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**Continuity and change: Education policy and  
historiography of education in Western Samoa**

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**This thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Education in the Faculty of Arts, Education and Social  
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## Abstract

This thesis explores the theme of continuity and change in Western Samoan education. It does so by looking at recent policy documents and at accounts of the history of education in Western Samoa written over more than a century. It compares the treatments of continuity and change in the policy documents and in the histories to show the extent to which both reflect a similar view of the place of continuity and change in Western Samoan culture and education.

The study documents and analyses current education policies and strategies in Western Samoa through the two key documents which outline the broad policy directions for education and the strategies for achieving them, respectively, supplemented by Department of Education Annual Reports. It outlines the process of redeveloping policies from early to mid-1990s and the general character of the policies as a whole, and looks more closely at statements of the purposes of education, curriculum and pedagogy, and outcomes of the policies in terms of the distribution of educational provision and participation in education. Throughout, these policies are shown to reflect concern with both the maintenance of traditional Samoa culture – the *fa'aSamoa* – and the need to change to adapt to the demands of a modern global economy.

It also examines a range of historical accounts of Western Samoa and, in particular, the history of education through four periods of development: traditional society, the missionary period, colonial rule, and early independent Western Samoa. It uses three types of account: accounts that are written in, or close to the periods to which they refer, such as missionary accounts of Western Samoan society and education in what is identified as the missionary period; late twentieth century histories of Western Samoa; and historical overviews used to frame late twentieth century official reports. The analysis of these accounts focuses on the purposes of education in different periods, curriculum and pedagogy, and the outcomes of education, again in terms of the distribution of educational provision and participation in education. It analyses these histories in terms of continuity and change, and argues that such histories suggest that Western Samoan history has always been characterised by a balance between continuity and change: the *fa'aSamoa* has adapted to changing circumstances in ways that have allowed it to maintain core values, but resisted changes that would threaten those core values.

Finally, the thesis compares the understandings of the ways in which continuity and change have been balanced as suggested in the histories with those to be found in the policy documents. It argues that throughout its history, Western Samoa has maintained the strength of its indigenous tradition and cultural values. At the same time, since the arrival of the missionaries, it has selectively welcomed and adopted western practices and values, simultaneously adapting itself to them, and them to its own traditional practices and values. Current policies appear to continue this tradition of selective adaptation to change while continuing to maintain core values of the *fa'aSamoa*. This suggests that the policies are well calculated both to hold the support of the Western Samoan people, and to enable Western Samoa to hold its place in the global community.

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## Introduction

### Defining the Problem

This thesis documents current educational policy in Western Samoa. It shows how that policy relates education to themes of continuity and change, tradition and modernisation (or westernisation), and it seeks to construct desirable possibilities for a Western Samoan future. It also explores the ways in which accounts of the history of Western Samoa, and of Western Samoan education in particular, provide understandings of the *fa'aSamoa* which reveal themes of continuity and change. The thesis reveals how the *fa'aSamoa* itself has progressively assimilated missionary and colonial influences into the education and upbringing of children. The thesis focuses on three main aspects of education, namely, the purposes of education, curriculum and pedagogy, and the outcomes of educational policy and practice. It is argued that while it acknowledges the importance of the traditional Samoan way of life – the *fa'aSamoa* – the current educational policy is strongly oriented to change. Furthermore, historical accounts about the education and upbringing of Samoan children indicate a generally positive view of the changes which followed the establishment of close contact with the West following the arrival of missionaries in the early nineteenth century.

These histories recognise both strong continuity in Samoan culture, and the processes of mutual adaptation of westernised changes to traditional practices and values. They see change and continuity as essentially harmonious and as enriching rather than disrupting or threatening the core values of Western Samoan culture and society. Where they are strongly critical of changes introduced by westerners, as during the period of German government in the early twentieth century, these changes are seen to have attempted to undermine and disrupt traditional practices. This interpretation of Western Samoan histories provides a context for understanding both current policy and current debate over policy. It suggests that Western Samoan society and culture has a long tradition of adopting, and adapting to western influences, without significant social disruption, and that a key to this relatively harmonious development has been the capacity to adapt such changes to the *fa'aSamoa*. Lastly, but not the least, the thesis will argue that this historical perspective on the present suggests that the continuing process of modernisation will

need to continue to recognise and respect the strength of Samoan traditions if it is not to introduce undue and unwanted tensions, disharmonies and disruptions into Western Samoan society.

Currently, there are two opposing schools of thought among Western Samoans, especially among parents, regarding various aspects of Westernisation in contemporary education. Coxon (1996) noted the divisions over education, and the direction of educational development at the time of the 1988 elections, with one party (the incoming government) promising to revert to the pre-1987 system (p. 188). Some parents believe that contemporary education has brought dramatic negative influences to the lives of their school children as for example, the imposition of English language for wider use in schools instead of the Samoan mother tongue (Dunlop, 1986; Spolsky, 1991; Denoon, 1997). The exposure of children to a variety of lifestyle images on television and video presents another dilemma for parents. Ahlborg (1991), among others, claims that parents and some government officials are against contemporary education methods, because they can lead to the problem of 'brain drain' or loss of professionals from the local labour force.

According to such parents, the present system of education appears to be incompatible with Samoan ideas of nature, nurture and indigenous culture; they claim that the new technologies and contemporary education have weakened the vitality of *fa'aSamoa* or the Samoan way of life and its values. Further, they suggest that these developments have contributed to new problems such as high suicide rates, murder, theft, family break-up, anti-Christian attitudes and other anti-social behaviour.

Other parents hold the view that life is not static but always in motion. For them, the old Western Samoa and its 'backwardness' has faded away and the new modernised Samoa should be welcomed. They have come to accept that new technological knowledge, curricular and pedagogical strategies and other aspects of modernisation in contemporary education can improve the present and the future for their children. Such indigenous acceptance of current education in Western Samoa has further driven the aspirations of modern parents for their children to do well in their studies in order to get overseas scholarship awards or for them to migrate abroad in order to receive a better education.

From the perspective of government, it is crucial to develop policies that tread carefully between these opposite views, so as not to alienate parents from

educational developments, but to cultivate their support, and the participation of their children. At the same time, government must develop policies, strategies and practices that satisfy the developmental demands of outside bodies, such as the World Bank and the Asia-Pacific Development Bank for modernisation, as conditions of continuing aid and economic support.

### **Researcher Standpoint**

My approach to the topic, and my initial perspectives on it, are shaped by my social, cultural and educational positions. As an indigenous Western Samoan, I have drawn on my own personal experiences of being born, raised and educated in a Samoan milieu. I have experienced, and benefited from, the availability of education in the village in which I was raised, where elders, chiefs and parents taught traditional cultural values to their children. Here, through close observation and imitation, I learned the structure, rules and regulations of Samoan society, and learned to appreciate their value for us as a people. Here, too, I was immersed in practices that demonstrate both continuity and change in the *fa'aSamoa*, in a Samoan approach to society and life which I came to understand had its roots in a culture which existed well before the arrival of Westerners, but which also showed the impact of the culture they brought.

As a Samoan chief holding the title of *TuiSalevao*, conferred upon me by the *Faleula o Samoa* (Auva'a, 1995), I have a deep appreciation of and respect for Samoan traditional social structures and knowledge, an appreciation further developed in my position as Secretary of the Department of Education Committee of High Talking Chiefs responsible for officially overseeing the operation of the chiefly, or *matai*, system and the historical and genealogical lineages it embodies. As a graduate in History and Samoan Studies of the National University of Samoa, I have a strong sense of the importance of the oral traditions of the Samoan people, our pre-Western history, and our experiences since contact with the Europeans.

As a Christian, I have a special appreciation of the value of our Western inheritance, not only for the broad influence of Christian religion in Samoan society as a whole, but more tangibly and specifically in terms of the role of the missions in providing education. I look back with appreciation on the Christian expectations of my parents and the village community, and the learning done in Sunday School sessions and Family Evening Service (*Lotu Afiafi*), where parents and all of their

children attended to worship their God in heaven, for thanksgiving, forgiveness and blessing. As an ordained minister of a Pentecostal church for four years, I add to this sense of the value of the church in village life, my knowledge of the role of the church in nurturing individual members of the congregation.

I also remember the subjects that were taught at the Pastor's School, or *Aoga Faifeau*: Bible reading, memorising the Samoan alphabet and writing simple sentences, basic Arithmetic and general history. Competition among students and the anxious and excited reactions of parents to their children as exam candidates were common. For about ten years, I was employed as a government secondary teacher, as a temporary employee in the main office of the Department of Education, and as a public servant for the Government of Samoa. As a result of my involvement and participation in education, I have a deep interest in the future direction of education in Western Samoa. Thus, while the research attempts to represent fairly and accurately both the policies and the histories which are used to provide perspective on the policies, the questions posed reflect my interest in the balance between continuity and change, and my own experience in this regard.

These varied experiences inevitably shape my understanding of the *fa'aSamoa* as embracing both continuity and change – tradition and modernisation – and of the relations between Western and indigenous elements in Western Samoan society and culture and education, both in the past and in the present. Inevitably, therefore, my research cannot be described as value free or unbiased. Nevertheless, it aims to be scholarly and rigorous, and to make an informed contribution to the debate on future directions for Western Samoan society and education. The work aims to provide a reflection on education and society, past and present, as a basis for considering what needs to be done for the future. It does this with a view to appreciating both the continuities and discontinuities, and understanding ways in which the *fa'aSamoa* has absorbed and utilised missionary, colonial and postcolonial influences on the education and general upbringing of children. These changes and developments, I suggest, indicate possibilities for educational policies that embrace change without losing the culture, tradition and values of the *fa'aSamoa*.

## Sources and Methods

The thesis involves textual analysis of two types of documents: policy and related texts, mainly since the mid 1990s, and a variety of texts which provide accounts of the history of Western Samoan society and education. These texts are analysed to show themes of continuity and change, highlighting the importance of both the traditional *fa'aSamoa* and modernisation, and showing how the *fa'aSamoa* has adopted changes from 'outside', simultaneously adapting them to itself, and adapting itself to them, both in present-day Western Samoa and in what is understood to have happened in the past. The documents are analysed in particular to show the purposes portrayed for education, preferred approaches to pedagogy and curriculum, and the outcomes of Western Samoan education. These are further examined to show how they can be seen as embodying continuity and change, and how notions of continuity and change are related to the *fa'aSamoa*. Finally, these accounts of continuity and change in the past and in the present will be compared to show the degree of correspondence between them, and to show how accounts of continuity and change create an understanding of potential needs in contemporary Western Samoa, and of the ways in which current policy might successfully balance them.

The key current policy documents are *Education Policies 1995-2005* (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a) and *Education Strategies 1995-2005* (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995b). These are supplemented by the annual reports of the Western Samoan Department of Education (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1996; 1997; 1998, 1999b; 2000b) and other recent government reports (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1999a; 2000a). Some scholarly commentary on current policy and developments is also used to indicate the context in which policy is being shaped (Ahlburg, 1991; Afamasaga, 2000; Coxon, 1996; Denoon, 1997; Dunlop; 1986; Macpherson, Belford & Spoonley, 2000; Spolsky, 1991; Tavana, Hite & Randall, 1997).

The thesis draws on three types of historical accounts of Western Samoa. There are numerous nineteenth and early twentieth century accounts, including, notably works by missionaries, travellers and government agents (e.g., Williams & Barff, n.d.; Barradale, 1907), many of which are not only primary sources for the period in which they are written, but provide a historical background to the time of

writing, often including impressions of what the past, especially the ‘traditional’ past, was like.

There are also more or less recent amateur and academic accounts of particular historical periods or developments. Among older studies are those of Watson (1918), Fletcher (1920), Keesing (1978 [originally 1934]), Ellison (1938) and Grattan (1948), while more recent accounts are provided by westerners such as Gray (1960), Davidson (1967), Pitt (1970), Gilson (1970) and Wood (1975), and Samoan historians such as Wendt (1966), Efi (1975), Va’a (1978), Sio (1984), Meleisea (1987a; 1987b; 1992) and Tuimalealiifano (1990). Many official reports (e.g., Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980; World Bank Project, 1992) on aspects of society and education also include historical sketches to provide a sense of background and origins of the matters presently under consideration. For recent periods, there are also accounts of various aspects of education, such as those by Barrington (1976), Baldauf (1975), Banks (1977), Lowe (1981), Huebner (1986), Gannicott (1990), lo Bianco and Liddicoat (1991), Jones, Meek and Weeks (1991), Ma’ia’i (1957; 1960), Ala’ilima (1964), Galo (1967), Tavana, Hite and Randall (1997) and Tanielu (1997). These historical and educational accounts are supplemented by a variety of anthropologists’ accounts (e.g., Mead, 1928; Freeman, 1983) of what they see as surviving aspects of traditional Samoan culture and society.

Despite the large number of sources, the historiography of Western Samoan society and education is limited in several important ways. First, there is, and indeed cannot be, any comprehensive or thorough written account of Samoan society before the arrival of Europeans in the early nineteenth century. What written accounts there are necessarily offer backward projections of traditional society based on observations of what are deemed traditional practices in a much later period. Second, there is a Eurocentric bias and organising focus apparent in many of the histories. For example, accounts from and of the nineteenth century focus principally on matters of concern to missionaries and rely heavily on documents and perspectives of the missionaries. There is a similar Western perspective, this time from a New Zealand viewpoint, on histories for much of the colonial period. This perspective leads many of the Western accounts, including some relatively recent studies, to talk in deficit terms. Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984), for example, discuss ‘traditional’ Samoan education in terms of what it *lacked*, rather than in

terms of what it possessed, stating that it was conducted ‘*without* a written language, *without* a stated course of study, and *without* formal schools or professional teachers’ (pp. 205-206, my italics). Third, there is very little literature written in English concerning the period of German colonial rule. Finally, only a small number of indigenous Western Samoans have had sufficient levels of formal education to write histories from a Samoan perspective, and of those, only a small proportion focused on educational or social history.

Further limitations, from the point of view of this study, lie in the fact that the majority of Western writers have concentrated on government, the people, the economy and ‘exotic’ aspects of the culture, or on matters central to their own interests, such as religion, in the case of missionaries, while the systematic treatment of the history of education in Western Samoa has received little attention. Notable exceptions in this regard are studies by Pitt (1970) and Keesing (1978; 1975). Certainly, no comprehensive interpretation of the history of education in Western Samoa has been published. Similarly, there are no thorough historical studies of such central aspects of education in Western Samoa as purposes, curriculum and pedagogy and outcomes of Western Samoan education. Finally, there has been no attempt to conduct a systematic discussion of the relationship between historical understandings of continuity and change in Western Samoan society and education, and the approach to continuity and change in contemporary policy.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to draw out such themes through the history of Samoa, and to trace, from the histories, the gradual adoption of western ideas and practices in the development of Western Samoan society and education, and the adaptation of those ideas to its own traditional ideas and practices. This provides a framework for noticing and reflecting on the positions adopted in policy and related documents regarding continuity and change, tradition and modernisation, the *fa’aSamoa* and westernisation.

## **Structure**

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction which sets the scene for this study. It outlines both traditional understandings of the origins of Samoan, and the main features of traditional Samoan society. It sketches the early Samoan contacts with Europeans, and the general changes in Samoan society through its nineteenth century contact

with missions and missionaries. It notes the pact between western powers for the division of Samoa between German and the United States and for German rule of Western Samoa, and outlines the impact of the German administration and economic intervention. It also examines the impact of New Zealand rule after the transfer of colonial control from Germany as a consequence of World War One, and the moves after World War Two to establish independent Western Samoan government. Finally, it documents developments in the early years of Western Samoan independence and the key features of contemporary Western Samoan government, society and economy.

Chapter 2 explores contemporary Western Samoan educational policy. It outlines briefly the approach to policy adopted in the thesis, and the process of policy development in Western Samoa since about 1990. It provides an overview of the main features of education policy outlined in the *Education Policies 1995-2005* and *Educational Strategies 1995-2005*, before proceeding to a more detailed analysis of their treatment of the purposes of education, curriculum and pedagogy, and the outcomes of post-1995 initiatives. Finally, it provides a general interpretation of the ways these documents deal with questions of continuity and change, tradition and modernisation.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine representations of each aspect of education in the traditional and missionary periods as well as colonial and early independence periods, as they appear in various histories and in recent policy and policy-related documents. Chapter 5 draws together these historical representations and contemporary policy statements. It explores the balance between continuity and change and expresses the view that while there continue to be strong social and cultural reasons to maintain the *fa'aSamoa*, outside pressures, and the need for change, cannot be avoided. It argues that the ways in which the balance struck in the policy documents corresponds to the balance which is seen to have been formed in earlier historical periods, and suggests that this indicates that current policies are formed within the historically demonstrated capacity of Samoan society to adapt to change, and are thus well judged to maintain an appropriate balance between the competing forces for both tradition and modernisation.

## Chapter One

### Setting the scene

Western Samoa is situated in what Samoans traditionally call *Samoa i Sisifo*. It is the western islands of the Samoan group, 80 miles from *Samoa i Sasa'e*, now known as American Samoa. The combination of the western and eastern islands form what is commonly known as the Navigator Archipelago. According to Samoan tradition, it is the centre of the world. On most published maps of the world, it is located roughly north east of Fiji and north west of Tonga in the mid-Southern Pacific Ocean. In geography textbooks and atlases, Western Samoa is described as being located between 13-15 degrees south of the Equator and between 170-173 degrees west of Greenwich near the city of London, the place which such maps take as their point of east-west reference. To speak of the location of Samoa in these various terms is to see it in relation to different traditions of knowledge and culture: its own traditions independent of and prior to any contact with the non-Pacific world and the West, and those of the West.

Western Samoa comprises four inhabited islands namely *Savaii* (the largest island), *Upolu* (the main island where *Apia*, the capital of Western Samoa is located and *Manono* and *Apolima* (the smaller islands). The islands of *Nu'usafe'e*, *Nu'utele*, *Nu'ulua*, *Namu'a*, *Fanuatapu* and others are uninhabited. Many of these islands were formed by a series of volcanic eruptions. They are generally flat around the coastal areas with a mountainous interior. Commonly, the soil is fertile and rich in manure, which allows a variety of natural vegetation to grow. Numerous rivers flowing from the mountains provide fertile soil for agricultural growth and sufficient water for human use. The environment is clean and free from pollution. Despite the frequent occurrence of tropical cyclones and other natural hazards, the physical beauty of its sea-shores, mountains, valleys and evergreen forests makes Samoa a great Pacific paradise.

The climate is equable and semi-tropical with two seasons. The Wet season normally begins in November and finishes in April while the Dry season falls between the months of May and October. The south-east trades or prevailing winds have cooling effect around July and August and they are often modified by refreshing sea breezes while the north-westerly cyclonic period causes discomfort and poses a threat of danger roughly from December to March. The annual rainfall

averages about 280 centimetres and is sometimes torrential. The average daily temperature is 27 degrees and humidity levels can reach 75 percent.

### **Origins and Characteristics**

Samoaan culture was traditionally an oral culture. Knowledge of Samoa's past, like all other forms of knowledge, was passed from one generation to another by word of mouth, mostly in the form of stories that not only related events but embodied values, beliefs, laws and rules governing daily life and ritual. According to oral tradition, the history of the Samoan islands began between approximately six hundred and one thousand years ago. Originally, the name *Samoa* was derived from a Samoan legend about a married couple called *Papa* (the husband) and *Eleele* (the wife) who lived in *Manu 'a* island a very long time ago. In the legend, when *Eleele* became pregnant, the child developed quickly causing upward movements in the top part of her stomach, which Samoans called *moa*, meaning heart. When *Tagaloaalagi*, who resided in heaven and was a sacred traditional Samoan god, saw the movement of the child in the woman's belly, he ordered the couple to name him *Moa* to commemorate the strong movement he had witnessed. When the baby was born, the holy commandment or wish was fulfilled and the unseen consequences behind this wish contributed to the name Samoa, as the legend continues:

When Eleele had her baby boy, *Salevao*, the devil appeared and said to the couple, 'You must name the boy *Moa*, according to the wishes of *Tagaloaalagi*.' The couple did so. At midnight, the couple heard the birds crow. Then *Salevao* said, 'Let those birds which are crowing be named *Moa* too like the boy as they have crowed to signal the birth of the boy.' So the birds (fowls) came to be known as *Moa* also. *Salevao* told the couple to take the boy to be bathed in a rock pool that he had prepared. At dawn, the boy was bathed in the pool. *Salevao* then said, 'This pool is sacred (*sa*) to the boy *Moa*.' So the pool came to be known as sacred (*sa*) to *Moa*, later known as *Samoa* (Sio, 1984, p. 3).

Samoaans also have their own accounts of their origins and birth as a people. They claimed that they did not naturally originate on this planet but, rather, that they were the remnants of the highest god, *Tagaloaalagi*, as in the following account:

There was a man and a woman. The name of the man was *Afimusaesae*, the woman *Mutalali*. They had a

child, a boy named *Papaele*. *Papaele* married *Papasosolo* and they had a son, *Papanofo*. *Papanofo* married *Papatu*, and their son was named *Fatutu*. *Fatutu* married *Maataanoa* and their son was called *Tapufiti*. *Tapufiti* married *Mutia* and they named their son *Mauutoga*. *Mauutoga* married *Sefa*. There was no child. So *Sefa* married *Vaofali*. They had no child either. *Vaofale* then married *Taataa* and they had a son called *Mautofu*. *Mautofu* married *Tavai* and their child was called *Toi*. *Toi* married *Fuafua* and their child was called *Masame*. *Masame* married *Mamala* and their son was called *Mamalava*. *Mamalava* married *Malili* but there was no child. *Malili* then married *Tapuna* and *Vaololoa* was born. These are all the trees of the forest.

