk	32 (88.9)
Car	1 (2.8)
Cycle	1 (2.8)
Bus	2 (5.6)

**Table 11: The distance parents travelled to school compared to their child**

Travel compared to child's	No: (%)
Significantly less	4 (11.1)
Less	7 (19.4)
About the same	3 (8.3)
Further	6 (16.7)
Significantly further	16 (44.4)

**Table 12: Parent's accompaniment in their travel to school at the same age as their child**

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Did you go by yourself?	18 (50)	18 (50)
Who accompanied you?	No: (%)	
Parent/guardian	3 (8.3)	
Younger brother/sister	2 (5.6)	
Older brothers/sisters	6 (16.7)	
Other Children	7 (19.4)	

### **Phase three: Interviews with KITC Samoan parents (Sample 1)**

The KITC participant database was used for this study. Permission was given by the main researcher to gain access to this database to locate parents who identified as Samoan. Thirty-six parents who had identified themselves as Samoan and consented to be further contacted following the KITC research project. The first attempt to invite participants to take part in this study took place 13-16 months after their participation in the KITC project, so unfortunately many participants had either moved, changed their contact details or were no longer interested in participating. Attempts to contact this database of potential participants involved telephone calls on landlines, mobiles and work numbers, text messages via SMS, and sending a participant letter via post. Six of the 36 parents were able to be contacted and were interested in participating in this the qualitative interviews. They were all mothers.

All but one interview took place at the parents' homes, with one parent interviewed at the



university campus where she studied. These interviews were conducted between 6 October 2012 and 30 October 2012, and took approximately between 25 minutes and 63 minutes.

Their parent participants' children were aged between 11-12 years old at the time of the interviews.

The interview guide with the Samoan parents was based on the themes that emerged from the key informant interviews. The question guide can be found in Appendix 6. All audiotapes were transcribed, and transcriptions returned to participants for their feedback. Two participants returned their transcriptions with no changes required.

## Participants

**Table 13: KITC Samoan parent sample 1 demographic details**

Parent ID	Parent Pseudonym	Sex	Place of birth	Country raised	Area of residence	Child's school neighbourhood <sup>11</sup>
1	Mele	F	Samoa	Samoa	Mangere	4
2	Ana	F	Samoa	Samoa	Panama	1
3	Sina	F	Samoa	Samoa	Wiri	2
4	Avae	F	Samoa	Samoa	Clendon	4
5	Lusi	F	Samoa	NZ	Wiri	2
6	Tusi	F	Samoa	Samoa	Wiri	2

### **Phase four: Interviews with a snowball sample of Samoan parents (Sample 2)**

A plan to recruit 12-15 participants and five key informants was agreed between the researcher and supervisors. This is a standard participant ratio used in qualitative research in the Public Health field (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Accordingly, the snowball sampling technique was then used to gather more Samoan parent participants.

The social networks used for the sampling technique were existing participants and the

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<sup>11</sup> Child's school neighbourhood according to Table 16 which provides context/demographic details of the participating KITC schools and surrounding neighbourhood.

researcher's contacts through university/research department, church and school communities. These social networks were asked if they knew of Samoan parents of children aged 9-12 years of age, who would be interested in participating in the study. The people viewed as potential participants were then contacted via phone call or text by the researcher and invited to participate. Nine Samoan parents were recruited using this technique, including a husband and wife interviewed together. All parents indicating their interest in participating were given a consent form to complete.

Interviews took place at the parents' homes or workplaces. These interviews were conducted between 24 November 2012 and 30 November 2012, and took between 30 and 74 minutes. Their children were aged between 11-12 years old at the time of the interview and all but one attended their local school. One child attended a nearby public school (but not his local one) due to familiarity, as it was where his two older sisters had attended primary school. All of the schools the children attended were situated in high deprivation neighbourhoods. There were 6 mothers and 3 fathers who responded to participate, with one father opting to do the interview with his wife (who was non-Samoan).

The interview guide with the Samoan parent sample 2 was similar to the interview guides for the KITC Samoan parent sample 1, which were based on the themes that emerged from the key informant interviews. The question guide can be found in Appendix 6. All audiotapes were transcribed, and transcriptions returned to participants for their feedback.

## Participants

**Table 14: Samoan parent sample 2 demographic details**

Parent ID	Parent Pseudonym	Sex	Place of birth	Country raised	Area of residence
7	Tala	M	NZ	NZ	Manukau
8	Ina	F	NZ	NZ	Manukau
9	Maea	M	NZ	NZ	Manurewa
10	Lina	F	NZ	NZ	Papatoetoe
11	Losa	F	NZ	NZ	Manurewa
12	Su'e	F	Samoa	NZ	Manurewa
13	Futu & Nise (Husband & Wife)	M & F	Samoa/ Germany	NZ	Totara Park
14	Telesia	F	NZ	NZ	Manurewa

### Phase five: Follow-Up Interviews

The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to gain further insight into concepts and themes on Samoan parenting and IM that had specifically and generally emerged from the initial interviews. The follow-up interviews also provided a context for parents' perceptions. For example, the initial interviews were conducted when their children were aged between 11-12 years old; however, during the follow-up interviews, the parents' children were now 12-13 years old. Changes in schools had occurred for all of the children during this time, as they were now attending intermediate or high schools. All but one (the KITC participating child) were now attending out of zone schools, which meant they had to take some form of vehicular transportation to get to and from school. The participating KITC child was attending her local high school, which was within walking distance of her home. The follow-up interviews aimed to capture some of the changes, if any, which may have occurred over time in both experiences and perceptions of Samoan parenting practices and children's IM.

An invitation for a follow-up interview was sent via phone, SMS, and email to all the participating Samoan parents. Nine of the 14 parents responded indicating their interest in participating. In the end, the follow-up interviews were conducted with eight of the

participating Samoan parents. One parent who was initially interested in participating eventually became too busy to do so, and only the wife of the couple in sample 2 participated in the follow-up interview. The eight participating parents were asked to choose their preferred form for the interview: online<sup>12</sup> (via Skype or other form of visual telecommunication), telephone or email; all responded indicating email as their preferred method. A set of questions was sent to each participant via email. An example interview guide is given in Appendix 7. All participants responded and sent their responses to each question via email.

Interviews took place between 5 April 2014 and 28 May 2014.

## Participants

**Table 15: Follow up Samoan parent demographic details**

Parent ID	Parent Pseudonym	Sex	Place of birth	Country raised	Area of residence	Sample Group
6	Tusi	F	Samoa	Samoa	Wiri	1
7	Tala	M	NZ	NZ	Manukau	2
8	Ina	F	NZ	NZ	Manukau	2
9	Maea	M	NZ	NZ	Manurewa	2
11	Losa	F	NZ	NZ	Manurewa	2
12	Su'e	F	Samoa	NZ	Manurewa	2
13	Nise	F	Germany	NZ	Totara Park	2
14	Telesia	F	NZ	NZ	Manurewa	2

## Phase six: Travel Diary Analysis

The KITC researchers visited child participants at their school for six consecutive weekdays for data collection. Physical activity levels and travel patterns were gathered via accelerometers,

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<sup>12</sup> Virtual face-to-face (remote) interviews were an option due to the researcher's move to Brisbane, Australia.

GPS units, and travel diary data. In each school, a research 'office' was set up where the researchers met the children and could collect data and distribute equipment. This section describes the research methods for travel diaries only; however, additional methods were used in conjunction with travel diaries. See Oliver (2011) for more information about these additional methods (Oliver, et al., 2011).

On day one, the children were given a plastic watch using analogue time (for recording trip times) and an A4 travel diary (see Figure 4) to complete before returning the next day. Data for time, destination, mode of travel, and accompaniment for all trips taken were collected in the travel diary. Researchers also gave a tutorial on how to fill out their travel diaries which included recording the time on their watches, writing their trip destinations, and ticking the associated box for their travel mode and accompaniment (if any). During subsequent weekday visits, the researchers would go through travel diaries daily with each child to check their travel movements, see if they needed any further assistance filling these out, and collect the previous day's sheet while distributing another A4 travel diary for the following days travel. For the weekend, children were given two A4 travel diaries to complete at home. Incentives for the child participants included stickers on completion of travel diary information and return of equipment and a shopping centre voucher offered at the end of data collection (Oliver, et al., 2011).

## Participants

**Table 16: Neighbourhoods where the KITC children went to school**

Neighbourhood	Region Area	Decile <sup>13</sup>	Walkability	% Maori, Pacific, European, Asian/South Asian, Other	No: Samoan Children Participants	Male:Female
1	East	1	Low	21, 64, 0, 0, 14	10	3:7
2	South	1	Medium	39, 57, 0, 0, 4	12	7:5
3	East	1	High	30, 63, 4, 0, 0	6	2:4
4	South	1	Low	51, 41, 1, 0, 7	6	5:1
5	West	4	High	21, 34, 15, 24, 6	2	0:2
6	West	5	Low	15, 19, 19, 27, 10	1	1:0
<b>Total</b>					37 <sup>14</sup>	18:19

Note: Walkability was assessed using a combination of street connectivity, residential density, land use mix, and retail floor area ratio. See Oliver, 2011 for more information.

Recreated from (Oliver, et al., 2011, p. 4).

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Quantitative Data Analysis

Travel Diary: Univariate analysis (analysing one variable at a time) was conducted with the travel diary data. Data tabulation was conducted to provide a frequency distribution (total numbers of the sample within each category). This was done by counting the frequency of children's trips in each category: supervised or unsupervised trips, active or non-active trips, and destinations of children's trips. This research continued to explore the data by disaggregating it across different categorical variables (Poole & Folger, 1981). This included

<sup>13</sup> In the New Zealand education system, **decile** is a key measure of socioeconomic status used to target funding and support schools. A school's decile indicates the extent to which the school draws its students from low socioeconomic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities.

<sup>14</sup> 37 Samoan children participated in the KITC research project while 36 Samoan parents participated in the KITC CATI survey. This discrepancy is due to a set of twins participating in the KITC research project and their parent counted once as a participant of the CATI survey.

further analysing the frequency of children's trips within the categories above such as destination places of independent trips, specific travel mode such as walking or using a car, accompaniment type (e.g. with friend, sibling or alone), independent and active trips to and from school, and trips made by the sex of the child (male or female)<sup>15</sup>.

#### CATI:

In the CATI survey, in addition to items with fixed response rates, the parents were asked qualitative, open questions about the places that they were concerned about letting their children go alone, the reasons for their concerns, and changes to their neighbourhood that would make it a better place for the children to walk/play by themselves. Their responses were analysed using thematic analysis, and a coding scheme was created to organize the data into main and sub categories (Poole & Folger, 1981). Content analysis was then used to calculate the frequency of responses in each main and sub category coded per participant in the data. Parents' responses were coded once per category but were allowed to have more than one response. For example, one parent could identify several places in their area where they were concerned about letting their child go alone and each place was recorded; but if they mentioned the same place twice, it would only be included once in that place/code.

#### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data gathered with the participants for the current study. Nvivo 9.2, qualitative research software, was used to assist with data management. Thematic analysis enables the researcher to group the responses to identify commonalities and differences in various areas/topics. In this study, it was utilised to reveal parenting and neighbourhood experiences and to gain insight into parents' motivations and actions. This analysis also investigated whether or not there were common meanings that perhaps create a unique "cultural" understanding amongst Samoan parents in New Zealand (Lester, 1999).

I transcribed the interviews and each transcription was read through several times and line-by-line to identify and gain a good understanding of the themes that emerged within the text.

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<sup>15</sup> These analyses were undertaken by SHORE & Whariki statisticians and GIS analysts. The results based on the full sample (suburban and inner city samples) are published. Details of the published papers can be seen here: [www.kitc.ac.nz](http://www.kitc.ac.nz).

From this, a coding scheme was created to organize the data into main and sub categories (Poole & Folger, 1981). Each interview was coded individually, by going through line by line to identify and code the themes into categories (Punch, 2000).

### Critical realism: analysis framework

A central concept of critical realism that informs this research relates to the four identified planes of social being. These are:

- 1) Material relations with nature;
- 2) Interpersonal subjective relationships between individuals and groups;
- 3) Broader social relations and inherited structures; and
- 4) Inner being. (Alderson, 2013, p. 62)

The four planes of social being exemplify how the three levels of 'natural necessity' (see Figure 3 – the real domain, the actual domain, the empirical domain) are applied - and were a critical part of the analysis used to gain a broader understanding of the factors that influence Samoan parents and their children.

The first plane is interested in the event or behaviour, in how material matter behaves in nature. For this research, the event or behaviour is Samoan parenting practices and their children's IM behaviours.

The second plane is the how the event is impacted by, or has influence on, Samoan parents; in other words – what is the relationship between Samoan parents and their parenting practices/styles, and their child's IM behaviours.

The third plane is concerned with some of the external influencers on either the first and/or second plane. For example, how does policy impact how Samoan parents perceive how safe, desirable or otherwise the built environment is for their children's independent use? How does policy inform the social environment necessary for Samoan children's IM?

The fourth plane argues for ontology. It is concerned with the inner being of self, the soul, and the values and belief systems adopted by the observer, and how these shape their interpretation of the event or behaviour.



Alderson argues that “multi-plane analysis avoids unduly blaming individuals, which could happen implicitly or explicitly if the analysis ended at the first or second plane of social being. [It is important to analyse Samoan parents and children’s] lives critically at all four planes of social being, in order to avoid over-emphasising interpersonal and structural influences to explain human behaviour” (Alderson, 2013, p. 64).

The first and second plane of this research is concerned with Samoan children’s IM behaviours and Samoan parenting practices, and the relationship of the two. These planes are also concerned with how Samoan culture and social groups influence this relationship. In the third plane, the impacts of political factors such as migration, acculturation, dominant discourses, gentrification and social norms will be explored. Furthermore, historical context of Samoan culture in Samoa, and how it is upheld, transformed or neither in Auckland, New Zealand, will also be examined.

The fourth plane is how the Samoan ‘self’ has implications for the other three levels. The Samoan ‘self’ as a spiritual, holistic and collective self informs how Samoans interpret their experiences and perceptions, and guides their action. As Alderson (2013) writes, the third and fourth planes are essential to avoid over-emphasising or providing undue blame (direct or indirect) that may occur should the analysis cease at plane 2.

## **ETHICAL COMMITMENT**

Ethical approval was obtained from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHECN 12/040) for this research project. Ethical approval for the KITC study was also obtained from this committee (MUHECN 10/053). Both ethical approvals were needed in order to gain access to both the KITC participant database and use participant demographic information from this, as well as undertake additional data collection from the Samoan parent participants.

The identities of the participants will remain confidential at all times. No actual names or personal information will be published. Information given by participants will remain anonymous. No participant will be identifiable in any reporting and dissemination of information. All signed consent forms and hard copy data will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet at SHORE, Massey University. All computer files will be password protected. All paper files will be shredded after ten years.

## CHAPTERS 4-6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

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# CHAPTER 4: SAMOAN PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTING

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## INTRODUCTION

*'Ua fetau'i lelei fola o le 'alia*

**The deck-planks (fola) of the voyaging canoe ('alia) fit together well  
(Samoan proverb)**

The opening proverb encapsulates the importance of va fealoa'i (interpersonal relationships) through the analogy of the 'alia – the voyaging canoe. The success of the voyage is dependent on how tightly and accurately the fola (planks) of the canoe are woven together – and *'a safe voyage through life is possible when members of a family, team, or society fit together like the watertight planks of the 'alia'* (Keesing & Keesing, 1956). In this chapter, the planks of the voyaging canoe represent family, friends, the collective group and other important elements that play a part in Samoan children's 'safe and thriving journey through life'. This chapter views the parents as the guiding forces of the canoe journey. Previous research has identified the role of parents as mediators of their children's IM behaviours (Shaw, et al., 2015). This chapter examines Samoan parents' perceptions of their social and physical environment that inform the decisions they make for their children's IM and PA.

There are three major themes: 1) Samoan perceptions of parenting; 2) Samoan perceptions and experiences of their social and physical environment; and 3) Samoan perceptions of children's IM and its influencing factors. The aim of this chapter is to understand how cultural beliefs and epistemologies impact on Samoan perceptions of parenting, neighbourhood, and children's IM, and how these perceptions promote or constrain Samoan children's IM.

The data for the chapter are derived from four data sets:

- Qualitative interviews with six key informants who work with Samoan children and parents through early childcare, primary schooling, tertiary education, research,

government organisations, and community organisations.

- Qualitative interviews with nine Samoan parents (sample 2) who were not part of the Kids in the City (KITC) research project, but lived in neighbourhoods close to or similar to those of the participants in the KITC project. These parents were all New Zealand- raised, with two parents who were born in Samoa and migrated to New Zealand when they were young. The rest of the parents were born in New Zealand. These parents had children aged between 10–12 years old at the time of the interview.
- CATI survey data (n=36) and qualitative interviews (n=6) (sample 1) with Samoan KITC parents. Pseudonyms were used for both sets of parents' qualitative interviews.

## FINDINGS

### Samoan perceptions of parenting

This section presents findings from qualitative interviews with the key informants and Samoan parents of sample 2.

#### The child as part of a large support network

The Samoan individual is not a sole entity but one part of a collective group – the aiga (family) (Suaalii-Sauni & Mavoa, 2001). All of the key informants acknowledged the collective nature of the Samoan family unit. The experts and parents discussed the importance of the Samoan family unit in raising a child, particularly the extended family network, and the place of the child within this collective:

*Without the aiga, without the support, without the parents' support, the kids will not be complete – [that's] the holistic way of learning. In Samoa, it takes the whole village to raise the child. That means grandparents, great grandparents, aunties, and uncles ...There's no such western thinking, that [it's a] nuclear family [and you're] independent, there's no such thing like that in Samoa. [Tala]*

The importance of the extended family still exists for Samoan families living in New Zealand, though this is practised differently to how it is practised in Samoa. For Samoan parents living in

New Zealand, there is less frequent interaction due to work and extracurricular activities and family members being more geographically dispersed:

*Well they always say in Samoa 'it takes a village to raise a child,' that child belongs to everyone in the village. [It's hard here] 'cause you guys will have a busy work, home lifestyle, and we have a busy work/home lifestyle, and then just trying to catch up [is hard]. The main thing though is that we make time for birthdays, Christmas, Easter, you know, all those special occasions, also Sunday lunches/toana'i - just to hold onto those family gatherings. It's an opportunity for a family gathering. [Tala]*

The parent above acknowledges the difficulty in staying in touch with extended family due to busy work and home activities. The extended family is important, and special occasions are time for family members to come together and catch up with one another.

### Instilling culture

The key informants and parents expressed how important it was for Samoan children to know about their Samoan culture. Despite their varied backgrounds - Samoan born/raised, New Zealand born/raised, researchers, teachers, policy makers, full time workers, part-time workers, stay at home mums – there was consensus on the necessity for Samoan children to know about their cultural heritage.

The key informants reported that Samoan culture was still held on to very strongly by Samoans in New Zealand, regardless of their place of birth.

*I think the traditional norms are still very, very, very, very strongly held, even if they're not abided by to what they are in Samoa. [Key Informant Four]*

Samoan culture was important to all Samoans; it was how it was interpreted and practised that differed among Samoans in New Zealand. The key informants acknowledged that each Samoan had a different understanding of Samoan culture or fa'aSamoa – though there were fundamental values and principles.

*That's why when we talk about fa'aSamoa, we really have to choose what we are actually talking about. Fa'aSamoa values for me, is respect; if you respect, you get respect back. [Key Informant One]*

The parents were mostly New Zealand born and almost all New Zealand raised. They discussed the perception that teaching their children the Samoan culture was not essential for their day-to-day living, such as at school or extracurricular activities, at work, or even at home. However, they expressed a desire for their children to know their Samoan culture and heritage, acknowledging the importance of cultural knowledge to give their child a strong sense of identity:

*[Samoan culture] - it's what we grew up with, but our perceptions [have] sort of changed. It's not quite as important as it used to be. But deep down I know that it's my job to keep my culture alive in my kids. Is it the Niuean language that's becoming extinct? I keep thinking of that at the back of my mind. It is important for my kids [to know their culture]. [Lina]*

This quote highlights the tension most of the parents felt. They acknowledged their role in cultural maintenance and continuity through their children, but found it difficult keeping these relevant in their day-to-day realities. The parent above was raised in New Zealand but had a traditional Samoan upbringing with migrant parents who spoke the Samoan language and practised strong Samoan traditions and practices. Her desire to keep the culture alive was implied through her acknowledgement of other Pacific cultures becoming "extinct", as well as its importance for her children.

For all the parents, passing on the Samoan culture to the younger generations was often done through the children's grandparents. The role of the grandparents was a link to the Samoan culture as they were the ones to migrate to New Zealand and negotiated learning a new culture while maintaining their own culture. The parents acknowledged the role their parents (children's grandparents) played as a conduit or pathway to traditional Samoan knowledge:

*I want them to be exposed to their own culture so they have an idea of where they come from; their ancestors. That's a key importance. There's an awareness that when our parents move on, then our connection to our culture may be severed which is detriment[al] to our culture; we don't*

*want that. A lot of my generation are aware of it, and are fearful; they don't want to lose that in their families. [Maea]*

This parent reiterates the concerns of the previous parent about cultural continuity through the generations of their family. Both parents give an example of the Samoan 'collective-self', where the individual is one-part of the collective unit – the family. In Samoan culture, the collective is inter-generational. This also shows how the collective self is not only a social aspect, but that it also transposes time, context and place.

