The Influence of Religion and Culture on Planning and Decision-making Processes in Samoa

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Abstract
Culture and religion form the foundation for all political, economic and social organisations in the Pacific Island nation of Samoa, and are inextricably linked (So’o, 2008). They are two of the most fundamental aspects present in the everyday lives of Samoan people. Both aspects dictate the day to day routines and practices of Samoa’s people whether it is in the home, workplace, or social setting. The importance of religion is reflected in the national emblem which states ‘E faavae I le Atua Samoa’ which translates to ‘Samoa is founded in God’. Culture is also important and this is highlighted in the way Samoan people are determined not to abandon their customs and traditions and so, instead of evolving into a government based completely on western democracy, the two world views were combined. It was a case of western democracy meets Samoan customs and traditions, and this is how Samoa has been governed ever since.

The overall aim of this study was to establish the extent to which religion and culture influence planning and decision-making processes in Samoa. To answer this aim, four key questions were established. These questions looked at the significance of religion in Samoa, the nature of the relationship between religion and government, the influence religion has on planning and decision-making processes, and lastly, the hierarchy of importance in government of religion and culture. Through using these four questions as guiding themes, the study was able to collect both primary and secondary data, analyse them and provide a conclusion that answered the main aim.

This study has found that the influence of religion and culture on planning and decision-making processes in the Samoan government takes form at different levels and do not occur to the same extent. It is evident from the results that culture plays a more prominent role in the government and as a result, the extent of its influence on planning and decision-making processes is much greater than that of religion. This study also concludes that religion does have an influence on planning and decision-making processes of the Samoan government however, the extent of this influence is only at the discretion of government. While religion holds a significant role in Samoan society, its ability to change planning laws and legislation and make decisions is controlled solely by government.
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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SAMOA
Samoa is one of many Polynesian islands located in the South Pacific Ocean near the islands of Tonga and Fiji. Like all other islands in this region, Samoa has a vast history made up of many strands, from the earliest recollection of European explorers and missionaries down to the histories passed from generation to generation by word of mouth through ancient orator-chiefs (Aiono-Iosefa, 2001). These histories have shaped the way Samoa has developed over the years and has created the small island nation that it is today. An important aspect of this history that has remained to this day is the arrival of religion to Samoa. Since its arrival, religion has had a significant impact on Samoan society as it proceeded to alter the physical, social, cultural as well as spiritual landscapes of the area (Aiono-Iosefa, 2001). While Samoan cultural customs and traditions have remained from pre-colonisation periods, these customs and traditions have been excessively transformed.

Like the arrival of religion, the establishment of a western styled system of government in Samoa brought about almost as much change. This is because the democratic parliament that now stands as Samoa’s government was a concept that was introduced by foreigners. However, this system of government was changed to incorporate Samoan cultural systems so it can fit what was already in place rather than replace it completely (Lee and Francis, 2009). While the relationship between government and culture is clear in this sense, the relationship between government and religion is not so definitive. More specifically, the implications of this relationship on how religion influences planning and decision-making processes in government.

Before the arrival of religion as well as the present system of government, planning and decision-making was undertaken through traditional protocols at the village level by pinnacle chiefs (Davidson, 1967). There was no central government like the one that exists today. However, since the arrival of government, planning and decision-making has now become a centralised process led by those who are in parliament such as the Prime Minister and Cabinet ministers. How has religion been able to influence these planning and decision-making processes, is the question this thesis will attempt to answer.
1.2 Planning and Decision-Making Powers

There are three periods of Samoan history where planning and decision-making processes changed due to the change in leadership of the country. The first was the pre-colonisation period where Samoan people ran their own affairs free from outside interference. The basic territorial unit of political and economic organisation during this time was the *nu‘u* (village) and the most important group was the *fono* (council) composed of the *matai* (chiefs) (Davidson, 1967). This group undertook the general government of the community and were therefore, the planning and decision-making body at the village level (Davidson, 1967). Government at the national level took similar structure as that at the village level however, it was more complex due to the lack of a continuous administrative body to maintain this government. Nevertheless, planning and decision-making functions were made through discussions in this council which consisted of the main chiefs of each district.

These planning and decision-making groups changed with the arrival of German and then New Zealand powers. Under the power of these two countries, decision-making was transferred to a more centralised group similar to what is present now, made up of mostly members of non-Samoan decent (Hempenstall, 2016). German rule exercised decision making through the appointment of a German Governor who went on to establish new departments and appoint additional officer to government (Hempenstall, 2016). Decision-making under New Zealand rule was performed through military occupation on behalf of Britain (Field, 1984). It continued to rule Samoa through existing government that was previously led by Germany maintaining laws and policies passed by the Germans unless otherwise advised (Davidson, 1967; Field, 1984).