*Tagaloaalagi* looked down from the heavens and saw that the trees had grown very tall, almost reaching to his heaven. So he sent his servant *Fue*, a creeper vine, to remedy this. *Fue* crept among the tree tops weighing them down and as a result, the tree tops were bent down towards the earth. *Tagaloaalagi* sent another of his servants, *Tuli*, to survey the earth. *Tuli* reported back to *Tagaloaalagi* and said, 'The trees on the earth are growing well, but it is sad that the food bearing trees cannot grow because *Fue* has become luxuriant and thick down there.' *Tagaloaalagi* then gave *Tuli* another tree with which to beat down *Fue*. *Fue* fell to the ground and he has remained there ever since. *Tuli* was sent down again to re-survey the earth. *Tuli* went down and saw that *Fue* had rotted, and in the rotting remains huge maggots were moving about. *Tuli* went back to *Tagaloaalagi* and told him about this. *Tagaloaalagi* then sent *Tuli* and a spirit called *Gaio* (sinuous mover). *Gaio* created man out of these maggots.

The head was made first. *Gaio* said, 'This is the head.' *Tuli* answered, 'My name should be included in that part.' This is why one part of the head is called *tuliulu* (back of the head). *Gaio* said, 'This is the stomach.' *Tuli* said, 'My name should also be mentioned here.' Hence we have *tulimanava* (the loins). *Galo* said, 'This is a hand.' Mention my name there also, ' said *Tuli*. Thus we have *tulilima* (the elbow). Likewise all the other parts of the body. From then on, we have called the elbow joint and knee joint *tulilima* and *tulivae* respectively (Lufilufi, 1987, p. 101).

Further, according to this account, the Samoan people were reincarnated and then existed as human beings. They could reincarnate into various forms such as lizards, pigs, dogs and chickens. In other words, people mingled with spirit

reincarnations and they adapted to that type of living. They enjoyed marriage amongst themselves and created their own human population.

Oral traditions also recount how in early times Samoans were involved in village *malaga* or local trips for traditional ceremonial and trading purposes. These *malaga* sometimes ended up in what Samoans called *aumoega*, traditional village parties which moved and slept over to arrange or engage a marriage between one of the sons and usually a high chief's daughter or *taupou* (a ceremonial princess) of another village. The practice of polygamy was very common, and a man with many wives was praised. Later, there was communication with neighbouring countries, such as Fiji and Tonga, and intermarriage with those peoples as well (Meleisea, 1987a).

During the late fourteenth century of the Western Christian era, fierce competition for societal ranks arose. In the late fifteenth century, the first *Tafa'ifa* (holder of four kingly titles) was conferred upon *Salamasina*. Between the early sixteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, rivalry among the villages and chiefs continued for *malo*, or what formed the Samoan equivalent of the Western term 'government': they fought for kingly status and the prestige of anointing a ruler from their own community.

Traditionally, the conduct of village life was governed through a complex age and gender-related status system (Rose, 1959; Duranti, 1994; Ochs, 1982). According to Meleisea (1987b), the core of the *fa'aSamoa*, or Samoan way of life, was the *fa'amatai* or chiefly system. Central to this system, at village level, was a ranked series of houses. The highest ranked house is the *fale-o-matai* (house of chiefs), consisting of a high chief, orators or talking chiefs, and other chiefs of different ranks representing their own families. The *matai* (chiefs) were nominated by their *aiga potopoto* or extended families, and their secular significance in society relied heavily not on economic status but rather on their superior political rank (Meleisea, 1987a; Rose, 1959). Different posts within the house signified the rank of the chiefs, corresponding to the family title the chief held. Within this system, the *ulu* (heads of their families) and higher ranking chiefs had absolute authority (*pule*) over all other family and village members, and had responsibility for such matters as titles (*suafa*), genealogies (*gafa*) and customary land (*fanua*). As custodians of ceremonial knowledge, they collectively determined who would participate in the *fa'atau* and the *sivaloa* (oratory competitions among chiefs to determine who will

present the *lauga* or speech on ceremonial occasions) (Duranti, 1994). All matters concerning the welfare of the village, including disputes, were discussed and resolved at this level; moreover, it was the chiefs who represented the village at the district (*itumalo*) level.

The second level was commonly known as the house of *faletua-ma-tausi* and comprised the *faletua* (chief's wives) and *tausis* (talking chief's wives). As female partners assisting the chiefs, they were responsible for the welfare of the village community.

At the third level was the house of *taulele'a* or *aumaga*, the young untitled men, who rendered service by supporting the chiefs in all aspects of social life as well as providing labour for many purposes. Holmes (1974) claims that this group was 'the strength of the village' (p. 31), since it was they who carried out the heaviest and most difficult duties and were responsible for serving the village, their chiefs and families. They planted crops, gathered coconuts and fished. They also had important ceremonial roles, for example, in the kava ceremony in the house of chiefs, and cooking a range of foods for such occasions (Holmes, 1974). They were responsible, too, for their sisters' welfare and behaviour (c.f. Freeman, 1983). Their relationship to the chief, as his servant (*taule'ale'a*), was likened to that between father and son. A good servant was seen as one who never argued with his chief, and his service was highly recognised if he worked hard, fast and efficiently in performing his duties. The son of the village high chief (*alii*) or talking chief (*tulafale*) always became the *manaia* or ceremonial prince, with a range of traditionally defined ceremonial tasks. When he married he became the head and supervisor of the group, and was treated as the *taule'ale'a matua* or senior untitled man regardless of age and maturity.

The fourth level was the house of *aualuma*, which represented the wives of the untitled men. It was their responsibility to work under the leadership of the chiefs' wives and carry out similar roles in village communities. While both *aumaga* and *aualuma* lack the status conferred by title, they were granted recognition on the basis of their contributions to village life.

The *Tinifu* was a traditionally unmarked group consisting of male and female youngsters. They were subordinate to, and expected to respect, not only their own biological parents and families but all mature-aged people in their environment. Under

the surveillance of village chiefs and elders, the members of this group were required to show ethical behaviour in their duties. During adolescence, sibling behaviour was regulated by brother-sister relationships taboo (*feagaiga*) (Freeman, 1983).

Not only ceremonial and the government of village life, but indeed all aspects of social life, were highly structured by status, and most roles and relationships were determined by rank in the village and beyond. Yet high status did not exempt its possessors from physical labour, and at times, chiefs worked in making *afa* or sinnets, building Samoan canoes and crafts, and other related activities.

It is worth noting here that, as I pointed out in the Introduction (pp. 4-5), these accounts of traditional Samoan life and culture depend in large measure on backward projections from observations, often by non-Samoans, of mid and late nineteenth and early and mid twentieth century Samoan communities. They are, therefore, highly problematic as accounts of what ‘pre-contact’ Samoa was like, even when enriched by accounts from Samoan oral traditions. However, they are useful, in the context of this thesis, in two respects. They provide *representations* of ‘the traditional past’ which can function as powerful symbols against which present developments might be measured, and against which Samoans and others might respond to changes, perceiving them as either threatening or otherwise. Second, and precisely because they are perceived as traditional practices in contexts in which Western society and culture have already had a marked impact, they indicate clearly the strong continuity and resilience of traditional culture and both the distinctiveness, and the sense of distinctiveness among Samoans, of their way of life, especially in the villages.

It is equally important to note, here, the prevalence of essentialist characterisations of Samoan people and culture. Referring to Samoan culture, for example, Barradale (1907) said it was ‘far from... happy and attractive’ (p. 47), Pitt (1970) described it as ‘irrational’ (p. 5), and Keesing (1975) regarded it as primitive. For Mead (1928), it was free and peaceful, McKay (1968) said it was communal rather than individualistic, and characterised by peace and harmony, and Kramer (1995) saw traditional Samoan life as pleasant. Freeman (1983), in contrast, depicted it as competitive and difficult. Referring to the people and their character, or nature, Barradale (1907) described them as religious and very superstitious, de la Perouse, variously, as sexually free, and as aggressive and de Bougainville as ‘fearless’.

Whether these are couched in positive (romantic) or negative (primitivist) terms, they are a simplistic response to complexity, and tend to impute a changelessness, more characteristic of nature than of culture, to Samoan people and their ways of life. Such essentialising can easily go hand in hand with a tendency to equate ‘true’ Samoan culture and practices with the past, and with a corresponding denial of the legitimacy of change within traditional culture.

### **Early Western Contact**

From the written records, it appears that Samoans’ first contact with Europeans was with de la Perouse; certainly he is the first European navigator who recorded having landed on Samoan soil, in 1787, in search of water. (Earlier visitors in Samoan seas – such as the Dutch navigator, Joseph Roggeveen, in 1722, or the French navigator Louis de Bougainville who named Samoa the Navigator Islands, and who produced an early characterisation of the Samoans, paddling their canoes towards him, as ‘fearless sailors of the sea’ – did not land or make direct contact; Keesing, 1975). De la Perouse’s encounter produced the first of a long line of quite different ‘exotic’ visions of Samoan life and character, as his crew misinterpreted the half-naked appearance of Samoan girls as a sign of their easy sexual availability. It produced perhaps the first conflict, too, as this misinterpretation of Samoan practice led to physical confrontation which resulted in deaths of some of the crew members, and the further characterisation of Samoans as aggressive human beings.

Between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, European whalers and traders were attracted to Samoa as a port of supply, while escaped criminal prisoners from New South Wales, Tasmania and Norfolk Island and others settled there, and introduced such skills as using and fixing muskets and new tools for building *fautasi* (longboats). During this period, more inter-communication by sea had developed in Samoa, and some Samoans were recruited as crew on ships sailing to other Pacific Islands and as far as Australia. One conspicuous event of this international affiliation was the attempt to introduce Christianity in the 1820s led by a Samoan sailor named *Sio Vili* (Meleisea, 1987b), alongside the growing import of other western material including few exotic iron and steel tools, gun powder and iron nails.

## The Missionary Era

In 1830 the London Missionary Society missionary John Williams and his fleet arrived in Samoa. They were able to secure acceptance relatively easily, by first approaching the King of Samoa, *Malietao Vainupo*, who converted and was baptised. In this, the missionaries, with their message of a heavenly King, were undoubtedly assisted by an old prophecy to the first king of Samoa, by the war goddess *Nafanua*, to await the ruler of his kingdom from heaven. Following his conversion, he instructed his people to accept Christianity, exercising the *pule* or absolute authority which lay in the hands of the Samoan *matai* or chiefs. Other missions followed over the remainder of the nineteenth century: Wesleyans, Roman Catholics, Mormons and Seven Day Adventists (Gilson, 1970; Wood, 1975). (Later, and into the twentieth century, other groups were to arrive, including Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of the Nazarene, the Baha'i Faith and Pentecostal churches.)

The Samoa to which the missionaries came was still characterised by the struggles over lands, titles and genealogies between and among kinship families and district alliances noted already (Watson, 1918). In this context, the early missionaries sought, and were often able to secure, the position of mediators (Rowe et al, 1930). Their initial favourable reception, the formal conversion of large numbers of villages, and the position they were able to establish for themselves as peacemakers enabled the missionaries to introduce a number of changes to Samoan cultural practices, over and above the material changes which had accompanied early Samoan contacts with the West, including the abolition of tattooing for both men and women, polygamy and the *poula* (village night dances) (Coté, 1997).

This initial success can be seen as early example of what I argue through this thesis is the Samoan capacity to adopt practices from 'outside', and simultaneously adapt to them, and adapt them to their own traditions and needs: Christianity changed the religious culture of Samoa substantially, and had an impact on a range of traditional cultural practices; yet it was taken up within, and without challenge to, the traditional *matai* social system, and indeed, was used to resolve conflicts arising within that system.

When *Malietao Vainupo* died, the missionaries' privileged position changed. Both his successors and their rivals opposed them, claiming that they had caused dispossession of Samoan traditional culture and customs essential to the

Samoa way of life. To the Samoan chiefs, this included not only the significance of Samoan culture and traditions but also their roles in the Samoan villages; as they secured the loyalty of their converts, they came to form alternative centres of authority to the chiefs themselves (Barradale, 1907).

### **The Colonial Era**

In the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, the political situation in Samoa became intertwined with the colonial appetites of Germany, Britain and the United States. According to Meleisea (1987a), these nations acted like three large dogs snarling over a very small bone, and they almost fought one another. In 1899, the Great Britain ceded its interests in Samoa to Germany, and the Islands were divided into an eastern territory under the control of the United States and a western group (present-day Western Samoa), comprising *Upolu*, *Savaii*, *Manono* and *Apolima*, under German control.

The annexation of Western Samoa by German was driven by both economical and political considerations. As part of its economic agenda, Germany established the Deutsche Handels and Plantagen Gesselchaft in close association with the government. German rule was harsh, and imposed heavy labour for little return, taxes and the take-over of native land, and resulted in some serious confrontations. Faced with Samoan resistance, the Germans recruited Chinese and Melanesian indentured labour, further inflaming Samoan hostilities.

Colonial rule also attacked Samoan traditional structures of authority and governance, and imposed a range of prohibitions and regulations on Samoan social activity. The *Tupu Samoa* or King of Samoa was removed from the long-standing kingship system, although they did temporarily recognise the importance of the chiefly system, and co-opted the *Alii sili* (paramount chief), *Mataafa Iosefo*, to their colonial office. They also appointed village representatives, and Samoan advisers and councils as part of the structure of government. At the same time, colonial rulers enforced colonial laws and regulations, dispossessed Samoans of their guns, and imposed a prohibition on Chinese and Melanesians, mixing with the 'natives' (Meleisea, 1987a). (These had been brought as indentured labourers in the early years of the German administration to work in the plantations as well as to overcome the

shortage of labour, since Samoans were reluctant to engage in regular paid employment.)

In a major response, conservative natives particularly Samoan leaders became antagonistic towards the German administration. In 1908, these grievances led to the formation of an opposition movement called the *Mau a Pule* headed by a traditional chief, *Namulauulu Lauaki Mamoe*; the Germans quickly sought to put down this development, exiling its leader and nine other chiefly members were exiled to Saipan in the Mariana islands in 1909 (Ellison, 1938). In 1912, the position of the *Alii sili* became vacant when *Mataafa Iosefo* died. It was filled by two newly designated *Fautuas* or Advisers, *Malietoa Tanumafili I* and *Tupua Tamasese Lealofi I*, in 1913 under the auspices of the German authorities.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, the Germans were dispossessed by the British, and New Zealand took over colonial administration of Western Samoa, an arrangement subsequently legitimated when the League of Nations confirmed New Zealand's mandate to govern Western Samoa, in December 1921. Initially, the New Zealand administration left the policies and economic systems established by the Germans intact, with little more than changes in name and ownership. It extended its controls over social life in numerous, often small ways, such as the banning of the importation of liquor in 1919. It also sought more systematic intervention in village life in terms of order, health, agriculture and industry. Citizens' Committees comprising local Europeans, people of mixed descent and the *Fono of Faipule* (composed of Samoan chiefs only) lodged petitions for legal recognition in village development. The government rejected these petitions, and Samoan chiefs, in particular, took offence at New Zealand's absolute paternalism in their own country's affairs. Again, colonial intervention in Samoan traditions of rule resulted in the formation of the *Mau a Samoa* protest movement in the mid-1920s. The government aggressively removed their village titles, and exiled 'serious offenders'. Resistance continued; *Mau* supporters declared their nation's independence and organised a march against the New Zealand government, in which one of their leaders, *Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III*, and other protestors, were assassinated and many were wounded. Subsequently, New Zealand used marine forces to frighten Samoans and ruin their properties. Many *Mau* supporters were jailed and their work

became weak; the movement continued, however, perpetuated by Samoan women (Meleisea, 1987a).

This series of confrontations might be taken as demonstrating the capacity of Samoans to resist changes introduced – in this case imposed – from ‘outside’ that they see as threatening in fundamental ways, the Samoan way of life, or *fa’aSamoa*.

In 1936, a new relationship between New Zealand and Western Samoa was formed. A new political structure was formed, and the *Fono a Faipule* was given the right to nominate Samoan members for the Legislative Council. After World War II ended, there were preparations for Western Samoan independence. Petitions were sent to the United Nations, and a new joint system of government established with a view to eventual independence. In 1957, a new Legislative Assembly was elected and a new Western Samoan Trust Estates Cooperation (WESTEC) replaced the New Zealand Reparation Estates. In 1958, a Western Samoan Commissioner to the South Pacific Commission was appointed by New Zealand. In 1959, a full cabinet was appointed under the auspices of the Western Samoan Amendment Act before the termination of the United Nation Organisation Trusteeship. The Constitution for an independent government of Western Samoa was passed in 1961 and general elections were held in the same year (Keesing, 1978; Meleisea, 1987b).

### **Independent Western Samoa**

In 1962, Western Samoa became the first South Pacific nation to officially gain independence. During its early years, Western Samoa continued to use a similar political structure and form of government to that formulated by the New Zealand administration. The Treaty of Friendship between the two nations has provided a framework for the political nurture of Western Samoa, along with assistance from the South Pacific Commission, to help ensure political stability in a period of transition. Central to the new government was the formal recognition of the Lands and Titles Court, which played a major role in dealing with problems of the *matai* system. *Matai* or those who held chiefly titles were permitted to vote in government elections but little opportunity was given for women to be representatives in the political system. This situation was remedied when universal adult suffrage was introduced in the early 1990.

Thus, the introduction of western concepts of democracy, with their notions of equality among citizens, sits alongside the *matai* system with its strongly defined hierarchies of status and power, and tensions have arisen between the two, with democratic notions often being used to challenge traditional values. In part, however, the two systems have accommodated to each other, and within the parliamentary system, the majority of members are chiefs of high rank. However, political uncertainties and tensions have led to the emergence of political parties such as Samoan National Development Party [SNDP], Human Rights Protection Party [HRPP], and others, often differentiated by their positions on matters of tradition and modernisation.

Currently, Western Samoa's total population is estimated at 170,000 people and it is increasing with each census. About 85% of this figure is classified as indigenous or 'full-blood' Samoans while the remaining 15% comprises Melanesians, Chinese and *Afakasi*, descendants of Europeans and others who arrived during the missionary and colonial eras, and intermarried with indigenous Samoans. A majority of the population are less than nineteen years of age, a demographic structure that leads to high dependency ratios and high levels of youth unemployment. This and other factors have contributed to high levels of internal (rural to urban) and external (to overseas) migration.

The Western Samoan economy has been, and remains, centred on primary production, mainly of food and other crops. It is heavily dependent on coconuts, from which copra is produced as a raw material for oil, an industry developed commercially under the German and New Zealand colonial regimes. Other marketable crops included cocoa, taro and bananas. Consequently, the economy is vulnerable to both price fluctuations and environmental conditions, in particular devastation by cyclone. According to Meleisea (1987a), some of the worst impacts of this have been offset by New Zealand's granting of visas to Samoans for 3-6 months so that they could obtain jobs in order to send money to relieve the pressures on their relatives at home in Western Samoa, introduced after the devastating 1966 cyclone. Nonetheless, unemployment has been a major problem in Western Samoa since independence, resulting in sustained external migration.

The nation's economy was stabilised after joining the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme in the 1970s. Contemporary

Western Samoa's economic growth and consequent increased standard of living, especially in the urban areas, depends largely on participating in a modern, western-oriented, global economy. Tourism, with the establishment of new hotels and resorts, and improvements to the road system, the establishment of local industries to produce indigenous manufactured products for local consumption and export, as well as local branches of overseas companies such as Rothmans, Pepsi, Safety Match and Yazaki Samoa, and government and aid supported construction of roadworks, telecommunications installations, and harbour and airport development projects have all formed significant parts of this growth. Affiliation with other international agencies such as the World Health and Food Agricultural Organisations in the late 1970s and early 1980s has assisted the government in ensuring a reliable supply of personnel, equipment, technology and medicine. Many of these developments, especially those that have been directed outside of Apia, such as village-based tourist operations, and improved rural amenities, have helped reduce migration to urban centres and consequent social problems in towns, and enabled urban residents to maintain family ties in rural areas, and thus their links to traditional society and cultural practices of the *fa'aSamoa*.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Educational policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

#### **An approach to Educational policy**

There are many approaches to understanding educational policy (Ball, 1990). One approach focuses on the forces driving policy development, or the political processes through which development takes place. A second explores the ideological character of policy, analysing it in terms of class, gender or racial inequalities, and the interests of the dominant group in each case. A third is concerned with questions of implementation, focusing, variously, on the appropriateness of procedures for carrying out policy, on the extent to which policy can be judged to have been effectively implemented, or on the outcomes of new policies and the practices that follow from them. One variation on this approach focuses on the institutional and other factors facilitating or impeding implementation: national and international economic circumstances, the capacity to command the share of budgetary, human and technical resources to successfully implement policy. Another, which also draws on the second approach, focuses on resistance to prevailing policy regimes, in the form of critique of dominant ideologies and the articulation of alternatives, and in terms of the 'space' for resistance in daily practice, reducing or negating the impact of new policy directions and initiatives by assimilating them to existing practice.