The parents reported that their children themselves enjoyed learning about their Samoan culture from their grandparents, and this is something parents encouraged:

*He's really close to his grandfather, he just idolizes him; and he goes, 'did you know that grandpa's a high chief title in Samoa?'. And he likes singing his hymns and his prayers, he likes learning the [Samoan] language and I won't hold him back from that. I think, 'Good on you son, if that's what you want to do then good on you. You go for it.' [Tala]*

Grandparents were relied on for traditional Samoan knowledge because the parents were so engrossed in their day-to-day life in New Zealand that their practice of Samoan culture, and in particular, their Samoan language, had become diminished. The following parent reiterates what both Lina and Maea discussed:

*I spoke the language. I had to speak to mum and dad in Samoan cause they didn't know how to speak English. Funny enough, when my kids were born, I just got lazy. I couldn't be bothered speaking to them in Samoan. You go to work, 8 hours at work [speaking in English]. [It's the] same with the kids; they go to school and they speak English. So I didn't speak to them in Samoan. I think it had a lot to do with just [being] lazy. It was just so much easier to speak to them in English and they would understand what I was saying. [Su'e]*

The key informants agreed that the grandparents played important roles in the nurturing of the child. They have been involved in, or conducted various research projects, which highlighted the impact of the extended families in the Samoan child's nurturing and

development, particularly the role of the grandparents:

*I'd look at the role of grannies, 'cause from my students' research it's the [influence of the] extended family who are [living] in the household. In a lot of cases, even if mother and father are there, they're busy out working and doing whatever they're doing. Often it's the grannies [who] are determining these [parenting] decisions. It may not be your parents. [Key Informant Four]*

The key informant above alludes to the fact that the influence of the grandparents on Samoan children is also attributable to working demands and parenting responsibilities that left little time for instilling cultural aspects. The close connection formed with grandparents due to parents' heavy work demands meant cultural continuity was more likely- and highlighted some of the parenting pressures Samoan parents faced living in New Zealand, particularly the financial pressures:

*I always feel that the grandchildren are more connected to their grandparents than with their parents... because the grandparents stay at home – they're not the key people to work and provide for the family, so they're always [at home]. It's the parents [that] have that responsibility. Whereas the grandparents, that responsibility is no longer there; so that's sort of a stress factor for some of our parents nowadays. [Key Informant Four]*

Parents' financial pressures meant they often worked longer hours, which reduced their time to be with their children. However, this provided an opportunity for grandparents to be active in their grandchildren's development. The role of the primary caregiver was to provide basic essentials/necessities, whereas the role of the grandparent was to pass on cultural knowledge. Later we will see the cyclical nature of this process, where the parents discuss how their parents also had little time to support their activities when they were young.

The social order of Samoan society in New Zealand appears to maintain this cyclical pattern. Samoan culture has a distinct social order in which roles are associated with age and gender. The roles and expectations of young Samoan children differ between girls and boys. The following section looks at Samoan views on gender roles and how this impacts on Samoan



parenting.

### **Parents' views on the role of gender**

In Samoa, gender expectations differed as boys worked alongside the older men outdoors where they tended the plantation and the cattle and harvested and collected food. The girls and older females carried out the domestic chores which included maintaining the home, and caring for children and the elderly. In contemporary times, particularly with the introduction of Western goods and machines, physical labour in both outdoors and domestic work has lessened, but the female's role has remained the same in maintaining the home, and caring for the children and elderly (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996).

For the mothers/ female parents, gender differences still existed. The majority of the participants were mothers/females and so had experienced gender differences themselves. Their collective experience mirrored literature findings (e.g. Macpherson, 1999; Pitt & Macpherson, 1974; Tiatia, 1998) that Samoan girls experience more restriction than boys. As young girls, they experienced more responsibilities and expectations than their brothers or male cousins:

*It was harder [for girls]. We got, not picked on, but more responsibilities put on females rather than the males. [Losa]*

*The female always takes on a lot, based on my experiences. The female is always the one that takes up the load. I mean my brother, he's about 8-9 years younger than me, and he's like the prince. [Lina]*

Their experiences of the gender differences influenced how they parented. They chose to have more gender equality in how they parented their sons and daughters:

*[The boys] did the outside jobs, [and] we did all the inside jobs. I think nowadays, it's accepted for girls to do what the boys are doing. I push more for that equality, because [I] know what it was like to be held back [because of your gender]. [Ina]*

There were three fathers but they didn't speak to specific gender differences or experiences of gender roles growing up. However, there were not enough fathers to make a comparison

between the fathers' experiences as Samoan males with the mothers' experiences as Samoan females. The key informants agreed with the parents' perceptions of Samoan gender roles. They talked about the socialisation of Samoans in traditional Samoa, and the traditional perspectives of gender roles.

The following key informant explained her perception of how traditional Samoan practices influenced gender roles and the socialisation of these roles:

*Boys seem to have more freedom. This aligns with gender socialisation for Samoans specifically. Women from back in the old days were taupou's; [the] sacred essence and face of the village. So they need[ed] to be pure and safe. The role of boys at the time was to go and make the genealogical links with the high chiefs [daughters]. 'So go out and sow your seeds.' [This was] encouraged. [This] conflicted with the role of the male in the feagaiga process, which was to protect his sisters from boys like him [who are also] trying to sow their seeds. [Key Informant Five]*

In Samoan culture, feagaiga is a sacred covenant between a sister and her brother. According to Fairbairn-Dunlop (1998), the sister was of higher rank than her brother and was given precedence in seating arrangements in eating and more comfortable sleeping quarters. Further to this, Fairbairn-Dunlop (1998) states that "...while all the daughters of the village were highly valued, the village taupou (ceremonial virgin) was the Samoan ideal of feminine status. Her chastity was the state of purity to which all unmarried girls should aspire" (p. 6). The taupou was usually the daughter of a high chief or one of his sisters, and the taupou title was the equivalent of a matai title (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1998).

In the quote above, the key informant emphasises the role of the taupou as "the female face of the village" representing purity and the sacred aspect of village occasions. The traditional role of the taupou was also to establish kinship ties with other high-ranking matai titles through marriage. This reinforced and strengthened the reputation of the village and their family title/name. The taupou therefore, needed to maintain her purity and sanctity as a representation of her family lineage. The role of the family therefore was to protect her from impurity and being defiled, which also protected their status and reputation.

In contemporary times, protection of Samoan girls still exists, particularly from sexual assault:

*Well it's that the girls must be at home at night. Some of it is that danger of the sexual [assault]. [Key Informant Four]*

*They kind of like to protect the girls cause they don't want them to...[get pregnant?]. Yes, and that would bring shame to the family, so that was very much...even that wasn't explicitly said, it was very implicit in that expectation. [Su'e]*

The effects of protecting girls can have negative consequences. As the parents have discussed already, the greater restrictions for Samoan girls were hard to accept nowadays in a society that advocates gender equality. The following key informant discussed the traditional role of Samoan girls in contemporary times, with young Samoan girls seeing this as overprotective and unfair:

*[Gender roles], that still has a huge influence on today. Our girls out there nowadays, parents are still more strict and more protective of them. Boys have a little more freedom. So that can either benefit the ultimate outcomes for these kids, or not. Some of our girls go and rebel against that whole system, and hence our high fertility and youthful pregnancy rates. [Key Informant Five]*

The Samoan female - representative of purity and carrying the reputation of the family – is held responsible for the consequences of sexual activity, and the male involved appears to be absolved of any responsibility. Though only mentioned in one quote as the protector as well as the courtier, there is an expectation that males will roam freely. The effects of this would most likely influence where Samoan boys and girls are allowed to move about in their neighbourhood unsupervised, with boys likely to experience more freedom than girls.

The impact of these different expectations and allowances for Samoan boys and girls varied. Key informants provided evidence from their research and experience that girls do better in school than boys, for instance:

*[There] are very different rules for girls and boys. ...If you look at educational achievement in high school and university, girls are doing much better than boys. Girls must be at home in a sense learning their*

*skills, [doing] homework, looking after their father - all those sorts of things. Whereas boys [they're] just taking off. [Key Informant Four]*

There appeared to be resistance from Samoan children to traditional views of gender roles and traditional ways of parenting. As first migrants, Samoan parents can be unaware of the struggle children have to navigate through parents' cultural expectations and way of seeing the world in a contrasting environment with a different value system (Esera, 2001). The following section discusses the tension for parents and children who are navigating through two worlds: Samoan culture, and Western New Zealand society.

### **Navigating through two worlds**

All of the parents admitted to the pressures that came from being Samoan and living in a Western society (Esera, 2001). They confessed to taking the best from both cultures and implementing them in their parenting, while disregarding aspects they did not agree with:

*We've taken the best of both worlds. We've seen what works for us. We've seen things about the [Samoan] culture that we don't like, but we [also] see the value in it. We see the value of the westernized culture, but we also see what we don't agree with; and we're just trying to find that nice balance for our kids. My kids, I guess they'll have to find their own identity. [Telesia]*

This parent admits that the diaspora influences the way her and her husband parent. The parents acknowledged that the cultural ambiguity or dichotomy that exists between Samoan and Western cultures would differ for their children.

The following parent shared his journey as a parent, giving his children the best of Western privileges, while instilling Samoan cultural values:

*As a parent, I've had to adapt and learn, and use my own brains. With my son and girls, we put them through good schools to give them guidance and support. I'm predominantly New Zealand driven, but there are certain aspects in the Samoan culture that I like, and one is respect for the parents, and [to] listen. [Tala]*

Navigating through these two worlds however can be confusing for Samoan children, who have to fulfil the expectations of two different environments – home and school.

The key informants spoke of their experiences of growing up in two different worlds where values about the Samoan child's autonomy are voiced differently. These experiences shaped their parenting practices so there was not the same amount of conflict between home and school that they had experienced growing up:

*We pretty much had to live in both worlds - our parents were trying to instil in us the Samoan values, but then we go to school and our teachers were telling us, 'Speak up, speak your mind' but then when you come home it's, 'Be quiet, listen.' We're probably parenting a lot different to the way we were brought up. We'd tell our kids, from our own experiences [to] 'speak up,' knowing that if they don't, they won't sort of succeed as much.*  
[Telesia]

The key informants acknowledged the difference in parenting styles between Samoans born or raised in Samoa with those born or raised in New Zealand. The different lens and experiences impact on their parenting practices:

*I think there's always a conflict in the New Zealand born [and] Samoa born ways of parenting. There's a whole lot of things (that vary) between New Zealand born and Samoan born. [Key Informant One]*

Place of birth or length of residence had impacts on cultural affiliation:

*We need to look at the different acculturation levels that exist in various groups. You look at one's cultural affiliation, and studies have identified that those who are more aligned with their Pacific cultural orientation, have more protective factors against many various things. But in the same sense, if they're highly aligned with Western and have dropped Pacific, they still have some sense of belonging and some sense of protective factors around them. Those who are low in Pacific and low in Western are at worst; [they're] basically struggling with worlds. [Key Informant Five]*

The key informants discussed the impacts of migration for Samoan people and the tension that arose between Samoan-born and raised parents, and their New Zealand-born and raised children. Just as the parents spoke about navigating through two often conflicting worlds, so too did the experts. They had experienced that tension through their students and their parents.

The following expert talked about her experience with her students who have less cultural affiliation than their parents, which created tensions:

*The ones straight from the islands, they're still trying to find their ground and they're a bit more over-protective of their children. But they do have a stronger cultural sense. Even though they moved here, they still have more Samoan than they do English, because it's a foreign land to them. They still do everything the Samoan way, and it will take a long time for them to integrate themselves. [Key Informant Two]*

Migrant parents found it difficult to adjust to the way of life in New Zealand, as they held tight to their cultural ways of doing things. For their children adapting to the social norms of New Zealand was much easier, particularly as they navigated through the New Zealand schooling system and were influenced by the Western pedagogies of teaching, as well as the influence of children from other backgrounds:

*It's almost as if parents who come straight from the islands, they really don't want to lose their cultural origins, and they try so hard to teach their children. I'll tell you what; the first one to lose [their cultural connection] is the child. They go to school, they'll make friends, they'll learn [English] and most probably they will lose the [Samoan] language. They will dress more, talk more and act more [Western] just so they can have some connection to the new people, and it's the parents that probably will be the last to lose [their culture]; they hold on to their cultural origins. [Key Informant Two]*

The key informants said that for Samoan born and raised parents, the act of transferring Samoan culture to their children may mean less interaction with other cultures, particularly those that conflicted with Samoan cultural values and principles:

*...the value is safety; it's trying to [protect your child] from outside influence, and especially Palagi influences which are always bad [sarcasm]. So I think its safety - knowing where your children are. It's your duty to look after your kids and know where they are – [to] make sure they're safe and secure, and that when they are out, you know who they're with - approved people. [Key Informant Four]*

Ensuring cultural continuity means that Samoan parents are less likely to allow their children to interact and engage with children and neighbours from other cultures, in fear that their children are influenced by cultural norms and practices contradictory to Samoan ones. This limits where Samoan children are allowed to go in their neighbourhood and restricts who they can interact with.

### **Samoan parenting in New Zealand**

The key informants reported that the stigma of 'bad parenting' also influenced parenting practices. For Samoan parents, there was fear of being perceived as a bad parent and this influenced where their children were allowed to go and what they were allowed to do because of fear of judgement from others. The following key informant compared this with parenting in Samoa where if an incident happened to a child, the child was more likely to be blamed than the parent:

*It's the people in your church. If something happened to your kid and you're home doing something, you go to church on Sunday – everybody knows. They started talking about it, 'she's been home all day' and then they start to [gossip]. So that's another fear. It's totally different from a setting in Samoa 'cause people don't do that. If a kid [has] hurt themselves, they don't blame the parents. They say, 'Oh you maka valea (not thinking or being aware/oblivious to what's around them)' - it's one of those things. Whereas here [in NZ], if something happens to that kid, their parents [are] blamed. [Key Informant One]*

The Key Informant above highlights the parenting pressures created by other Samoans, particularly at church. She alludes to the 'gossip' that could happen should a parent let their children move about freely and the chance of them misbehaving in front of people. This results

in other Samoans from church judging the parents' parenting competency based on their child's behaviour, and then telling other people at church about their judgement. The fear of being judged as an incompetent parent makes parents ensure their child stays close enough to monitor their behaviour. The key informant reports that this kind of pressure does not exist so much in Samoa, where the child's behaviour is not just the parents' responsibility but dealt with by others in the community, and so not a medium in which to judge parents by.

Fear of being perceived as a bad parent in the absence of having family living close by, restricted parents in New Zealand from letting their children roam freely in their neighbourhood, even if there were other Samoans living nearby. The key informant who talks about the gossip at church by other Samoans exemplifies this:

*I think the parenting [in NZ], they're not so free ...[It's] safety reasons; neighbours are neighbours, [but] they're not family neighbours. You know Mr Tom next door, but you don't really know him. Here, the boundaries are sort of limited. If you have neighbours who are Samoans, you also have limitations. You also have that fear because they are not related. You still have that kind of careful [mind set], 'I don't want them to say that I'm a bad parent,' because they also tend to talk. [Key Informant One]*

The role of family is important in that there are levels of trust based on an understanding that they share the same values, and that the responsibility of parenting is shared. The following parent discussed the similarities in her and her siblings' parenting styles, and this comforted her:

*Our parenting is similar. I know that if my sister tells [my daughter] off, it's for a good reason. It's not because she doesn't like her or she has something against her, it's for her own good. We're all quite fair in the way we parent our children. We all parent the same, and we only know that because we see each other often enough to know how [each other] parent. [Su'e]*

This parent allows her siblings to make parenting decisions for her child when she is not present, as she knows that their parenting values and beliefs mirror her own. This is because of the time shared together in which they are able to learn not only about each others' parenting



motivations and practices, but are also able to inform and learn from each other.

All of the key informants discussed issues that Samoans faced due to media portrayals of migration, displacement or identity struggles, living in low SES areas with low income jobs, substance use (alcohol, tobacco or drugs), and to some extent teenage pregnancy and/or crime:

*There's a lot of negative media portrayal. Unfortunately they don't focus on other things that are more positive, that come out of the same community. I think media portrayal of Pacific people focuses negatively on many things and I think that has impacted on mindsets and attitudes and no doubt, impacted on one's perception of safety in their neighbourhood.*  
[Key Informant Five]

The following key informant worked in a community organisation with Pacific families struggling particularly with domestic issues. She had seen how these were a result of not being stable and strong in fa'aSamoa values, and how such issues resulted in disassociation with fa'aSamoa values and the impact of this on the stability of their family and their children:

*It's definitely the other issues they face. I think for the Samoans, if you have a stable family where the Samoan values are very strong, right from when the child is born, that family won't go wrong. But why the fa'aSamoa values are not strong in some [families] is because of other issues they go through which affects the way they function.* [Key Informant One]

According to this key informant, the most important protective factors for Samoan families were their cultural identity or the fa'aSamoa, and their family. When parents were dealing with issues such as domestic abuse, poverty, unemployment, or substance abuse, they are often disassociated from these protective factors for fear of the shame they would experience should their family know. Shame and the fear of being perceived as a bad parent, isolated Samoan parents and their families from the very support that they needed. The benefits from social interaction with cousins or the support network of grandparents were not available to their children when they isolated themselves from family:

*I'm afraid that some of our [Samoan] families, and some of our parents are*

*ashamed. There's the shame because other families may think it's bad [parenting]. It seems to be the [main focus], sometimes they just sort of ignore the child's needs because they don't want the other families or other people to know that their daughter or their son [did something bad].*  
*[Key Informant One]*

Uncertainty about whether other parents in the neighbourhood shared similar parenting values meant parents were less likely to communicate issues around children and parenting. This reinforced keeping to oneself, and maintaining the connection with family and church despite the geographical distance:

*Whereas now mum gets involved, and everything gets turned into a saga, it's not PR. You could run down the street and if you caused havoc then, they will come and knock on your mum and dad's door. People will tell on you, 'oh did you know your daughter was running down...' and they wouldn't get offended. In fact, YOU'D get in trouble; whereas now if you go and tell a parent, then they'll turn it on you. So I think it's much better to keep to yourself. [Ina]*

The parent above talks about how this is an issue in shared parenting. Growing up, the neighbourhood would alert parents if their children were doing something they perhaps shouldn't, and parents would respond by telling their child off. Ina says that now parents turn on a concerned neighbour to mind his or her own business. This reinforces people/neighbours to keep to themselves, and reduces the neighbourhood cohesion where people look out for each other.

Despite the tensions that arose, the key informants agreed that there was a need for parents to help their children navigate through cultural differences to ensure they got the benefit of both worlds:

*There's a lot of compromising that needs to be done. The parents need to negotiate things, because that's the only way to hold onto your fa'aSamoa and that your kids will [choose to] continue on with the fa'aSamoa. [Key Informant Four]*

## **Samoaan perceptions of their social and physical surrounding**

Samoaan parents' experiences and perceptions of culture affected how they saw their social and physical surroundings. There was an emphasis on the differences between the physical and social environment in Samoa and New Zealand.

### **What is a neighbourhood?**

The key informants discussed the differences between the Samoan village and how that concept was transferred (or not) to the New Zealand context. The most obvious difference they reported was the cultural diversity in New Zealand that was not in Samoa. In Samoa, cultural norms and expectations were easy to keep because they were shared and known by all. In New Zealand, diverse cultures meant diverse cultural norms and expectations with the possibility that these could conflict:

*... in each village, they have their own rules to stick with. If they don't follow those rules they can be penalized or...kicked out of the village if they don't behave themselves. But over here [in NZ] it's totally different from Samoa. ... they just do whatever they like. [Futu]*

*... There's so many races here. When I was growing up it was predominantly Palagi and Maori; when I was at school there was hardly any islanders. But now it's just so many people from so many countries and they all bring with them their own different lifestyles, and it clashes with different cultures. [Tala]*

How Samoans perceived the village in Samoa influenced their perception of their neighbourhood in New Zealand. Whether parents were born in Samoa or New Zealand, their perception of what a neighbourhood in New Zealand should be like included some elements of a Samoan village:

*... for me, village and neighbourhood has to have family in it. That's probably why I get so deeply rooted in living around my sisters and my mother. We have thought about it, we even tried to move to Brisbane, but*

*no. My sisters on Toa<sup>16</sup> Road, my mother's off Toa Road and we're off Toa Road, so we're all sort of in that little area. So that's like my little village, and if they were to go, I wouldn't feel like I should stay there, I've got to be near family. [Losa]*

All the key informants reported the importance of the Samoan village for parents was because of the proximity of family, particularly as a support network. This was still important for some Samoans in New Zealand, however, not all Samoans had family that lived close by. Despite the distance, the connection to family was still important:

*... what's that concept? Where the whole village raises the child? It's very true in Samoa. [Key Informant Two]*

The saying 'It takes a village to raise a child' is a popular proverb used in Pacific communities in New Zealand (Ussher, 2010), with its origins from Africa. The idea of the proverb is that it is the responsibility of the whole village, not just their parents or immediate family, for the optimal health and wellbeing of the child, and his or her positive upbringing. The key informant above believes this is the case for children in Samoa, where villages in Samoa accept their responsibility and collective role in raising Samoan children:

*...a Samoan neighbourhood for parents would be more family now, in the community – church. I know for me and [my husband], that's gone into the school, cause we've gotten to know those in the school, like the friends, parents of our kids. So for us, that village concept is probably not so much those that live around us, but the community that we've gotten involved in. [Telesia]*

The key informants described the Samoan neighbourhood as largely defined by the location of family. Though the Samoan village encapsulated the closeness of family, Samoan extended families in New Zealand lived further away:

*... the neighbourhood, well number one I think the desire to mix with other Samoans is paramount. So neighbourhood as I see it in New Zealand, the*

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<sup>16</sup> Fictional street names: changed for anonymity purposes

*Samoaan neighbourhood is not a physical location. [It's a] different concept of neighbourhood to the [Western definition], it's spatially distributed. Like my neighbourhood is from here to my aunty over there and [other family], and so that's your interaction points there ...and for Samoaan parents, they don't foster many relationships in the immediate neighbourhood, and between those points. It's not going next door for a cup of sugar; they'll go over to the shop or jump in the car and go over to the cousins rather than set up that obligation or reciprocity close by. So to me, the Samoaan neighbourhood is not close [together] now, it's [spatially] spread but it operates in the same way with cars. So now you just jump in the car and go. But in that point of view they're separate isn't it, well it's not the neighbourhood of Samoa. Not at all. [Key Informant Four]*

Key Informant Four's definition of a Samoaan neighbourhood in New Zealand included significant places like relatives and church despite these being out of their immediate surroundings. This meant neighbourhood was dispersed, car travel was often needed to access 'neighbourhood' locations, and the spaces between these locations were insignificant. This was consistently reported across the key informants.

The following parent compared the Samoaan village with camping in New Zealand. The value of communal living and reciprocity with your neighbours was what this parent valued about the village context, and was why he loved camping in New Zealand; because it was an environment that reminded him of the aspects of the Samoaan village that were important to him:

*... in the village you're sharing your things with your neighbours. When we went to Samoa we took a box of food to my uncle [and] his kids, and the next thing it was opened up and then divided between all the neighbours. It was just amazing. Here we are, just bringing it for them, and they're not selfish, they are dividing it out to everyone in the village. To me that's awesome. ... and their kids are your kids and your kids are their kids. And I guess that's why I compare it to camping, 'cause everyone's backgrounds and that don't exist, you're there to enjoy and have fun, and you get that communal thing, where everyone shares and looks out [for each other].*  
*[Futu]*

## **Samoaan perceptions of neighbourhood and IM**

The key informants reported that the important elements of the Samoan village included a sense of belonging with place, a sense of connectedness with people, and trust with people and place. These elements, when present, enabled Samoan children's IM:

*It's that trust, and that sense of connectedness, that sense of belonging, 'Oh they're my family. They can play in the village.'* [Key Informant One]

*I think we've talked about the village life and the extended family being together ...it's a sense of belonging, and there's different levels of belonging; that even though you've had neighbours for 20-30 years, it's not the same as having your parents or extended family.* [Key Informant One]

There are some elements of the New Zealand neighbourhood that are different to the Samoan village, and have negative consequences for Samoan children's IM:

*I don't know about you, but you don't just go next door, knock on the door, and hang out with your friend. But in Samoa you can just walk around the village and hang out with whoever; everybody knows everybody. But in New Zealand it's very, 'this is your house, this is your area, don't go next door, things happen, you don't know the man next door.'* And plus, your whole street could be different cultures, all the way down. Whereas in Samoa you can just go wherever, no one worries about you. [Key Informant Two]

The kinship bonds within the Samoan family unit are based on trust and shared values. For most of the key informants, relationships based on trust and shared values were not experienced in most, current New Zealand neighbourhoods:

*... in Samoa it's very open and the freedom to be free, whereas here [in NZ] there's limitations. [Especially] with that whole connection thing, and the sense of belonging within your neighbourhood.* [Key Informant One]

For the parents who were born or raised in New Zealand, they described elements of the

Samoan village such as sense of belonging, relationships with neighbours based on trust and shared values, and family or church that were present for them in New Zealand when they were a child. These elements however are not present in their current neighbourhoods and they felt over time, elements of the Samoan village had become diluted in New Zealand neighbourhoods. The parents who were born or raised in New Zealand described having a sense of connectedness and a freedom to roam within their neighbourhoods when they were children. By contrast their children had limited independence. Neighbourhood change was attributed, in part, to the cost of housing, as, particularly in Auckland in the areas where Samoan and Pacific peoples are more likely to reside, neighbours are more likely to be renting than owning their home. Other explanations included people travelling further to work so spending more time away from home and urban design changes such as fewer cul-de-sacs, and less yard space for children to play in. These features were seen to reduce chances to build relationships with neighbours and opportunities for interaction. In the past, parents reminisced that:

*All our neighbours knew everyone, and there was a lot. But these were all permanent household owners; we knew each other. We all knew each other and grew up [together], like from when we were babies... I think we might have been in our 20s when the first neighbour moved [out of the area]. [Ina]*

*It was just open; you just run in and out and everyone knew who you were. And you just, you don't misbehave because the shopkeeper knows your mum. The shop owner was my friends' dad. He owned it for years. So I couldn't misbehave in there, 'cause that's my friends' dad. So that's how the neighbourhood was, it was kind of like, you had your own little...[village]. [Ina]*

The key informants described Samoan villages, as being more open with few or no fences to bound houses so there was plenty of shared space for children to play:

*... no fences. As I said, I can run from that house to that house. I can play between the trees; there is a space on the grass so we can do our game there. But over here [NZ], no, when you go outside it's only a few, small area that's outside the house. [Key Informant Three]*

An open landscape was also present in New Zealand at the time when the Key Informants were growing up which also contributed to their stated higher IM levels. They reported no fences so had shared areas to play with their neighbours:

*There were no fences; there were no fences anywhere. I think the only fence there was [at the front house], and that was fine. But there were no fences; this whole area was all open. So one would go out, you'd hear the noise, you'd look out, 'oh they're outside' and then you just go outside and play. [Ina]*

The Key Informants compared how different it was when they were growing up with how it was now for their children. These differences in neighbourhoods impacted on Samoan children's IM:

*I wished it was like how it was for me. I wish I can let my kids go out on the street and play with their friends, [or] walk to the shops which is something we used to do all the time. We didn't even have to ask mum and dad, we just went. It's just that things are so different now. It's scary 'cause you can't even let your kids go out on the road. [Lina]*

*... everything feels like I'm locked in. I'm locked in, I'm neglected, you know, I'm isolated. I'm not free. Because everything that was in [Samoa] was not here in [NZ]. [Key Informant Three]*

For the parents and Key Informants, their neighbourhoods were clearly not the same as it was when they were growing up, whether in New Zealand or in Samoa. They had strong and trusting relationship with their neighbours, they knew almost everyone in their neighbourhood including the shopkeeper, and the open landscape meant they had more space to see and to move about their neighbourhood. They no longer had these things and so did not feel it was conducive for their child's safe movement unsupervised in the neighbourhood.

The following section describes how Samoan parents' perspectives of the social and physical surroundings have influenced their children's IM.



## **Samoaan perceptions of children's IM & PA**

### Perceptions of children's IM

Many of the parents experienced high levels of IM when they were their children's age. They talked fondly about their childhood and the freedom they experienced playing with their friends and discussed in detail the games they played in the neighbourhood. They talked about a childhood that was full of outdoor, independent travel and play:

*I had a good childhood growing up. You know you just played around in the neighbourhood with friends. And then when the streetlights came on at night, that's the time you knew it was time to go home for dinner. We used to make bow and arrows and play cowboys and Indians. We used to play bulrush, and football over the neighbours or over our house. [Tala]*

By retelling their childhood adventures and their independent movement and play, they were aware of the benefits of being independently mobile and desired that their children be afforded the same benefits. They admitted that their children's experiences of IM was not the same as theirs and viewed this as a loss:

*I couldn't let the kids do what I did, ...[and] that's a shame because I think they're missing out on a lot of what we used to have, in the laid back lifestyle and play, especially on the weekends, and I think that a lot of that's getting lost. Which is a shame. [Tala]*

The parents attributed their independently mobile behaviour to an environment that contained important elements of the Samoan village – supportive networks (e.g. family), familiarity with their physical and social surroundings, and open landscape. They also attributed high IM to other elements of the Samoan village, which had not been discussed. These included safety issues, technology, and a busier, fast-paced lifestyle:

*I wished it was like how it was for me. I wish I can let my kids go out on the street and play with their friends, [or] walk to the shops which is something we used to do all the time. We didn't even have to ask mum and dad, we just went. Everybody knew each other. It's just that things are*

*so different now. It's scary 'cause you can't even let your kids go out on the road." [Lina]*

## Influencers of Children's IM

### *Safety*

The parents reported safety as the biggest deterrent for their child's IM. Safety issues that restricted their children's independent movement and travel today were not a concern when they were children:

*The biggest thing is safety because of the awareness. Now I don't know if we talked about paedophiles or kidnapping...it really wasn't an issue when we grew up. I mean everyone knew each other, and paedophile wasn't really a word; so whether we were less informed or less aware of [those] things then, I don't know. Whereas this generation, we see it on the news, we're a lot more aware of it. So we make an active decision to make sure [our children] are not in a position where they will be compromised. [Maea]*

Consistent across the parents was the impact of media coverage of crimes against children and how this shaped parents' perceptions of safety for children. As the parent above mentioned, awareness of safety issues concerning their children increased the restrictions they placed on their children.

Like the quote above, it was people that made parents most concerned. People that made Samoans feel unsafe were mostly described as bullies, people who drank (particularly youths), or kidnappers. The most common description of the people parents felt unsafe with was strangers. The Key Informants felt safe when their children were with people they were familiar with and who they had developed a trusting relationship with. The Key Informants described these people as family, church community, and for some the school community:

*It always has to be within the safety net of people you know and trust; that's going to be certain communities. Family is first, maybe school and the church - those sorts of groups that you're already familiar with. And you always try to minimize that exposure of them to be placed in a*

*compromising situation. I think you can only do your best to try and minimize it. [Maea]*

*Back then, the neighbourhood and the streets were a lot more safer, there wasn't that, 'you might get picked up', the stuff that's happening now ...Back then in my day, we could just go down the road and play with the neighbours, and come back even when it's dark. Everybody knew everyone. [Lina]*

Therefore, strangers created a sense of danger and Key Informants and parents did not feel safe letting their children out in the presence of strangers:

*... that [impacts on] the whole concept of safety: strangers. So it's that concept of safety and the life here; there's major barriers. [Key Informant One]*

*I'm more reluctant for them to go off or go to the dairy by themselves. More for safety concerns, probably just from other kids, [and] other people. Stranger danger. [Telesia]*

### *Technology*

Parents and experts reported technology as a major deterrent for children's IM, and a major contributor to the difference in children's IM levels nowadays compared with the parents IM levels as children. In New Zealand, Samoan children nowadays could easily access a range of technological devices, which their parents could not access at the same age, particularly those parents who grew up in Samoa:

*...the research shows that a lot of New Zealand kids are spending more time indoors, because of technology....The kids in Samoa, they don't really have those updated technologies, so they're forever entertaining themselves outside. [Key Informant Two]*

*I never had TV in the islands, but then back then there was no such thing as computer and laptops; so TV was the only thing you could do [at that time]. [Futu]*

For Futu, TV was the only technological device in Samoa – there were no devices that his children now have access to such as computers or laptops. Even though TV was the only technological device in Samoa, his family did not have one, and so his access to technology growing up in Samoa was very limited.

### *Children's Maturity*

A few of the parents said they did not think their child was mature enough to be out independently. They feared they wouldn't be able to handle themselves in a negotiating circumstance. This was mostly as a comparison to their own childhoods, where they talked about being more street-smart and resilient. This perhaps was a result of the opportunities they had to apply and practise such skills. The following parent shared her concern for her son who she perceived as being very vulnerable and naïve to danger:

*Their minds are still babies. They're still very vulnerable and very naïve to the world; I still think that someone can talk [him] into getting into a car.  
[Lina]*

*I think that the kids nowadays are probably a little bit too soft. They just panic mode, you know fight and flight, they just flight, so they're not as street-wise as us I think. [Ina]*

### *Busier lifestyles*

Parents commented that life was at a faster pace now than when they were children. This meant there was limited leisure time to enjoy things like free play, especially 'play' as they experienced as children. Using cars meant they were able to get to and from places faster; they were able to do more and travel further in a given time:

*Its just life has just changed. ...The generation has just changed big time. There's no such thing as walking anymore to the supermarket, there's no time. You waste that hour walking when you can just hop in the car and take 5 minutes. [Lina]*

According to the key informants and parents, there was not a social norm of playing in the

street with neighbouring kids due to this increased pace in lifestyle. Busier lifestyles restricted the opportunity for informal play between neighbouring kids:

*... It's hard to go out and play 'cause it's just not a thing to do. I think unless they spend time with other kids, just outside playing, then they don't. But I think there's a lot more separation even more now because everyone's a lot more busier, and parents are so much busier. [Maea]*

### *Parent support*

For the Key Informants, another reason for their high IM levels as children was because their parents were working long hours and so as children they had no choice but to be independent in their travel and movements. The parents talked largely about walking to and from school because their parents had to go to work early and would come home late, because their parents did not drive, or rather because that was the norm:

*Look how young we are and so independent. And we didn't even realize how [independent] we are 'cause you just do things on your own, you had to, 'cause mum and dad had to work. [Ina]*

For the parents now, they did not need to work such long hours as their parents did. What this also meant was that they chose to invest time and interest into their children's activities, as this was something lacking from their own childhoods. One of the key informants discussed how their parents were not able to attend her sport games because they were working, or could not play sport because they did not have transport.

*When I was young I used to play school netball, but there wasn't that support from our parents. They just expected you to go to school and learn and come home. [But] they were working hard like 7 days a week, so they couldn't [support me]. Because I missed out on that, with my kids, I now support them in anything they do, because when I grew up there was no support. [Lina]*

The quote highlights opportunities for children to participate in activities due to the support of their parents both directly and indirectly. Unlike the parent above who also talks about her role as the eldest child to help with her siblings while her parents worked, her children don't

have that responsibility. Supportive parenting allows children more opportunities for PA through family, church and extra-curricular activities.

What this contrasts is parents' statements in the beginning of this chapter, their difficulty in instilling the culture in their children due to many demands of their everyday lifestyles. It appears extra-curricular activities such as sport, unlike culture, is seen as an important aspect or contributor to their everyday reality.

### *Encouraging mobility and PA*

Most of the key informants understood the important role that family had on modelling an active lifestyle. Parents understood the influence they had in role modelling this for their children:

*Through our own family activities we try to encourage our children [to be active] ...More so now a days, a lot of parents are becoming more active which then rubs off on the children...so role modelling it. [Maea]*

*Every family is different ...If you have a family where two parents are very active, I'm sure the PA and that are much better for those kids; the kids will do it too. [Maea]*

Family activities provided a great opportunity for children to be mobile and active. It involved the key ingredients for their child's movement and play - supervision and trusting relationships with others; and was a great way for all family members to get involved being active. Children actively participated, as it was something they enjoyed and looked forward to:

*Our family, we play together ...Me and my husband and the kids, we play together as a family....During summer we always go to the park to play touch. [Nise]*

*My kids are always looking forward to it. No matter what, we're all outside, playing tag or ki o rahi [a traditional Māori ball game]. Different things. We do that together. [Losa]*

### *Children's IM developments through a cultural lens*

A major benefit of IM is that it is a form of PA for children. What is the Samoan perception of PA, and is it important to ensure the benefits for their children through IM? Key informants and parents shared their perceptions on PA, especially from a cultural perspective.

Due to the subsistent lifestyle in Samoa, PA was part of the everyday activities. For example, in the plantation harvesting crops, collecting food, or cleaning around the house and garden. As a result, Samoan people were fit and healthy even well into their old age:

*...if you look at it historically, I mean, are we physical people? Yes, our people lived in the islands, and we're subsistence, we lived off the land, and you go to the island now a days and how many old men with abs? More than here. [Key Informant Five]*

Sport was also a big part of Samoan culture. Sport was a medium to display strength and ability, and was often a competition between villages:

*So our people initially have been very physical, so if you look at games and sports, we were involved in many sporting activities; pigeon hunting, spear throwing, village against village matches, all very physical. [Key Informant Five]*

*... probably many Samoan minds are associated with competitiveness. It's not sport for my individual benefit, it's between villages and that's where sport is ...the aim of sport is to beat the other village; rather than sport for me getting health for me. [Key Informant Four]*

Sport continues to be a popular interest for Samoan children and their families in New Zealand. Perhaps due to Samoans predisposition for incidental PA and competitive sport between villages, sport is a natural interest of Samoan families and children. The key informants and parents identified sport as a popular interest for Samoan families and a way for children to be active:

*Sport has always been popular. [Key Informant Five]*

*Most families, they're really good in making sure that the children are involved in clubs – club sports and everything. So it's really good to get them active that way. [Key Informant Three]*

Due to working the land or fishing, and sport as a medium to display village prominence, PA and the physical ability of an individual was not only important for its contribution to the collective. In sport, being physically fit was beneficial for the team goal of winning the game. In traditional Samoa, being physically fit meant members were able to fulfil their role such as the men tending the cattle or plantation, and women caring for the children while taking care of the domestic duties. Being physically fit is only as good as how it contributes to the collective good:

*PA is still more for the group rather than for the individual – like getting strong; it's you're getting strong to contribute to the group. So you get yourself fit because it's going to be for the group or team [Key Informant Four]*

*Because they've got these All Blacks, what we're finding now is that a lot of parents are seeing sport as an avenue to money, you know that aye, money, careers, and that's a bit sad too cause that's a bit cut-throat isn't it. So it's not sport for healthiness ...maybe that's in their parent's heads too. If you're looking purely at sport, or PA, that if I'm not good enough to [be] the best, then what's the point. [Key Informant Four]*

Some of these traditional perspectives of PA and sport still exist for Samoans in New Zealand. Although Samoan families in New Zealand no longer need physical fitness for subsistence farming or to display village status, there was still an affinity for sport and outdoor activities. Church and family as key elements for Samoans living in New Zealand were still focal points for Samoan activity behaviours (Bell, 2001). The Key Informants described that Samoan children's activity levels were achieved through sport, family and church activities. This paper argues that children's PA, and possibly other IM developments such as social skills and spatial awareness, are possible through these activities as they foster the elements important for Samoan families family, collective wellbeing, culture, and safety. In relation to sport:

*I put them into sport teams so they have to go to training, and play on the*



*weekend. And it's good, 'cause they learn social skills too - learning how to mix with other people, learning to be part of a team... [Tala]*

*We always come to an arrangement in winter and in summer; she has to do one sport that's active. She's picked up netball, but before netball it was karate. She got bored with karate, but I said, 'You can't leave karate until you've picked up another sport,' and so she said, 'Netball,' and she's enjoying that. [Su'e]*

Family activities:

*Our family, we play together. When we have time, me and my husband and the kids, we play together as a family. It's not just a safety issue, we also want to spend some time with them and let them know that we care for them. [Nise]*

*No matter what, [our family] we're all outside, some are watching us, but the rest of us are all getting in there, playing tag or ki o rahi. Different things, its not always volley [ball] ...we do that together. We're all training together. [Losa]*

And church activities:

*The good thing is at our church every Thursday evening there's Zumba [fitness regime based on Colombian dance]. So all of us go there and do that. [Telesia]*

*A Samoan village for parents in the community [would] be more church; if not family the next best thing is church. [Telesia]*

Churches are environments for PA for Samoan children that are not only encouraged, but fostered by their parents. There is promise in tailoring perceptions, expectations and PA measures to achieve the cognitive, social and physical benefits for Samoan children, as well as their family, in such environments.

## KITC Samoan parents (CATI survey and Qualitative interviews - Sample 1)

Many of the concerns voiced above were evident in responses to the CATI survey from KITC Samoan parents and in the qualitative interviews conducted with six of these, but there were also contrasts. This contrast is perhaps due to the fact that two-thirds of the Samoan parents from the CATI survey were raised in Samoa, and five of the six Sample 1 parents were raised in Samoa, while the entire Sample 2 parents were raised in New Zealand.

For the six KITC Samoan parents (Sample 1) who were interviewed, they were all Samoan born and five of the six raised in Samoa, and all had a strong and proud connection to their culture. The Samoan culture was important to them and they ensured their children knew the culture as their roots, their origin and where they were from. This was done through learning the Samoan language and maintaining traditional practices and values. This was their duty as a 'good' Samoan parent (Pereira, 2006):

*I pass that knowledge to them, empowering them to use the Samoan language at home. We talk to them and communicate with them in the Samoan language. [Mele]*

*That family over there, we share our food; it's Samoan culture, we used to do that when we grow up too. [Sina]*

The Samoan parents spoke openly about a good childhood in Samoa and didn't question their own parents' parenting practices. In fact, all but one spoke of parenting their children like their parents did:

*I'm a Samoan, you know, and I want to follow the way that I was brought up by my parents and I want my kids to follow in that too. [Ana]*

*That's what our parents [tried] to do [for] us and what we will do for our kids. [Sina]*

In contrast to the Sample 2 parents who expressed a desire to incorporate the best of both worlds – Samoa and New Zealand discourses - the Sample 1 parents spoke only of the importance of instilling the Samoan culture to their children by parenting like their parents. They were aware that their children would be heavily influenced by English and the New

Zealand Western culture, so their focus was on maintaining the Samoan culture:

*This lifestyle and this country that we're living in, like most of our young parents thinking 'oh no, we teach our children English because they are born here'. But hello, there is always a connection between these children, even though they were born in New Zealand, they are still Samoan. So I teach [my kids] the Samoan language. I pass that knowledge to them. To keep that knowledge. And even though they're influenced by English at primary school, the whole day its English, everywhere its English, go to the doctor, TV, whatever, you name it. Where else are they gonna learn it. From home, ...It always starts from home. [Mele]*

They admitted that these practices were not always valued in New Zealand and spoke of a conflict that existed for parenting as their parents did in a different context:

*One policeman came here and interviewed me about [Samoan discipline], and I said to him, '...it's the island way, that's what my/our parents did to us, and now we're good. We never did anything wrong like what the kids nowadays do.' ...The main reason is for our kids to get a good future ...Some other Samoan parents who don't [use Samoan discipline], they don't know how to control their kids, when they grow up they're not good. [Sina]*

For most of the Sample 1 parents, they admitted to keeping to themselves because of the different cultural expectations and norms that existed in their neighbourhoods:

*When we first came to New Zealand we tried to know our neighbours, but most of the time they just come in, come through, come out. Its only when you know some island people, some Samoan people aye – you have something [in common]. But it's different, there's so many different peoples and there are differences; you just mind your own business. [Tusi]*

The one parent who did not choose to parent like her parents spoke about what she disliked about the Samoan parenting practices she experienced growing up. She was the one parent of the group who was raised in New Zealand and could explain why she had a different

perception of parenting to the rest of the Sample 1 parents:

*I was [brought up in a traditional Samoan house] quite sadly and I didn't like it. I don't know if you were brought up the same way but back in the days we were pretty much, told to go to school, make sure you passed, and if we had questions, there was no way you could ask questions, you know. And it was do your chores, and if you stepped out of line, it was... [a beating], you know. [Lusi]*

Though she admits, like the other parents, to using physical discipline, Lusi makes sure to be clear that it is not harsh. In fact, she is cautious through her interview to make clear she does not use harsh force when physically disciplining her children, that her children did not ka'a (roam freely and get into mischief), and that they do the best to protect, but not suffocate, their children from harm. Her interview reiterates the tension for Samoan parents in talking about their parenting practices and the caution they have in not portraying a negative light on them as parents and to stigmatise (or be stigmatised as) Samoan parents in New Zealand:

*I don't really do all these Samoan ways to my kids 'cause it's kind of too harsh. ...I do bring that out sometimes, things like – in a good way though – I know my kids know, not to step out of line; I mean I don't give them a smash or anything ...with that, we don't really, we don't let them go out, you know, like go ka'a (roam freely), you try and protect your kids from all that, drinking, smoking, being in gangs, being pregnant, and I know that too much protection can lead them opposite...it's hard. But you just try your best, that's all we can do. [Lusi]*

An example of non-aligned worlds or contrasting values, independence appeared to be interpreted differently for the Samoan parent's to how it defines the concept of independent mobility. Independence for Samoan parents was defined as being responsible in chores or tasks, and was part of character building to contribute to the collective now and in the future.