Here, I am not concerned to examine such matters as the policy making process, the economic, social or political conditions and factors enabling, constraining and driving policy, or how policies might be seen to be implemented. Rather, I am concerned with the understandings of Western Samoan society and education, and in particular, with the ways those understandings relate to questions of continuity and change in Western Samoa, as these are constructed in a range of policy documents. This interest in policy is consistent with Ozga's (1990) claim that policies hold 'people's perception and experiences' (p. 259). Ball (1993) takes a rather similar view further, suggesting that educational policies can be seen as 'representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context) (p. 11). In the same vein, Codd (1988)

argues that ‘policy authors’ are in principle unable to control meanings of ‘policy as text’ because it circulates among ‘a plurality of readers’ and thus gives rise to ‘a plurality of readings’ (p. 239).

This approach to policy might be seen as a ‘policy discourse’ approach. Like the ‘policy as ideology’ approach, it focuses on policy and related documents, rather than social or economic conditions, structures and processes of government, or measurable outcomes of policy. It differs from an ‘ideology’ approach in that it does not seek to tie policy discourse to particular groups or interests, and it does not assume any coherent, single underlying ‘position’, but recognises that policy discourse might be made up of a wide range of not necessarily consistent values and rationales.

From this perspective, educational policies can be seen to construct accounts of the present as a framework for constructing both visions of possible futures and strategies for realising those visions. They are, in part, a response to what are seen as problems – both broad social problems, and more specific problems, such as those found to arise in previous administrative arrangements. Necessarily, they are informed by, embody and are directed towards values, sometimes explicit and often implicit. Such values, as well as the problems addressed, link policy to the wider society, and situate it in relation to the social, political and cultural differences which structure the society. The values and strategies they embody can not only address existing concerns but become the focus of both ongoing disputes and debates and new points of contention. Importantly, for this thesis, policies implicitly or explicitly draw on, and re-present, a view of the histories from which the present contexts have arisen, and see these histories as providing a way of understanding both the nature of the problems to be addressed, and the practices and values from the past which will shape what solutions might be available and acceptable.

Here, I explore, in particular, the ways in which educational policies, as they have developed over the past ten years, draw on and re-create understandings of the nature of Western Samoan society and the *fa’aSamoa*, understood as maintaining a continuity of tradition and embracing change, through the ongoing take-up and adaptation of possibilities offered through changes associated with modernisation in response to (largely) Western culture and a globalising economy. This chapter, therefore, documents in general terms the development of educational policy in Western Samoa over the past 10 years, provides a broad overview of those policies,

and explores three aspects of those policies – those to do with the purposes of education, curriculum and pedagogy, and the outcomes of policy in terms of new developments, participation and outcomes of education, as reported by the Department of Education – in closer detail. It does so specifically in relation to social and cultural values associated with the maintenance of Samoan traditional life on the one hand, and those associated with change in the direction of a modernising, globalising Westernised culture. Thus, while it does not directly examine social, political and cultural tensions surrounding the relations between *fa'a Samoa* conservatives and global modernists, it reflects an awareness of those tensions, and provides a basis for understanding how current policies might relate to those tensions. The analysis is based principally on the *Educational Policies 1995-2005* (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a) and *Educational Strategies 1995-2005* (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995b) and the Education Department's *Annual Reports* since the release of those documents.

### **Policy development process from 1990s**

The crucial turning point in the development of current Western Samoan educational policy was the establishment of a World Bank funded review of the education system in April 1992 (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 3). A major immediate outcome of that review was the formation of an Education Policy and Planning Development Project in December 1993, and also externally funded, in part, this time by New Zealand Overseas Aid through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, financially assisted by United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] and United Nations Funds for Population Activities [UNFPA]. As the Introduction to the *Educational Policies* document explains, this was a moment at which planning was able to consider not just piecemeal change, but the virtual rebuilding of the whole educational infrastructure following its devastation by cyclones in 1990 (Ofa) and again in 1991 (Val). As Coxon (1996) reported, '85% of school buildings and virtually all school equipment and teaching materials were destroyed' (p. 192). This project reached its first major milestone when the new *Educational Policies* and *Educational Strategies* documents were officially launched in March 1995. In the words of the Minister of Education at the time, the release of

these documents ‘marked a historical step in the development of education’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995c, p. 13).

The policies were formulated by a Policy and Planning Committee of the Department of Education of Western Samoa comprised of the senior officers of the local department, and other *ad hoc* members, including a Policy Adviser and Consultant, Education Planner and Economist as well as an Adviser for Education Management Systems. Reflecting the links between government, development and overseas aid, non-Departmental members included overseas experts, principally from New Zealand. Private and public sectors and members of the wider Western Samoan community also contributed in the formulation and subsequent review of these policies, through both broad and targeted consultative processes.

The development of these policies followed a thorough revision of the Education Act, and the passage of the *Education Amendment Act (1991-1992)*. This combination of new legislation and new policy frameworks effectively reconceptualised the education system as a whole. It encompassed all levels and aspects of education from early-childhood to post-secondary, including Special Needs education and teacher education and Training, Post-Secondary, Department and Schools, as well as the administrative structure and management and leadership practices. It also recognised the importance of community involvement alongside that of the Department, and private and public institutional providers of schools. In the process, the new Education Amendment Act created ‘new obligations for the government, parents and school communities’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995b, p. 5).

The Chair of the Education Policy and Planning Committee claimed that ‘a crucial part of the current exercise has been not only to produce a set of policies but to provide guidelines for future policy formulation and review... a starting point for the work of administrators, managers, educators and parents in building a sound system for the future’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, Foreword). The *Policy* document claimed that the aim of the initiative was ‘to provide a comprehensive policy and planning framework and information system to increase departmental policy development and planning capability’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a). The 1994 *Annual Report* for the Department of Education (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1994) saw this not only as

establishing a new regime but as laying the basis for ongoing change, though ‘rational decision making, policy review, planning and participative cooperation’ (p. 3). The Chair of the Committee, by now the Director of Education in Western Samoa, claimed, retrospectively in 2000 that:

We developed two key documents – *Education Policies 1995-2005* and *Education Strategies 1995-2005*. Using the documents as our compass... its course and directions for overall development of a meaningful education system which shall continue to serve Samoa well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Vargese, et al., 2000, p. 2).

Subsequent *Annual Reports* continue to explicitly endorse this complex set of commitments, both in words, and in their ongoing reference back to the frameworks they established, in their reporting of their ongoing revision and progressive implementation.

### **Policies: general characterisation**

At the broadest and most general level, the policies construct an ideal of Western Samoan society that balances and embraces both continuity and change, ‘recognis[ing] the place of continuity within change, and tradition within modernity’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 10). This can be seen as the broad social, cultural, political vision that provides the general direction for more specific educational policies and the developments they propose.

The *Policies* document enunciates four key concepts governing developments within the education system at all levels: equity, efficiency, quality and relevancy. The precise phrasing suggests that the Committee perceives tensions among these four: it states that the aim is ‘to achieve goals of improving equity and the quality of education *while* at the same time increasing relevancy and efficiency’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 3, italics added). Whatever the relations among them, these terms invite questions about what they actually mean, especially in relation to questions of continuity and change, the *fa’aSamoa* and westernisation or modernisation.

Equity, for example, is derived from Western rather than traditional Samoan culture. In its usual Western contexts, it would apply to gender and socio-economic (class) differences. In Western Samoa, formal differences of status are crucial to the

traditional social fabric, and these have further connotations of gender inequality: women, cannot, for instance, be chiefs (at least, not in traditional practice). Efficiency, too, is rooted in western capitalist principles and practices, and would appear to contrast sharply with traditional Samoan ways of conduct. Efficiency, in its western context, has to do, essentially, with maximising the return on any expenditure of time, resources or effort. An orientation to efficiency implies an orientation to essentially economic calculation, and the extension of that principle through all aspects of social life.

The concept of relevancy necessarily raises the question about what things education is to be relevant to. In one set of educational discussions it might mean relevancy to the child's psychological development; in another it might refer to the child's social world and his or her experience of that world. Alternatively, it might take national goals – social, economic, political, or cultural – as the reference point. Finally, quality assumes particular notions of what constitutes good – 'quality' – practice. Further, questions of quality, and quality-related goals might focus, educationally, on inputs, processes, or outcomes. These principles are applied repeatedly to provide the explicit justification and explanation of a range of developments, throughout both the original policy and strategy documents, and in the Department's *Annual Reports*.

One of the characteristics of the *Policies* and *Strategies* documents is that they offer an all embracing plan for education, from curriculum and pedagogy, and the learning outcomes of individuals, through the overall patterns of the provision of schools and participation in education at all levels, to the administrative arrangements for ensuring that infrastructure are adequate, that records are well kept, that long term plans are well grounded, that women teachers enjoy similar career opportunities to men, and that international links are maintained and used effectively. The Minister of Education, Hon. Fiame Naomi Mataafa, highlighted the comprehensiveness of the plan in her general comments on the policy, in the *Policies* document itself: she insisted, first, on the importance of early childhood education, second, on the necessity of including special education as a part of the introduction of universal primary education, and third, on the need to provide post-secondary education (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 9). Elsewhere, the documents stressed that these developments, and the overall

characteristics of equity, efficiency, quality and relevancy would require ‘strengthening [of] the key roles of the departmental and school management’ in conjunction with ‘an active partnership between communities, families, teachers and student’, while the Minister herself stressed, specifically, the importance of ‘the role of parents as first teachers’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 9). Subsequently, the Education Department commented on the importance of partnerships, between government, mission and private schools, including arrangements for funding, enrolments and participation, inspection, reporting and accountability, and outcomes (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1997, pp. 5-8). The theme of partnerships also informed the ‘education mini summit’ and its theme of ‘taking strategic control’, by providing opportunity for public and stakeholders to review existing policies and practice, and discuss possible future directions (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1999b).

The notion of partnership is somewhat problematic, in part, because of the nature of the ‘partners’ themselves. They are, in fact, quite different entities: ‘communities’, for example, are quite a different type of category from ‘students’. Further, they overlap: students are part of communities; they are also part of families, which are part of communities. The language of partnership, here, parallels the language used in similar documents over the past three decades in many other, including Western, countries. Yet once one starts to ask what a partnership might be between and a student, his or her family, and their community, it is less easy to see what this might mean. The policy does not spell this out. While this absence of detail about ‘partnership’ is understandable in a broad, general document of this sort, the fact that it is left so vague means, in effect, that the document offers ways of encouraging different groups to participate, while leaving the nature and form of participation very vaguely defined. Significantly, the documents are much clearer on the administrative structure and powers of the central bureau.

At the same time as these strategies and processes were being put in place, directly concerned with schooling itself, other programs and procedures were being developed, still within the overall framework of the 1995 *Policies and Strategies* documents, directed towards more sophisticated, complex and competent management structures and practices. For instance, in May 1999, the Department of Education’s Institutional Strengthening Programme (DoE/ISP), which was co-

funded by the government of Samoa and the Australian Assistance International Development (AusAID), was established. This educational project was established 'to transform the Department's capacity in order to develop and implement corporate and management plans in accordance with Government policies', and its key role was to enhance the skills of all staff 'in work processes, structures and systems' (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1999a, p. 5). The ongoing commitment to this program was reflected in its further development in the Department's *Corporate Plan* for 2000-2003 (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000c). The other major development during the final few years of the twentieth century was the introduction of Annual Management Plans for the more explicit setting of goals and measures of achievement for each Unit in the department, implemented in the year 2000 (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a, p. 5).

This reworking of broad policy directions and strategies for implementation can be seen in the broader context of a general re-orientation of government policy, in particular in the *Statements of Economic Strategy* for 1996-1997 and again for 1998-1999 (cited in Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2001). A significant part of the strategy detailed in these statements was the promotion and strengthening of 'new partnerships' between government and private sectors, this time in a range of economic activities.

In education, the stress on partnerships works in two distinct ways. On the one hand, in the context of early childhood education, for example, it recognises economic constraints limiting the capacity of government to provide all the early childhood education that might be needed, and relies on local partners to carry a significant part of the burden of providing education at this level. On the other, it constructs an expanded and expanding role for government and formal education in the teaching of children in their early years, by regulating curriculum and teachers (and through teachers, pedagogy). In this regard, it decreases the role for parents, conforming to the Western practice of regarding parents as in-expert and/or incompetent educators of their children beyond their earliest years, despite the rhetoric of including parents in education discussion and decision-making.

## **Policies: Purposes of Education**

According to the Minister, education in Western Samoa is designed to promote both ‘individual and national needs’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 9) or, elsewhere, the needs of both ‘individual and society’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 9). While ‘individual needs’ are not clearly defined, the notion of all-round personal development appears to be implied in the more specific educational goal of ‘comprehensive and enriching curricula’, and by describing the schooling to be provided, and the education system providing it, as ‘humane’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 10). Further, the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of this goal of promoting individual well-being is conveyed by the expressed concern for ‘improving the quality of education for *all* learners’, and by stressing the importance of enhancing opportunities at *all* levels of education, from pre school to tertiary (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, Introduction). Moreover, the approach to pedagogy, and the importance of developing capacities for independent creative thinking stressed there (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a), suggest that the policy makers envisage liberal, active citizens rather than passive authoritarian subjects. At the same time, the concern with vocational aspects of education and, perhaps, the stress on ‘relevance’, indicate a concern with the practical needs of Western Samoans to develop the capacity to seek and find employment in a range of occupations (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a).

Beyond the level of the individual, purposes are framed at several levels. In terms of the character of Samoan society, education is to support a Samoan society in which the *fa’aSamoa* is respected, can be maintained and, as a living culture rather than a fossilised residue from the past, can continue to evolve (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a). Education is also to promote an inclusive, equitable society, through notions of equity and social justice. In this context, education is seen as ‘an investment in Samoa’s future’ with a key role in ‘nation building’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education).

The notion of ‘nation building’ also applies to the development of economic strength. Thus, the education policies established in the *Policies and Strategies* documents seek to strengthen Samoan’s membership of and access to a global culture and economy (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2001). This rests on the

view that this is necessary for Western Samoa to avoid chronic endemic poverty individually and nationally, and that education is crucial to ensuring the availability of required technical and professional human resources to fulfil national needs.

### **Policies: curriculum and pedagogy**

The initial review process for curriculum resulted in a new comprehensive curriculum, for all levels (early childhood to tertiary) and types (mainstream, special needs and post-school vocational); it addressed the general shape of the curriculum and approach to teaching, and the need for teachers who could teach it and materials to support it (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, Forward). In the medium term, policy centred on a ‘consolidating existing curriculum’ with a view to ‘strengthening literacy and numeracy skills’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education 1995a, p. 5). In this sense it maintained continuity with past practice within the (already westernised) education system, but also opened up the possibility of further change (*Statement of Economic Strategy, 1996-1997 & 1998-1999*, cited in Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2001). Early childhood education was, for the first time, incorporated as an integral part of a comprehensive system. While neither the foundational policy documents nor subsequent reports say much about the content of early childhood education, the policy statements and reports implicitly place it within a Westernised framework of educational thinking and professional teaching practice. It is no longer sufficient, this implies, simply to ‘raise children’ according to traditional wisdom and practices.

The documents pay closer and more detailed attention to primary and secondary schooling. First, they establish a fundamentally bilingual curriculum; Samoan is established as the first language of instruction, with English introduced in Year 4 (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 5). In secondary schools English remains the language of instruction for all subjects except, of course, Samoan Language.

At primary level, beyond the introductory years, the curriculum includes English, Samoan, maths, science, social science, health and creative arts, each supported and defined by integrated curriculum statements. For all primary subjects, the development of resources, including the establishment of resource centres, is a priority (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1999b, pp. 16-17).

For secondary education, the policies outlined a single 5-year comprehensive curriculum for junior and senior secondary schools to replace the existing dual system of academic and vocational subjects. This curriculum includes Samoan, English, mathematics, the sciences and social sciences, home economics, manual arts, commerce, agricultural science and others. Academic and vocational subjects are given formal equality. To integrate the academic and the vocational, all students in junior secondary (Years 9-11) are required to complete all core academic subjects and at least two vocational subjects to qualify for entry to senior secondary education (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 27). At Year 12, the junior curriculum is enlarged with supplementary subjects including art and craft, music, drama and physical education; students are expected to complete courses in at least five subjects chosen from across the full range of available academic and vocational options (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 27). This single integrated structure (9-13) is seen as giving secondary students greater opportunity to form wider ranges of aspirations and to choose their subjects accordingly (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 25).

An important feature of recent developments in curriculum and pedagogy has been the focus on combining relevance of content (as well as active learning pedagogical approaches, see below) with recognition of the value of traditional Samoan practices and knowledges. Thus, for example, the concept of education for sustainable village living underpins a Coastal Sustainable Improvement project designed 'to protect natural heritage through the conservation and sustainable use of bio-diversity while at the same time strengthen[ing] cultural identity through the recognition and innovative application of indigenous ecological knowledge and practice' (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2001, pp. 10-11).

As with primary schooling, the policies make provision of resources to support the new developments a priority: libraries with trained librarians, science laboratories and laboratory assistants, and technology resource centres for applied subject areas. The provision of textbooks and curriculum materials, and standardisation of equipment and materials in all subject areas at all levels are seen as essential to ensuring quality teaching and learning in all secondary schools (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 29). The policies also work to circulate the most current ideas and thus promote modernisation and educational

change into the remotest schools in the country, while at the same time providing resources and opportunities that help sustain rural villages.

A key policy concern, built into the provision of resources and other forms of teacher support, is promoting teaching styles which will promote 'student-based learning' and creative, imaginative and critical thinking, to minimise old methods of 'rote memory', 'talk and chalk' and 'spoon-feeding' (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, pp. 18-19). This is supported, in the policies, by moves to reduce teacher-student ratios; while recognising that multiple classes would continue to be taught by a single teacher in many schools, the documents define base-line staff student ratios for each type of class. Teacher quality is also addressed in a new stress on in-service programs for teachers, plans phasing out the employment of untrained teachers and appointment of secondary teachers to subjects for which they are underqualified, and in the upgrading of teacher training through the merger of Western Samoa Teachers College and the National University of Samoa in 1997 (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 32).

The goal, here, is to ensure that teachers at all levels are equipped to understand and promote the development of learners as social, moral, intellectual and physical beings, through teacher development. The aim of such programs is to ensure a balance between the academic content-coverage of subjects at all levels and professional development in educational theory and practice so that teachers can relate current educational issues and theories of their teaching to the Samoan context and think critically of options and strategies appropriate to their students' needs (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 32). The policies, therefore, stress teachers' ability to innovate and be flexible and resourceful, as well as their thorough knowledge of their teaching subject areas (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, pp. 28-29).

To complement these positive strategies to develop progressive forms of pedagogy, the policies also outline a number of ways of regulating and monitoring the system. On the one hand, they regularise school-based assessment at all levels as an integral part of the system. On the other hand, they point to the establishment of national minimum standards, in particular, through bilingual benchmark testing in literacy for Samoan and English languages and numeracy at Years 4 and 6, and foreshadow an extension of a base-level of schooling across all parts of Western

Samoan society. For the short term the Year 8 National Examination was allowed to remain, but in the medium term, it is planned to modify this following extensive review of the overall objectives of primary education (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 20).

At secondary level, the policies leave the existing examination system (Junior Secondary School Certificate, Year 11; Western Samoa School Certificate, Year 12; Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate, Year 13) in place for the medium term, but widen the local examinations to include subjects such as Samoan, agricultural science, business studies, home-economics and industrial arts. Longer term, they propose to merge the Junior Secondary School Certificate and Western Samoa School Certificate, and for certification to be decided at Years 11 or 12 (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 29). Within this structure, Year 10 School-based assessment functions both as a selection point, regulating entry to senior secondary programs, and as a quality audit point for monitoring the outcomes of junior secondary schooling (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000b, pp. 1-3).

Special Education also forms part of the overall plan outlined in the policy documents. Much Special Education continues to be offered through existing separate institutions, but the policies also plans the establishment of special classes in approved 'mainstream' schools. As with mainstream, the policies also provide for pre-service and in-service work for teachers to strengthen their ability to work in this area, focusing on identification and assessment of students' learning capabilities (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 31).

The final element in the proposed educational is post-secondary education and training, to focus on the development of employment-related knowledge, skills and attitudes in young people who have limited school-based qualifications, tied to labour market requirements. A rationalisation of offerings in a range of post-school institutions stresses cooperation and linkages between governmental and non-governmental sectors in a coordinated, rather than fragmented and competitive post-secondary system (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, pp. 33-34).

### **Outcomes: provision, distribution and participation**

The Education Department's reports since 1995 provide some indication of the gradual implementation and effects of these new policy directions. There was slow but steady growth in the number of village schools, and of junior and senior secondary provision outside Apia. Application of new zoning regulations, teacher-student ratios and enrolment criteria began dispersing numbers from the *Malifa* schools, re-directing resources to smaller schools, and reducing class sizes at *Leifiifi* Intermediate School (Western Samoa. Department of Education 1997a, p. 6). While most primary schools (around 165, but gradually growing) were government provided, missions added another eighteen primary schools and there were two private primary schools (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2001, p. 25). There was some small expansion (from three to four) in the number of senior secondary schools, through the conversion of *Leifiifi* Junior Secondary into a Senior Secondary School (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a, p. 8).

Provision for girls, and for students from remote areas, was increased by turning the all-male *Avele College* co-educational, and re-opening its residential hostel. While Special Education continued to be provided mainly by private institutions, new teacher education courses in this field were introduced (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1998, p. 8), and a Special Needs Advisory Committee of the Department of Education initiated a project to collect data for the identification of all special needs children and the assistance they required (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a, p. 9). In 1995 there were five main post-secondary institutions (Ioka, 1995); these were rationalised and consolidated (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1999a, p. 22) to provide greater opportunities for further tertiary education and training as well as vocational studies. As provision of schools and opportunities expanded, there were also small but significant reductions in student: teacher ratios in many schools, with corresponding staff reductions where schools were overstaffed according to the new criteria (Western Samoa. Department of Education 1997a, p. 7).

Curriculum statements were developed for all subjects offered in primary schools, and new subjects proposed in the policy documents (such as Agricultural Science, Computer Science and Science) were introduced in secondary schools, especially in rural areas, providing access to a broader junior secondary school

education with better chances of proceeding to senior schooling than had previously been the case. Curriculum developments were supported by the establishment of resource centres for applied subjects (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1999b, pp. 16-17), and the provision of new curriculum materials for primary education, through the Early Primary Literacy Development project and Primary Education Materials Project particularly for years 4-8 (Western Samoa. Department of Education 1998, p. 7; Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a, p. 10). To monitor learning achievements, there was a continuation of the Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level test in the Apia primary schools, and the Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level tests to ascertain literacy and numeracy standards were run in all primary schools (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a, p. 15). Further, to assist teachers, and ensure they were able to implement new curricula and appropriate teaching strategies, new systems for registration, regulation and (pre- and in-service) support of teachers were established (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a, p. 9). Moreover, a continuous process of monitoring and reviewing new developments and progressively implementing those planned in the 1995 *Policies* document was established.

Since the introduction of the new policies, student enrolments have increased slowly overall, with the most notable increase being at year 12 level and a corresponding increase in the proportion of older teenagers (15-19 years) remaining in school to undertake senior secondary studies (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a, p. 26; Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2001, pp. 19, 36).

The new policies inherited an elitist education system in the sense that the dual system of government and non-governmental schools allowed for two distinct 'levels' of education, and corresponding purposes, as Ioka (1995) noted:

The emphasis on education of an administrative elite in the 1960s in fact was so strong that it had continued to dominate the whole education system of Western Samoa up to the present day [i.e., 1995]... The production of an elite is indeed a characteristic of the structure of the school system of Western Samoa today (p. 33).

The new policies offered a more equitable, unified vision, to reduce both gender and urban/rural differences. Moreover, the ratio of male to female students in primary education in 1996 also demonstrates roughly 2% difference in number and this

shows the tendency to improve gender equity in educational participation (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1997a, p. 29). At Year 13, males were still outnumbered by females and the difference in gender among PSSCE candidates continued to broaden (Western Samoa. Department of Education (1997a, pp. 17, 28). There were signs of some challenge to the traditional gender division of labour in industrial arts and home economics, where 15 girls sat the Industrial Arts and 59 male candidates the Home Economics papers (pp. 20-22). At the post secondary level, in contrast, there is a fluctuating but roughly equal gender balance (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1998, p. 29).

The gradual expansion of primary school provision, upgrading of *Leififi* junior secondary to full secondary status, widening of curriculum offerings and slowly increasing participation rates indicate some lessening of the imbalance between urban and village education.

Improvements in participation rates were accompanied by some improvements in outcomes. Literacy benchmarking demonstrated small but noticeable improvements in both Samoan and English literacy achievements, and at senior examination, all subjects except Mathematics showed slight improvements in their mean percentages (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1997a, Annex 6). Both attainments and improvements were uneven across subjects, however, and the overall distribution of grades in this examination shows that best results were achieved in Agricultural Science followed by Samoan, and Food and Nutrition, with the more formal academic subjects showing relatively poor outcomes (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 2000a, p. 27).

### **Policies, tradition and change**

A careful consideration of these policies, and of their outcomes as documented in the Department of Education's own *Annual Reports* shows ongoing, fundamental concern for both the claims of tradition and the need to adapt to a changing world order. Statements about both the purposes of education and the curriculum show a concern to maintain the *fa'aSamoa* and to equip Western Samoans to take their place in an increasingly global economy. This is reflected in the commitment to an expansion of the education system as a whole, its adoption of approaches (such as those reflected in the core concerns with equity, quality, relevance and efficiency)

developed in Western theory and practice, its take-up of ‘progressive’ pedagogy with its stress on creative and critical problem solving, and its determination to introduce modern technologies. At the same time, there is an emphasis on enabling young people to maintain distinctively Samoan cultural values, reflected, for example, in use of Samoan as the early language of instruction, and maintenance of a bilingual curriculum throughout (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, pp. 10-11).

An examination of the policy document’s own account of the process of policy development suggests that the overall orientation of these developments was towards modernisation and westernisation. The process was initiated and supported first, by the World Bank, and then by the New Zealand government, and overseas consultants were involved. These can clearly be seen to represent forces from outside, for modernisation, globalisation and westernisation.

Accounts in the policy documents of the process of consultation with community also make no reference to, or recognition of, traditional social structures and their hierarchies. In their accounts of the process of developing the policies, the role of a bureaucratic government committee is central. Officials from within the modern parliamentary system of government are well represented. Traditional leaders are also invisible in discussions of the processes of consultation outside the sphere of government at the community level. The *Policies* document, for example, refers to consultation and discussion with ‘administrators, managers, educators, and parents’ and, on this basis, claims that the policies represent ‘as widely as possible’ the views of ‘educators, parents and the community’, and foreshadows and invites ongoing participation by ‘the community’ through studying and responding to the policies. Not once does this document (or other related documents) mention the special features of traditional Samoan society and the ways this might shape such participation and consultation, or the special roles of such figures as the chiefs who, traditionally, would have enjoyed privileged position in any discussion of matters affecting the wellbeing of Samoan society and the Samoan way of life.

However, the policy documents tell only part of the story. In particular, many of the key Samoan personnel were not simply government officials of high rank, but chiefs of rank in traditional Samoan terms. In the list of permanent members of the education policy and planning committee (Western Samoa. Department of Education,

1995a, p. 1) three are named by their chiefly titles: *Peseta*, *Galumalemana* and *Magele*. In addition, there were also two other members who were not chiefs at the time (Esera and Sanerivi), but who shortly thereafter had chiefly titles conferred on them. Their perspectives, we might assume, therefore, reflect not only concerns for modernisation, but their experience, knowledge and responsibilities as key figures in the traditional ordering of Samoan society. Equally, while the documents do not mention chiefs in their accounts of community consultation, in practice, the chiefs played key roles in such consultations, not only as leaders at the village and district level, but through the fact that in most cases the inspectors conducting the meetings were themselves also chiefs.

A key passage for understanding the balance between concerns for continuity and tradition, on the one hand, and change and modernisation, on the other, asserts that ‘policy development should be contingent upon a broad philosophy as a guide to educational enterprise and that [this]... should be concerned with the relationship between education, culture and development’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a, p. 3). Here, ‘culture’ can be seen to stand for the traditional Samoan way of life, while ‘development’ stands for change shaped by global influences. In this context, the assertions, elsewhere in the document that ‘an important part of policy development is identifying what should be continued and what should be changed’ (p. 3) and, later, ‘that policy is about change... and policy is about continuity’ (p.9), make questions about the possible relations between the *fa’aSamoa* and modern western culture crucial. The Policy Development Project clearly aims to set up a framework for ongoing revision and change, and key elements of its agenda were derived from outside. At the same time, it recognized that these terms had no single, clear, universal meaning that could be simply be ‘applied’ to Western Samoa, but that they had to be defined in terms that were ‘appropriate’ to the ‘context’. This allows room for the *fa’aSamoa* to figure as a key consideration for determining what might be ‘appropriate’.

## **Conclusion**

Current educational policy in Western Samoa projects a future in which the education system will increasingly develop the knowledges and skills, across an expanding proportion of the population, to enable Western Samoa to hold its place,

and participate in the benefits of a global economy. Its aims are framed in essentially modernising terms that stress the importance of economic outcomes in an increasingly global, hi-tech economy. At the same time, they seek to maintain a distinctive Samoan culture and way of life, as encapsulated in the *fa'a Samoa*. Both implicitly and explicitly, the policies construct these two goals as mutually compatible. In doing so, they take the *fa'a Samoa* itself, not as a static, unchanging set of practices and values, which can only be corrupted by any accommodation to influences from 'outside', but as capable of changing and absorbing such outside influences without losing its sense of distinctiveness or identity. The remaining chapters of this thesis seek to show how such an understanding is supported by the histories of Western Samoan society and education, as they have been written from the nineteenth century onwards. They therefore examine those histories, and the ways they have dealt with the relations between the *fa'a Samoa* and the changes which followed the establishment of Christianity and, subsequently, colonial and then independent democratic Parliamentary government.

## Chapter Three

### Education in traditional and missionary Samoa

#### Education in Traditional Samoa

In accounts of traditional Samoan society, 'education' was an integral part of the routines of daily life; there were no formal institutions set aside for the specific purpose of teaching, although some forms of learning were more formalised than others, and more deliberately and consciously taught (Boorer, 1987; Keesing, 1975). Consequently, there were no explicitly expressed 'purposes of education', and the implicit purposes were the maintenance of community life, and the integration of each new child into the beliefs and practices that made up the life of the community. In discussing accounts of education in traditional Samoan society, therefore, I do not consider 'purposes' and 'outcomes' separately, as I do elsewhere. Rather, I discuss what observers and historians of Samoan society and culture have said were the features of traditional Samoan upbringing, and the teaching and learning that formed part of that upbringing, and then the outcomes of that teaching and learning with the purposes implicit in it.

Before going further, I note again that my concern here is not to provide an account of traditional Samoan teaching and learning as such, but to show how traditional Samoan teaching and learning have been constructed in a variety of historical discussions. This serves to show the understandings of Samoan tradition that can be drawn on today as a basis for understanding how educational policies in the present fit into the overall development of Samoan culture and society.

Learning inevitably takes place from virtually the moment a child is born. In the traditional Samoan context, as it is portrayed in the literature, such learning did not only involve his or her immediate parents, but other members of the household, other relatives and people of the village at large (Thomas & Postlethwaite, 1984, p. 206). Deliberate instruction is said to have commenced at around the age of three or four, depending on ability and maturity. At this age, an infant was taught the practices of daily life, including sitting and walking, eating and drinking, and appropriate ways of speaking and addressing others. Barradale (1907), for example, notes that one-year old Samoan children were taught to sit down cross-legged with folded arms and to remain silent in the *fale* (house) when other people were present.

The infant was also trained not to walk naked in the household or the community. Ochs (1982) claims that children of this age were also being taught the 'specific norms' of behaviour and their corresponding speech forms: to bow their heads and to say *tulou* to show respect and honour when passing in front of other people, for example, and to say *fa'amolemole* ('please') and *fa'afetai* ('thank you'). Ochs further claims that the child who spoke unclearly was sometimes compared to an animal, and seen as less than human (1982, p. 93). Huebner (1986) also noted the importance attached already at this age to learning the various forms of speech appropriate to different contexts. And Barradale noted that children at this stage were being taught the Samoan 'values system' (1907, p. 74) and to obey parents and elders who had authority.

At four years, children were being taught the knowledges and skills associated with their respective occupations with the social and sexual division of labour (Barradale, 1907, pp. 74-75). Boys were taught how to climb coconut palms to get coconuts, and, by helping their fathers, how to do plantation work or fishing, and how to make the *umu* or cook food on hot stones and rocks. They were also taught the responsibilities and prohibitions of the *feagaiga* (the brother and sister taboo; Freeman 1983; Holmes, 1987, p. 75; Kramer, 1995; Mageo, 1996). At this stage, a boy was taught not to sleep together with his sister, nor to exchange clothes with her, eat before her, or even swear at her. In Samoan traditional values, a brother's life was cursed or *malaia* if he did not act according to the teachings of parents and other elders.

Girls were taught how to perform a range of domestic duties, including looking after children: the 'making of fans, little baskets, mats, bark cloth, ornaments and fine oils, preparation of *kava* and dancing' (Kramer, 1995, p. 61); learning how to draw water and gather shellfish (Macpherson, Bedford & Spoonley, 2000). They were also provided with an introductory knowledge to do with 'ceremonial singing, dancing, village celebrations and feasting' (Holmes, 1987, p. 75). In comparison with young boys, girls in traditional Samoa had 'less play activities, less freedom and time' (Holmes, 1987, p. 75).

Beyond this involvement in learning the skills and knowledge of daily life through direct instruction and participation in household activities, Coté (1997) suggests, children were 'left free' to experience 'hardships and evils' and that

children ‘lived in a real world of adults’ (p. 2). Macpherson, Bedford and Spoonley (2000) take a less optimistic view, and comment that parents trained their children ‘to witness all kinds of evil and encouraged them to follow deception as a virtue’ (p. 178), but their comment appears to assume the same general freedom to participate in adult life as Coté notes.

During this stage of his or her life, a child might be taught by either parent or by older members of the household, although he or she was ‘always under the special charge of a mother’ (Macpherson, Bedford & Spoonley, 2000, p. 84; c.f., Kramer, 1995). Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984) have portrayed the older siblings as substitute teachers and responsible carers for Samoan young children in the absence of chiefs or parents.

As the above description suggests, the general approach to teaching and learning was informal and community based (Boorer, 1987; Baba, 1991; Tavana, 2001). Earlier writers, such as Barradale (1907), largely overlooked, or dismissed, any notion that parents and others might have had particular skills in teaching children, claiming that they had only limited knowledge and ‘no training at all’ (p. 48). More recent accounts, such as those by Keesing (1975) and Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984) take a more positive view, and seek to identify particular pedagogical techniques used in the more explicit and direct teaching of children. Grattan (1940), for example, stressed the importance of direct instruction ‘by word of mouth’ (p. 173). Keesing (1975) refers to the ‘great variety of educational techniques’ used and suggests that parents and others ‘encourage[d], instruct[ed], praise[d], admonish[ed], and compel[ed]’ (p. 243) their children to get their message across. Boorer (1987) claims that from an early age children were taught to learn cooperatively through a combination of ‘instruction, observation and imitation’ (pp. 158-159). In so far as Barradale (1907) does comment on specific techniques used, he stresses the ‘quite severe’ use of corporal punishment with children at the early age of one year, noting that it was usually followed by some form of encouragement, such as giving them ‘a good meal’ (pp. 48-49), attributing this approach to their expectation that their children would ‘know and do wrong’ (p. 49).

At adolescence, girls worked together with *aualuma* while boys participated in traditional duties carried out by the *aumaga*. With the *aualuma*, girls further developed such skills they had begun learning earlier, including

cooking, how to squeeze the *ava* to make a kava drink for the *matai* during village *fono*, and how to weave *fala* (traditional mats of various kinds); this learning is seen as not only functional, but cultural, since patterns and designs of, for example, the *falalili* and the *ietoga* carry social and symbolic significance. Grattan (1948) notes the extension of their knowledge and skills in ‘the making of *lau* and *pola* or house-blinds as well as manufacturing and dyeing of bark cloth... [the] manufacture of mats, fans, baskets... [and] net-making and sinnet-making’ (pp. 103-111). Coté (1997) adds oil-making to this list, while Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984) include ‘negotiating and dancing’ as the remaining duties for female adolescents and young adults (pp. 205-206).

Generally, the older women assumed leadership, and supervisory and instructional roles in the group. However, the wife of the son of the talking chief or high chief in the village was also eligible to perform such an honour. Within the group of young women, the unmarried daughter of the village chief was also distinguished from others, and treated as a *taupou* or ceremonial princess. To fulfil her roles, in particular, in leading the final dance (*taualuga*) in village formal entertainments, she had to learn how to dance appropriately. She also had to learn how to use Samoan oratory language (*Gagana fa’a-failauga*), and the importance of maintaining her virginity before a formal marriage.

The *aumuga* had to learn how to serve the village, their chiefs and families in the practical work of planting crops such as *taro*, yams, *ta’amu* and bananas, fishing in the deep sea (Kramer, 1995; Coté, 1997). Once ceremonially tattooed, as a mark of adult status, they were required to learn how to perform the *kava* ceremony in the house of chiefs, and how to make a *umu* which respectfully called *suavai* or cook foods in a hot stones oven and to cook other traditional foods (Holmes, 1974; Barradale, 1907). At the same time, they were taught ‘the forms of Samoan rhetoric and styles of dress’ (Grattan, 1948, pp. 112-113).

As with daughters of chiefs, the education of the sons of the village high chiefs (*alii*) or talking chiefs (*tulafale*) was also different in some details from that of other young men of their cohort, in that it involved learning a range of knowledge and skills specific to their positions and ceremonial roles. Above all, they were required to learn mastery of appropriate speech styles for different occasions. They were required to learn to participate in the *fa’atau* and the *sivaloa*, how to compete

for the right to present the *lauga* or speech on ceremonial occasions and, later, how to determine whom among the eligible chiefs should participate, and how to adjudicate such verbal competitions. They were required to learn who should speak first, and the order in which different chiefs should speak, depending on rank in the village and sometimes in the whole district or *itumalo*. They were required to learn the genealogies of their families and all relationships by birth or by culture with other village families, as well as the traditional and cultural addresses, not only for their village, but for all villages (Thomas & Postlethwaite, 1984, pp. 205-206). They were required to learn the rules of social life in order to represent families in village meetings, and to settle family and village disputes.

In addition to, and in many respects, through, such gender-specific learning, there were matters which all Samoan adolescents were taught. Barradale (1907, p. 74) noted the general importance of adolescent learning of sex roles in ‘family leadership’, while Gilson (1970), Mageo (1996) and Barradale (1907) all claimed that throughout childhood and adolescence, young people of both sexes were gradually being instructed in the complexities of the status system. Within both this context, and the context of acquiring ceremonial, legal and genealogical knowledge, the stories of the origins and history of Samoa and its people that composed the rich oral tradition formed the core of what was to be learned (Rose, 1959; Baba, 1991). In order to develop mastery of this tradition, the cultivation of memory was perhaps the essential ingredient (Gray, 1960).

While all members of the community had a general responsibility for teaching the children of the village, some had greater responsibilities than others. I have noted already, the special role of parents for small children, fathers and mothers for boys and girls, respectively, and the senior men and women of the *aumaga* and *aualuma* for adolescents, and of the chiefs for imparting ceremonial knowledge. Yet Boorer (1987) claims that from among those eligible to give instruction, responsibility fell on some more than others, on the basis of ‘their village community experience, skills and status quo’ (p. 158), and Tavana (2001) suggests that these people regarded ‘themselves as those who had chosen by God’ to impart knowledge to their younger generation. |

As with earlier childhood, a number of writers have offered essentially romantic views of Samoan adolescence. Mead (1928), notably, suggested that

Samoaan adolescents enjoyed free and easy lives. This hypothesis was vigorously challenged by Freeman (1983) and Holmes (1987), who stressed the competitiveness and stresses of adolescence in Samoan culture, and Auva'a (1995), who critiqued both positions, and argued that a far more complex account was required.

#### *Purposes and Outcomes of Education*

I suggested earlier that in the context of traditional education, where teaching and learning were integrated into daily life, and where there were no such things as formal statements about 'education', it is almost impossible to separate purposes from outcomes. Thus, the teaching of children and young people had, as both purpose and outcome, their integration into the life of the village as competent, productive members of the community. Consequently, in the following discussion I shift between talking of purposes and talking of outcomes. According to Singh (1999), the central purpose of education in pre-European Samoa was reproducing the *fa'aSamoa* which meant, as it applied to the young people themselves, getting to know all about the Samoan way of life (c.f., Rose, 1959, p. 7). Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984) elaborate: teaching in traditional Samoa was central to the 'general structure of their society, the roles people performed in it, their culture's mythical foundations, the rewards for abiding by society's expectations, and the punishments for the violating group standards' (pp. 205-206).

In part this involved becoming 'culturally' competent. A report from the National Office of Overseas Recognition (1995) specifically defined this as the mastering of Samoan culture's 'rich oral tradition' (p. 21), while Singh (1999) defined it as comprising the 'oral and derived from oratory skills and knowledge of oral tradition' (p. 7). Such cultural transmission, according to Baba (1991), played a key role in maintaining and perpetuating Samoan 'value systems and their view of the universe' for 'the continuity of society' (p. 37). The oral character of this culture, and the stress on authoritative transmission through accurate memorisation resulted in a strong sense of continuity with the past.

As a process for the enculturation of individuals (Heubner, 1986, p. 398), this educational process ensured the adoption of appropriate 'knowledge, values, skills and attitudes' (Baba, 1991, p. 37). Further, as Coté (1997, p. 2) explained in his social historical analysis of education in Samoa, such rituals as tattooing, and the skills to perform it learned in early adulthood, functioned as a principal rite of

passage, but also as a symbol of peer-culture that helps the socialisation process of status-recognition, and the regulation of relationships between young men and women. The gradual acquisition of knowledge, along with the gradual entering into the life of the village community, resulted in the ‘creation of adult identity’ (Barradale, 1907, p. 2) in accordance with received cultural norms and practices. At the same time, the teaching and learning of practical skills for daily life ensured the physical survival and wellbeing of the society, as well as perpetuating its traditional divisions of labour (Coté, 1997; Keesing, 1975; Boorer, 1987; Barradale, 1907).