In the CATI survey, parents were asked what were the main ways they encouraged their child to be independent. The Samoan parents' responses were summed up in two themes. The first theme saw Samoan parents encouraging their child's independence through chores and learning skills to take care of themselves and others on an everyday basis. The emphasis is 'to

*look after herself like tidying the rooms and picking up rubbish, doing the cooking.'* Some children *'do a lot of chores before he can go and play.'* Majority of the activities were to do *'washing/cleaning/vacuuming and cleans her room,'* as well as *'washes dishes, helps change the baby, cleans table after eating,'* *'tidying room/sorting her own washing,'* and *'gardening/weeding/dry and put away dishes/vacuum house/put out rubbish.* All of this is, *'so he could know how to look after himself'.*

This was further explored by the KITC qualitative interviews with Samoan parents (Sample 1) where they acknowledged the importance for their child to be independent in feau's/chores and being responsible for certain tasks around the house:

*I try to make sure that they do their feau's [chores/duties] as well ...it's a good thing, its learning as well as teaching them how to do it when they're young, so that when they grow up and they have families then they will know what to do. [Mele]*

This was their job as parents', to instill the skills in their child so that they will survive and thrive when they are older and their own parents are no longer around to do those tasks for them. Again, this was their duty as a 'good' Samoan parent:

*That is my gift as a parent to my children. 'Cause you never know, one day I might have a car accident. You never know [but I've] already prepared [my] kids for their life. [Mele]*

Though the Samoan culture is collective, independence was valued in relation to completing daily tasks that contribute to the functioning of the household. Being responsible for feau's or chores was an important concept of children's independence. Their contribution to the collective household was important for Samoan parents, and an important aspect of their child rearing.

The second theme that emerged from Samoan parents' response to encouraging their child's independence was learning character skills to develop a stronger character and respectfully interact with other people. Parents shared they encouraged independence, *'by encouraging her to voice her opinions,'* and to *'always talk to him to be polite and respect people and they do the same thing to them.'* Parents share that by *'encouraging her to use initiative - increasing self-confidence by asking questions and letting her know if her answers are right or wrong,'*

they are being *'taught to have manners,'* so that in all things, *'good or bad situations to know what to do.'*

Again, a respectful yet confident character that could respectfully interact with other people was important for Samoan parents in encouraging their children's independence. Being able to present a respectful manner, yet be confident and able to voice their opinions was also valued.

The interpretation of independence for the KITC Samoan parents who participated in the CATI survey aligned to Samoan values of fa'aloalo (respect), tautua (service), and fa'alavelave (obligation), and aligned to Samoan practices of feau (chores) where each person has a specific task according to their role in the social order/hierarchy (Macpherson, 1978).

What is clear from the findings of this chapter is that regardless of where you were raised, the independence part in independent mobility was defined differently for Samoan parents than for parents from other ethnic groups, and brings consideration into the relevance of independent mobility for Samoan children.

## **DISCUSSION**

As the opening proverb states (p. 90), the well-being of the Samoan child is a product of a collective "fit" of 'aiga, culture and society. The Samoan child does not voyage through life alone, and the key to their safe and thriving journey is seen as being mostly due to the social environment around them – in which family and church are very significant. The success of the voyage for Samoan children thus depends on how well these collective elements "fit" to create a social harmony that provides beneficial opportunities for their development. Independent mobility appears to have no or little value in the Samoan culture in terms of providing opportunities for their children to be physically active. IM is therefore not considered an integral part of this collective "fit".

The key informants and parents reported many important elements that influenced Samoan children's safe and thriving voyage through life. These included the importance of instilling the culture in the child, the collective nature of Samoan families, the importance of trust and cohesive relationships, the importance of shared values, safety concerns and protection for the child (particularly girls), and the value of PA despite IM being of little value, and the ability to negotiate two often contrasting worlds. This highlights a complexity of elements that influence children's movement through life, including their movement in their neighbourhood

environment.

The key informants and parents talked to the non-aligned worlds of their Samoan culture and the New Zealand, largely Western, society they live in. They all agreed that both worlds were important to them and their families. It was important for Samoan parents to instil in their child, aspects of the Samoan culture that they valued. It was also important to them that their children had a good education, had the character and skills to successfully navigate through New Zealand society, and opportunities to carve out a fulfilling and rewarding future.

The key informants and parents expressed their views of Samoan parenting in New Zealand, comparing Samoan and Western parenting styles and in particular, their underpinning motives/values. They agreed that, while traditional Samoan parenting is authoritarian and restrictive, operating within a collective framework (Baumrind, 1967), Samoan parents in New Zealand use a parenting style that incorporates traditional Samoan parenting with Western parenting styles.

The difference between the Samoan village and New Zealand neighbourhoods affected day-to-day living for Samoan families. Many participants felt that Samoan culture, such as the Samoan language, was not needed in their everyday working life of and functioning of the family. The commercialism of Western living meant less time spent with family, and more focus on making money and being caught in the 'rat race' (McCallin, et al., 2001). The need to find a balance between what is valued in Samoan culture and Western society was recognised. Maintaining this balance included a sense of duty in instilling the Samoan culture in their children, thus ensuring their child has a solid, cultural identity; maintaining the Samoan indigenous knowledge across generations; and creating a connection across the generations with extended family ties. Some participants noted this meant restricting children's access to environments and people that could contradict the teachings of the Samoan culture. For their children, these restrictions on their interaction with their social and physical surroundings risks impeding their development opportunities, particularly in relation to IM. Children struggled with the pressure of navigating between two worlds and establishing an identity. Decisions made for the benefit of the collective could compromise their individual desires.

Issues around shame and a desire to uphold family/collective identity were discussed. Suaalii-Sauni and Mavoia (2001) discuss 'shame' as a major deterrent for Samoan behaviour and action. As collective beings, 'shame' brings judgement on the collective group as well as the individual. Pressure to be a 'good parent' impacted on Samoan parents' decision making, as

they took care not to attract negative judgements of their parenting, or bring shame on the extended family and family name (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996; Suaalii-Sauni & Mavoa, 2001). The participants reported that the pressure for Samoan parents in New Zealand was greater than in Samoa. This was due to the cultural diversity within New Zealand society, which meant Samoan parents needed to understand the dominant and other non-dominant cultural etiquettes, practices and values systems within New Zealand, as well as social norms of New Zealand society, and decide if these aligned or contradicted their own set of etiquettes, practices, value systems and expected social norms. They then needed to decide which of these they would sustain, accommodate or compromise when interacting with this diversity. Samoan cultural values underpin Samoan parenting, and Samoan parent in New Zealand run the risk of being criticised from a Western perspective. In Samoa, this cultural conflict rarely exists.

Regardless of the barriers challenging the collective nature of Samoan society and shared parenting styles, these factors still play a large role in Samoan children's lives and upbringing in New Zealand. Family and church are hubs for reinforcing and maintaining Samoan culture in the face of contrasting New Zealand systems and social norms. Family and church are institutions that encompass the Samoan culture, traditions and belief systems important to Samoan parents. They represent the safety and cohesiveness necessary for children's IM behaviours within these environments. Although IM is not experienced in these environments, the Key Informants argue that IM benefits (physical, social, and cognitive development) such as physical activity are being achieved through family and church activities.

Children, as 'gifts from God,' need to be protected, nurtured and up-skilled (with Western and Samoan knowledge). The parents and Key Informants noted that independence and play do not align to Samoan cultural values (Leauepepe, 2010); therefore IM is not seen as an important concept (Leauepepe, 2008). IM does not align with values important to Samoans, such as collectivity through 'aiga and church. On the other hand, PA, when achieved through collective activities, does. It is clear from the findings that Samoan culture informs parenting practices in ways that impact their children's IM behaviours.

For the KITC parents, ensuring their Samoan culture was instilled in their children, through the language and practice of Samoan values and traditions, was important. Their duty as a 'good parent' encapsulated their success in doing this. The pressures of being a 'good' Samoan parent in New Zealand weighed heavily for the KITC parents, whose concepts of 'good' parenting were more aligned with Samoan values of 'good' parenting than what is considered



'good' parenting in New Zealand. Samoan values of 'good' parenting often conflicted with New Zealand/Western values of 'good' parenting. Sample 1 KITC parents who were predominantly Samoan-raised, clearly had different parenting practices and underpinning values compared to the Sample 2 parents who were all New Zealand raised.

The Key Informants and Sample 2 parents talked about parents' desire to achieve the "best of both worlds" by adopting the Western world epistemologies, whilst maintaining a strong cultural ontology (Mila-Schaaf, 2009). They acknowledged the importance to their child that the balance between these two worlds is achieved, including by promoting gender equality.

Regardless of where they were raised, the Samoan parents aimed to give their children a better way of life than they had and, as parents and children voyage together, the parents also learn from the children. Critical realism acknowledges: "Children and parents exist in a similar dialectic of intergenerational emergence. As children change, so do parents, [and therefore] there is the gradual transfer towards greater sharing of power and control" (Alderson, 2013, p. 67).

The success of the Samoan child's safe and thriving voyage through life is dependent on how well their cultural, social, spiritual, and physical environments can be synergised and strongly woven together. *'Ua fetaui lelei fola o le 'alia* - the success of the voyage is dependent on how well the deck-planks of the canoe are tightly and accurately woven together.

# CHAPTER 5: SAMOAN PARENTS' NEIGHBOURHOOD PERCEPTIONS

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## INTRODUCTION

*E le falala fua le niu, 'ae falala ona o le matagi*

**The coconut tree doesn't sway on its own, but is swayed by the wind  
(Samoan Proverb)**

This proverb captures the Samoan belief that all things are connected, and Samoans' spiritual connection to the natural environment is based on complex understandings of ecosystems, conservation, biospheres, life cycles, and sustainability (PHARMAC, 2016; Wildermuth, 2012). It also highlights that the *va* extends beyond human interaction (Wildermuth, 2012). The proverb alludes to the intangible force of the *va* that impacts on an individual – a Samoan is not an individual entity but one part of a collective (Suaalii-Sauni & Mavoa, 2001).

This chapter presents the findings of Samoan parents' perceptions of their social and physical surroundings, and the impact on children's IM, which has parallels with the proverb above. Children's interaction with their environment is largely determined by the allowances and restrictions of their parents (Malone, 2007; Zubrick et al., 2010). There is evidence that parents play the role of gatekeepers to their children's activity behaviours, regardless of ethnic background (Hillman, 2006). Parents' perception of their physical and social environment as safe or desirable, impacts positively on their children's independent mobility (IM) and physical activity (PA) (Carver et al., 2005; Thomson, 2009; Zubrick, et al., 2010).

The chapter discusses Samoan parents' perceptions of their neighbourhood and the effects of these perceptions on their children's independent mobility. It begins with how the parents define their neighbourhood. Following this, the social and physical aspects that influence perceptions of neighbourhood as safe, desirable or otherwise are explored. Safety concerns are then discussed as a major determinant of parents' perceptions of, and children's

allowances in, the neighbourhood. Finally, the ways parents perceive their neighbourhood and the places within their neighbourhood, and the implications of these perceptions for their children's independent mobility are discussed.

The data for this chapter are also derived from two data sets:

- In-depth interviews with six Samoan parents (Sample 1) whose children participated in the Kids in the City (KITC) project.
- Qualitative data from Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) with 36 parents of Samoan children who participated in the KITC project.

## FINDINGS

### Neighbourhood

This research is interested in the immediate neighbourhood due to the relationship of children's IM and active transport, and the likelihood of active transport and independent mobility proximal to home and school (Humbert, Chad, & Spink, 2006). It is necessary however, to also understand how Samoan parents defined their neighbourhood and its boundaries.

The participating Samoan parents defined their neighbourhood by their immediate geographical location such as their street/road or a few surrounding streets:

*It's like a street; it's like a little bit the same as a street, that's a neighbourhood. [Sina]*

Though they had significant places that they frequented, these were not within their definition of their neighbourhood. One participant attempts to discuss significant places in her neighbourhood and realises they are not within, but outside of her view, of what a neighbourhood is:

*[Significant] places to me. Church would be... but it's not in my neighbourhood. It's in town. Family houses, church. I'm not really sure. My daughter's preschool. Family homes, but not like in my direct neighbourhood. ...Places in my neighbourhood? ...No. They're all over the*

*place. [Avae]*

While their neighbourhood was the street or streets that physically surrounded their home, significant places were not often within this physically defined neighbourhood. This was consistent with literature where church was a significant place of cohesion for Samoan caregivers though church was usually located well outside the immediate neighbourhood (McCreanor, et al., 2006; Witten, et al., 2009). 'Neighbourhood' therefore is not defined by significant places.

The participants lived in South Auckland. According to Borell (2005), South Auckland is defined "more in its symbolism than geographical boundaries...as a place large in ethnic diversity and a large Polynesian identity" (Borell, 2005, p. 9). For the participating parents, apart from their home, it did not appear that the neighbourhood per se was a significant place of cohesion or interaction; it was not attributed to a unique social meaning or identity other than that ascribed to South Auckland more generally. According to the participating parents, significant places were mostly church and relatives' homes that tended to be located outside of this physically defined boundary called 'neighbourhood'.

### **Social surroundings**

All of the parents talked about the social aspects of their neighbourhood, particularly their neighbours. The following parent preferred the term 'community' rather than 'neighbourhood' because 'community' encapsulated the importance of the people within a geographically defined area:

*I kind of [use] community [in] that kind of sense? Cause we hardly use the word neighbourhood, [it's] community aye. The community here is just around the area with tua'oi, that's neighbours. Pito nu'u is [neighbourhood] in Samoa. So like here, this is [area name], so this is the pito nu'u ...that's in [suburb name]. [Tusi]*

Tusi wove her definition of neighbourhood both in New Zealand and in Samoa. Tua'oi in Samoan can be translated as both 'boundary' and neighbour. Similar to her description of community, Tusi describes the neighbourhood in Samoa as a part of the village. Pito (part of) nu'u (village) is literally translated as 'part of the village,' which in New Zealand is the area she lives in; that is, in the wider suburb:

*...[my] neighbourhood is Polamo Road<sup>17</sup> I should say. 'Cause I don't really know the other people that live in the other area [Sina].*

*...my neighbourhood are surrounded by different people; Maori, Tongan, Samoan, all that; we get along really well. [Mele]*

Like Mele, all the other parents often referred to the people in their neighbourhood by their cultural heritage such as a Maori neighbour, or a Tongan neighbour. For some of the parents, having Samoan or Pacific neighbours brought a familiarity and connection with someone in the neighbourhood. Positive perceptions of the neighbourhood were created through the presence of good neighbours, often established by positive and reciprocal interaction with them over time.

A relationship with neighbours was an important aspect for all the parents, and was essential for feeling safe in their neighbourhood. When the parents were asked what would make their neighbourhood a better place, their answers focused on the people of their neighbourhood and their degree of connection with them:

*The more you know your neighbours, the safer you feel. [Ana]*

*The people. Because to have a good neighbourhood, you need good neighbours. [Mele]*

As social aspects of the neighbourhood created feelings of safety, in turn social aspects of the neighbourhood contributed to safety concerns. People in the neighbourhood who were perceived as bad people, strangers, gangs and bullies, were major contributors to safety concerns for parents in their neighbourhood. Safety concerns restricted the independent mobility allowances for children:

*I never let them [the children] out. Yeah safety issues. It's mainly, our concern, it's them getting a hiding, getting beaten up from someone else or getting picked on by someone that we don't know about. [Avae]*

As safety concerns are such a huge aspect of parents' perceptions of their environment, this

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<sup>17</sup> Fictional street; name changed for anonymity purposes

will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

### **Sense of Neighbourhood Connection**

If a connection with neighbours was important to feeling safe in the neighbourhood, to what extent did the parents connect with their neighbours? Connectivity, a neighbourhood measure in the CATI survey, is defined as a connection or relationship with the people in the neighbourhood, particularly other parents.

All but one parent discussed the degree of connection they had with their neighbours. All of the parents had at least one neighbour in their neighbourhood who they got along with. Most of the parents discussed that the relationship with this neighbour was such where they would keep an eye on each other's house while the other went away. There was an understanding that they looked out for each other's property:

*I've got my neighbours next door. They're very nice people there. So we're sort of looking out for each other, when we go they can keep an eye on our house and we do the same when they go. [Ana]*

Despite this understanding, all but one parent admitted that though they got along with their neighbours, they did not share a deep connection with them. For Samoans, the *va* ('the space between' referring to the social space that relates or connects), that is, relationships (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009), is a key element of Samoan culture that underpins "*communal cultures that value group unity more than individualism, that perceive the individual person or creature, or thing in terms of group, in terms of va or relationships*" (Wendt, 1999; p. 402). A deep connection with neighbours therefore is relationship that encapsulates these Samoan values. The participating parents' description of the relationship with their neighbours did not appear to have a deep connection that was rich in these values:

*...over here in my neighbourhood as Polamo Road<sup>18</sup> I know [my neighbours] by faces but I don't know their real characters. [Ana]*

Mele, the one parent who did speak of a close relationship with her neighbours, described how her neighbourhood in New Zealand imitated her village in Samoa, in that they were both

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<sup>18</sup> Fictional street; name changed for anonymity purposes

defined by the proximity of family, or trusting connections. She expressed that her relationship with her neighbours was similar to a relationship with family, which was a deeper connection than that held by the other parents with their neighbours:

*I use my neighbours as my family. I use my Maori neighbours, and my Samoan neighbours as my family, because that relationship, you have to build a strong relationship with them, to connect your soul with them. They will respect you. [Mele]*

The importance of family is evident in Mele's need to compare the relationship she has with her neighbours with family. There are many important symbolisms in Mele's quote. First, she compares the relationship with her neighbours with the relationship with her family. The family unit is an important element of Samoan's identity (Suaalii-Sauni & Mavoa, 2001). Second, she describes her neighbours by their cultural heritage acknowledging them as people with a historical story, an indigeneity to land, and cultural nuances/beliefs and sets of values. Finally, she further describes what a strong relationship with neighbours is, as a connection of the soul – the most vulnerable part of a person and the very core of their being. In connecting that core of being with neighbours, mutual respect can be built.

For the other parents, there were neighbours they got along with and there were some neighbours with whom they did not. One reason was that neighbours kept to themselves and did not reciprocate any attempt to build a connection/relationship:

*That's a thing here in New Zealand; when we first came to New Zealand we tried to know our neighbours, but most of the time they just come through, so it's just some Samoan people, it's only when you know some island people, some Samoan people. But it's different, there's so many different people, so they're different, you just mind your own business. [Tusi]*

Other parents talked about neighbours who displayed characteristics that they felt were not conducive to an environment for their children, such as swearing or drinking alcohol:

*Sometimes I have concern about these kids [across the road]; at night-time they have parties. They always swear a lot, I can hear it from here ...they*

*argue on the road, but we never open our curtains. We don't want to get involved with them. So we just ring the cops and they come and deal with them." [Ana]*

These characteristics meant that children were forbidden from going near these places without an adult. The parent above who had concerns about young people having parties, confided that these people were one of the concerns she had of letting her son go out in the neighbourhood unsupervised:

*...there's a lot of street kids around, so I hardly let them go 'cause I know it's not safe with all the street kids; just to be on the safe side. [Ana]*

### **Physical Surroundings**

If the social aspects of neighbourhood create a sense of safety or create concern for safety, how does this impact on perceptions of the physical aspect of neighbourhood? The juxtaposed perceptions of the physical and social surroundings of the neighbourhood were explained clearly in Lusi's account of her local park. Though the physical appearance of the park was alluring perhaps to an outside observer, as a longstanding member of the community, she was all too aware of the social aspects that made it unsafe for her children to go there without an adult:

*I know it's such a beautiful scenery and the kids always ask, 'oh mum, dad can we go to the park'. You know, if we didn't know the neighbourhood well, we would say 'yeah go and enjoy the beautiful scenery,' but we know this area, so we're like, 'no, you can't'. [Lusi]*

The dichotomy in perceptions of the physical and social surroundings was shared amongst the parents. There is evidence that parents' fears of potential dangers from strangers in neighbourhood spaces and concerns about road safety restricted children's IM. Whether there were adequate local facilities for children to play was almost immaterial to these concerns (Carver, et al., 2008; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997).

Samoan parents ascribe more importance to the social aspects of neighbourhood than actual location. There is also evidence that this is so for Samoan parents and their sense of belonging to place (McCreanor, et al., 2006). The use of physical environment therefore is dependent on



the social perception of 'place'. This social perception is only privy to residents who as Lusi says above 'know the neighbourhood well,' in contrast to an outsider who would be more likely to judge a place by its aesthetics and functionality (Carroll, et al., 2015).

### Meaning of 'place'

Notwithstanding the attention parents' paid to the people aspects of neighbourhoods, there were physical places in the neighbourhood that the parents found appealing or important to them such as the local park, shops, school and work:

*I guess the only thing we get stuck in here is because its closer to my work, it's just at Cocoa<sup>19</sup> Road, and it's close to the school, but it's good, a good area apart from the street kids [Ana]*

Despite these places being nearby, there were limitations to accessing them. For almost all the children, according to the parents, an adult must supervise them if they were to go to these places. For the parent below, however, the issue was not the place children desired to attend; it was that to get to the destination they had to go through an area that was not considered safe:

*...there's the dairy over there. There's the school. The mall's just over there. The older ones are more attracted to it [but] of course you've got to walk that way [through the park]. So unless we go with them, it's a ['no'], or otherwise we drop them there. [Lusi]*

Understanding place therefore is dependent on the social meaning given to specific areas and locations by its residents. As the parent above mentions, some places have no negative stigma attached, whereas some do. Knowing these social meanings is essential to understanding how residents interact with these places, and why.