A further outcome of this way of educating young people, according to a number of writers, was that it enabled young people to move fluently from childhood into adulthood. As children grew up and became adults, Holmes (1987) writes, each intersection of life or transition from childhood to adulthood was smooth and unbroken. Coté (1997) has attributed this to the fact that, prior to adolescence, Samoan youths were ‘already worldly individuals in their own right’ and that they possessed the ‘knowledge of that world’ together with the inherited ‘capacities and skills’ for the creation of ‘adult identity’ (p. 2).

A final outcome of this way of inducting young people into adult life, according to several writers, was the reproduction of a particular easy-going approach to life. Barradale (1907), for example, saw this negatively, in terms of what it *lacked*, asserting that work timetables were non-existent for the natives and there was little incentive to work hard. As a result, he claimed, they:

grew up to be idle and ignorant; they could not read and write; in fact, there was no language they could read and write and no books for them to read... they became wicked too, because they were idle. They had little to do much, and so they got into all mischief and lived very bad lives (p. 47).

Rose (1959) took a more optimistic view and has described it more romantically:

their whole way of life, is focused on today. The past is gone, the future can look after itself. Let us do a little work today, and tonight in the moonlight make love (p. 176).

Pitt (1970), accepting this general interpretation of Samoan life as ‘relaxed’, and fully preoccupied with the present, suggested four possible reasons for this outlook. First, he claims that Samoans had their own models of labour which were dissimilar from European models because ‘Samoans live in a Garden-of-Eden

environment’, which means they had nearly everything they wanted and plenty to eat in their physical surroundings (p. 3). Second, there was very little motivation within Samoan society because people were ‘constrained’ by the ‘despotic’ authority of chiefs emphasising a communal lifestyle rather than an individualistic outlook with ‘private incentives’ (pp. 3-4). Third, there was a ‘defective native mentality’, which was caused by the ‘lack of education and medical knowledge’ (p. 4). Finally, the so-called irrational element in Samoan thinking was explained by claims that ‘they do not think logically but rely on magical explanations rather than logical inference and empirical verification’ (pp. 4-5). Such features, in this view, would also need to be seen as outcomes of the Samoan traditional approach to education as part of their broader approach to life. Insofar as this view of the Samoan traditional heritage informs present-day understandings, it stresses the difference between the *fa’aSamoa* and the requirements of modern society and economy.

### **Education in Missionary Samoa**

In August 1830, a London Missionary Society party, led by Reverend John Williams arrived in Samoa. The group included a group of Tahitian teachers, and a Samoan chief and his wife who had been recruited, in part, as interpreters for both European missionaries and Tahitian teachers. As Duranti (1994) notes, Samoan custom would only allow someone with a chief’s title to formally speak to other chiefs. The presence of the chief in Williams’ party enabled the missionaries to secure an audience with the paramount Chief *Malietoa Vainuupo*, and was critical in securing his conversion (Keesing, 1975, p. 230). Following his own conversion, he also instructed his people to convert:

It is my wish that the Christian religion should become universal amongst us. I look... at the wisdom of these worshippers of Jehovah, and see how superior they are in every respect. Their ships... can traverse the tempest driven oceans for months with perfect safety... Their axes are so hard and sharp... Now I conclude that the God who has given to his white worshippers these valuable things must be wiser than our gods, for they have not given the like to us. We want all these articles; and my proposition is, that the God who gave them should be our God (John Williams, cited in Keesing, 1975, p. 230).

This event, Munro and Thornley (1998) note, formed a critical moment in the incorporation of western culture in Samoan culture and set in train what they describe as ‘often-contested relations of race, gender, and power’ between Samoa and the West, separated by great social and cultural distance (p. 477), and within Samoan society itself. In other words, the arrival of the European missionaries and the acceptance of Christianity can be seen as external influences on the lives of the Samoan people, generating a range of Samoan responses. It is important to note, as Meleisea (1987b) does, that the acceptance of Christianity was not done by forceful imposition, but with Samoan collaboration, and with the recognition that Christianity might be seen as compatible with Samoan culture, and that the adoption of Christianity, while involving some change, might be advantageous to Samoans. As Ma’ia’i (1957) points out, this moment also formed a turning point in Samoan education.

#### *Purposes of Education*

The primary purpose of the LMS missionaries, and others who followed, was to secure conversions, principally through preaching. They also sought to introduce other practices of ‘civilization’ as well, which they saw as inseparable from Christianity (Gilson, 1970; Meleisea, 1987b). As Coxon (1996) noted, missionaries not only engaged in ‘spreading the “Word of God” [but in] creating a good Christian Samoan society’ (p. 173). In particular, they aimed to Christianise the law of the land, in what Solf et al. (1907) referred to as the ‘moral principles department’. Baba (1991) rephrased this as ‘total societal change’ and the introduction of ‘new and more civilized ways of living, based on Christian principles’ (p. 69). In keeping with their view of morality, they pushed for the ‘abolition of polygamy, divorce, the abolition of customary marriage rights, including the exchange of goods and the public test of virginity; the prevention of adultery, fornication and prostitution’ (p. 96). According to Baba (1991) and Baumgarner (1982), the idea was based on Western principles targeting the evangelisation of islanders through the teaching of the Bible so that church and school could be seen as major contributors to the development of a Christian society such as that being developed in Tahiti and Tonga. In the case of Samoa, formal or western education was introduced to the Samoans for the purposes as described by Coté (1997):

missionaries viewed many Samoan customs as ‘evil’  
so [they] set out to eradicate that evil and to teach the  
‘heathen natives’... to live by what they believed to be

the morally superior principles of Euro-Christian culture... by building Christian 'character' among the young... to increase their influence with each successive generation... by introducing Western-style education (p. 4).

At the personal level, the aim was to build into the Samoan 'inner self' what were understood to be the essential traits of the Christian character: 'personal will, personal conscience, and personal identity' (Mageo, 1996, p. 8). Thus, Gilson (1970) shows, the missionaries promoted the 'ethics and conventions of puritanism for a Christian "change of heart" and the church's discipline of its members' (p. 96). Inevitably, each religion sought to do this in its own particular way, and in accordance with its own particular principles, as Solf and colleagues (1907) showed.

Finally, the missionaries sought to develop their Samoan converts to the point where they could act as missionaries and pastors to their own people, and to other Pacific peoples (Ioka, 1995; Meleisea, 1987b).

These broad religious, cultural and social purposes were basic to the purposes and form of education. Indeed, it was to support their religious aims that they introduced formal Western-style schooling. As Tuia (1999) notes, 'missionary education was the only way of generating "civilisation" and Christianising the indigenous populations' (p. 36). Coxon (1996) makes a similar point, claiming that 'the aim was not education so much as conversion and civilisation' (p. 173). Because of this attitude, 'the informal structure of Samoan traditional learning was changed into formal education brought over by European missionaries [as] they rescued Samoans from their "uncivilised" behaviours and aimed to change some parts of Samoan culture in order to civilise and teach European knowledge' (Gilson, 1970, p. 32).

In keeping with their broader purposes, missionaries established churches and schools, and, by the 1840s, the first theological college (the LMS *Malua* Theological School). This, and subsequent seminaries (the Wesleyan *Piula* Theological Institution and the Catholic *Moamoa* Theological Seminary) had as their primary purpose the training of village pastors or priests, and missionaries. Referring especially to *Malua* Theological School, Rowe (1930) claimed that such institutions aimed to provide 'an effectual means of training native pastors in the Christian ministry, to lead the village life, and to give an education fitted to make them not only evangelists, but also teachers in the schools' (pp. 87-88). While the Christian ministry was reserved for

men, women were also included in missionary training. According to Siers and Maliko (2000), the purpose of including women in ministry training was that 'the missionary wife was viewed as an assistant to her husband and therefore any education she received was geared towards her role as a Pastor's wife' (p. 103). Such institutions, and the practice of having potential missionary wives reside with the missionaries and European pastors, served the additional purpose of ensuring that their 'virtue' was secure and beyond question (Mageo, 1996, p. 8).

Such missionary and pastoral education depended on the foundation laid in schools. According to Gilson (1970), 'formal schooling' emerged in Samoa as the product of missionary teaching of 'religious themes' and after a series of their 'special meetings and threading classes' (pp. 95-96). In more specific terms, Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984) declared that, 'During the period 1830-1899, a key instrument used by the missionaries to impress Western culture on the indigenous people had been the missions' educational system' (p. 205).

At the elementary level, the immediate purpose of schooling was to develop basic literacy. In general, literacy was seen as one of the hallmarks of civilisation and, thus, as fundamental to Samoan advancement. As Barradale (1907) put it, the establishment of 'formal schooling' in Samoa helped the 'enlightening of those that sit in the darkness' (p. 43). Meleisea (1987b), however, pointed to it as an example of the spread of one nation's culture to another, claiming that 'the idea which the missionary had of the way Samoans should live was based upon the ideas of the middle classes of England' (p. 67).

In the case of the Protestant missions, it was also crucial to enable Samoans to read the Bible for themselves (Gilson, 1970). In addition, and as part of their more general 'civilising' mission, they sought to teach Samoans the other two of the basic Western '3R's': to write and to reckon, in their own vernacular language (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980). In the eyes of Keesing (1978) and Wood (1975), the move to establish schools was to enable the Samoan Christian converts to read, write and understand the scriptures in their own mother-tongue. Reading the Bible was a fundamental feature of protestant religions, based on their understanding of the role of the Bible in establishing direct communion between the individual and God. Further, as Gilson (1970) argues, it was a 'prerequisite of church membership' and for church baptisms and admission to communion, and was an essential

qualification for ‘deaconship and enrolment in a teacher-training class’ (pp. 95-96). In addition, and reflecting the missionaries’ sense that Samoans were lazy and economically backward, the schools aimed to teach Samoans both the disciplines of regular work, and Western skills and techniques of manual agricultural labour (Tuia, 1999, p. 32).

### *Curriculum and Pedagogy*

In keeping with their purposes, the schools established by the missionaries taught an elementary curriculum focused on the Bible, and using the Bible as a key resource. According to Huebner (1986), the Bible was the main text of missionary education, used simultaneously to ‘spread the word of God’ and to teach ‘spelling..., grammar [and] geography’ (p. 399). Barradale (1907), writing at the end of the missionary era, also noted that teaching and learning, focused on ‘Old Testament history and the Life of Jesus’ (p. 135), and that both these, like the Christian faith more generally, began with the Bible. In addition to core religious knowledge, and the basic teaching of reading and writing, Barradale (1907) reports that young men and women attending school were also expected to learn the academic subjects of ‘composition, arithmetic [and] Samoan Grammar’ (p. 135).

From the start, missionaries sought to preach and teach in the vernacular (Huebner, 1986, p. 399). To do this, they needed to convert the oral language of the Samoans into written form. According to Barradale (1907):

the first thing they did was to write down the words which they heard people speaking... They formed an alphabet, and at last made the written language as complete as the spoken. They wrote simple books in Samoan, and, after many years, they translated the whole Bible (p. 29).

Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984) note, too, that the translation of Samoan hymn-books was a major priority. Such translations and ‘simple books’ provided materials for use in teaching not only language, but content, and both reflected and supported the importance of religious purposes of education. In addition, Wood (1975) notes that the LMS missionaries established the *Malua* Printing Press, which helped them to print and supply learning materials. For the Wesleyan or Methodist church, there were ‘about 20,000 school books in the Samoan language already printed in Tonga and sent to Samoa in 1837’ apart from the Catechisms or *Tusi Fesili* that were also used for educational purposes (p. 279).

By the late nineteenth century, according to Barradale (1907), mission schools had a graded formalised curriculum, organised along the lines of evolving Western educational theory and practice. For young children, learning was confined to the alphabet and reading simple words, as well as counting numbers up to 100. At Standard III, children were taught skills and subjects such as reading, writing and simple arithmetical in operations addition and multiplication as well as the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. All these skills had to be extended and mastered along with Geography and Scripture subjects to form the entire timetable through to the end of Standard VI. Coxon (1996) also noted the teaching of numeracy as having been introduced in the missionary period. This subject was basically the teaching of 'simple arithmetic'. Indeed, the two areas of literacy and numeracy were, according to Macpherson, Bedford and Spoonley (2000), 'the keys to the progress of the mission in Samoa', and reflected the missionaries' belief that only limited attainments would be possible in this context (pp. 2-3).

Apart from teaching Christianity and what Gannicott (1990) refers to as the 'Basic curriculum of the 3R's' (reading, writing and reckoning) (p. 25), missionaries also trained and encouraged Samoans in living according to Western, Christian precepts. Churchill (1902) noted that the learning of English also included instruction in good manners, while Barradale (1907) stressed that there was training in 'ethical behaviour'.

In addition the missionaries sought to introduce Western skills and practices for the material and economic aspects of living. Thus skills of 'house building, boat building, agriculture, horticulture, sewing, printing, commercial work' were incorporated into the curriculum alongside the teaching of English (Gannicott, 1990, p. 1). Barradale (1907) noted such additional subjects as tropical gardening, and other trades 'which will help them to use their hands and exercise their brains and spend their time wisely' (pp. 101-102). Siers and Maliko (2000) have referred to this training as 'house education' (p. 103). Thus, there was a shift from Christian teaching to 'trade training'. All of these skills and trades were taught in pastoral schools with a view, according to Tuia (1999), to the Samoans becoming wage-labourers in the future.

Tanielu (1997) has noted the gender specialisation in these tasks, where 'males were taught carpentry and agriculture while females were trained in domestic

skills by the pastor's wife' (p. 174). Siers and Maliko (2000) elaborate on the notion of 'domestic skills'; they included 'craftwork, healthcare, how to teach children, domestic chores, cooking and sewing' (p. 103).

According to Churchill (1902), these studies were mostly learned through rote. Tanielu (1997) has also pointed out the significance of 'rote memorization' of certain prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer (*o le tatalo a le Alii*) as normal practice. Tahitian LMS Christian teachers also extended this learning into a form of 'Family prayer' namely *o tatalo a aiga* (Williams & Barff, n.d., p. 94).

According to Keesing (1975), there were few resources and pupils usually squatted on mats because the number of desks was limited and there was only 'a blackboard and simple writing materials, a chart and a map or two' supplemented by a handful of texts (p. 267). Thus, the Samoan Bible became the main text and the only teaching resource in religious pedagogy. According to Faletose (1959), there were also other teaching literatures already translated into the Samoan language and available for the education of Samoans such as 'the book of Samoan Alphabetical Letters and simple related words [known in Samoa *Tusi Pi*], [the] sermon book and the hymnbook' (p. 15), while Catholics used catechisms in 'ministering to the spiritual welfare of the boys' (Solf et al., 1907 p. 76). Dunlop (1986) noted that 'bibles and hymns' were already translated by missionaries and extensively in use (p. 15).

Following English and other European custom, schools regularly conducted examinations, sometimes in the form of public displays of what had been learned. Barradale (1907) claims that Samoan parents often accompanied their children at examination time to ensure that their academic efforts were recognised and prizes distributed to the high achievers. Where examinations were more formal, Gilson (1970) argues, 'education helped set in motion the machinery of selection, with the more intelligent and attentive being singled out for the praise and moving to the top of their classes' (p. 98).

The schools established by the missions were under the control of pastors, increasingly, Samoan pastors, who were assisted in teaching by their wives and sometimes supported by graduate theological students. Barradale (1907) explained this as part of the wide range of functions such pastors (and their wives) fulfilled; they were not just missionary teachers in Samoa but that also they served as 'schoolmasters and examiners and inspectors as well as ministers' and even 'matrimonial agents' (p.

146). While Solf et al. (1907) claimed that the schools had a professional teaching staff who were responsible for gathering, maintaining and utilising resources, Keesing (1975) asserted that they had little formal pedagogical training.

According to Gannicott (1990), the pastoral schools were at the heart of the missionaries' plan for the provision of the foundation for an extensive system of primary education (p. 25). That is to say, early pastoral schools were set up as a preparatory stage or prerequisite for entering primary school level. Solf et al. (1907) pointed out that vocational skills were learnt at established higher boarding institutions such as the *Leulumoega* school for boys and *Papauta* school for girls. These institutions were set up by LMS missionaries to provide training in 'higher arithmetic, algebra... agriculture and many useful trades' for boys (p. 136) while girls learned some academic knowledge and a range of handcraft skills. These higher institutions were seen as a preparatory stage for Samoan theological students.

Theological boarding schools accepted both single and married students for pastoral learning. Normally, the teaching staff comprised of missionaries assisted by Samoan tutors. According to Solf et al. (1907) these schools had a highly systematised curriculum and a highly structured program:

The curriculum is four years, and the subjects comprise a theological course of two years in biblical and pastoral theology, homiletics, scripture history, church history, pedagogics, with practical normal school work, history of Rome and Germany, natural philosophy, elements of physiology, geography, arithmetic and composition Monday, Tuesday and Thursday are devoted to class work (ordinary school subjects). Wednesday is the industrial day, when instruction is given in various classes of industrial work such as carpentry, building, gardening, simple smiths, smith and lathe work [and]... plantation which is normally done on Fridays (p. 68).

For instance, the LMS missionaries trained students in gardening at *Vaialua* while Methodist missionaries conducted plantation at *Lufilufi* and Catholic priests trained students in tropical agriculture at *Moamoa*. While there is little said about the methods of teaching and learning, Siers and Maliko (2000) claim that teaching 'revolved around open and informal seminars' (p. 103).

### *Outcomes*

The work of the missions in Samoa had a range of outcomes. First, and most obviously, it established new modes and methods of formal education, and embodied in a network of schools. As a recent Report notes ‘The arrival of the missionaries introduced a new method of learning and recording through reading and writing [and] this was the beginning of a semi-formal or organized learning through the *Aiga-Faifeau* or Reverend Minister’s Schools’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1997b, Appendix 1, p. 1). What Gannicott (1990) called ‘pastoral schools in villages’ (p. 25) formed the basis of this network, but they were supplemented by higher schools at a district level, and they in turn provided students for the theological colleges whose job was to train pastors who could also be teachers in the village schools. Teachers for the village schools had little or no specifically pedagogical training and they used largely rote learning methods (Keesing, 1975, p. 265; Churchill, 1902). On the one hand, this can be seen to have fitted well with the oral traditions of Samoan culture; on the other hand, it was increasingly different from developments in pedagogy in the West, even though the general aims and style of education were derived from the West. And, as Meleisea (1987b) notes, most of the education of Samoans at village level, up until the 1950s continued to be provided by the village schools established by missions and churches.

The spread of schools was, according to a number of authors, accompanied by a growing acceptance of Western education. Huebner (1986) claims that the village *matai* or chiefs were great supporters of education. Nevertheless, such support appears to have been uneven, as Barradale (1907) reported that attendance was very low since education was not compulsory. Further, he claimed, Samoan parents did not encourage their children to attend school and when they did turn up, ‘they come trooping to school [with] twinkling black eyes full of fun and mischief... [and the teacher has] to keep them awake’ (p. 131). According to Meleisea (1987b) and Ioka (1995), there was no specific age for entrance, and Gray (1960) recalled that ‘old grey-headed men may be seen poring over the alphabet, and taught by some of the youngest in the family’ (p. 39).

The spread of schools was also accompanied by the spread of print literacy and print-literate culture. Ma’ia’i (1957) observed that:

Fifteen years after the arrival of the missionaries in 1830, the whole of the New Testament had been translated into Samoan and was being eagerly read by the newly converted natives. (p. 168).

And Meleisea (1987b) comments that ‘the missionaries were increasingly aware of a growing Samoan interest in reading and writing’ (p. 108).

It is not possible from the existing literature, however, to make a reliable estimate of either the numbers of schools provided, the extent to which Samoans of different gender, age and family actually participated in Western, mission-based schooling. Thus, it is not possible to establish a basis for comparison with the outcomes of education under later colonial governments and independent Western Samoan education.

The growth of a body of Samoan pastors, also functioning as teachers meant that there was a significant Christian Samoan population acting as agents for promoting Westernised culture in Samoa. There is further evidence, too, that the spread of Western religion, education and other aspects of ‘civilisation’ made a significant impact on ‘grass roots’ Samoan culture. Dunlop (1986), for example, notes that before being taken to pastoral schools, that the teaching of Samoan children continued to begin at home, where it had always been initiated. However, she claims, home-teaching itself was transformed as parents learned new ways associated with Christian teachings (p. 11). Tuia (1999) also maintains that the three elements of Samoan culture namely ‘love, respect and obedience’ which are now stressed by Samoan parents as a technique for behaviour management represent the Christian ‘code of ethics’ originally taught in the missionary training of indigenous pastors. According to this author, ‘the Samoan culture [was] elevated through Sunday schools in villages’ (p. 34).

New skills and techniques in production of the means of living were also introduced through the ‘industrial’ aspects of the curriculum, and Meleisea (1987b) notes that these religious and educational changes were inseparable from the gradual forging of closer links between Samoa and international trade: ‘wherever the Missionary goes, new channels are cut for the streams of commerce’ (pp. 36-37).

The relations between Samoan tradition and the changes which followed from the work of the missionaries and the new forms of education they introduced were complex. I have noted already the mixed responses of Samoans to the presence

of the missionaries (chapter 1) and their education (above). While Macpherson, Bedford and Spoonley (2000) note the difference between what they called the ‘world view knowledge’ of Samoan and Western cultures, Singh (1999) maintains that ‘with the translation of the Bible into Samoan, written communication practices were incorporated into the oral traditions and spirituality of the *fa’aSamoa* (Samoan way)’ (p. 7). Similarly with more technical and practical matters, while new skills and techniques for agriculture, carpentry, cooking, sewing, and other vocational fields were introduced, they took their place within the traditional sexual division of labour (Solf et al., 1907).

A potential second source of power and authority, outside and in some respects in opposition to the chiefly system, was also formed: while Samoan culture accorded formal speaking rights only to holders of chiefly titles, the missionaries required their Samoan pastors and teachers to renounce such titles. At the same time, once the system of theological training of Samoans came into operation, the fact that Samoans themselves were doing most of the pastoral and teaching work at village level meant that there was maximum opportunity for the subtle mutual adaptation and accommodation of Samoan traditional culture and the new Western influences to each other.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Education in colonial and early independent Western Samoa**

As is the case with the nineteenth century, after the arrival and impact of the missions and missionaries, there is a relatively substantial body of literature dealing with society and education in Western Samoa during what is usually referred to as the colonial period. For the period since 1962, when Western Samoa became the first Pacific island country to achieve political autonomy from the colonial regimes and establish its own independent government, the historiographic situation is similar to that of the period prior to the nineteenth century, in that there are relatively few specifically historical studies. The reasons, clearly, are very different. For the pre-nineteenth century, the problem reflects the absence of written records, the relative remoteness of the period and its seeming timelessness. For the period since independence, there is a lack of any settled government-evolved sense of perspective on the period, and there are restrictions on access to many of the documents which might inform such a history. The long-standing sense among many historians, generally, appears to be that recent matters are more properly the subject matter of political than historical accounts; such a view would certainly conspire against an extensive historical literature.

Despite the limitations in the historiography of the post-independence period, this chapter explores both the histories of education in twentieth century Western Samoa, and the twentieth century content of historical background accounts in recent policy documents. As with the missionary period, it attempts to lay out the main purposes of education promoted by those involved in providing or regulating schools, in this case, the colonial and early independent governments, key features of curriculum and pedagogy, and the outcomes of education, in particular, in terms of provision of schooling and participation in schooling.

#### **Education in Samoa under German Administration**

As noted in Chapter 1, from 1900, Western Samoa was separated from American Samoa, and came under German colonial rule. Keesing (1978) notes that initially, the German administration assured the missions that they would not disturb or interfere with their work of educating the Samoan people (c.f., Bentley, 1988;

Coxon, 1996). When the Germans did initiate new developments it was at a more advanced level of education, rather than at the elementary level where it would have been in competition with the mission schools (Ma'ia'i, 1957).

According to Singh (1999), the new government was happy to allow the mission system to continue, at least in part because mission schools turned out in large numbers to support and respect the official raising of the German flag marking the commencement of their rule. In part, however, it was, as O'Meara (1990) argues, because Germany's interests in Samoa were almost entirely commercial. Indeed, as Ellison (1938) showed, German interest in annexing Western Samoa was an outcome of German presence in Samoa as traders since at least the year 1875. Churchill (1902), too, claimed that the primary reason why the Germans came to favour colonising Samoa was their interest in securing 'absolute trade supremacy' by 'annexing new lands for ordinary commerce' with the idea of 'selling dear and buying cheap' (p. 17).

For their part, the Christian missionaries welcomed this political change for the fact that Samoans would have a settled government favourable to the advancement of civilisation, mainly in terms of religion (Meleisea, 1987a). Nevertheless, as Baumgarner notes, even though there was little attempt to supplant the missions, some missionaries felt that the Germans were showing signs of seeking to direct their efforts in particular ways. One LMS missionary in Apia claimed, in 1911, that:

We are being told that we ought to do this and that, to teach more English and to bring new and 'up to date' methods into our village schools. We may think that our schools very well answer the purposes for which they are intended, and that if the Governments [Germans] require a different sort of education for their own purposes, they ought to recognize their own responsibilities and supply it themselves; but this they confess they cannot do and throw the onus upon us because for so many years we have undertaken the responsibility of educating the Samoans (in Baumgarner, 1982, p. 16).

Indeed, some German practices, such as the granting of 'small subsidies' to mission schools for particular purposes may have simultaneously strengthened the position of the mission schools as education providers, while giving the administration some influence over the nature of their programs (Meleisea, 1982). Overall, however,

Baba (1991) describes the Germans' progress in the field of education as 'slow' and 'almost reluctant', while Baumgarner (1982) argues, 'the mission education program continued during this period virtually uninterrupted [and]... virtually nothing change[d]' (pp. 17, 28).

#### *Purposes of Education*

At the most general level, the Germans' primary purpose in supporting education was, as Meleisea (1982) put it, 'to teach Samoans to understand European culture' (p. 36) or, as Tawake (2000) expresses it, 'to bring [Samoans] into conformity with the [European] defining centre' of cultural norms and practices (p. 155). This reflected the German belief in the superiority of Western civilisation, and their parallel belief in the backwardness and primitiveness of Samoan society and culture (Tavana, 2001).

In this context, and in keeping with their economic interests in Samoa, Macpherson, Bedford and Spoonley (2000) claim, the primary specific educational objective of the Germans in Samoa was to develop the Samoan people as a 'valued commodity', through encouraging 'vocational training' (Baumgarner, 1982) and stressing 'the practical and useful rather than the academic' (Keesing, 1978, p. 415). The aim of making the population more economically useful was limited mainly to children of European or part-European descent, and extended only to a relatively small number of Samoans. In so far as it did extend to Samoans, it aimed to select only the most promising to continue beyond elementary schooling to a level at which they might acquire the skills to become 'clerks and public servants' (Baba, 1991). To some degree, this purpose enjoyed the support of the *matai*, who had requested an institution to enable older Samoan boys to acquire qualifications for employment as Government officials. Apart from this, Meleisea (1987a) claims, the German primary target for this new secular system was:

to marginalize indigenous Samoans and... to shape [them] to occupy subservient positions and thus prevent them from challenging and threatening European and part-European hegemony in Samoan society (p. 150).

In general, Coxon (1996) has argued, the German rulers in Samoa showed a lack of interest in the educational lives of the indigenous people. In this context, the stress

on vocational education and practical training can be seen to serve the purpose of making the Samoans a more productive labour force.

Such purposes, from the perspective of government, were directed at the level of Western Samoan society, government and economy in general. At the level of the individual learner, Baumgarner (1982) claims, the purpose of education was 'no longer... to prepare the individual for a better understanding of Christian beliefs' but now to prepare him or her for more secular purposes, 'launching the pupil on a course into the future' (p. 30).

### *Curriculum and Pedagogy*

As I have argued above, the mission system initially continued almost unchanged under German colonial rule (c.f. Coxon, 1996). However, the government increasingly put mission schools under pressure to modify both curriculum and pedagogy. Such modifications shifted the curriculum in the direction of a more secular form of education for Samoan children for the first time (Macpherson, Bedford & Spoonley, 2000).

For European children, Solf et al. (1907) observed, the German administration sought to ensure that they mastered both German and English languages, orally and in written form. For Samoan children, especially at the elementary level, the vernacular – the *Gagana Samoa* – continued to be used. The government also insisted on the inclusion of German language as a compulsory subject (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980). In effect, Macpherson, Bedford and Spoonley (2000) and Meleisea (1987a) argue, this officially established a division between non-indigenous and indigenous Samoan children, and restricted indigenous Samoan children's opportunity to obtain Western education in the English language.

While the missionary curriculum, with the addition of German, continued in place, the government appointed a committee of (European) experts to devise a new program much more focused on industrial and commercial learning. They recommended introduction of 'handwork' and 'manual training', including courses in native craftwork, carpentry, elementary smithing and painting. They also introduced nature studies and simple agricultural studies, based on developing a school garden; these also provided a small measure of 'health education' (Ma'ia'i, 1957; Keesing, 1975).

Ma'ia'i (1957) saw this as an attempt to supersede the emphasis on 'academic' discipline areas that were highly taught by the missionaries in the pre-colonial era. Keesing (1975), however, claims that this approach sought to supplement, rather than supersede the missionary 'academic' programs. Certainly, as Solf et al. (1907) show, the development of 'practical' subjects was done alongside the continuation of subjects such as 'arithmetic, geometry, history, geography, natural history and physics, singing, drawing, writing and drill' (p. 65). Baba (1991) points out that the academic and technical elements of education were directed to different groups of children: those who were considered 'bright' or 'intelligent', and those who were now identified as 'slow', 'low achievers' or 'backward', respectively.

In government-sponsored schools, much of the elementary teaching was in the hands of Samoans, appointed as teacher trainees or associates, under the supervision of European teachers (including Germans and Samoans of mixed descent) (Ma'ia'i, 1957). In the mission schools, in contrast, and in keeping with long standing practice, the bulk of the teachers were Samoans, acting without direct European supervision.

Much of the teaching took the form of drills, or unvaried routine procedures. Each lesson was supposed to start with a rapid physical movement to secure pupils' attention. This was followed with the standard formal questions, which had already been prepared by the teacher. Such methods stressed 'rote' learning, and the acquisition of highly formalised knowledge. Describing such teaching as 'parrot-like instruction', Ma'ia'i (1957) argues that it had 'very little real worth, as it demands the least possible mental effort either by teacher or by pupil. It definitely prohibits development of initiative and self-reliance and is lacking in any real educational worth' (p. 206).

In teaching reading, Ma'ia'i (1957) shows, instead of using the Samoan vernacular, the German government encouraged reading in English for the Samoans, on the assumption that the skill they acquired would help them to read in their own mother-tongue. Other subjects were taught in *Gagana Samoa* (Baumgarner, 1982; Wood, 1975).

Solf et al. (1907) observed that the only teaching resources available were a few books about natural history, rubber and cocoa which had become relevant with the changed curriculum, and a few other materials appropriate to simple

demonstrations. In addition, European children, and others with higher levels of literacy, were able to access a wider range of reading resources. For teaching geography, there were illustrations and maps.

#### *Outcomes of Education*

One outcome of German intervention in education, as Keesing (1978) has pointed out, was that education in Samoa came to comprise ‘four parallel school systems run by the four main mission bodies’, in addition to the gradually emerging German ‘national’ schools system (pp. 414-415). This system was also structured by the hierarchical organisation of mission education, from elementary schools at village level, through district schools offering slightly more advanced education (such as the boarding schools of the LMS, Methodists and Mormons) (Keesing, 1978), and a small number of centrally located and run higher institutions, mainly for non-indigenous Samoans: the German school at *Leififi* (from 1905), the Malifa School, and the Marist Schools for Boys and for Girls (Solf et al., 1907). From 1908, there was also a central school at *Malifa* for Samoan children (boys and girls) under the authority of the German government as a response to the request of Samoan chiefs for an institution to educate older Samoan boys (17-19 years) to acquire qualifications to work as Government officials (Coxon, 1996; Ma’ia’i, 1957).

Such a network, and especially the provision of separate schools specifically for European and ‘part Samoans’, established a hierarchy of education provision in which most Samoans received only the most elementary education, and were effectively excluded from participation in more advanced learning (Meleisea, 1987a). At the same time, as Meleisea (1987a) points out, the price of participating in Western schooling was, in some cases, in effect to renounce one’s Samoan identity, by adopting a European or Chinese surname. Baba (1991) argues that this structure reflected the government’s concern to develop a system which would provide a supply of capable people to become ‘the clerks and public servants’ for the colonial regime.

A second outcome, Macpherson, Bedford and Spoonley (2000) claim, was the growth of secular schooling in Samoa, challenging the essentially religious orientation established by the mission schools in the nineteenth century (c.f. Va’a, 1978).

A third outcome was an increasing shift of control away from the local level, where, under the missions, Samoan pastor-teachers had lived and worked close to Samoan daily life and were essentially part of its culture, and where the *matai* had continued to exercise authority and power of in matters concerning the education of children of their villages. Control was now increasingly located in the hands of European bureaucrats and experts, who saw local Samoan culture as backward, primitive, and simple, and who, according to Tavana (2001), had ‘no appreciation of the traditional lifestyle and cultures of the Samoan people’ (p. 2), a view which he describes as ‘derogatory’ and ‘patronising’ (c.f. Tawake, 2000, p. 155).

In this context, it is worth noticing the implications of the incorporation of ‘native’ crafts within the ‘industrial’ curriculum. On the one hand, it involved some recognition of Samoan culture and practices. On the other, it both denied Samoans access to Western technical knowledge and skills, and reflected colonialist views of their inferiority and general inability to master Western culture.

### **Education in Samoa under New Zealand Administration**

With the outbreak of World War I, New Zealand took over the government of Western Samoa from Germany. During the war years, the new colonial government was not in a position to pay much attention to education, much less to undertake any systematic reconstruction of educational provision or the formulation of a new education policy (New Zealand. Department of Island Territories, 1922). The education system still continued to use similar educational principles that were operated by the Germans alongside the mission school systems. The most significant change was the inclusion of two Samoan High Chiefs, two others of rank, and village mayors or *pulenu’u* in the School Committee (Ma’ia’i, 1957).

With the formation of the League of Nations after the end of World War I, the status of Samoa changed from that of a colony within a framework of competition among rival nations, to that of a territory governed by New Zealand under the League’s Mandate. Ma’ia’i (1957) argues that at this point the provision of education became significant in preparing Samoan people to take over leadership of their own country. Crucial to this, Coxon (1996) shows, was providing a general education for all Samoan children.

An integral part of the New Zealand government's educational strategy in Western Samoa, from almost the beginning, was the development of a more coordinated and comprehensive system of schools, and a key to this, according to both Baumgarner (1982) and Keesing (1934), was the integration of mission schools into a more comprehensive government system. Such integration was the subject of a series of conferences, but, Baumgarner (1982) argues, the missions had disagreed with such a plan because they believed it 'would be inefficient and uneconomic as well as depriving the mission education system of its freedom' (p. 18). However, by 1920, this proposal was agreed in principle.

A much later Report, setting the development of education in independent Western Samoa in its historical context (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980), identified the establishment of New Zealand civil government in 1920 as marking the introduction of education in Samoa as 'a state responsibility and duty'. Baumgarner (1982) reports that the first education policy initiated by New Zealand was the construction of a 'free, secular and universal system of education', under government control, for Samoan people. Singh (1999) claims that the proposed national system of schools was brought into existence by 'transposing the upper level of the pastors' village schools (Grade II schools) into public secular institutions, leaving the lower-level schools in their original form under the pastor's control' (p. 9). In other words, New Zealand did not change the entire school structure which had been originally formed by the missions and modified by the Germans. In effect, they directed their attention to the secular transformation of the higher educational levels in the country. Fox (1992) comments that alongside secularisation, the main concerns were the establishment of sufficient schools at convenient locations around both main islands of *Savaii* and *Upolu*, the training of teachers, and the establishment of English as the medium of instruction in schools.

This set of policies remained in place largely until after World War II and the formation of the United Nations Organization (UNO), when the political administration of Western Samoa was reconstituted as a United Nations Trusteeship (Ma'ai'i, 1957). During this period, according to Ma'ia'i (1957), New Zealand's policy for education in Western Samoa aimed to provide a sound system of primary education for all children of school age, to make provision for senior students to obtain manual, technical and agricultural training, to select from primary school

children those thought best for a higher education and to provide for them a sound secondary education and to provide adult education (p. 266).

#### *Purposes of education*

According to Coxon (1996), a key purpose for education under New Zealand rule was to promote indigenous understanding of, and ability to actively participate in, a democratic State. Keesing (1978) also noted that a major aim in educating Samoans was to ‘develop... citizenship,... to train leaders, to prepare for greater self government’ (p. 433). Similarly, Ma’ia’i (1957) sees the aim of education in this early period of New Zealand government as ‘the making of good citizens, inspired with the love of their country’ (p. 198).

A second purpose was to provide encouragement and skills for a majority of Samoan people, who would continue to work on the land, to become better and more productive farmers. Ma’ia’i (1957) saw part of the aim of education at this time as encouraging in Samoans a ‘determination to live and work for it and to increase its natural productions’ (p. 199). Indeed, citizenship and productivity were intertwined: both Keesing’s and Ma’ia’i’s statements, cited above, join citizenship and productivity in the same sentence.

These linked purposes required the development of particular personal characteristics; in Keesing’s (1978) terms, education was to ‘develop character’ (p. 433). On the one hand, this related to citizenship by ‘broaden[ing] limited mental horizons, [and] mak[ing] the people more competent to participate in a world of enlarging experience’. On the other it related to economic productivity and a (notably Western) orientation to progress and improvement, by ‘conquering indolence by intensifying economic wants’ (p. 433).

While pursuing highly western goals, New Zealand sought to work hand in hand with the Samoans in developing education, to ensure it was well adapted to Samoan perceived wants and needs (Ma’ia’i, 1957). The principle, here, was to provide an education which would not be in advance of their ordinary environments and social conditions (Ma’ia’i, 1957, p. 199). Such an approach, Keesing (1978) argues, was designed to make better Samoans, with a pride of race and love of country (pp. 420-421). Ma’ia’i (1957) appears to accept this view, arguing that ‘a system of education based on modern European methods or traditional lines is not suited for the Samoans whose mode of life, mental outlook, ambitions, traditions,

customs, habits, environment and future needs are altogether different from New Zealanders' (p. 132). However, elsewhere in the same study, she sees a variety of purposes being served by different parts and levels of the system. Elementary education, she suggests, served the purpose of enabling 'the great mass of them... to live in villages and be independent on agricultural pursuits'. Manual, technical and agricultural training, she suggests were to enlarge the productive capabilities of those who receive it, enabling them 'to become more useful members of the Samoan society'. Selective secondary education was to provide a trickle of Samoans into 'clerical or administrative positions, higher specialist training or entrance to university'. And, finally, adult education was meant to 'induce a fuller understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship, increase efficiency in work, and contribute to the more fruitful use of leisure' (p. 266).

After World War II there was a new urgency to educate sufficient Samoans to occupy positions of authority in their country (Baba, 1991; c.f. Gannicott, 1990). In this context, the primary official purpose of education was the preparation of an elite to become the future leaders of Western Samoa (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980). This was also important from a Samoan perspective. Ma'ia'i (1957), for example, claims that, 'education was regarded only as a means of quickly taking over the administration and thus superseding the Europeans as rulers' (p. 236).

From the point of view of at least some Samoans, education also served much more individual purposes, as it clearly had in early periods. Beeby, a former New Zealand Director of Education, suggested that 'Education for the Samoans is not the means of building a more enlightened society, or a means of forging a new culture, richer because of the two culture backgrounds. Education is still a means of getting office work because this leads to prestige' (1966, p. 27). This view is confirmed by the proposal from the *Fono of Faipule* in October 1943 for the sons of Samoan chiefs to be sent to New Zealand to further their education. This stress on the preparation of an elite was so strong that, in Beeby's view, it overtook any concern for a comprehensive unified vision or purpose for Samoan education, promoting him to write that 'there was no general aim of education for Samoan society at the time (1966, p. 27).

#### *Curriculum and pedagogy*

Ma'ia'i (1957) cites a 1920s report which outlined several principles governing curriculum and pedagogy for elementary education. It asserts:

instruction should be closely related to the native environment and traditions. Nothing should be taught that is not service able to the natives in their present social state or not likely to be serviceable in the near future. The system should aim to develop agriculture in its widest sense and also the manual and domestic arts. The possibility of broadening and intensifying interest in village life by means of manual training, nature study, drawing and design, music and games should be recognized. Prominence should be given to the teaching of hygiene. As far as practicable, instruction should be given both in the English language and in the vernacular. (p. 199)

In keeping with this view, Grade I was conducted fully in Samoan language. At Grade II, the curriculum focused on simple reading, writing, and arithmetic, and began to be taught in English. From this level upwards, English in fact became the most important subject. According to Ma'ia'i (1957) and Beeby (1966), the main aim in the subject was teaching students 'how to speak English' rather than how to read or write it. *A Special Report on the Development of Education in Western Samoa* (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980) also comments that English language was taught using 'phonic and conversational' rather than formal written means. By the end of Grade II, students were required to show the ability to read and write in ease and accuracy in the vernacular as well as the ability to carry on a simple conversation in English and to understand written English well enough for immediate practical purposes such as reading notices, simple bulletins and other similar texts (Keesing, 1978; Thomas & Postlethwaite, 1984).

Beyond Grade II, the curriculum for primary schools also included Samoan language and custom, English language, arithmetic, health, social studies, natural science, music, dancing, arts and crafts, and physical education. There were moves to further develop studies in agriculture and technical education. Children were expected to acquire sufficient knowledge of arithmetic in order to deal with practical situations. In health and hygiene they were required to have a firm practical understanding of major principles. They were taught a knowledge of Samoan history and customs, common features of the people and their traditions, and of the geography of the Pacific, some appreciation of the natural world and some knowledge and skills in the music, dance and crafts of Samoa. Girls were also required to learn simple domestic arts including the feeding and care of children. A

sign of the gradual standardisation of the curriculum was the introduction of the New Zealand Proficiency Certificate as a means of formal assessment the end of primary schooling.