With physical places in the neighbourhood having different social stigma, all of the parents confessed that their preference was that their children stayed home. Because of that, all of the children mostly played in the front/backyard with their siblings. Playing in the front/backyard was encouraged by parents as a way to keep children active and engaged, while in the safety

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<sup>19</sup> Fictional street; name changed for anonymity purposes

net of their home:

*...they run amuck in the house. Their dad put up a basketball ring for them outside, a basketball hoop. And a punching bag and the boxing bag in the garage for the little ones, for the boys. Just to keep them active at home. [Lusi]*

However, for Ana, limited front/backyard space restricted her children to playing out in the front/backyard independently:

*...that's the only thing, there's not enough space for them to play; they're now grown up, they can't fit, there's little space. [Tusi]*

Unfortunately, due to a lack of independent mobility, her children also had a lack of physical activity opportunities. Her preference, like the other parents, was for them to stay at home but because of limited front/backyard space, this meant they were confined to staying indoors:

*...sometimes when they come home from school, I want them to watch TV. Or doing some homework and that, and next time, it was just the eldest, the two older ones, but the little ones, Lydia and Christian, they are the ones that missed out, 'cause they want to go out and run around, but so long as they're here, then yeah. [Tusi]*

Some of the children were allowed to play in the street under the prerequisite that they were visible from the house. This meant there were some opportunities for independent mobility, but also more opportunities for physical activity:

*...[it's] alright for him to go around on his bike around the front here, but we always keep our eyes on him. Just in front here. We always have to see him whenever he goes out there. [Ana]*

Three parents reported one place that their children were allowed to go independently - one parent allowed their child to go to the park and the other two allowed their children to go to school independently. Though independent, these children travelled with their siblings; they were not allowed to travel alone. Travelling with a sibling was a determinant for children's

independent movement. Parents reported none of the children travelled alone, or with friends:

*My kids, if they're going out they're going out together. [Tusi]*

Other than for compulsory or purposeful trips such as to school or sports practice, children's movement in the neighbourhood was mostly determined by parents' ability to supervise their children's travel or play in the neighbourhood. Therefore, children's movement in their neighbourhood was determined by the availability and willingness of their parents:

*There should be somebody to watch them. [Mele]*

*I won't let my kids go there to that park. Only when we are free, then we will go altogether to a park, with them, together. [Sina]*

The park was a place to go as a family so that children could play or to play games/sport as a family. For all but one parent, children were not allowed to go to the park unsupervised:

*...during summer we always go to the park to play touch. So, that's how I met with my husband, through volleyball games ...we like sports [Ana]*

What was clear was that proximity of place was positively attached to where children were allowed to go, if safety was not an issue. Proximity and supervision appear to be the key elements for children's utilisation of neighbourhood places:

*I like [it] here 'cause it's close to the school. [Ana]*

*We need a park where we can see them playing from [home]. [Tusi]*

One parent allowed her children to move about the neighbourhood independently, but this was only to the park down the road and for a specific purpose. As seen in the following quotes proximity and safety in numbers were important considerations in the license given for her child's independent travel to the local park:

*When they do go, it's to their training on the main field out on Mana*

*Park<sup>20</sup>. So that's as far as they go...for the training, for the club and for the school. But as far as going out for other things, nah. I never let them out.*  
*[Avae]*

Proximity was especially an issue for Avae in that school, an important place for her children, was not nearby and so her children could not walk there, even if there was safety in numbers. When her mother was in her old home, her children would walk to school with their cousins (more numbers for safety) as they lived close to both. Now they taxied to school:

*No the kids taxi to school, 'cause it's a bit far now. [Avae]*

## **Safety**

All of the parents had concerns about their child's safety in their neighbourhood. These concerns were mostly fears of bad people in the form of strangers, gangs, people who drink and party, and bullies:

*...because of the people, you never know that man or that lady walking by, if she's good or not. Because nowadays, 'cause the man can do it, the lady can do it, the teenagers, [anyone]. [Tusi]*

Parents' safety concerns affected where they let their child go independently in the neighbourhood, if at all.

For most of the parents, familiarity with their area was a large component of feeling safe. All of the parents had lived in their home for many years, and had become familiar with the area and most of the people. Safety concerns arose when they ventured beyond the familiarity of local places and people. The following quotes revealed parents' knowledge of their area and the people within it, even the local gang:

*We've been here for quite a while now. So we pretty much know everybody and everyone knows us. I think it's just the fear of letting them go out of the neighbourhood, that's when you fear for your kids. I worry when they have to go walk to school. We've had a few incidents with some hoodlums that walk around drinking. [Lusi]*

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<sup>20</sup> Fictional park; name changed for anonymity purposes

*We been here, 15 years, we don't have an issue about, it's just that, I know that there is a Black Power<sup>21</sup> place around here. It's all right, it's nothing. I don't have a big concern about it...the Black Power across the roads, they're good people. Except for the kids, the young ones, it's ah, sometimes they're noisy around here. [Ana]*

There were specific areas in the neighbourhood children were forbidden to go unless accompanied by an adult:

*...it's not safe – the neighbourhood, on the road, and this [house] behind here [Sina].*

The following section discusses specific neighbourhood places of concern in more detail, and the implications of the social and/or physical aspects of neighbourhood that cause their concern.

### Safety concerns: Places in the neighbourhood

In the CATI survey, parents were asked about specific places in their neighbourhood where they had concerns letting their child go alone (Table 17) and the reasons for their concern (Table 18).

Across all ethnic groups in the survey, pools, parks, reserves or fields were the most commonly noted neighbourhood places where parents had concerns letting their child go alone, followed by 'everywhere' in the neighbourhood. Similarly, parents of Samoan children were more concerned about letting their children go to the park, reserve or field alone than any other places in their neighbourhood. Likewise, 'everywhere' in the neighbourhood was the next highest concern.

Parents of Samoan children were least likely to report specific streets, main roads and 'places that were too far' as places of concern. Parents of Samoan children were the only ethnic group to view party places as a place for concern. Parents of Pacific Island children (including Samoan children), were the only ethnic groups to express that there was 'nowhere' in their neighbourhood that they were concerned about letting their children go alone. Three parents

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<sup>21</sup> 'Black Power' is the name of a gang.

of Samoan children reported 'nowhere' was a place of concern for their child to go alone.

**Table 17: Neighbourhood places where Samoan parents feel concerned for their child's safety**

	<b>Samoan</b>
<b>Main Road</b>	1
<b>Specific street(s)</b>	1
<b>Walkway/Alleyway/Remote street</b>	2
<b>Any place too far</b>	1
<b>Park, reserve or field</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Water - creek/pond/wharf/ beach/jetty</b>	4
<b>Shops/mall/town centre</b>	5
<b>Specific building</b>	2
<b>Party place</b>	2
<b>Everywhere</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Nowhere</b>	3

Total Samoan parents n=36

Totals do not sum up to n=36 because respondents can give multiple answers or refuse to answer.

The two most common responses are in bold font.

### Safety concerns: Reasons for concern

The CATI results revealed that 'people danger' was the most common reason parents had concern about letting their children go to neighbourhood places alone.

Half the safety concerns for these parents were because of 'people danger.' This is consistent with the interview data presented earlier that people-related concerns influenced perceptions of neighbourhood places as safe or not.

Concerns and/or observations frequently reported by parents of other ethnic groups that were not often reported by Samoan parents included vandalism/graffiti/broken glass/roaming dogs, water danger, or 'not a place for children'. Traffic danger and children's behaviour/maturity levels were also seldom reported as a concern by Samoan parents. Physical aspects of the neighbourhood were therefore less of a concern for parents than the social aspects.

It is notable that when children going alone to water places such as the creek, pond, wharf, beach or jetty were mentioned, the parents' concern was not water danger like drowning or mud as indicated by parents of other ethnic groups, but people danger such as youth drinking or hanging around these water places.

Despite the concerns listed, only one Samoan parent reported that the neighbourhood was not a good place for children and none reported that their neighbourhood was a place that disengaged children or lacked the facilities for children. Safety concerns were clearly due to perceptions of unsavoury people in the neighbourhood and, if their children were supervised in their play or travel, these unsavoury characters were not a bad enough problem to claim that the neighbourhood was not a place for children. It was probably one of the reasons why supervision was considered essential by Samoan parents. This was supported by findings that lack of visibility in public spaces was a concern to parents.

**Table 18: Samoan Parents' reasons for concern in their children's independent movement in the neighbourhood**

	<b>Samoan</b>
<b>Safety Concern (unspecified)</b>	<b>10</b>
Traffic danger	2
<b>People danger (stranger, gangster, drunkard, youngster, bullies)</b>	<b>18</b>
Water danger (drowning, mud)	1
Lack of visibility/secluded	4
<b>Not a place for children</b>	1
Vandalism/graffiti/broken glass/roaming dog	1
<b>Child's behaviour (carelessness)/maturity levels</b>	2

Total Samoan parents n=36

Totals do not sum up to n=36 because respondents can give multiple answers or refuse to answer.

The two most common responses are in bold font.

## What would make the neighbourhood a better place for children’s IM?

In the CATI survey, parents were asked what they believed would make their neighbourhood a better place. The most common response for all ethnic groups combined was traffic related issues, and reducing the presence of unsavoury characters second.

**Table 19: Samoan Parent’s solution for a better neighbourhood**

What would make the neighbourhood a better place	Samoan
Nothing	2
Policy restrictions e.g. Alcohol store restrictions/ Alcohol/Loitering bans	1
<b>Reduce presence of unsavoury characters</b>	<b>11</b>
Traffic related – reduce traffic, more lights	2
Aesthetics/Infrastructure – better pavements, fix buildings, less trees, better facilities etc.	3
Policing/Neighbourhood Watch/CCTV	4
Social Cohesion – knowing neighbours better/ trusting neighbours/good people/meet and greet neighbours	4
Dog controls and policy enforcement	1
Supervision of child	4
<b>Safer (Unspecified)</b>	1

Total Samoan parents n=36

Totals do not sum up to n=36 because respondents can give multiple answers or refuse to answer.

The two most common responses are in bold font.



For the Samoan parents, reducing the presence of unsavoury characters was the most reported solution to making their neighbourhood a better place. As reported in the table above, better surveillance by police, neighbourhood watch or CCTV; having a more socially cohesive neighbourhood (the degree of connection with neighbours); and supervising children would be other ways to make their neighbourhood a better place.

The latter response that more supervision of their child was a solution to make their neighbourhood a better place, further endorses the view that supervision was a prerequisite to their child moving about the neighbourhood. One mother responded that *'it's only okay if she goes with her daughter - nothing would make it okay for her to go alone'* (Samoan parent, CATI interview). Surveillance was an important mechanism so that children could interact with their environment.

Understanding how these perceptions and observations affected parents' as gatekeepers for their children's IM in the neighbourhood is important. Carver (2008) concludes that "perceptions of risk of ...'stranger danger' and consequential behavioural constraints should be examined in relation to children's physical activity in the neighbourhood" (Carver, et al., 2008; p. 224).

## **DISCUSSION**

The opening proverb (p. 129) is useful for understanding how Samoan parents' neighbourhood perceptions reflect and are embedded within the wider family, social and physical environment. Samoan parents' perceptions of their surrounding environment influence the allowances they give their child to utilise/interact with the people and places of the neighbourhood, and in turn their children's activity behaviours. The proverb also acknowledges the interconnection of the Samoan self as holistic (encapsulating many important elements and dimensions) (Pulotu-Endemann, et al., 2007), and the immersion of the Samoan person within the collective group.

There is overwhelming evidence for the role that parents play as mediators of their children's activity behaviours in the neighbourhood (Crawford, et al., 2015; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997; Zubrick, et al., 2010). It is necessary to understand parents' perceptions of their social and physical surrounding to unpack the reasons behind their decision-making on their

children's license to be independently mobile (or not) (Crawford, et al., 2015). The findings from this chapter provide evidence that the social aspects of neighbourhood are pivotal to the decisions made by Samoan parents; the social aspects of the neighbourhood give meaning to place – both positive and negative.

'Neighbourhood' for the parents was geographically defined with its borders determined by the proximity, as well as the familiarity, of place. This is important for understanding the confines of parents' meaning making. Places acquired social meanings, which in turn coloured parents' decision-making around where they would allow their children to go unsupervised.

For the participating Samoan parents, social meanings of place derived from the people in their neighbourhood, and the relationships, or lack thereof, existing between them. McCreanor et al. (2006) found similarly that sense of belonging to place for Samoan caregivers was established through "a strong sense of familial and cultural connections...(family and friends often from a church context)...that constitute community with less emphasis on the significance of actual location" (McCreanor, et al., 2006, p.205).

A limited or poor relationship with people in the neighbourhood commonly arose through a lack of familiarity with others, or through observing disagreeable characteristics such as drinking, swearing, partying and fighting.

Limited or poor relationships with neighbourhood people resulted in parents' concern for their child's safety in neighbourhood spaces and places. Safety concerns were the major barrier for the KITC children's independent mobility in their neighbourhood. This is consistent with findings reported in the international literature (Crawford, et al., 2015; Karsten, 2005; Zubrick, et al., 2010). However for Samoan parents, people-related safety concerns were more common than those relating to traffic, a significant point of difference with the larger KITC CATI parent group. People-related concerns imbued places with an aura of fear and caution and children were forbidden to go alone to these neighbourhood places. For example, drowning or water-related danger in places like the local creek, the estuary or wharf, which were prominent features of two of the six neighbourhoods, were secondary to concerns about strangers or young people who may hang out there.

Most of the participating parents did not have a relationship with people in their neighbourhood that created a sense of their neighbourhood as a suitable setting for their children's independent mobility. Supervision of their children was therefore the best

immediate solution. The participating parents expressed a desire for more cordial relationships with their neighbours and a more socially cohesive neighbourhood. It was reasoned that these attributes would not only make the neighbourhood a better place, but also counteract the negative aspects of their neighbourhood.

How do social aspects give meaning to place? Understanding the ontology for Samoan culture and also for the Samoan diaspora is important in understanding their perception of their built environment/neighbourhood, and also their experiences and utilisation of it.

Many of the participating parents and key informants discussed the subsistence living of Samoan people in Samoa and their deep connection to land. One parent discussed the Samoan word for land, *'fanua'*, which is also the word for placenta. The practice of burying the baby's placenta in the land was an example of connection to land. The placenta, which provided sustenance for the growing foetus, was returned to the land, which would also provide sustenance to the growing baby. Land in Samoa is connected to many generations who have lived and tended the land. Therefore, it is not just the land, but also the meaning of the land that is inherited. In Samoa, loved ones are buried on their *'aiga/family's* land, returning to the land from which they came<sup>22</sup>. How this connection to land affects Samoans in New Zealand is still unknown.

The participating Samoan-born parents talked about a strong connection to Samoa, their homeland, and talked about being in New Zealand as visitors or foreigners. For them, there is no direct connection to land in New Zealand that mirrors the connection to land experienced by Samoans in Samoa. In the previous chapter, New Zealand-born parents talked about a strong connection to the place (described by suburb) they were brought up in. This was strong despite their residence being elsewhere, and despite their time away. This connection to place appears to be based on familiarity that is built from a very young age, regardless of place/country of birth.

As Samoans do in Samoa, migrant Samoans are creating their own meaningful connection to places in New Zealand. Migrant Samoans see coming to New Zealand as an opportunity to create new stories for themselves and their family as an inheritance for their children and generations to follow. Many of the parents in this chapter, and the previous finding chapter, reported that they wanted a better future for their children, just as their parents had wanted

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<sup>22</sup> Christian biblical principle of the flesh/body returning to the land after death. *'All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.'* Ecclesiastes 3:20. See also Psalms 146:4 and Ecclesiastes 12:7.

for them. It appears that children's independent mobility is not part of the Samoan narrative that parents wish to create in New Zealand. In contrast, IM appears to contradict what is of value for Samoan families:

- strong family bonds;
- Samoan culture that emphasises the collective over the individual;
- strong Samoan values including faith in God;
- education as a means to a prosperous future; and
- health and wellbeing achieved through a balance of the dimensions outlined in the fonofale model (Pulotu-Endemann, et al., 2007).

Since their arrival in New Zealand, Samoans have created their own, new stories in their new land. The parents acknowledged Maori as tangata whenua (people of the land), and also acknowledged their own place as visitors. For Samoans in New Zealand, social meaning attached to place/location appears more important than the actual location of land itself. Thus meaning is produced by experiences with other people. According to Samoan parents, their children's experience with place and people in New Zealand is limited to family and church. In light of parents' desire for supervision, concerns for their child's safety, and parenting stigma, it appears the best way for Samoan children to create positive meaning to the places in their neighbourhood is to do this with their family. Reducing safety concerns through removing unsavoury characters, as well as increasing social cohesion with neighbours, is a great start. Addressing media stereotypes and political effects will also minimise the parenting stigma identified by Samoan parents. The limited opportunities Samoan children have to interact with their neighbourhood environment suggest it could take a very long time to build the needed familiarity and affective sense of place if these issues are not addressed.

Understanding inherited structures in Samoan culture, e.g. connection to land, can provide insight into the utilisation and value of place for Samoans in New Zealand – and that the coconut tree doesn't sway on its own, but is swayed by the wind. *'E le falala fua le niu, 'ae falala ona o le matagi'.*

# CHAPTER 6: SAMOAN CHILDREN'S IM AND PA

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## INTRODUCTION

*Ua usiusi-fa'ava'asavili*

**To obey like a canoe before the wind  
(Samoan proverb)**

In the previous chapters, Samoan perceptions of parenting and Samoan parents' perceptions of their neighbourhoods were discussed in relation to their influence on Samoan children's IM and PA. Traditional understandings of PA are as a necessity of everyday subsistence living in Samoa. It is clear however, that IM as part of play has little value in the Samoan culture, both traditionally and in New Zealand. PA however is valued, and is seen as a collective good rather than an individual benefit. PA is a medium through which to encourage family and church gatherings and social bonding. It is also seen as a way to address the high obesity rates that are stereotyped in the Pacific population, and as something that can be done by families or churches. In addition, the key informants found sport to be a lucrative prospect for young, promising Pacific children in New Zealand, and something particularly encouraged by parents as a means of financial gain for the family.

PA is essential for optimal physical and psychological health (Lee, et al., 2012) and children need 60 minutes of moderate activity for most, if not every day of the week (Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), 2003). PA levels for Pacific children in New Zealand have increased and this is mostly due to PA measures incorporating incidental and informal activities such as play or walking (which Pacific children have high rates of), instead of only rates of participation in sport (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2011). IM (outdoor play and travelling to destinations unsupervised) contributes to higher levels of PA in childhood and is also important for children's overall cognitive and social development (Proshanky & Fabian, 1987; Shaw, et al., 2015). IM has also declined radically in recent decades (Shaw, et al., 2015). Research reveals children prefer independent and active transport,

particularly in their travel to and from school (Mitchell, Kearns, & Collins, 2007). The Kids in the City study combined “spatial and social aspects of children’s lives to understand how urban environments impact on the wellbeing of the children who live in them” (SHORE & Whariki Research Centre, 2017, p. 1). IM and PA are two key, but not exclusive, measures in the project.

Pacific children are least likely to be transported to and from school compared to the national average (Ministry of Health, 2003b). Pacific children are more likely to walk or bike to school (Ministry of Health, 2003b). They have high levels of incidental PA, rather than through organised participation in leisure and sport (as is shown in national sport and PA surveys – SPARC, 1997/98, 1998/99, and 2000/01) (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2011). Little is known however, about Samoan children’s IM apart from their contribution to the wider Pacific cohort (although they contribute almost half (48.7%), of the Pacific population in New Zealand) (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). This chapter contributes more evidence specific to Samoan children.

The importance of children’s participation in reporting and collecting data on their activity behaviours is well documented (Oliver, et al., 2011). The chapter begins by examining the movement of the canoe (children’s movement) as it is blown by the wind (parents’ decisions about where in their neighbourhood their children can go unsupervised). This chapter explores this through a 7-day travel diary completed by 37 Samoan children. Secondly, two examples will follow two of the Samoan children’s movements in their neighbourhood and their parents’ views on this. The two examples will allow an examination of the relationship between the wind (parents’ decision-making) and the canoe (children’s movement). Finally, follow up interviews were conducted with eight of the participating parents a year and a half after their initial KITC interview. Parents’ attitudes towards their child’s IM in this new context are examined. This chapter presents the follow up data for these eight participating Samoan parents about where they allow their children to go unsupervised – a year and a half on.

The data for this chapter are derived from:

- Self-reported travel diaries completed by 37 Samoan children who participated in the KITC project over a 7-day period.
- Two examples using data from KITC go-along interviews, travel diaries, and parent interviews.

- Follow up interviews with eight Samoan parents who had been interviewed a year and a half prior.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Samoan Children's IM & PA: Self-Reported Travel Diaries**

The following section details Samoan children's movement via 'trips' – travel from origin to destination (Oliver et al., 2014) over a seven-day period. The travel diaries data is presented through three themes: 1) Who with: supervised and independent trips; 2) How: active and non-active transport; and 3) Where: school, and other significant places.

In this research, active transport included walking, biking, and using a scooter or skateboard. Non-active transport consisted of travel using a car. Public transport was considered a form of active transport as it usually involves PA to arrive at the public transport place of departure and then when the public transport destination is reached, more PA is required to arrive at the final destination (Schoeppe, et al., 2015).

Supervised trips are defined as trips where an adult accompanies the child; independent trips are children's trips without adult accompaniment and could include trips with peers (friends, siblings or cousins) (Shaw, et al., 2015).

## Who with: Supervised and independent trips

**Table 20: Independent and supervised trips for Samoan children over a 7-day period (n)**

Trip Type	All trips (Active and Inactive)	Active		Non-active
		Independent	Supervised	
All destinations 7 days	1101	344	91	666
All destinations (weekdays)	828	312	73	443
All destinations (weekends)	273	32	18	223
School only (to)	180	71	13	96
School only (from)	189	97	21	71

Children were more likely to be supervised when travelling to destinations, with less than a third of their trips being independent (Table 20). This is consistent with current literature (Crawford, et al., 2015; Schoeppe et al., 2015; Shaw, et al., 2015). It is hard to conclude whether this is a high or low level for children’s IM as there is not an agreed optimal level in the current children’s IM literature. Shaw et al (2015) agrees in their international comparative study of children’s IM, that there is no evidence of an adequate children’s IM level and concludes in their research that:

...it is striking that the concept of IM is not either a focus of many interventions or a major concern of policy-makers. Even where it is explicitly referred to little consideration is given to the question of what an appropriate level of children’s IM might be or the scale of intervention that would be required to enable a chosen level to be achieved. (Shaw, et al., 2015, p. 63)

According to Schoeppe (2015), children’s IM in Australia declined between 1991 and 2012. Current children’s IM levels indicates Australian children travelling to (31%) and from school (32%) independently almost a third of the time (Schoeppe, et al., 2015), while Swedish children walk to school unsupervised almost half the time (46%) (Shaw, et al., 2015). IM levels of



children in NZ are low (Carroll, et al., 2015; Oliver, et al., 2014) but similarly, there is no overall percentage to compare whether rates of IM for the participating Samoan children are high or low in comparison. With some comparison with the literature provided, Samoan children's IM, which is a third of their *total* trips, is low. Current KITC research provides evidence that Pacific children have higher IM levels than other ethnic groups (Carroll, Asiasiga, Tava'e, & Witten, 2013). Emerging KITC research shows Samoan children having higher IM levels than their counterparts of other ethnic groups. Optimum levels of IM are still needed however to ascertain whether these IM levels for Samoan children are sufficient.

There is stark difference in the Samoan children's independent trips over the week compared with the weekend. Nine out of ten independent trips made by Samoan children were made during the school week. That means that 1 out of 10 independent trips were made during the weekend. Samoan children were mostly supervised in their travel and movement over the weekend. Over the weekend, the children's supervised trips were more than 4 times their independent trips. Trips during the school week included the school commute, which could explain higher levels of children's IM during the school week than over the weekend.