Through the post-war period up to 1960, the secondary curriculum continued to develop. English itself was taught as a core subject (Ma'ia'i, 1957). Commercial courses were started, including bookkeeping, commercial practice, shorthand and typing. In the academic stream, courses like mathematics, human biology, and advanced general science were all undertaken and English was used as the medium of instruction (New Zealand Government, 1960). Mission schools, even at secondary level, offered a narrower curriculum, offset by greater attention to moral training and biblical and other religious knowledge.

At this point, the New Zealand government reduced the time given to religion and handicrafts, in order to provide a more comprehensive syllabus that could include such things as health and agriculture courses to meet what it perceived as the needs of the Samoan people. The *Western Samoa Mail* (Education in Pacific Countries, 1939) commented on what it described as the 'difficulty which affected the useful training in manual and agricultural trades' because of the scope of the essentially imported New Zealand curriculum, which included such irrelevant matters as 'trading, and money matters' (p. 5).

Teaching methods continued in the highly formalised style noted already, with an emphasis on rote learning. The basic method of teaching was the 'group drill in the memorizing of symbols' (Beeby, 1966). Arithmetic was taught through rote learning; for instance, tables were displayed and chanted in unison, and thus learned by heart. In this way, repetition was the hope for obtaining or remembering the meanings of those words already learned. Similarly, in English, a variety of grammatical rules were taught essentially through drills. 'Child activity, child doing and thinking are at present sacrificed to drill methods' (Ma'ia'i, 1957, p. 208). To promote more varied and 'modern' methods, refresher courses were introduced for both government and mission teachers, and many of the teaching resources provided (see below) included guidance on how best to teach their subjects and topics.

There were exceptions to the formalism of teaching and learning, and the distance from the concerns of Samoan life and culture that accompanied the curriculum and teaching methods. History and Geography were taught using local

legends and historical events, as well as maps, globes and other educational devices. Food plots and gardens were established for teaching agricultural pursuits, such as growing taro and other native foods. As radio became increasingly available, receivers were provided in virtually every room for key lessons provided through a daily broadcast service. For these lessons, a *Tomatau* text or 'Lesson Guide' was supplied to provide general information to teachers in their preparation of relevant materials for each lesson, as well as to give understanding about the steps to follow in the course.

In the early years of New Zealand government, Ma'ia'i (1957) writes, most of the curriculum resources for Samoan schools were the ones already established by the missions, together with some contributions from New Zealand. However, as the system developed, and especially as the curriculum was expanded and elaborated, each of the subjects of the primary school curriculum in villages were provided with a teaching manual or guide – even if only that from the School Broadcasts – which was used to help teachers in the preparatory, teaching and follow-up phases of their lessons. In some cases, such as the grammar text, these resources also suggested rote methods rather than more active teaching and learning. During this time, Beeby (1954) mentions that locally prepared textbooks in the vernacular as well as the periodical *Samoan School Journal* were helpful in the learning of Samoan language (p. 6). Later, Beeby (1966) also noted that training in the vernacular language had been facilitated through the assistance of a Samoan grammar textbook and a Samoan dictionary. Baumgarner (1982) pointed out that basic nature study lessons were given on educational radio to classes at standard levels together with the assistance of the New Zealand textbooks such as *Nature Study: Source Book for Pacific Islands Teachers* by R.R.V. Blanc (1958). Equipment gradually finding its way into schools and teaching included projectors, films and filmstrips. These resources were not restricted to government schools, but also made available to mission schools. In addition, gradual extension of western styled furniture and other equipment in school buildings enabled more teachers to adopt western styles of teaching and classroom order (Beeby, 1966).<sup>1</sup>

#### *Outcomes of Education*

One of the primary outcomes of the educational efforts of the New Zealand government was the foundation of a coordinated system of secular schooling. Baba

(1991) claims that the early 1920s was the time when ‘education became progressively secularised’ in Western Samoa and that this marked a strong shift towards the provision of ‘universal primary education’ in government village schools (c.f. Singh, 1999). By the 1930s this ‘system’ (which still consisted of government schools and four networks of missionary schools) comprised village schools teaching to Grade I under the control of the village pastor, mission-run district schools under the government supervision teaching Grade II level, government and mission boarding schools teaching Grade III, government *Malifa* schools in *Upolu* or *Vaipouli* in *Savaii* offering Grades IV to VI, and a handful of mainly mission-run secondary schools. Keesing (1975), however, suggests that the school system in Samoa was not yet properly developed, and that different schools in the system as it existed were not fully coordinated because of a lack of a consistent educational philosophy shaping policy, together with clear criteria for establishing priorities within budgetary limitations.

By the 1950s, this system had been further developed. Since the 1920s, village schools had begun developing a more expanded curriculum, and there was more provision for students to reach the middle standards in village and district schools, as well as through the *Leififi* Intermediate School (Beeby, 1954). The first steps were taken towards the introduction of government-provided secondary education with the establishment of *Samoa College* in 1953 to accommodate selected ‘bright’ students from the intermediate and district schools. This stress on the development of secondary education had begun to replace the program of ‘accelerated education’, mainly at *Leififi*, which formed the government’s immediate response to the United Nations’ insistence that it should ensure that there was an educated Samoan elite capable of taking control of government. Finally, the system was integrated through the establishment of a single uniform curriculum framework and common examinations (New Zealand Government, 1960, p. 98). Overseeing this increasingly extensive, developed and integrated system was the government, which, Baba (1991) argues, ‘was no longer just a participant in the venture, it was expected to coordinate and direct not just education, but also the whole social, economic and political development of the country’ (pp. 40-41).

Dunlop (1991) and Barrington (1976) both describe this system as a form of ‘welfare colonialism’, promoting assimilationist philosophies. Like earlier colonial

and missionary approaches, this approach assumed the superiority of western social, economic, political and cultural values and practice. Accordingly, it attempted, gradually, to draw Samoans into these Western values, 'raising' expectations of 'higher living standards and relatively good social conditions', and using education as a means of making those higher standards possible. For their part, Dunlop (1991) claims, Samoans were generally happy to take advantage of many of these Western ideas and practices, and demonstrated this in their adoption of such things as agricultural and health extension programmes. New Zealand schools inspectors at the time shared this view, one commenting that the 'Samoans were slowly changing as a result of contact with European civilisation' (cited in Fox, 1992, p. 240). While also criticising the lack of coordination in this system of educational provision, as early as the mid 1930s, Keesing (1978) had argued that the increasing participation in Western education undermined the *fa'aSamoa*, claiming that 'the present semi-education for all is a great mistake... spoiling... superfluous... deculturising' (p. 437). Yet, Ma'ia'i (1957) argued, in important respects, the system, as it applied to most (i.e., elementary) education, was geared to the circumstances and conditions of village life: it was to be closely related to the native environment and traditions, and 'serviceable' to Samoans 'in their present social state', and should focus on the occupations of village life (agriculture, and manual and domestic arts), and seek to 'broaden... [and] intensify interest in village life'. Only 'for a limited number' would 'special provision' be made for 'advanced classes' that might enable students to undertake 'higher and professional courses' (Ma'ia'i, 1957, p. 199).

It can be argued, as Ma'ia'i (1957) points out, that this brought into Western Samoan life critical questions and tensions over whether increasing participation in an essentially Western and Westernising system of schooling did in fact threaten the *fa'aSamoa*, and about whether the *fa'aSamoa* could only survive by remaining unchanged, or whether it could adopt, and adapt to, Europeanising influences.

It also produced what amounted to a two-tiered system with only limited possibilities for Samoans to 'cross over'. Most participated for a relatively short time in village schools, which offered only a limited introduction to Westernised education. And, as Coxon (1996) notes, in the absence of any form of compulsory education in the country, participation was dependent on whether parents could afford the costs to extend their children's education, especially where it involved moving them from

rural to urban settlements. This limitation on the likelihood of children staying for an extended education was strengthened by the introduction of fees for government-owned schools (Coxon, 1996), and the fact that, according to Meleisea (1987a), the Catholic priests encouraged half-caste Samoans to participate in their schooling and left the indigenous Samoans in isolation from the middle and upper levels of schooling and their more extensive contact with 'Western' knowledge.

Educational participation was still also strongly shaped by gender. While there were no local laws or customs restricting the educating of girls together with boys, and they were commonly taught the 'core' subjects – English, Arithmetic, History, Geography and so on – together, only boys undertook agriculture and manual training or, in the academic stream, science, while only girls participated in handicrafts and domestic training.

But for the limited number of Samoans who were able to take advantage of the modern advanced academic forms of education, clearer forms of support had been developed. By 1945 a 'scholarship scheme' sent promising Samoan students overseas, particularly to New Zealand, to further their education (Barrington, 1968, p.132). This scheme allowed Samoan students to receive higher education, but it was a short-term policy, which took pressure off the administration to develop Samoa's own education facilities (MacKenzie, 1950, p. 8).

There were some signs that the standard of teaching and learning, even at elementary level, was improving. Coxon (1996) notes the appointment of New Zealand teachers as Heads as a significant move to raise the general standard of district schools, particularly in the area of English language. And Ma'ia'i (1957) points out that the New Zealand School Commission was able to raise standards for assessing the academic achievements of Samoan children. Nevertheless, the standard remained low in comparison to Western countries, especially in village schools, at least partly because of the very poor standard from which they were starting. Beeby (1966) claimed that in village and pastoral schools the level of education in the 1940s was more or less equivalent with the New Zealand schooling in the 1800s. He pointed to the poor training and educational standards of many of the teachers, and argued that they were not well equipped with pedagogical strategies, and compared them with the 'Dame schools', which had been the target of reformers in England. Australia and New Zealand by the mid-nineteenth century. The basic method of

teaching remained ‘group drill in the memorizing of symbols’, an approach which was essentially meaningless to the children, and produced very limited ability to do more than repeat facts (Ma’ia’i, 1957).

There was also some improvement in the provision of resources for schools. As I noted above, there was an increasing range of textbooks, radio broadcasts and audiovisual material, distributed across both government and mission schools, and there was some advance in the provision of school buildings. Yet, as Ma’ia’i (1957) noted, in the village schools, ‘conditions under which pupils in the village live [and learn] are somewhat primitive compared with those of more advanced people. For instance, pupils sit cross-legged on the floor in the schools and to use an exercise book, have to stretch out on their stomachs’ (p. 212). In the Grade II schools class sizes were enormous. And, as Ma’ia’i (1957) noted, there was a general scarcity of paper and paper-based resources, leading to a reluctance to use paper for such tasks which were not seen as absolutely necessary. Overall, the system might have made progress, but it ‘still ha[d] a greater distance [to go]’ (p. 254).

Literacy practices and outcomes provide one measure of the extent to which schools had functioned as agents of cultural change. Samoan remained the language of instruction in most village schools, and Dunlop (1991) claimed that at this level schooling was already almost universal, with about 98 percent of the population able to be described as literate. On the one hand, the relatively small numbers of students progressing from village elementary education to district intermediate and advanced levels of schooling, where English was more extensively used, meant that the bulk of the population were insulated from the full impact of western education and culture. On the other, the increasing levels of vernacular literacy themselves involved two significant social changes: first, it marked an increasing involvement of Samoan people at village level in literate practices, and second, it increased the shift towards the bringing up of children in a Westernised institutional setting. In addition there were other, seemingly insignificant practices, such as the introduction of school uniforms (even if they were adapted to Samoan styles of dress) (Keesing, 1978; Thomas & Postlethwaite, 1984) that also reflected Western rather than indigenous Samoan culture.

Moreover, as Ma’ia’i (1957) argues, the formality of most pedagogical methods could not ‘develop independence of thought and self-reliance, nor provide

means for the training of initiative and similar desirable aptitudes and skills... Child activity, child doing and thinking are at present sacrificed to drill methods' (p. 208). As a consequence, the sorts of purposes noted by Keesing (1975) and others, of transforming the Samoan character, were unlikely to be achieved. As Ma'ia'i (1957) continued:

The Samoan has been in contact with Western culture for over 150 years but through out this time he has continued to show strong conservatism. He still prefers to dress in the lavalava; he depends upon his own Samoan food and most of the customs are as strong today as they were at the time of the European discovery of Samoa. This being so, it is my opinion that the process of merging the two cultures, Samoan and European should not be hastened. The Samoans desire the teaching of English and this can be met by including English in the curriculum. (p. 208)

Yet, she notes, this entailed a major dilemma:

Although Western Samoa did not need the same kind of mass education, it was necessary in some underdeveloped areas to bolster up community life. Yet the demands for self-government, the increasing contact with Western European culture, the pressure of a growing population and the rapid development of education amongst the young, made as to widen the world and the views of the adult Samoans, thus enabling them to cope with the new ways and new problems. (p. 259)

Thus, the problem of the relations between Westernisation and the *fa'aSamoa* I noted above did not arise as fully or as sharply as it might have done if a more fully Westernised education, and a more extensive use of English, with its open access to Western culture, had been developed at the village level.

### **Education in Newly Independent Western Samoa to 1980s**

When Western Samoa became an independent state in 1962, it inherited the education system developed by the New Zealanders, which had itself been built on the work of the Germans in the early twentieth century and the missionaries in the nineteenth century. For the first few years of independence the government was not in a position to undertake a revision and reformulation of education policy or practice. Coxon (1996), for example, maintains that when Western Samoa became

independent, its education system was ‘dominated by the organisational, curricular, pedagogical and assessment prescriptions of the New Zealand Department of Education’ (p. 188). Similarly, a *Special Report on Development of Education in Western Samoa* (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980) claimed that during ‘the early years of the Independent State of Western Samoa, there were no significant changes brought to its education system’ (p. 2).

Within a few years, however, it was clear that there were pressures that would ensure that this situation would not remain unchanged for long. First, the *Special Report on Development of Education in Western Samoa* (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980) mentioned that many problems of the New Zealand education system had generally hindered its course of progress and development in the country. Second, Coxon (1996) notes that in education, there was the slowest rate of localisation of any government department in the country, as well as pressures resulting from the sudden upgrading of secondary schooling to focus centrally on what had been spelled out and required by the New Zealand external examination system. Third, the passing of control from a New Zealand administration to indigenous leaders opened up for the first time opportunity for those leaders to re-shape the system in keeping with their own views of what the future of Samoan society should be (Ioka, 1995).

By the mid 1960s, the government had therefore begun working towards the development of what the 1980 *Report* on the development of education in Western Samoa referred to as ‘a system of education that is relevant to the needs of the Samoan people’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980). As a result, it embarked on a series of ‘Five-Year Plans’, the first coming into effect for the years 1966-1970. The first Plan emphasised the ‘accelerated development of secondary education’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, p. 3). The second (1971-1975) made a significant change of direction, aiming more broadly to meet the needs of the Samoan society at a grass-roots level. From this long-term objective, there were short-term objectives formulated for improvement of various aspects and levels of education in the country: first, the full implementation of universal primary education; second, raising the standard of post-primary education, together with a reduction in the use of external examinations; third, the redevelopment of vocational education; fourth, the expansion of teacher education; and fifth; the development of school facilities such as

libraries, museum, arts centres and so on (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, p. 4).

The third Five Year Development Plan (1975-1979) aimed mainly at the ‘upgrading of the Junior Secondary Schools’ in the rural areas of Western Samoa. Strategically, this aimed to enable large numbers of rural students to proceed to early stages of secondary education in their home districts rather than needing to migrate to urban areas. This would both reduce rural-urban migration and move towards equal educational opportunities for all children throughout the whole country.

#### *Purposes of Education*

The main purpose of education in the first Five Year Plan was ‘to educate an elite at the secondary level and “plough” them back into the general system as leavening in the bread’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, p. 3). In contrast, the central purpose of the second Plan was more concerned with the Samoan people as a whole; it sought to make Samoan people better to cope with modern life at the same time as they continued to practise the richness of Samoan culture and the *fa’aSamoa*; it saw this balancing of the two as a fundamental part of the development of the Samoan people’s identity. Here, the potential for tensions between modernisation and the *fa’aSamoa*, already recognised by Mai’ai’i (1957) under the New Zealand administration, came into the foreground.

In the 1980s, the policies sought to achieve ‘harmony and compatibility’ between school and society, so that the education of Samoan children would become crucial to indigenous life and an integral part of all villages. In this context, it sought to promote the importance of Samoan culture and traditions, both for their own sake, and for the role in nurturing the development of Samoan children – intellectual, cultural, physical and recreational as well as personal and emotional. Equally, it sought to use Samoan culture and life to develop a sense of Samoan identity, and as a basis for developing social and moral principles in Samoan children as reliable members of the society (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, p. 10). Here, education was intended to serve individual and social purposes as two sides of the one coin: the development of a strong sense of tradition and identity would not only promote development as individuals but also contribute to a cohesive society with a strong sense of national and cultural identity, and a shared core of social

values. Here, the balance of the policy seems most strongly directed towards supporting, for most students, the traditional values of the *fa'aSamoa*.

At the same time, education was to serve more 'modern' individual purposes, in particular in terms of life pathways and employment options. Secondary education, especially, was to enable young Samoans to cultivate and realistically pursue their own aspirations, whether to become a public servant, to work in the developing urban economy, or to remain as productive members of their own village communities. In part, the stress on supporting the importance of village life and occupations reflected government recognition that the Western economy and standards of living were relatively difficult to access for most, and that for the majority of the population, their economic wellbeing would continue to depend on traditional means; as the 1980 *Report* put it, 'every Samoan man, woman and child will have to learn to plant taro heads, bananas or coconuts, or raise chickens or pigs to augment his small cash earnings (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, p. 3). Nevertheless, especially at secondary level, education opened up the possibilities of greater involvement in non-traditional employments and lifestyles, and as a result, a need to resolve potential conflicts between Western and traditional knowledges and ways of life.

#### *Curriculum and Pedagogy*

At independence, Western Samoa still used the curriculum developed under the New Zealand administration. According to Gannicott (1990), there were significant gaps in the fields of technical and vocational education, and in education for the development of managerial skills. Existing arrangements did, however, provide a 'major source of curriculum, teachers, inspectorate, and external certification through the New Zealand School Certificate and University Entrance examinations' (pp. 25-26).

The first Five Year Development Plan established the principle that, at least at elementary level, all curriculum and pedagogy should relate to cultural and traditional aspects of the Samoan way of life and its local environment and reflect the close links between language and culture, and the spiritual values of Samoa. For example, in the modern mathematics program (a program developed through a bilateral arrangement with the Australian government), mathematical concepts were to be taught and developed with examples and applications drawn from the Samoan

environment and way of life. Nevertheless, in general curriculum sought to balance traditional claims with those of modernisation. This was clearly reflected in the decision that instruction would be provided in both English and Samoan (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980).

The first three five year plans further developed the curriculum already established. At elementary level there were developments in a number of curriculum areas, notably mathematics, elementary science and social studies (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, pp. 5-6). At secondary level, the importance of vocational preparation saw the strengthening and development of technical courses such as electricity, carpentry, plumbing, marketing, house-keeping, budgeting, food and nutrition, as well as some commercial and secretarial courses at Samoa College. From the mid-1970s there were also significant developments in providing academic as well as vocational subjects in Junior High Schools in rural locations (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, p. 6). The other major curriculum development was the establishment of the Western Samoan national examinations.

By the 1980s, a newly reorganised curriculum was in place for both primary and secondary education. At primary level, a sequential curriculum was developed in Samoan language with a focus on the areas of listening, speaking, writing and reading, parallel to the process for teaching and learning English. In science, studies of health, nutrition, agriculture and environment were developed. Traditional and modern music, arts and crafts were more systematically organised. Physical Education was developed around basic skills, games, dance and recreation. Mathematics and social studies were core compulsory subjects. The balance within the curriculum was standardised, and the length of time for each subject each week specified (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, p. 15).

The secondary curriculum continued to be structured around the division between 'academic' and 'vocational' subjects. The weighting given to academic and vocational subjects was equalised, academic subjects (English, mathematics, science, social science) being provided mainly for 'high achievers', and vocational studies (home economics, agricultural science, industrial arts, bookkeeping and commercial practice) for 'low achievers'.<sup>1</sup>

### *Outcomes of Education*

As I have noted already, the initial emphasis in the early years of independent government, like that in the last years of the New Zealand administration, was on developing secondary education for the preparation of an indigenous elite to take the reins of government in the new State. According to Ioka (1995), one outcome of this was a dominance of the system by the need to produce leaders and administrators:

the emphasis on education of an administrative elite in the 1960s in fact was so strong that it has continued to dominate the whole education system of Western Samoa up to the present day [the 1990s]... The production of an elite is indeed a characteristic of the structure of the school system of Western Samoa today. (p. 33)

Yet, as the 1980 *Report* noted, ‘A policy which hacks at the roots of the tree while paying all attention to the top, cannot continue indefinitely without killing the whole plant’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1980, p. 3).

The revision of this policy, and the gradual reversal of the bias towards secondary schooling for a small number of Samoans, led to a more highly structured system of provision and participation. Entry age for primary education remained at 5-6 years (with a possible extension to 7). The length of primary education was reduced from 9 years to 8 years, and restructured into broad bands of Lower Primary (Years 1-3), Middle Primary (Years 4-6) and Upper Primary (Years 7-8). In the process, the former upper primary years (Forms 1 and 2) were moved from district schools to village primary schools. Regulating progress through primary school there were also now ‘Progress Cards’ to summarise every student’s academic performance, behaviour and attendance.

The expansion of secondary provision worked towards an increasing level of participation, aiming to provide at least 3 years of secondary education for all. In the process, former District Schools had been transformed into Junior High Schools with a three-year program. A crucial part of this development was ‘to eliminate the element of selection at the elementary school level and... to open up more room for our students to enter senior secondary education’ (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1986a , pp. 6-7). As Afamasaga (2000) saw it, ‘There was a rapid growth of junior secondary schools in the various districts of Samoa in the 1970s’ (p. 82). At the peak of the system,

Samoa College in *Upolu* and Vaipouli College in *Savaii* offered senior secondary education for the best students from the junior secondary schools.

The continued division between academic and vocational subjects, and its relation to the distinction between 'high' and 'low achievers' maintained, in somewhat different form, the two-tiered structure that had emerged under the New Zealand system. Further, secondary education itself was now divided into junior and senior levels, with senior secondary providing the pathway to white collar and professional occupations. At the same time, the fuller development of the secondary system was designed to cater for the needs of dropouts and encourage them to stay within the school system longer. This expansion of secondary schooling further supported the development of a more extensive post-secondary technical and vocational sector.

There remained significant inequalities between urban and rural education, in both quantity and quality. Over the 1970s and into the 1980s there was an increase in the rolls of primary schools in the urban areas and a decrease in some of the rural suburbs, partly as a result of general migration to the larger centres, and partly as parents responded to the perception that the quality of education, and opportunities for success at advanced levels, were higher there. Overall, enrolments were high in comparison with other developing countries, and continued to grow in the long term, including enrolment of older teenagers (15-19 years) (World Bank, 1992; this report did note a sharp drop in the participation of 10-14 year olds, but was uncertain whether this represented a change in statistical procedures or a declining capacity of the education system, pp. 7-8).

A crucial element in the development of this system was the implementation of Western Samoan national examinations. First, a new National Examination marked the completion of primary education. Second, in the late 1980s, the Western Samoa Secondary Certificate replaced the long-standing New Zealand School Certificate Examination for Lower and Upper Fifth Year students (Years 11 and 12) in secondary schools.

The long-standing division between government and mission schools also continued. While the government increasingly dominated village and other Primary education, the missions' contribution and participation at secondary level remained important and, if anything, actually increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995c).

In terms of the curriculum itself, an important outcome of the emerging policy directions was the careful attention to developing curricula, by Samoans, that related closely to Samoan everyday conditions and needs. In Agricultural Science, for example, teachers and advisers experimented with projects including piggery, poultry and vegetable gardening, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture. Home Economics was developed with a view to more relevant teaching of subjects like cooking, sewing, vegetable gardening, nutrition and first aid in rural areas.

A major outcome of the developments in the Samoan education system was the increasing capacity of the system to provide its own teachers, and to provide in-service support for existing teachers. Concern for the quality and supply of teachers, especially with the move towards universal secondary education, had led to the opening of the Secondary Teachers' College in 1978 as the main supplier of the system. At the same time, opportunities were also given to some primary school teachers to attend at least one year overseas training in Home Economics so that they could not only also teach subjects of relevance to village communities but could do so with the full benefit of advanced scientific and pedagogical knowledge. The provision of a more highly qualified teaching force, especially at secondary level, was crucial to the process of adapting an essentially Western system of schooling to Samoan values, needs and conditions. As Afamasaga (2000) comments:

teachers and teacher education in Samoa are *Measina*. They are treasures of education in Samoa which have been shaped and refined through the exacting processes of history, through the bedazzling experiences of contact with Europeans, the bitter struggle for autonomy during colonial rule and the attempts of a young nation to survive in a rapidly changing and increasingly globalised world. (p. 80)

Many of the purposes, practices and outcomes of schooling discussed here show how schools are inescapably positioned in relation to both tradition and change. Further, they form part of a broader array of institutions, including other institutions of government, which simultaneously construct and negotiate the particular and ideal relations between the two. For example, in light of its belief in the importance of traditional Samoan culture and the Samoan way of life, the Department of Education proposed the establishment of a museum and cultural centre to preserve the cultural wealth of the country. At the same time, as Dunlop

(1991) points out, Christianity had become such an integral aspect of the Samoan way of life, that it had been incorporated into its political system and formed a motto of the independent state. Further, while the school system itself was essentially an imported Western institution, and continued to be developed in partnership with outside agencies such as the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) and the United Nations Development Project (UNDP), it had been modified to meet Samoan conditions, and there was strong resistance to excessive and direct continuing external control, such as that represented by the continuing dominance of the New Zealand examinations. And, as evidence that this complex positioning of schools between modernity and tradition was not felt only at the level of government, while many of the developments I have traced above were initiated by the Department, others were instigated at local level: the upgrading of village schools encouraged quite a number of villages to build their own primary schools, and in some cases new junior high schools were requested by the people of the districts (p. 5), who continued to live under village conditions, with ‘traditional’ institutions, and engaged in what were still recognisably ‘traditional’ economies. Fox (1992), indeed, comments that the history of educational development in Western Samoa had a ‘structure of intercultural contact’ typical of colonial influences (p. 237). And yet, as I showed in Chapter 1, central facets of the *fa’aSamoa* remained in place as major features of ongoing Samoan life at all levels.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion: Balancing tradition and change

This thesis has sought to explore the issue of continuity and change in Western Samoan education and society. Continuity is understood in relation to the maintenance of the *fa'aSamoa*, while change is understood in terms of westernisation and modernisation. The thesis has documented the ways current education policy of Western Samoa deals with continuity and change. It has also examined how continuity and change and the relations between them have been represented in the historiography of Western Samoan society and education in traditional society, the missionary period, the era of colonial rule, and early independent Western Samoa. In both cases, it has done so by examining the purposes of education, curriculum and pedagogy, and the outcomes of educational activities, including the distribution of provision and participation in education. Before bringing together these two discussions, it might be worthwhile to recapitulate what has been covered already, as a basis for bringing out the main argument of this thesis.

According to a range of accounts, in traditional Samoa, the life of Samoan people was governed mainly by *matai* under the chiefly system, or what Samoans called the *fa'amatai*, which was the core value and practice of the *fa'aSamoa*. At that time, Samoan society was essentially 'patriarchal': men largely controlled social life and affairs, especially ceremonial life and the authoritative knowledge of tradition, and only men could become chiefs. Education within village life perpetuated this by educating boys and girls, and young men and young women, differently from each other; they were educated in gender-based groups, the *aumaga* and *aualuma*. Education, like society, was based on age and rank. Samoan children were taught to accept without question the dictates of those who had the *pule* or authority, such as parents, chiefs and elders in the village society.

Much learning, these accounts suggest, was focused on the practices of daily life, and took place through observation and participation in everyday tasks. Some learning was more explicit and deliberately taught, including, especially ceremonial practices, genealogical and other historical knowledge, and the distinctive Samoan 'worldview', conveyed in the form of stories about the origins of the islands and their people, and of notable individuals and events. Such teaching, in an oral

tradition, was essentially by rote and placed high demands on the development of powerful memory.

Almost all histories of Western Samoa stress the importance of the arrival of the missionaries in 1830 and the official acceptance of Christianity by the Samoan people following the lead of their paramount chief. The European missionaries' key concern, it is widely agreed, was to secure and extend the hold of Christianity in the society and in the lives of individual Samoans, and then use Samoan converts to take over the pastoral work of the new churches within Samoa, and to undertake missionary work elsewhere in the Pacific. Their work in spreading Christianity was inseparable from a more general promotion of Western civilisation, and both their specifically Christianising and more generally Westernising goals led them to introduce formal education. On the one hand, this involved a significant change in Samoan teaching and learning practices, in content, formality, and relation to daily life. On the other hand, it was accomplished through traditional protocols: the missionaries worked through, and in cooperation with the chiefs.

These historical accounts argue that this new form of education resulted in considerable change in Samoan society and culture. Samoan language took written form, and Samoans experienced their first encounter with a non-Samoan literature (in the form of both the bible and other specifically 'educational' books written in Samoan or translated into Samoan). Further, the other subjects which accompanied religious instruction – History, Geography and English, for example – also introduced new forms of knowledge and new understandings of the world and Samoans' place in it. Eventually, under the stimulation of the missionaries, a network of village schools, district higher schools and theological institutions was established. This, one can argue, produced a new form of differentiation, based on the status of possessing and passing on the new Western Christian knowledge, and a new set of roles which Samoans could fulfil: as teachers of the scripture and many other subjects, and as supervisors, medical doctors and counsellors among the Samoan people, and as missionaries abroad. At the same time as the missionaries introduced new forms of knowledge and opened up new roles for Samoans (and persuaded the chiefs to introduce other changes, such as the abandoning of tattooing), these histories also indicate, they left other aspects of Samoan society and culture intact: they continued to work through, and thus reinforce, the chiefly

system; the education and new roles they offered fitted in with the patriarchal structure of Samoan society; and the new knowledge they introduced was also consistent with Samoan understandings of age and gender difference, and the respect due to authority. Finally, some of these accounts allow us to conclude that while Christianity and Western civilisation may have had an impact on family practices, families continued to provide their children's earliest education, and families, the chiefly system, and the traditional groups of untitled men and their wives continued to provide the setting in which much traditional knowledge and practice continued to be taught and learned.

Most historical accounts also agree that the partitioning of Samoa into two political entities, with Western Samoa under the control of first Germany and later New Zealand, marks the beginning of the next major period in Samoan history. The colonial governments, they show, inherited the work of the missionaries and began to take responsibility for educational provision of their own, supplementing rather than replacing the missions' and village pastors' schools.

Under the Germans, German language became a recognised subject in the school curriculum, replaced by English under the New Zealand administration. This introduction of an official, government-sponsored curriculum was the beginning of a secular form of education in Western Samoa, even though under the Germans, in particular, it was weak in its operation. The educational role of government continued to be limited, partly because the Germans focused on commercial rather than education matters, and partly because they left the actual work of educating of the Western Samoans entirely to the missionaries of the different missions. Apart from the inclusion of the German language in the school curriculum, the Germans emphasised the importance of vocational subjects, for example, simple agriculture, gardening, carpentry, cooking or home-economics in Western Samoan schools. More advanced schooling was also reoriented towards vocational preparation and selection, functioning as a vehicle for training future public servants and government officials.

The New Zealand administration extended the role of government in education, and formed a national education system after formal negotiation between the government and the missions, with more uniform curriculum and examinations in place by the 1920s. It set out to establish universal primary education throughout Western Samoa, although its policies stressed the need to educate Western Samoan

people in ways that recognised and accommodated their environments and traditional way of life. By the 1940s, it had refocused its educational efforts on the training of an elite to occupy government positions, by sending them on scholarships to New Zealand for further education. In the 1950s, the target was the expansion of secondary education in the country, with a view to meeting Western Samoa's emerging needs in the context of moves towards independence.

In 1962, Western Samoa became politically independent. Economically, it was a primary producer of crops such as taro, yams, bananas, cocoa, copra and other fruits. It began to participate increasingly in international trade and in a number of international financial, political and social organisations and relationships: the United Nations, UNESCO, FAO and WHO, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. Each of these involved pressures and incentives to undertake development and thus introduce further changes into Western Samoan society. In addition, local political parties such as the Human Rights Protection Party (HRRP, the governing party) and the oppositional Samoa National Development Party (SNDP) were also established; while they differed in detail on matters concerning tradition and change, both accepted the need to develop, and thus to elevate Western Samoa economically, politically, socially and environmentally, while maintaining the *fa'aSamoa*.

Educationally, the country continued to use the New Zealand forms of curriculum and examination. Nevertheless, Western Samoa's Department of Education began to introduce its own education development projects, again seeking to balance the continuity of the Samoan way of life and change, through the modernising of the education system.

In the early 1990s, Western Samoa was devastated by consecutive cyclones in 1990 and 1991, with major consequences for education: about 85% of facilities, materials, school buildings and other education resources were destroyed. A development project of the World Bank in 1992 and, at almost the same time, a new Education Act, provided further pressures and opportunities for the improvement of education in the country in all areas, and at all levels, from pre-school to tertiary education. These key developments resulted in the formulation of new, comprehensive education policies and strategies, published in 1995. This initiative

can be seen as perhaps the most major single step in the history of education in Western Samoa.

My analysis of these policies shows that they seek to ensure that Western Samoa is able to take its place in a globalising economy while simultaneously maintaining the *fa'aSamoa*. In other words, the two competing issues – the continuity and maintenance of tradition, and the necessity of change – are considered important. In the current policy and strategy documents, the purposes of education are to strengthen the nation, the individual and village life. The fulfilment of these purposes of education in Western Samoa is shown in both curriculum and pedagogy, in which both academic and vocational subjects are emphasised. For example, vocational courses such as carpentry (now called Design Technology) and cooking (now Food and Textiles Technology) are now stressed in the education policy; they are to be taught and examined at all levels, on the same basis as the ‘academic’ subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science. This approach seems to maintain the *fa'aSamoa* while ‘easing in’ changes in Samoan society and education, with assurances that the core values and practices of the *fa'aSamoa* will remain ‘organic’ to Western Samoan life and society, in the sense that it is still growing, and not destroyed by the inevitable currents of change which continue to bring in values and models of westernisation and modernisation.

### **Historiography, continuity and change**

I have stressed throughout that in examining the history of Western Samoan education, the sources I draw on are simply ‘accounts’. They are inevitably incomplete, and are shaped by the perspectives of their writers. Together, they form a body of understanding of how Samoans have organised their lives in general and the education of their children in particular. A number of recent writers offer critical perspectives on much of the writing of Samoan (and other Pacific nations’) histories, and suggest ways of re-reading them so as to better understand the role of the Samoans (and other Pacific island peoples) in shaping their own histories. Denoon (1997) for example, notes the complexity of the ‘external’ forces at work, contrasting the ‘monopoly of force, the power of its reasons, the discipline of its police, its control over lawmaking and the language and agencies of government, its formidable external relations’ of colonial government, with the more ‘negotiated’

and less directly enforceable dynamics associated with cultural change (p. 8). Singh (1999) argues that the ‘Samoan people were adept at taking the best from the colonisers, but still retaining core aspects of the *fa’aSamoa*’ (p. 9). Both Denoon and Singh, therefore, criticise the one-sided nature of many accounts, which suggest that once the Europeans arrived in Samoa it was they who determined what happened. Tavana (2001), too, argues that many histories involve misinterpretations, in their ethnocentric portrayals of Samoan culture, people, traditional values and practices. From a different perspective, Meleisea (1982) argues for the importance of symbolic family property which was inherited and orally disseminated in Western Samoa from one generation to another:

For Samoans, knowledge is power, and the most powerful knowledge is historical knowledge: treasured and guarded in people’s heads, in notebooks locked in boxes and *matai*’s briefcases or with their precious mats under mattresses. The valuable histories, families, lands, genealogies, villages and events long ago are family property (p. vii).

The recognition of the importance of such family knowledge provides one basis for understanding how Samoans might have resisted, or only selectively adopted ideas and practices from ‘outside’. Denoon (1997) argues, further, that when Western historians ‘write about other people’ they need to do so with sensitivity, and criticises the tendency to write in such a fashion that assumes ‘the right to speak on their behalf’ (p. 1). Such a right to ‘speak on their behalf’ is implicit in many accounts’ judgements about the ‘problems’ and ‘deficiencies’ in Western Samoan culture and society.

In the light of these criticisms of the historiographic traditions within which many of the accounts I have analysed above have been written, it is possible to suggest a re-interpretation of the relations between continuity and change those histories appear to present. Most accounts of traditional Samoan society (and these are in any case problematic, since they involve backward projections of what Western writers saw at often much later periods) stress its continuity, and either overlook the issue of change, or imply that it was essentially static and unchanging. Yet, as Meleisea’s (1987b) work shows, Samoans encountered change well before the arrival of the Europeans. In dealing with the newly encountered societies of Fiji and Tonga, for example, they could not have avoided some changes to both their

broad views of the world and their place in it, and the ways in which marriage practices were regulated, since these ‘new’ groups were, by definition, not located within the traditional structures of Samoan society.

Accounts of the missionary period, in contrast to those of traditional society, stress the changes in Samoan society, including those in education, and especially those which can be seen as outcomes of the educational efforts of the missionaries. Further, they stress the role of the Westerners, rather than the Samoans, in making these changes. This holds true for earlier accounts, such as Barradale (1907), for later accounts, such as those of Keesing (1978 [1934]), and even for more recent studies such as those of Wood (1975), or Munro and Thornley (1998). Yet, even these accounts themselves provide evidence that Samoans were not passive respondents to the agency of others, in their recognition of role of the chiefly system in shaping initial responses to the LMS missionaries, and of the ongoing dependency of missionary education on the support of the *matai*. Further, as I argued in Chapter 3, many of the changes were themselves consistent with Samoan practice, in that they strongly accepted both a hierarchical structure of power and authority, and a patriarchal gender order. Finally, many traditional practices and beliefs continued alongside the changes which followed the arrival of the missionaries.

Discussions of the colonial administration provide a different perspective on Samoan responses to change. Both the German and in different ways, the New Zealand, administrations can be seen to have sought to impose changes, some of which went to the very heart of the *fa’aSamoa*: the chiefly system and traditional landholding patterns. In these cases, rather than submitting to such changes, adopting them, and adapting themselves to them, Samoans resisted in a variety of ways, including ways that led to some of their leaders being killed and others exiled. Such re-interpretations of Samoan histories suggest that while Samoans are open to change, they also are able to maintain and continue the practices and core values of the *fa’aSamoa*, and can resist changes which threaten that. In other words, the Samoan approach to Western influences, including those in education, has been to take only those aspects that seemed relevant to them, and that would not devastate the traditional practices of Western Samoan society.

### **Conclusion: Continuity and change, historiography and policy**

The main argument of this thesis is that accounts of Samoan society show that it has a capacity both to maintain a strong sense of continuity, and to change. In changing, in most cases, it has not only adopted Western ideas and practices, and adapted itself to them, but also adapted and modified those Western influences to its own traditions and practices. These historical understandings of the ability of Samoan society to change in response to external influences provide one context within which to understand the way in which current Western Samoan educational policies deal with continuity and change. In this view, the *fa'aSamoa*, as the core of Samoan culture and society, is not, and never has been, static, but has always been open to change when faced with new conditions. From this perspective, the current policies are consistent with what are understood to be the ways Samoan society has historically dealt with change while maintaining continuity with its cultural and social traditions. This understanding of how the policies deal with continuity and change relates to the long-term ability of Samoan society to change without losing its sense of identity, and offers one way of assessing the probability that the policies will gain a general level of acceptance among the Western Samoan people.

There are, necessarily, a number of limitations in this study as a way of understanding the significance of the ways current policies deal with continuity and change in the context of various pressures in Western Samoan society at the beginning of the third millennium. First, it provides only an indirect understanding of the contemporary context within which policy is formed. This is particularly important in any attempt to use the findings of this thesis to understand how Samoan people might respond to the policy, as it is difficult to be sure how far the understandings of Samoan history presented in the historical accounts examined here are shared by Samoan people themselves. Second, the thesis examines only a limited selection of historical accounts, and thus provides only a preliminary analysis of the historiography of Western Samoan education and society. Third, because it relies on historical accounts, and does not supplement these with detailed historical research and analysis, it is unable to extend the understandings of Western Samoan educational history beyond the limits of available secondary accounts themselves. And, finally, a deeper understanding of the ways current policies impact on contemporary Western Samoan society would involve a study of the implementation of those policies, and the

responses of Western Samoan parents and others to them. Each of these limitations points the way towards further research needed to develop a thorough understanding of the relations between continuity and change in contemporary Western Samoan education and society in both policy and practice.

The analysis I have provided points to the need to understand better how complex these relations are. One final example illustrates this point. *Education Policies, 1995-2005* (Western Samoa. Department of Education, 1995a) talks about elected committees of parents and villages, and lists the membership of the Department's Strategic and Planning Committee without any mention of the *matai* or chiefly system which is the core of *fa'aSamoa*. Yet, in practice, chiefs dominate the membership of such committees at both central and local levels. Further, in the traditional Samoan system, no untitled person could hold a position of authority. Nor could an untitled person speak with authority to men of status and rank. Further, because it was a patriarchal system, no woman could hold positions of power or rank. (The notable partial exception to this rule in Samoan tradition was Salamasina. However, even though she was a chief, she had no speaking rights, and required male chiefs to speak on her behalf.) Yet, under the modern democratic system of government in Western Samoa, it is possible for untitled persons, and women, to achieve positions of power in government. The potential conflict this raises is resolved by both the traditional and modern systems accommodating each other. In the case of the present Minister of Education, for example – a woman, who is necessarily untitled – she has been granted chiefly title, something unthinkable in traditional terms, and yet necessary for both the traditional and the modern to co-exist in contemporary Western Samoa.

Such a capacity to adopt and adapt, developed over centuries, suggests that the *fa'aSamoa* remains, and can remain 'organic', in the sense that it can keep growing, continuing its traditions while changing to meet new conditions. In this context, current directions in policy seem well-grounded in Western Samoan cultural values; it maintains the integrity of the *fa'aSamoa* without being logged into the something 'fixed' and 'unchangeable'.

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