When making independent trips, children were more likely to travel alone than with siblings, friends or both (see Table 23). This conflicts with parents' statements in previous chapters, where they reported that travelling with siblings was a prerequisite for children's IM. What is surprising from these findings is the large proportion of trips children made alone in the context of Samoan parents' concern for their child's safety due to bad people in the neighbourhood.

A few children had reported being alone more than what was accounted for in active trips. Further examination revealed that these children had recorded in their travel diaries that they were alone when travelling in a car. From an adult perspective, this is impossible, as a child cannot drive themselves to places. What may contribute to this is how children defined being alone; for example, a child may perceive that they are alone when they are not included in a conversation or dialogue with someone, or when they are the only child in the car. Though this was easy to capture due to the transport mode used (as children cannot travel in a car alone), the effect of their interpretation of being alone cannot be measured when using active transport. If children's perception of alone is as defined above, this may influence their recordings of their perceived active independent trips that were perhaps instead active, supervised trips. Children's perception of what alone means therefore, needs further investigation as it may vary with context.

From the findings, active transport is an indicator of IM when unsupervised as supported by current literature (Shaw, et al., 2015). How children travel is examined in the next section.

### How: Active and non-active transport

Samoan children were more likely to use non-active transport/car use than any other mode of travel (see table 21). This is consistent with literature which claims that the use of a personal vehicle affects children’s opportunities for walking - an excellent source of incidental PA for children, and a key component for active transport (Fyhri, et al., 2011). Despite high levels of car use, if children were to use active travel, they were most likely to walk. Samoan children walked to a third of their destinations. If using active travel, Samoan children walked in four out of five active trips. The other 20% of active trips were a mix of bike or scooter use, or running.

**Table 21: Transport type children used over 7 days as recorded in their travel diaries**

<b>Active Transport</b>	Walk	357
	Bike	49
	Run	16
	Bus/train	9
	Skateboard/Scooter	4
	<b>Total Active transport</b>	<b>435</b>
<b>Non-Active Transport</b>	Car	666
	<b>Total non-active transport</b>	<b>666</b>

\*Total trips n=1101

Across the seven days, the travel diaries showed considerable difference between how much active travel occurred during the week, compared with the weekend. During the school week, the difference between active and non-active transport was relatively insignificant. Samoan children made almost equal amounts of active and non-active trips. However, on the weekend there were significant differences, in the rate of non-active trips more than four times that of active trips. The difference in transport type over the school week with the weekend was consistent with findings from the KITC project that surveyed children of numerous ethnicities. KITC concluded that active travel use was considerably higher during the week than on the

weekend because of the large contribution of school commutes (Oliver, et al., 2015). This could also explain the difference in Samoan children's use of active and non-active transport use over the course of the week (see table 20).

For most families, the weekend was the ideal time to enjoy family time, and to participate in activities like visiting extended family, church, sport, other leisure activities, or shopping. For Samoan families, family and church activities are important in nurturing and implementing belief systems and principles (Macpherson, 2012), while maintaining and nurturing relationships (Airini, Anae, & Mila-Schaaf, 2010). During the weekend, supervised activities with family were dominant.

The findings thus far show similarities in children's independent and active travel through the week, and suggest a correlation between the two factors. Children's independent trips contributed nearly a third of their overall trips, with the majority of independent trips made during the school week. Similarly, active travel was used for more than a third of children's total trips, with active travel mostly made during the school week. An analysis of children's school trips and their contribution to their overall movement is discussed in the next section.

## Where: School and other significant places

### *Trips to and from school*

Children's trips to and from school made up a third of total trips over a 7-day period, and almost half of the total trips during the school week (5 day period) (see table 20). This is also consistent with current literature (Fyhri, et al., 2011; Oliver, et al., 2015; Shaw, et al., 2015).

Samoan children were more likely to use active transport and be independent in their trips *from* school as opposed to trips *to* school. Travelling to school, there was very little difference in children's use of active travel and their use of non-active travel, whereas travelling from school, children used active travel almost two-thirds more than non-active travel. The difference in travel to and from school may be related to 'trip chaining' (Oliver, et al., 2014) where children were dropped to school by parents/caregivers on their way to work (Fyhri, et al., 2011). However, traditional 9am-5pm working hours do not allow parents to trip chain after school, so children must use alternative ways of getting home, such as walking. This explanation is plausible as trips *to* school were mostly supervised whereas trips *from* school were mostly independent.

These findings thus far provide a strong link between IM and active transport as evident in the high IM and active transport use in children's trips *from* school. This is also evidenced in current literature (Fyhri, et al., 2011; Shaw, et al., 2015).

### *Other significant places*

This research categorised 'shops' as places like takeaways, dairy, malls and specifically named places such as McDonalds, Bunnings, Kmart, Countdown or Pak'n'Save.

The top four places children travelled to were the shops, school, relatives, and church (see Table 22). Other places were predominantly trips home from a destination, with few trips made to places that were not frequent enough to make their own category such as the doctors or a suburb name.

Frequent trips to the shops were not surprising as this is consistent with current literature in children's movement in their neighbourhood (Carroll, et al., 2015; Shaw, et al., 2015).

High levels of trips to relatives' houses are not so commonly mentioned in literature. This regular interaction with family reinforces the important role that family play in Samoan children and their families' lives (Anae, 2010). Similarly, the number of trips to church also shows the important role of the church in Samoan children and their families' lives (Macpherson, 2012).

### Places: Independent trips

The top four places children travelled to independently were school, the shops, around the street, and friends' houses. Trips to the park, field or reserve and to relative's homes were also places where children went independently. Trips around the street, friends' houses, and the park/field/reserve, though not places they frequented often, were places that they travelled to independently.

Children travelled independently to different places than when they were supervised, and supervised trips were more frequent than independent trips. This difference perhaps shows the importance of relatives and church for the family unit where they travelled to together so there were no independent trips made to church and few independent trips to relatives' homes.

**Table 22: Samoan children’s independent and active trips to varying destinations**

Trip Type	All trips (Active and Inactive)	Active		Non-active
Shop	202	47	14	141
Relatives home	93	19	3	71
Church	53	0	2	51
Parks	41	21	7	13
Around the street	32	25	7	-
Friend’s house	31	25	2	4

### Gender differences

There were differences in IM and active transport between the participating Samoan boys and girls (see Table 23). Boys were more likely to make active and independent trips than girls. In their independent trips, boys were more likely to travel alone than with siblings or friends or both. In fact, half of the Samoan boys’ independent trips were made alone. Girls on the other hand, were almost equally likely to make independent trips alone or with their siblings than they would with friends.

**Table 23: Active independent trips and accompaniment for Samoan boys and girls**

Trip Type	All active independent trips	Alone	Friends	Siblings	Both friends and siblings
Active independent boys	221	117	34	58	12
Active independent girls	123	55	10	50	8
Total active independent trip accompaniment	344	172	44	108	20

Boys were more independent in their trips and more likely to travel alone than girls the same age. This supports current literature that boys are permitted more freedom and licence to move about their neighbourhood independently than girls the same age (Fyhri, et al., 2011). This is also consistent with the findings in previous chapters on the different gender roles and expectations of Samoan boys and girls, where Samoan boys are permitted more freedom from these expectations compared with the strict confinement of girls (Macpherson, 2012).

## Examples

The following section presents examples of two children with different IM levels: one child who experienced higher IM than the other one with limited IM.

The following data was gathered from: 1) children's travel diaries; 2) children's go-along interviews (described in the 'Kids in the City' section); and 3) parent interviews.

### Example 1: loane

loane was 10 years old when he participated in the Kids in the City project and lived in Neighbourhood one. He had four older siblings aged 15 years old and over at the time of data collection.

loane was very confident moving around his neighbourhood and proudly professed his ability to go anywhere:

Interviewer: Where do you like to go?

*loane: Around the street.*

Interviewer: Where are you allowed to go by yourself?

*loane: Anywhere.*

Interviewer: Where do you usually go in your neighbourhood?

*loane: I pretty much just go anywhere. Just ride around the street.*

loane spoke about his knowledge of the local gangs, and how that knowledge provided him safety in his neighbourhood:

Interviewer: Are there places that make you feel like scared or bad or sad?

*loane: No, because I know the gangs around here.*

Interviewer: ...so what is the best thing about living in your neighbourhood?

*loane: Oh, I've got friends and the gangs that protect us.*

Interviewer: Who do they protect you against?

*loane: The gangs that we don't like.*

loane rode his bike around the streets, and would sometimes go to his friends' houses. He particularly enjoyed playing with his friends and often mentioned them in his interview about where he went and who he went with. Almost all the places he spoke of going to in his neighbourhood, he went with his friends:

Interviewer: So what places do you like to go?

*loane: Oh, around the streets.*

Interviewer: What's your favourite place to go in the neighbourhood?

*loane: Oh I don't know, [the] park.*

Interviewer: Oh yeah, and why do you like going to the park?

*loane: 'Cause I want to play rugby there.*

Interviewer: Who do you play with?

*loane: My friends.*

Interviewer: What do you do in the weekends?

*loane: I go over to my friend's house, play Playstation, or play in the backyard.*

Interviewer: And do your friends live close?

*loane: Yeah some friends live close, some friends live far. But not that far from here.*

loane's travel diary over a seven-day period reflected his independence particularly during the school week. He was alone in one out of four trips, and almost one out of six trips were made with a friend/s.

Please tell us about the trips you went on:

	Where did you go?	What time?	How did you get there? (tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )						Other (please write):	Who did you go with? (tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )				
			Walk	Bike	Scooter	Board	Car	Bus/Train		I was by myself	Parent/adult	My friends	Brother/sister	Other (please write):
After school and before going to bed														
1 After school?	Walked to my mums work	2:47	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2 After that?	went shopping	4:03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3 After that?	went name	4:40	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 After that?	I rode my bike	4:50	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Before school this morning														
5 I went straight to school?	<input type="checkbox"/>													
6 I went somewhere before school?	shop	8:25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
How did you get to school this morning?	School	8:30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Figure 4: A snapshot of loane’s travel diary that shows his independent and supervised trips

loane’s IM levels reflected his use of active transport. All his independent trips were active trips, with none of his supervised trips being active.

His independent trips reflected the locations he went to in his neighbourhood: school, the shops, around his street, and home. All of these trips were made during the school week, and mostly after school. He walked to his mother’s work after school, which was close to their home. Before school, he walked to the shops and then to school. This reflects current evidence that children are more active and independently mobile during the week than on the weekend, and after school more than before (Fyhri, et al., 2011; Shaw, et al., 2015). The literature puts this down to trip chains where parents dropped off their children at school on the way to work (but could not pick them up due to work hours) (Oliver, et al., 2014), as well as the weekend providing opportunities for activities including family time/events, sport, festivities (Shaw, et al., 2015), and for Pacific Islanders, church.

Occasionally loane was driven to school. Every time an adult accompanied him as he was in a car.



**Table 24: Destinations for loane’s independent trips over a seven-day period**

<b>Destination</b>	<b>Number of trips</b>
<b>School</b>	4
<b>Shops</b>	2
<b>Mum’s work (from school)</b>	5
<b>Around the street</b>	2
<b>Home</b>	1
<b>Total</b>	14

I interviewed loane’s mother almost a year and a half after his participation in the KITC research project in which he had completed the travel diaries and participated in the go-along interview. During this time, loane was no longer in primary school but attending intermediate.

loane’s mother was adamant that she did not allow loane to go anywhere unsupervised, that he had to be supervised at all times. She talked about loane always having to be seen by his family, which meant he had to travel to destinations like the shop with his older siblings or either parent. She said he was allowed to ride his bike in the street in front of their house, so long as he was visible from the house (the kitchen or living room window which faced the street):

*[It’s] all right for him to go around on his bike around the front here, but we always keep our eyes on him. Just in front here ...We always have to see him. We always have to see him whenever he goes out there. ‘Cause there’s a lot of street kids around here. The Black Power [name of a prominent gang] across the roads, they[‘re] good people. Except for the kids, the young ones, sometimes they noisy around here. [Ana]*

On some occasions, loane’s perceived independent trips around the street and at the park could be explained by his mum’s allowance for him to ride on the street where he was visible

from home, or to let him play at the park while they are playing family sport. There were discrepancies however in loane's recorded independent trips compared to his mother's account, such as his independent travel to her work after school, his trips alone to school, or his trips to the shop with his friends. A possible explanation could be his mother's fear of being judged as a "bad" parent. Samoan parents in New Zealand feel under pressure from mainstream society because of their different value system (Esera, 2001; Ministry of Education, 2001), as reported in previous chapters.

Despite discrepancies around loane's independent travel, there were no discrepancies around his PA opportunities through family activities. loane's family regularly played volleyball down at a nearby park often with extended family. loane's mother spoke of her and her husband's love of sport, particularly volleyball, which both had played regularly before they had children. This love and participation in sport did not dissipate, because their children now also played:

Interviewer: Are there places around here that are important to you? That you feel are important to how you live your life, and for your children?

*Yeah, during summer we always go to the park to play touch. So, that's how I met with my husband, through volleyball games ...we like sports. 'Cause we used to play hard out before we got married ...every summer we always go, we all go as a family and they can play volley if they want or there's basketball rings there they can play basketball with. Or play rugby, touch so yeah. We all go to the park during summer time ...My girls play and my son as well. We have friends and family, they have volleyball games and they invite us to come over. [Ana]*

loane also spoke of the family's regular volleyball activities. He also recalled that if he became bored with it, he could play nearby at the rugby field or basketball courts.

Interviewer: Who do you go with?

*loane: My family, my whole family. My mum, my dad, and my three sisters.*

Interviewer: And how many of you play volleyball?

*loane: All of us. And we have rugby on the other side of the field.*

Interviewer: Oh cool. And who do you play rugby with?

*loane: The people who come to the park and the adults.*

Interviewer: What's your favourite thing to do?

*loane: To play on the basketball courts. Um, when I'm bored.*

It is clear that for loane's mother, the motivation behind her desire for supervision includes, but is not limited to, safety concerns for loane and his siblings:

*[In] my opinion like my kids, when they grow up, I always follow my kids, wherever they go. Our family, we play together. When we have time, me and my husband and the kids, we play together as a family. We always want to be with them. It's not just a safety issue but also we want to spend some time with them, and let them know that you care for them, and that you want to ...have a good relationship with your kids; it's very important.*

*[Ana]*

This example highlights: 1) discrepancies in children's reports of their independent trips compared with their parents' concerns for their safety and parents' reports of limited or no IM for their child; 2) high PA levels achieved in family activities; 3) motivating factors for adults to be with their children that extend beyond safety concerns. loane's account of his independent trips around the street and at the park are inconsistent with his mother's account of her allowances for loane to ride his bike in the street where he is visible from the house and his activity at the park when the family go to play sport together. There are a number of possible explanations for this discrepancy: biking in the street was considered independent to loane but not to his mother; loane's aspirations for greater independence coloured his interpretation of events; and as noted earlier his mother may have felt pressure to report closer supervision of loane's outdoor play than occurred. Additionally, this scenario could perhaps show the possibility that IM benefits can be achieved in supervised activities, particularly if loane believed he was independent of his parents' input in his travel and play in the street and at the park, when in fact he was supervised.

What this example also highlights is the high levels of PA achieved through family activities. Though loane's family activities do not meet the requirements of IM because they are supervised, PA benefits are being achieved nonetheless – as well as social interaction, social skill development, spatial awareness of their immediate neighbourhood, autonomy, decision-making and problem-solving. For loane's mother, family activities were not only about

supervising her son but also a way to spend quality time and develop a good relationship with her children. The costs of not validating family activities as having multiple benefits, also risks devaluing loane’s parents’ motivation for choosing to play together as a family, and contributes to the pressure for Samoan parents to conform to Western values where, the individual is privileged over the collective (see Chapter 4).

### Example 2: Adelina

Adelina was 10 years old when she participated in the Kids in the City project, and lived in Neighbourhood 2. She had four siblings, one older and three younger siblings.

Adelina experienced limited independent movement in her neighbourhood over the seven-day period; however, her active travel was relatively high, with almost half her weekly trips being active.

Please tell us about where you went yesterday: ⊙ After school? ↓ Next place you went ↓ Next place you went ↓ Next place you went ↓ Next place you went	Where did you go? (e.g., home, shops, park, nana's house, school)	What time did you go there?	How did you get there? (tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )							Other (please write):	Who did you go with? (tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )				
			Walk	Bike	Scooter	Board	Car	Bus/Train	I was by myself		Parent/adult	My friends	Brother/sister	Other (please write):	
	none	4:18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	shopping	5:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	shops	5:30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Park	5:41	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	home	6:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Figure 5: A snapshot of Adelina’s travel diary

Adelina recorded in her travel diary that her older sister drove her to places, and reported in her go-along interview that she often travelled in her neighbourhood with her older sister. In three of her travel diary trips, she did not indicate whether these trips were with her older or younger siblings so they were recorded as independent trips, however it is most likely that she travelled with an older sibling, which indicates her independent trips were less than recorded.

Adelina often moved about her neighbourhood as ‘home can get quite boring’ and was usually accompanied by her older sister:

Interviewer: Who do you go down to the river with?

Adelina: My sister

Interviewer: Which sister?

*Adelina: The big one*

Interviewer: Who do you go with to the park?

*Adelina: My sister*

Interviewer: Why do you guys go to the park?

*Adelina: 'Cause like at home, yeah um, I have nothing to do at home, so just feel like playing, 'cause there is nothing much to do at home.*

She revealed she usually had her older sister with her because she did not feel safe to go places in her neighbourhood alone. Strangers and the fear of being 'taken' were reasons for this.

Interviewer: Do you feel safe here if you were to come here by yourself?

*Adelina: No*

Interviewer: Why is that?

*Adelina: Um, because if I go alone then some stranger might come and take me.*

Interviewer: Is that another thing you would like to change about your neighbourhood?

*Adelina: Yeah, scary strangers.*

Though she had mentioned that strangers and bad people in her neighbourhood made her feel unsafe, she still enjoyed walking around her neighbourhood with her family and meeting people. People therefore represented both positive and negative experiences of her neighbourhood:

Interviewer: Do you like walking around your neighbourhood?

*Adelina: Yup, you meet new people.*

Adelina's mother also spoke about her concerns about some people in their neighbourhood. These concerns informed her decision not to let Adelina move about the neighbourhood unsupervised. For example, Adelina's mother's concern about her back neighbours' behaviour and swearing meant Adelina and her siblings were not allowed to play in the backyard:

*...before these two families here [back neighbours] they just moved in. Before I [would] tell my kids to go play outside [backyard] cause there's the Samoan neighbours, but now when they want to come out, we don't want them to go out 'cause we[re] worried about [them]....cause the mum's always yelling at the kids, saying the 'F' words. It's so sad what the kids are listening to. So I said to them not to go to the back[yard] anymore. I think this house is a gang. Some of the old boys ...it's [just] different cultures. [Sina]*

Adelina's mother expressed that when they had Samoan neighbours she encouraged her children to play outside. However, the new neighbours, who were from different cultural backgrounds, swore and appeared to be gang affiliated, which made Adelina's mother cautious for her children's safety.

Adelina's mother only let her play in the front of the house where she was visible from the kitchen window. If Adelina was to go further in the neighbourhood, she needed to have someone with her. Going to the local park was a family occasion:

*They only go out in the front here, but there should be somebody to watch them. No, I don't let them go by themselves. Over there in the park, that's the only place we used to go. When the dad comes home from work. [Sina]*

What was clear from Adelina's travel diary, her go-along interview, and her mother's interview about Adelina's activity in the neighbourhood, was that although Adelina's independent movement was limited, her PA levels were high due to activities done with her family. This reiterates the importance of family and church or community activities that foster PA benefits:

*The good thing is at our church, it's always every Thursday evening, there's zumba. So all of us go there and do that ...its very important for us, 'cause that's what our children need; we need to tell our kids to try and move their body, they need to use it. My kids, I'm telling you the truth, my kids need to play around. They like playing. So it's good. [Sina]*

As church and family activities are an important part of Samoan children's activity behaviours, so too is the role of sport. Adelina's mother suggested in her quote that Pasifika peoples were

good at sport and this was something she wanted her children to pursue, particularly if they showed some skill in it. Adelina's sister was good at netball so her mother was trying to encourage her to pursue this sport:

*Yeah, do you see the All Blacks, most of them are Islanders – Samoan, Tongan; they say, 'that's why, 'cause they always eat taro' but not that. [We're] active and good at sports. Yeah the netball, I try to push my middle one [daughter], 'cause she's good. [Sina]*

Adelina's mother wanted the best for her children. That was why her she and her husband had made a life in New Zealand - to provide a bright future for their children:

*We explained it briefly to them why we leave our parents there [in Samoa] and the family, and we come here to New Zealand, it's because of them - for their good future. [Sina]*

For Adelina's mother, IM is not an important part of this future, although PA is. This is consistent with what the other parents and key informants in this study have reported. It appears then that the Samoan families in this study are in fact achieving the PA benefits without actually being independently mobile. This could also explain the increasing PA levels of the Pacific cohort in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2011), particularly as they begin to measure PA components relevant for Pacific people. These physical activities are not achieved particularly through sport (not for Adelina anyway) or through IM, and capturing informal PA through family and church activities is important to get a true indicator of Samoan children's PA behaviours.

### **Follow up interviews: Children's IM changes over time (attitude and behaviour)**

Current literature provides evidence that children are afforded more IM as they age, particularly for those aged over 11 years old (Shaw, et al., 2015). This section explores changes in children's IM as they age by presenting findings from follow up interviews with the Samoan parents. Eight parents participated in the follow up interviews, with one of those parents being from the KITC project (Sample 1). The rest were from Sample 2 parents. At the time of the follow up interviews, the children were aged 12-13 years old. The children of Sample 2 parents were attending out of area schools, which meant they needed to use public or private

transport. Their discussion of IM was in terms of travel to and from school, and attending sports or events with school friends who lived outside of their neighbourhood. The child of the KITC parent was attending her local high school. She was 13 years old.

When asked if things had changed over the year and half in relation to their older child's IM, parents agreed there had been changes. Reasons included the older children's travel to and from school via a variety of public transport modes, awareness of their surrounding physical and social environments, and their older children travelling more with groups of friends.

Parents reported that their older children were much more mature, confident and aware of their surrounding environments, which made their parents more confident about allowing them more freedom:

*He has grown older and his boundaries have widened. He is more independent in his travel and play than he was two years ago, more confident...because he is more aware and able to recognize and defend himself if needed, to protect [himself] or get away from danger. [Ina]*

*[He] is wiser to know when something doesn't feel right. [He] is a very confident young man. [Tala]*

Because the children were older and more confident, they were given more freedom by their parents and experienced more responsibility such as looking after younger siblings:

*She is of course 2 years older, nearly 14 [years old]. She is more confident and comfortable in the neighbourhood and city i.e. catching buses across Auckland for school etc. [Nise]*

*Yes, things have definitely changed. [She] is now 13 [years old] and is a very responsible young lady. She looks out for her younger siblings and now takes initiative to create safe environments for them, especially when playing outside. [Losa]*

The older children were sometimes chauffeured to and from their train or bus stops, but otherwise they travelled without a parent to school. Despite this, travel to the train or bus stops were still restricted. Parents reported that if the older child walked home from the train



or bus stops, it was only allowed because the distance was not long or because they had a friend who they could walk with:

*[He] catches the train home from school by himself and walks to the mall to meet up with his older sister. [Tala]*

*[She] is the only one at school now so she travels by herself ...if anything we don't allow her to walk to the bus stop or home. If she had a buddy that she could walk with that would be great, but it is difficult attending a school outside of [our suburb] especially a zoned Catholic school in [another suburb]. [Su'e]*

Transport options to travel to and from school varied slightly, which gave the older children the opportunity to manoeuvre between these different modes of transport and timetables:

*I guess she is somewhat slightly more aware and conscious of her neighbourhood two years on. She travels by herself to high school now by bus or train, but we drop her off to the bus stop or train station, or she would go home with her cousin who goes to the same school. [Maea]*

All of the parents reported their older children were more independently mobile in their travel to and from school.

The parents also allowed their older children to spend more time with their friends now, attending sleepovers or going to sports or other events with friends. Parents responded that they felt more comfortable with their children being 'safe in numbers'. The parents admitted that these trips were mostly supervised by their friends' parents or in a setting where there were other known adults to watch them:

*I allow him to do sleepovers but only if I know the family. [He] catches the train home from school by himself and walks to the mall to meet up with his older sister. [He] also plays a lot of sport and mixes and mingles with all different types of people. [Tala]*

*I have let him to [go] on sleep over's at his friends home, expo's etc.*

*...though all the places he has gone has been with friends & other adults that we know of. [Ina]*

Some older children are permitted more IM around the street within certain boundaries:

*[She] is able to ride her bike in and around the neighbourhood and sometimes with her brother. But not far. [Losa]*

Independence for parents still required some adult supervision but there was some relinquishing of this supervision to include the wider community. This was a novel concept for Samoan parents and children, whose environment one and a half years previously was mostly family and church.

Despite an increase in the older children's awareness of their surroundings and an increase in their perceived independent allowances, parents still had some concerns about letting their children move about freely:

*I still wouldn't let him to go the shops (two blocks away) by himself, he is only 13 [years old] and there are still 'crazy people' around. [Ina]*

Although the older children used public transport to and from school, parents were concerned about their child's safety outside of this such as walking home from school. They were reassured that transport to and from school included other students from their child's school:

*[He] is now catching the train and bus to [school] this year and it is reassuring that he is catching them with other boys from his school but we still get him to wait for us at the public library rather than let him walk home. We still worry about him being targeted by other schools for being from out of zone if he is walking home on his own. [Telesia]*

Parents spoke of specific incidents where their older child's safety was compromised:

*He had an incident last month where he was walking to the library through one of the shopping mall alleyways and had his wallet snatched out of his hand by some random idiot after getting off the train. This has made him a bit more wary of where he is and less trusting of strangers around him*

*now. There are certain parts of our neighbourhood that just aren't safe, so for that reason we still prefer to drive them rather than let them walk.*  
*[Telesia]*

One parent admitted that her parents (child's grandparents) did not like their grandchild walking from school and so helped with transport when needed:

*My mum and dad live behind us and they would be upset if they knew that [she] walked home. So they do the pick up if [my husband] or I are busy with work. [Su'e]*

Another reason for limited IM was being involved in organized sport (which often involved supervision in travel and during practice/games). Children and parents preferred children's participation in sport:

*[She] has somewhat become less independent. She's very involved in netball and sport that she has less time to play. [Losa]*

Another reason was children were not interested to play outdoors anymore:

*My three girls are now in High School, so most of the time they stayed in the house after school doing their homework; they are not interested in going out to play. [Tusi]*

*Technology; tech has been one major influence to less PA. TV, internet, cell phones have played a huge influence in the rapid changes in habits and behaviour (positive and negative). [Maea]*

Parenting practices in their decision-making evolved over the two years also. Some parents reported that children had become active participants in making decisions around their IM behaviours. They said they explained to their children how they came to a decision as to where they would allow them to go unsupervised and hear their child's perceptions of that decision, taking into account their desires, feelings, and understanding of this explanation:

*I always believe in explaining my reasons for everything. I would tell her,*

*'You cannot play down by the driveway because there are cars that come and go and the driver might not see you.' I would also ask questions for her to come up with her own logic, "Do you think it's safe to ride your bike at the end of the driveway?" "What would you do if a man came up to you and wanted to talk to you?" The purpose was to make her aware of what if's. She understood my reasoning and through her explaining her own logic on safety, we both came to an agreement that that's the rules and it's important to follow them. There is a reason why things are the way they are – for her own safety. [Losa]*

Such discussions gave their children an opportunity to understand from the parent's perspective the reasoning behind decisions, and in turn, parents hoped their children would develop an ability to analyse situations as safe or not for themselves:

*[She] is quite a mature girl for her age so we would usually engage in a discussion and together reach a decision. If [her father] and I feel strongly that she should not go because of safety issues or for whatever reason we would follow up with an explanation and most of the time she agrees with the decision made. Involving [her] in the decision-making encourages her to express her point of view but hopefully through the process she will come to an understanding of why she [can] go or [is] not allowed to go. [Su'e]*

Parents understood that their children were aware of the dangers in their neighbourhood by this age. They had either experienced some level of their safety being compromised through bullying, or had seen examples of it in the media:

*... she [has] seen news on TV in regards of things [that have] happened here in NZ [to] all ages; people killing people, kids been kidnapped...if it's happened in NZ it can be happen in [our] neighbourhood. [Tusi]*

Parents wanted to inform their children of the risks they considered when making decisions about where they could and could not go, without causing unnecessary concern for their child. This was a negotiation that took place for some of the parents:

*As parents, we try to prevent our fears being our children's fears. I've attempted to eliminate the necessity of my kids walking home on their own by ensuring they are 'picked up by car' or are in a group when it was unavoidable that they needed to walk home. [Ina]*

Ina was aware that this negotiation was a compromise for her children to learn from experiences of being independent. She was aware that her desire to limit their exposure to risks had adverse effects in that they would not be prepared to handle situations where their safety was compromised. Ina put them into karate classes as a self-defence solution to this problem:

*As a result because they have never been put in that 'fearful' situation they are maybe unprepared of how to handle it if they fell victim to it ... fortunately I also covered that by taking them to karate lessons...so as black belts they should be able to handle it if it does happen. In summary, I think it was that case for kids at that time because we are more able than our parents were, to cocoon our children and make life (in our eyes) easier for them. Though this does not necessarily make them more prepared (the world around us is different and safety wise more harsher) we hope they have learnt (more out of habit) to be more aware and safer in their choices to avoid those types of danger. [Ina]*

What Ina exemplified was a negotiation that takes places for parents' decision making for their children's movements. Ina is aware of the effects of limited IM, such as her child's lack of confidence or experience to deal with risky situations due to a lack of exposure to risk. However, she devised a new way to tackle this within the comfort of her parenting desires, through a supervised sport. Ina knew her children were not accustomed to playing on the street or in the neighbourhood and navigating potential dangers like she did when she was growing up. She grew up in a socially cohesive neighbourhood where everyone knew each other, that allowed for her independent play and movement with other neighbourhood kids. This context was far different to her children's current environment, which she described as 'harsher,' and limited opportunities for her children to learn through their independent play and travel.

Though Ina shared her awareness of not allowing her children to develop maturity and

confidence around moving in the neighbourhood independently, she found a way to address this without compromising her concern for their safety and her desire for supervision. Parents in previous chapters have shared about their own carefree childhoods where they were free to roam and play and be children without huge restrictions, and that they wished their child could have the same childhood they had. Like Ina, they did not feel this was possible in their current situation. Many reasons were given for this such as a society that was not safe and not trusting of neighbours and other people, as well as children's lack of interest in playing outdoors because of the lure of technology, and for these reasons they did not see value in allowing IM when its benefits, particularly PA, could be achieved through other means. Sport, church, and family activities were ways in which parents believed their children could achieve PA, social interaction, self-esteem and similar IM developmental benefits.

## **DISCUSSION**

The opening proverb (p. 148) outlines the objective of this chapter: to examine the impact of the wind (parenting practices/allowances) on the canoe (the child). Samoan parents defined the 'independence' of IM in a different way to parents of other ethnic groups. Most parents reported that supervision was necessary for their child's movement in their neighbourhoods and that they allowed their child minimal, if any, IM. Those few children who did experience some IM, were only allowed to go around the neighbourhood with siblings – but never alone. Supervised play and travel, or play and travel with siblings were the prerequisites for the children's movement in the neighbourhood.

This chapter provided evidence that the perceived and desired IM levels of Samoan children changed over time. Although the followed-up parents reported more IM allowances nearly two years on when their children were now in intermediate or high school, their children's activities were still mostly supervised. Parents perceived IM the absence of their supervision, or a known adult. Therefore, although travel to and from school was by public transport or being driven by an adult, parents still considered this a form of independent travel for their children. Their definition of being 'independent' therefore was not the absence of supervision, but rather being independent from their usual carers' supervision. Parents reported high IM allowances in travel to and from school, and attending events or friends' houses. These activities were still under the supervision of the public transport operators, event organisers, and friends' parents.

Family and church played a large role in the participating Samoan families' lives, but as children grew older the wider community was now entrusted with chaperoning/supervising their children. For Samoan parents, including the wider community in negotiating and providing safety for their child is a huge concept. However, including the wider community in their parenting provides opportunities for not only parents but also children to engage with the wider social and physical surrounding, allowing for more opportunities to negotiate space.

Parenting practices had evolved over time to incorporate children's participation in the decision-making process around more freedom and independence, particularly as they matured and got older. Parents' rationale for this was to ensure that children understood the logic behind the decisions they made for them, so that they could make the same considerations when they were older and had to make the decisions themselves. Understanding this was important. It is clear that two years following the initial interviews, the parents were allowing their children more freedom, and so ensured that their children had the decision-making abilities to avoid risky situations. Through this inclusive parenting style, parents were allowing children to understand the values, perceptions and experiences that underpinned their decision-making.

The findings from the children's travel diaries revealed that boys experienced more IM than girls, which is consistent with research literature (Fyhri & Hjorthol, 2009), and were more likely to travel alone than with peers. These findings also align with traditional Samoan gender roles, where the boy's role is more outdoors and away from home while the girl's role is to stay at home and help with domestic work (Macpherson, 2012). Girls were more likely to travel with siblings and friends, than they were to travel alone. Boys were more likely to use active transport. Those who used active transport in general were more likely to be unsupervised. These findings reinforced active transport as an indicator of IM.

The findings highlight a discrepancy between parents' and children's reports of IM. The findings from the children's travel diaries suggest that Samoan children have higher IM levels than their parents reported. There are a few plausible explanations for this.

First, no ages were obtained in the travel diaries to ascertain whether the siblings were older or younger (unless travelling with only the sibling in a car – then we would assume the sibling is the driving adult). Therefore, the participating children's siblings could in fact be adults, and this would then mean the child was supervised as opposed to being independent in their trip. This then suggests that the number of independent trips could potentially be lower than

reported, and that the Samoan children were potentially less independent than recorded. Similarly, interpretations of being 'alone' may have impacted on reports of independent trips.

In fact, some literature queries children's understanding of data collection methods, particularly their interpretation of the terminology used in data collection tools such as the travel diaries. Interpretations of the words 'trip' (Oliver, et al., 2014) and 'place' (Mavoa, Oliver, Witten, & Badland, 2011) varied among the children. It is possible that children's interpretation of being 'alone' (see Figure 7) may have varied, therefore affecting the study results. Both Oliver et al. (2014) and Mavoa et al's (2011) KITC papers discussed the effects interpretations of terms used in the data collection methods may have had on how the children filled in their travel diaries, and how this could then have impacted the data analysis. In Figure 7, line 3 (below), the child has recorded that they went shopping at 4.30 pm in the car *alone*. Obviously the child, who is between 9–11 years old could not have travelled alone in the car, but may have perceived herself as alone as an adult is not to be counted, especially in a car where their presence is a given. There were a few other cases similar to this.

Please tell us about the trips you went on:														
	Where did you go?	What time?	How did you get there? (tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )					Who did you go with? (tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )						
			Walk	Bike	Scooter	Board	Car	Bus/Train	Other (please write):	I was by myself	Parent/adult	My friends	Brother/sister	Other (please write):
After school and before going to bed														
1 After school?	home	2.30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2 After that?	Park	3.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3 After that?	Shopping	4.30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 After that?	home	5.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Before school this														

Figure 6: Excerpt of a child's travel diary entry

A child may perceive that they are alone when they are not included in a conversation or dialogue with someone, or when they are the only child in the car. If children did not record their parent's accompaniment while in the car, it could be that the children also didn't record their parents' accompaniment when walking, riding a bike or scooter, or using public transport. If this is so, it could explain the children's reports of a large amount of trips made alone which contradicted their parents' account of the children's largely restricted IM.

Oliver et al. (2014) investigated the accuracy of using GIS and children's self-reported travel diaries for the entire KITC data set:

...54.5% of journey sequences were fully or partially matched, 22.4% were



GPS only trips and 23.2% travel diary only. Greater accuracy (full/partial match) was observed for weekdays than for weekend days and for the journey to or from school than for other journeys. Travel mode agreement existed for 99% of matched trips. Although children's travel diaries may confer contextual journey information, they may not provide completely accurate information on journey sequencing (Oliver, et al., 2014, p. 249).

With the Samoan children contributing almost a quarter of the KITC cohort, it is fair to suggest Oliver et al's (2014) conclusion is inferred for the Samoan children's travel diary data also. These findings also provide evidence that the travel diaries have some degree of accuracy in gathering children's travel movements particularly for travel mode. The high accuracy for travel mode provides evidence of the participating children's active travel – almost two out of five trips. If children's reports of travel mode are highly accurate, it emphasises the importance of examining children's perception of alone (see Figure 7), rather than considering the chances of the transport mode being incorrect. Weekday trips and the school commute have higher accuracy in children's reporting than data on weekend trips and trips to other places, suggesting the findings on Samoan children's school trips have a high chance of accuracy.

Apart from children's interpretations of being 'alone' or research assumptions that travel with siblings is considered an independent trip (even though they may in fact be an adult), another explanation for the discrepancy between parents' and children's accounts of their IM is parenting pressures to downplay children's actual IM allowances and behaviours for fear of judgements of poor parenting.

In the previous chapters parents talked about the parenting stigmas that exist for them as Samoans, and as Samoan parents, in New Zealand. Samoan customs and cultural underpinnings of behaviour often do not align with the societal norms, lawful regulations and expectations, and ways of doing things in the Western context of New Zealand society. Parents talked about the challenge of negotiating and merging the two worlds. For them, being aware of some of the pressures and stereotypes that existed for Samoans and the wider Pacific community reinforced lifestyles that revolved around family and church – familiar environments that encapsulated safety and support of their ontology and cultural preferences. Perhaps due to this pressure and the stereotypes, parents chose not to disclose the allowances they gave their children for fear of being judged as a bad parent, particularly in the context of both the KITC and Samoan KITC projects' interest in IM, and cultural expectations of keeping an eye on your child.

The travel diary data (including the GPS and accelerometer data) provides only a snapshot of children's activity levels over seven days. This needs to be acknowledged and is quite possibly another explanation for the discrepancy between children's and parents' IM accounts. These seven days may not have been typical of the child's activity behaviour for reasons other than their interpretation of the terminology used on the travel diaries. Other reasons include the parent's and/or child's desire to provide pleasing results and so present themselves as more independent and/or active in this week than normal. Or perhaps other circumstances such as sickness, family events, or weather may have affected the child's normally active and independent movement. For whatever reason, it is quite possible that the travel diaries were not reflective of the child's typical activity and movement in the neighbourhood, and these considerations need to be acknowledged.

The large role that family and church played in Samoan children's movement was evident, as regular trips to relative's homes and church were made. These trips imply the importance of relationships, culture (Anae, 2010) and spirituality (Pulotu-Endemann, et al., 2007) for Samoan families. Travel to relatives or church was a family affair, as evidenced by children's travel diary records of these as family trips, rather than independent trips. According to both examples, family and church activities played a large role in parents and children's activity behaviours where the children participated in sport or active travel with their family.

Unpacking the ontological underpinning of Samoan parenting and Samoan children's IM is necessary. Parents come with their own experiences and biases in how they choose to parent and actively shape their child's own knowledge making/interpreting skills. In the two examples, both parents' motivation was to create an environment that supported their child's success and afforded them a bright future. This was also reflected in the narratives of other parents and key informants. Wanting to provide a better way of life for their children than they had had often informed parents' decisions for their parenting practices, including decisions about their children's activity behaviours. PA is an important aspect of their children's lives and parents purposefully addressed this through sport, family or church activities. The concept of IM was not of value for Samoan parents given the nature of their current context, especially in light of achieving IM benefits such as PA through these supervised activities.

Both examples of Ioane and Adelina's IM experiences highlight the high PA levels achieved through family and church activities. It is interesting that the developmental benefits of IM, such as PA, social skills, spatial awareness, and some levels of self-directed travel and play, seem to have been achieved through these supervised, group environments (family and

church). Adelina achieved social skill development, spatial awareness of her immediate environment, and PA by socialising with others in her neighbourhood when walking with her older sister, going for runs around the block with her older sister, and attending Zumba at church with her family. Ioane experienced a range of PA benefits as well as IM through his recorded and perceived independent trips and play. He reported playing around the street (which correlates with being supervised from the house by his mother) and playing with his friends at the park (which also correlates with playing nearby while his family play volleyball at the park as reported by his mother). He also reported walking to his mother's work after school on his own, and going to friends' houses alone and with friends, activities not accounted for in his mother's interview. However, whether accounted for or perceived, he believes he is independently mobile and so behaves in ways that promote self-directed play and travel, autonomous decision-making and problem-solving over and above the PA, and developing social skills during family activities. These examples emphasise that, whether limited or restricted IM is occurring, PA is not compromised.

PA research reports exemplify this. The data for PA was primarily sourced from the SPARC study, which collected PA data from sport participation but did not account for informal PA such as walking, playing or dancing. Pacific children and adults performed poorly in these original SPARC results (Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), 2003, 2012). They were considered physically inactive due to their lack of participation in sport. However, when PA research began to include incidental activities for adults such as housework, and walking, and extended this to children's play and travel, Pacific children and adults were seen to have high PA levels - and in fact to be one of the most active ethnic groups across all ages (Clinical Trials Research Unit, 2010; Ministry of Health, 2003b; Rush, et al., 2003). This exemplifies the importance of including measures that capture culturally specific perceptions and activities.

There is a need for evidence about the level of IM necessary to obtain the associated developmental benefits (Shaw, et al., 2015) and to assess whether these benefits are/can be achieved in the family and church setting. This shows that context is hugely important.

# CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

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*E iloa le lima lelei o le tufuga i le soofau*

**The mark of good statecraft is shown in blending idiosyncrasy**

**(Samoan Proverb)**

The main aim of this research has been to investigate the impact of Samoan parenting practices on Samoan children's IM and PA.

The specific purpose of this study has been to produce an ethnic-specific angle on the relationships between Samoan parents' perceptions of their social and physical surroundings, and their children's IM and PA.

This was done by examining:

1. Samoan children's IM and PA;
2. How Samoan parents' perceptions of their neighbourhood influenced their children's IM and PA;
3. How Samoan perceptions of parenting, including cultural issues and social stigma, influenced their children's IM and PA.

This research contributes to understanding of the ways Samoan perceptions of parenting, neighbourhood, and IM impact on children's IM and activity behaviours in the short and long term.

## 1. Samoan children's IM and PA

Cultural perceptions influence the decisions parents make about where they will allow their children go without adult supervision, thereby rendering notions of IM to be of little value. Although the participating parents had experienced and enjoyed high levels of IM when they were growing up, and desired that their children have the same level of IM, they felt that in the face of acculturation, parenting stigma, poor media portrayals and fears around cultural, physical and social safety, that IM was of little value for their family and children in their current context in New Zealand. Though there were contrasting results for children's IM between the KITC children's travel diary reports and the reports of the participating KITC

parents, it became clear in the CATI and individual interviews, as well as the other Samoan parent and key informant interviews that IM had little value for Samoan families as they navigated their cultural, social and physical environment in New Zealand. The developmental benefits associated with IM, however, particularly physical activity and social interaction, were valued by Samoan parents. The findings indicate that physical activity and social skills can be achieved in a collective environment that benefits the family as well as the child (Benwell, 2013; Sharpe & Tranter, 2010). Sport, family and church activities promoted PA and social skills with a wide group of people across a range of ages, in a culturally safe and cohesive environment, aligned to the importance of 'aiga and church in fa'aSamoa. Family involvement in these activities validated and supported Samoan parenting beliefs and values that underpinned their parenting decisions/practices, while also providing an environment where parents felt safe.

Benwell (2013) and Sharpe & Tranter (2010) criticise the emphasis placed on children's IM as a measure for increasing physical activity through active transport. These two studies both conclude that acknowledging parent participation in children's active transport behaviours is important.

## 2. Samoan parents' perceptions of their neighbourhood influenced their children's IM and PA

The research findings support Carroll et al's (2013) finding that children's fears and perceptions of their neighbourhoods reflected their parents' fears and perceptions; children did not want to go beyond the boundaries allowed by their parents. The transferring of parents' behaviours and attitudes to children is also seen in children's activity behaviours, which reflect their parents' activity behaviours well into adulthood (Ministry of Health, 2008a).

If children are reflecting their parents' fears and perceptions of their neighbourhood, passed on when parents involve them in the decision-making process around independent activity, then it is important to address parents' fears and perceptions and unpack what underpins them.

There is evidence of the role played by parents as mediators of their children's activity and independent behaviours in the short-term. In the long-term, it affects children's own perceptions of their neighbourhood, and how they utilise and engage with it as they get older.

Ensuring positive perspectives of the neighbourhood is important as it can inform children's desire to interact with it when they become mature enough to make decisions for themselves. It appears that parents' negative or restrictive perceptions of the neighbourhood are most likely transferred when the child is old enough to be able to navigate these perspectives and experiences themselves. There is profound impact on the role of the wider community and the media in providing negative narratives around place. Negative media portrayals of Samoans and South Auckland aligned to crime, poverty and overrepresented in poor health, lack of education and low employment rates has huge impacts on Samoan families. The wider community in embracing the diversity of neighbourhoods and the idiosyncrasies of each culture also impacts the social cohesion of its residents. This highlights the importance of parents, the wider community, and the media in providing positive stories about neighbourhoods is an important inheritance for Samoan children to take with them into adulthood.

### 3. Samoan perceptions of parenting influenced their children's IM and PA, and were in turn influenced by cultural issues and fear of social stigma

Samoan parents' perceptions of parenting were strongly influenced by Samoan cultural values. The extended family, particularly grandparents, played a large role in cultural continuity and instilling the Samoan culture for children. A Samoan child is a member of a large support network – their 'aiga or extended family. The family collective provides the child with the knowledge and understanding of what it means to belong to their particular family and how their family works. The concept of the collective 'aiga, involves each member having a supporting role and being a representative of the 'aiga. From an early age, Samoan children are instilled with the idea of being a good representative of their 'aiga – and not bringing shame upon their family (Suaalii-Sauni & Mavoa, 2001).

The concept of independence conflicts with the collective family concept, whereby members are expected to contribute to or support the family rather than be involved with outsiders.

The conflict between traditional Samoan values and practices and Western values and practices has often resulted in some Samoan parents being branded "bad" parents. Samoan parents have been associated with authoritarian parenting and harsh discipline of children (Pereira, 2010; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996) - as well as, in some instances, not taking enough individual responsibility.

In the Samoan village, parenting is a shared concept and it is the village's responsibility to keep an eye on the safety and wellbeing of the child (Cowley-Malcolm, 2013). The child is therefore free to move about within a safety network that is geographically and socially situated. This is less possible in New Zealand. High fences bound homes, residential areas are dependent on social class, and cultural diversity and political systems create nuclear family style parenting, as opposed to shared parenting. This encourages individualistic lifestyles and parenting styles. With little cohesion with their neighbours, Samoan parents are less inclined to let their children move about the neighbourhood without the safety net of family, including their siblings. Therefore, the issue is not that Samoan children are not independently mobile, but that their mobility is independent of imposed cultural norms, and that these are consistent with Samoan cultural norms, reflected from within an urban context with multicultural contexts.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research recommends an incorporation of cultural knowledge, including Samoan cultural knowledge, into urban policy and planning. It recognises indigenous connection to the land. The participants generally acknowledged Māori as the indigenous people and their own spiritual and cultural connection to place and belonging in New Zealand.

Collins and Friesen's (2011) make recommendations that "focus on the manner in which 'intercultural knowledge' might be integrated into [urban policy through] existing approaches to communities, settlement patterns, creative industries and the public realm" (p. 12), that educate migrants about Maori culture, and embrace the contribution migrant culture can have in urban Auckland's culturally diverse city.

They also highlight need for 'intercultural knowledge' to be integrated in many levels of city planning. This research reiterates their recommendations and the need to involve residents in the planning and design of physical and social environments. Samoan and other minority ethnic groups have a valuable contribution to make.

Built designs (e.g. streets and facilities like local parks) as well as technological advancement (e.g. social media) can be used to facilitate community events such as neighbourhood street barbecues, or the use of neighbourhood apps to get people connected, informed of events in the area, and provide an avenue for proximal social support. At the community level this can

help foster relationships between neighbours and assist in the utilization and engagement with their immediate physical environment and resources.

Improving cultural literacy in processes will allow the development of “public spaces that reflect the cultural and geographical particularities of Auckland” (Collins and Friesen, 2011 p. 12).

This research also recommends further research into the impact of issues such as acculturation, cultural identity/affiliation, gentrification, media stereotypes, and parenting stigma on parenting practices that impact children’s IM and PA.

Though Samoan parents see the benefits of IM, there is no value for it in the current context. Collective activities are highly valued and often involve physical activity. Independent mobility is not a culturally appropriate measure of physical activity for Samoan children.

## **FINAL REFLECTIONS**

Samoan parenting practices and Samoan parents’ perceptions of parenting, neighbourhood, IM and PA were found to have a large impact Samoan on Samoan children’s IM and PA. Although there were discrepancies with regard to the participating Samoan children’s reported IM levels, their physical activity levels were consistently reported as high and often achieved through family and church activities, and sport.

Acknowledging cultural underpinnings is important to create and facilitate approaches that are culturally appropriate and engaging. If the developmental benefits are being achieved through supervised activities such as sport, family and church activities, then these should be encouraged and supported because they benefit whole families.

For the Samoan parents in this study, a shift to perceiving parent-participation in children’s play and travel as pertinent to improving physical activity levels supports health promoting behaviours for both Samoan children and their families (Benwell, 2013; Sharpe & Tranter, 2010). As a collective and family-oriented culture, this not only validates the collective frame of Samoan culture, but also encourages Samoan families to embrace their health in a strengths-based approach. Independent mobility is a Western concept, non-aligned with Samoan and other Pacific peoples’ values, and diverts attention from the strengths-based approach of working with Samoan families and communities as a medium for improving individual health



through collective effort. As noted by Tui Atua (2009):

***E iloa le lima lelei o le tufuga i le soofau*** - the mark of good statecraft is shown in  
blending idiosyncrasy. (p. 9)

Blending the idiosyncrasies of our cultural differences allows us to draw upon the best of our non-aligned worlds to promote children and families' wellbeing.

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# APPENDICES

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## Appendix 1: Key Informant Information Sheet



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SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### **Samoan Kids in the City: The Impact of Samoan Parenting Practices on Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity**

#### KEY INFORMANT INFORMATION SHEET

Talofa lava! My name is Nicola Tava'e and I am currently studying towards my PhD in Public Health at Massey University. I am doing a study that follows on from the 'Kids in the City' project – an HRC funded project that investigates children's independent mobility and physical activity in relation to urban design. The project is a collaborative study involving researchers from Massey University, AUT University and the University of Auckland.

My particular interest is in how length of residence in New Zealand may determine the level of affiliation Samoan parents have with the Samoan culture (fa'aSamoa), and how parents incorporate these values in their parenting practices. I am interested in what the fa'aSamoa means to Samoan parents living in New Zealand, and how this influences the decisions they make in relation to the independent movement and physical activity of their children. Being a New Zealand-born Samoan, it is my hope that through this study, I can learn more about the fa'aSamoa, and its influences on our children in New Zealand.

#### **Research Background**

Physical activity (PA) is essential for optimal physical and psychological health but substantial declines in children's activity levels have occurred in New Zealand, particularly for Pacific children. Independent mobility (e.g., outdoor play and travelling to destinations unsupervised - IM), an integral component of PA in childhood, has also declined radically in recent decades. There is little research on the IM of Pacific children in New Zealand. There is evidence that the influence of the family environment and the fundamental role of parents as gatekeepers to children's activity behaviours are vastly significant. Have safety-conscious parenting practices, cultural traditions and beliefs, as well as westernisation and urbanisation converged to

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)

produce Pacific children living increasingly sedentary lives?

The 'Kids in the City' (KITC) research project provides a large Samoan sample in which to explore the themes above. This study will further explore concepts of neighbourhood perception in relation to children's IM and PA, by focusing on the influence of culture (particularly the Samoan culture) on the parenting practices that determine these. Samoan parents/caregivers, who participated in the KITC project, will be invited to take part in this study. Their participation involves one, 1hour interview, at a venue of their choice, to discuss these issues. Samoan parents/caregivers from 12- 15 families will be interviewed in total, as well as five key informants.

### **Your Participation**

You have been invited to participate in this study because you have experience in working with Samoan parents as part of your occupation or research, and I believe you have invaluable knowledge of Samoan parenting practices that will provide contextual information and understanding for this research.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be part of a face-to-face, individual interview to discuss your view of the Samoan culture (fa'aSamoa), how this influences the parenting practices of Samoans in New Zealand, and its impact on their children's independent mobility and physical activity. I am also interested in the Samoan view of the terms 'parenting practices', 'independent mobility', and 'physical activity', and the concepts these represent. This interview will last approximately one hour and can take place where ever is convenient for you. Interviews will be audio-recorded. I will provide refreshments for this interview, and you will receive a \$30 koha for your time and participation. I will provide you with a paper copy (transcript) of your interview so that you may make changes if you feel the need too. I am happy to provide you with a summary of the findings if you would like this.

### **Please note:**

- Before you can participate in the study you will need to sign the consent form sent out with this information sheet.
- You don't have to agree to take part. Taking part in the project is completely voluntary.
- You can pull out of the study at any time and may remove any information you provide any time before 1st December, 2012.
- You can ask questions at any time.
- You can ask to have the tape recorder stopped at any time.
- Your name will not appear in anything that is written about the study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz

- The information you provide will only be seen by the researcher.

If you have any other questions or want to know more about my study, I can be contacted via email/text/call on:

**Nicola Tava'e**

SHORE and Whariki research Massey University [N.Tavae@massey.ac.nz](mailto:N.Tavae@massey.ac.nz)

Mob: 021 0629464      Wk: (09) 366 6136 ext 413-22

If you can't get a hold of me, feel free to contact my supervisor:

**Dr. Lanuola Asiasiga SHORE**

and Whariki research Massey  
University

[L.Asiasiga@massey.ac.nz](mailto:L.Asiasiga@massey.ac.nz)

**Tel:** (09) 366 6136

If you want to be part of the study please sign the consent form and return in the envelope provided. Thank you.

Manuia fa'afetai tele lava,

Nicola Tava'e

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)

## Appendix 2: Key Informant Consent Form



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SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### **Samoan Kids in the City: The Impact of Samoan Parenting Practices on Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity**

#### **KEY INFORMANT CONSENT FORM**

##### **Individual interview**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please read the following statements carefully, and sign where indicated at the bottom of this page.

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet provided.
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Key Informant Information Sheet.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself and any information that I have provided for this study at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I agree/do not agree to be audio-recorded.
- I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details: Ph:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)

## Appendix 3: Parent Information Sheet



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SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### **Samoan Kids in the City: The Impact of Samoan Parenting Practices on Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity**

#### PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

Talofa lava! My name is Nicola Tava'e and I am currently studying towards my PhD in Public Health at Massey University. You may recognize me from the 'Kids in the City' project. I am doing a study that follows on from the 'Kids in the City' project. I am interested in what the Samoan culture (fa'aSamoa) means to Samoan parents living in New Zealand, and how this influences the decisions they make that effect the independent movement and physical activity of their children. Being a New Zealand- born Samoan, it is my hope that through this study, I can learn more about the fa'aSamoa, and its influences on our children in New Zealand.

You have been invited to participate in this study because your child took part in the 'Kids in the City' project last year and have indicated you (and your child) are of Samoan descent.

Your participation requires taking part in one individual interview to discuss your view of the Samoan culture (fa'aSamoa), how this influences you as a parent, and how this influences where you allow your child to go and what you allow him/her to do. This interview will last approximately one hour and can take place where ever is convenient for you - at your home or another venue close to you. Interviews will be audio-recorded so the interview is not interrupted by note taking. I will provide refreshments for this interview, and you will receive a \$30 koha for your time and participation. I will provide you with a paper copy (transcript) of your interview so that you may make changes if you feel the need too. I will be conducting interviews with Samoan parents/caregivers from 12-15 families, and five key informants. Following this, I will provide you and other participants with a summary of the overall findings.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)

**Do you have any questions? Answers to some of the questions that you may have are answered here:**

- Before you can participate in the study you will need to sign the consent form sent out with this information sheet.
- You don't have to agree to take part. Taking part in the project is completely voluntary.
- You can pull out of the study at any time and may remove any information you provide any time before 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2012.
- You can ask us questions at any time.
- You can ask to have the tape recorder stopped at any time.
- Your name will not appear in anything that is written about the study.
- The information you provide will only be seen by the researcher.

If you have any other questions or want to know more about my study, I can be contacted via email/text/call on:

**Nicola Tava'e**

SHORE and Whariki research Massey University [N.Tavae@massey.ac.nz](mailto:N.Tavae@massey.ac.nz)

021 0629464

(09) 366 6136 ext 413-22

If you can't get a hold of me, feel free to contact my supervisor:

**Dr. Lanuola Asiasiga**

SHORE and Whariki  
research Massey University  
[L.Asiasiga@massey.ac.nz](mailto:L.Asiasiga@massey.ac.nz)

(09) 366 6136

If you want to be part of the study please sign the consent form and return in the envelope provided. Thank you.

Manuia fa'afetai tele lava, Nicola Tava'e

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)

## Appendix 4: Parent Consent Form



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SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### **Samoan Kids in the City: The Impact of Samoan Parenting Practices on Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity**

#### **PARENT CONSENT FORM**

##### **Interview**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please read the following statements carefully, and sign where indicated at the bottom of this page.

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet provided.
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Parent Information Sheet.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself and any information that I have provided for this study at any time prior to completion of data collection without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I agree/do not agree to be audio-recorded.
- I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.
- I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Details:** **Ph:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mob:** \_\_\_\_\_

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)

## Appendix 5: Interview Guide – Key Informant



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SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### INTERVIEW GUIDE – KEY INFORMANT

#### Questions:

1. Can you please tell me a bit about your work with Samoan parents of, or Samoan families with, young children?
2. Are there unique characteristics of a Samoan parent?
3. What key issues do you think Samoan parents face living in New Zealand compared to living in Samoa?
4. In your experience with Samoan parents, do you think the fa'aSamoa contributes to their parenting practices/the way they bring up their children? What is the impact of these practices on their children?
5. Do you think the length of residence in New Zealand affects how strong the fa'aSamoa is for Samoan parents/families? How? Do you think there is a certain length of time/point when Samoan families become acculturated to the 'way of life' in New Zealand? How do you think Samoans in New Zealand are able to maintain the fa'aSamoa in New Zealand?
6. Do you think there are Samoan values that impact how Samoan parents view their neighbourhood? Do these values/views influence how they let their children utilise their neighbourhood?
7. Do you think it is important for children to be independently mobile and physically active? Do you think Samoan parents think it is important for their children to be independently mobile and physically active?
8. What ways do you think Samoan children are/can be physically active?
9. What ways do you think Samoan children are/can be independently mobile?
10. What do you think needs to change to ensure Samoan children are physically active and independently mobile enough to get any health benefits?



## Appendix 6: Interview Guide - Parents



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School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### INTERVIEW GUIDE – PARENTS

#### Questions:

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family; how many children you have, how long you have lived here, things like that?

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD

2. When we hear the word 'neighbourhood' we think of different things. What does it mean to you?
3. I've got a street map of your local area that has a few features marked on it. Could you use this map to show me the important places in your neighbourhood?
4. Are there places that are important but are not on this map? What/Where are they?
5. What is your perception of a good neighbourhood?
6. Can you tell me a little bit about your experiences, as a parent, living in this neighbourhood?
7. In the Kids in the City project, Samoan parents identified safety issues as the main reason why they don't let their children go to places in the neighbourhood. Do you agree with this? What are some of the safety issues for you and your children living in this area?
8. Where do you see yourself living in 5-10 years from now?

#### FA'ASAMOA

9. Where were you born? Where did you spend most of your childhood?
10. Have you ever been to Samoa?
11. How often and in what form do you have contact with anyone in Samoa?  
i.e. call relatives once a week, or email a friend once a month.
12. What is your view of the fa'aSamoa? Is it important to you?
13. Are there Samoan traditions that you practice? If yes, what are they and how often do you practice this/these?
14. What do you think is a 'neighbourhood' in Samoa? How do you think this is different to a 'neighbourhood' in New Zealand?
15. Do you think there are differences for children growing up in Samoa to children growing up in New Zealand? Why/Why not?
16. What does it mean for you, to be Samoan?

**17.** Do you think fa'aSamoa changes the longer a Samoan lives in New Zealand? If yes, how do you think it changes? Does it change for everyone - parents, children etc?

IM & PA

**18.** Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like for you growing up? Did you run around your neighbourhood freely, play around in the streets with friends etc?

**19.** Do you think being a Samoan, influences how you view your neighbourhood? Why/Why not?

**20.** How does your view of your neighbourhood influence where you let your child go and who with?

**21.** Do you think your child is physically active? Do you think your child is independently mobile?

**22.** The Kids in the City project found that boys were allowed to go and do more in the neighbourhood than girls their age, across all ethnic groups. Why do you think there are gender differences in where children are allowed to go and do?

**23.** Do you think Samoan children are generally physically active? ...independently mobile? If yes, how?

**24.** Walking to and from school without an adult/older sibling is a large measure of children's independent mobility. The Kids in the City project found Other Pacific Island children walk to and from school more than Samoan children. Are you surprised by these results? How does your child get to and from school?

**25.** How do you think your child reacts to your decisions about where they are allowed to go and are not allowed to go? Do you think they understand the reason why you make those decisions?

**26.** There is evidence that Samoan youth in New Zealand view the fa'aSamoa values different to their parents. Is this an issue for you and your child? Was it an issue for you and your parents? Do you anticipate this to be an issue in the future with you and your child?

## Appendix 7: Follow Up Interview Guide



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SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Standard Questions:

1. Thinking back to what you allowed or did not allow your child to do or where to go two years ago, do you think your child understood why you made some of those decisions for him/her? Do you think he/she agreed with your decisions? Why/Why not?
2. So how have things changed over the past two years? Is there anywhere in your neighbourhood you let your child go by him/herself now that you didn't two years ago? Where? Would you say he/she is more/or less independent in his/her travel/play? How?

#### EXAMPLE OF PERSONALIZED QUESTIONS FOR EACH PARTICIPANT

##### Participant 2

Talofa Ana,

This is Nicola Fa'avale; you knew me as Nicola Tava'e before I got married. How are you?

I interviewed you nearly two years ago as part of my PhD studies through the Kids in the City project. We talked about what a neighbourhood is to you (compared to the neighbourhood or village in Samoa where you grew up). We also talked about your experience of being independently mobile and physically active around your village growing up as a child. I also asked you about being a Samoan child and parent, and how that influences the way you parent in NZ.

Would it be possible to double-check a few things we talked about?

##### Question 1:

In relation to loane's independent mobility, you had commented that ...

*"my son, because he knows all the kids from the school he used to go, so that's alright for him to go around on his bike around the front here, but we always keep our eyes on him...Yeah, we always have to see him. We always have to see him whenever he goes out there. Cause there's a lot of street kids around here."*

Thinking back to two years ago, what were some of your concerns about loane being out in your neighbourhood with the street kids?

##### Question 2:

Two years ago, do you think loane understood why you made some of those decisions for him? Do you think he agreed with your decisions? Why/Why not?

##### Question 3:

So how have things changed over the past two years? Where in your neighbourhood do you let

loane go by himself now that you didn't two years ago? Would you say he is more/or less independent in his travel/play? How?

Thank you so much for your time. I will be in touch again to give you a summary of the results.

## Appendix 8: Authority for the release of transcripts



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### **Samoan Kids in the City: The Impact of Samoan Parenting Practices on Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity**

#### AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name  
(Please  
print):**

.....

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)

## Appendix 9: Letter requesting approval for use of database



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### **Samoan Kids in the City: The Impact of Samoan Parenting Practices on Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity**

#### **Letter Requesting Approval for use of database**

Dear Associate Professor Karen Witten,

I am looking to conduct research that follows on from data collected in the Kids in the City (KITC) project. My particular interest is in how length of residence in New Zealand may determine the level of affiliation Samoan parents have with the Samoan culture (fa'aSamoa), and how parents incorporate these values in their parenting practices. I am interested in what the fa'aSamoa means to Samoan parents living in New Zealand, and how this influences the decisions they make in relation to the independent mobility (IM) and physical activity (PA) of their children.

The study arises out of concern over substantial declines in New Zealand children's IM and PA in recent decades, and associated increases in childhood obesity. Pacific children in particular, have the lowest PA rates and one of the highest obesity rates in New Zealand. There is little research on the IM of Pacific children in New Zealand. There is emerging evidence that neighbourhood social and physical environments can influence children's mobility and physical activity behaviours. Safety-conscious parenting practices, car reliance and auto-centric urban design have converged to produce children living increasingly sedentary lives. Add to this cultural traditions and beliefs, westernization and urbanization, and environmental factors; are these contributing to Pacific children living increasingly sedentary lives.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)

The KITC research project provides a large Samoan sample in which to explore the themes above. This study will further explore concepts of neighbourhood perception in relation to children's IM and PA, by focusing on the influence of culture (particularly the Samoan culture) on the parenting practices that determine these.

In order to achieve this, I am requesting access to the database of the Kids in the City project, in which I am able to invite Samoan parents from this data set. Samoan parents, who participated in the KITC project, will be invited to take part in this study. These potential participants will be selected from Kids in the City project participants who gave explicit permission to be re-contacted for further related research. Their participation involves one, 1hour interview, at a venue of their choice, to discuss these issues. Samoan parents/caregivers from 12-15 families will be interviewed, as well as five key informants. Initial contact inviting potential participants to participate in this research will be made via telephone. Those indicating their interest in participating will be given an information sheet and a consent form to complete.

The interviews will be semi-structured, with an outline of topics and key questions to provide the basic structure. Interviews will be audio-taped. All audio tapes will be transcribed, and transcriptions returned to participants for their feedback.

All information will be kept confidential and private. No one else will have access to such information except me, the researcher, in which participation in the study is completely voluntary. All signed paper files will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet at the Massey University. All computer files will be password protected. All paper files will be shredded/deleted after 10 years.

Thank you for considering approval for use of the KITC database for this research project. If you have any queries about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your reply.

Kind regards,

Nicola Tava'e PhD Student

SHORE and Whariki Research

School of Public Health Massey University N.Tavae@massey.ac.nz (09) 366 6136 ext 413-22

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz

## Appendix 10: Approval for use of database



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

SHORE and Whariki Research  
School of Public Health,  
Massey University Level 7, 90  
Symonds Street, Auckland, NZ  
[www.shore.ac.nz](http://www.shore.ac.nz) (09) 366 6136

### **Samoan Kids in the City: The Impact of Samoan Parenting Practices on Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity**

#### APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF DATABASE

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet provided.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered to my satisfaction.
- I give approval for the use of the 'Kids in the City' database as a source of recruiting potential participants for this research.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name  
(printed):**

.....

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application MUHECN 12/040. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Dianne Gardner, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 41225, email: [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)