In 1962, Samoa became the first independent island nation in the pacific and this caused decision-making powers to be transferred again but this time, back to the people of Samoa (So’o, 2008). Because Samoa was a UN trusteeship under the scrutiny of the UN Committee for Decolonisation, it was inevitable that the political system chose for independent Samoa would be democratic (Ross, 1969). It was also inevitable that the political system would be modelled off New Zealand’s as they had a long running association and therefore were most familiar with form of politics.
1.3 RELIGION AND CULTURE
Culture and religion form the foundation for all political, economic and social organisations in the Pacific Island nation of Samoa, and are inextricably linked (So’o, 2008). They are two of the most fundamental aspects present in the everyday lives of Samoan people. Both aspects dictate the day to day routines and practices of Samoa’s people whether it is in the home, workplace, or social setting. The Coat of arms for Samoa illustrates the importance of religion with the ever-present “E fa’avae i le Atua Samoa” motto which translates to ‘Samoa is founded in God’. Samoa’s Constitution of 1960 states in its preamble that “whereas the Leaders of Samoa have declared that Samoa should be an Independent State based on Christian principles and Samoan custom and tradition”. The Samoan Coat of arms and Constitution can be thought of as of the ‘founding documents’ of Samoa and both highlight the significance of religion and culture within Samoa.

1.4 RELIGION IN SAMOA
Samoa’s religion as we know now, started in 1830 when Reverend John Williams of the London Missionary Society arrived in Samoa (Mead, 1961). Initially, European missionaries whose goal it was to convert Samoan people to Christianity, struggled in achieving this as Samoan people refused to abandon their customs and traditions. It was not until the twentieth century that the missionaries realised that the future of the church in Samoa depended on a close alliance with traditional leaders (Mead, 1961). In a sense, the establishment of a permanent congregation depended upon traditional Samoan culture. Missionaries were unable to abolish traditional Samoan culture and replace it with Christianity. Therefore, they knew they had to incorporate this culture with their religion in order to succeed. With the approval of the matai, Christianity expanded quickly, and Western religion progressively became a fundamental part of Samoan’s cultural development and identity (Robson, 2009). Religion in Samoa encompasses a range of groups but majority of people adhere mainly to the Christian faith (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

1.5 FA’ASAMOA – THE SAMOAN WAY OF LIFE
Samoan culture is known to Samoans as fa’asamoa. Fa’asamoa in a short sentence means “the Samoan way of life” (Aiono-Iosefa, 2001). It refers to social order, the economic order, historical order and moral order for Samoan people (Davidson, 1967). The foundation of Samoan identity is a commitment to the fa’aSamoa, however, this fa’aSamoa does not exist without religion as it is a portrayal of a unique relationship with God (Ernst, 2006). Samoans
possess a common identity through the conscious and deliberate transmission of traditional values and hierarchical aspects of social structure of their culture (Ernst, 2006). Bound up with social stratification or hierarchy are concepts which are of great significance to Samoans: status, prestige, honour and the associated behaviours of faʻaaloalo (respect) and usita’i (obedience) (Meleisea, 1987). This idea of faʻasamoa includes all the customs and traditions of Samoan people that make them unique.

It is clear that the people of Samoa have always been strong in their cultural beliefs. The substantial majority of Samoans argued persistently in the 1954 and 1960 constitutional conventions that they wanted a future political structure for Samoa based on Samoan custom and tradition (Huffer and So’o, 2003). To this day, even with the strong presence of a religion introduced by Europeans, the traditions and customs of Samoa’s people remain supreme. These Samoan people were determined not to abandon their customs and traditions and so, instead of evolving into a government based completely on western democracy, the two world views were combined. It was a case of western democracy meets Samoan customs and traditions, and this is how Samoa has been governed ever since.

1.6 Samoan Government

The National Government of the Independent State of Samoa is made up of three branches. The Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary. Politics of Samoa takes place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic whereby the Prime Minster of Samoa is the head of government (Vaiao and Alailima, 1994). Existing alongside the country's Western styled political system is the faʻamatai chiefly system of socio-political governance and organisation, central to understanding Samoa’s political system (Vaiao and Alailima, 1994). From the country's independence in 1962, only matai could vote and stand as candidates in elections to parliament (So’o, 2008). In 1990, the voting system was changed by the Electoral Amendment Act which introduced universal suffrage. However, the right to stand for elections remains with matai title holders (Keesing and Keesing 1956). Therefore, in the 49-seat parliament, all 47 Samoan Members of Parliament are also matai, performing dual roles as chiefs and modern politicians, with the exception of the two seats reserved for non-Samoans (Keesing and Keesing,1956).
1.7 STUDY AIMS AND KEY QUESTIONS:

The overall aim of this study is to establish the extent to which religion and culture influence planning and decision-making processes in Samoa. To answer this aim, four key questions were established to guide the research and these are:

1. What is the significance of religion in Samoan society?
2. Is there a relationship that exists between religion and the government of Samoa and what is the nature of this relationship?
3. What kind of influence does religion have on government planning and decision-making processes in Samoa?
4. Does culture have more of an influence than religion in government processes?

1.8 METHODS

This research will use qualitative research methods for data collection. Primary research collection will use key informant interviews. Secondary data will also be collected through a document analysis and literature review.

1.8.1 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews will be the main primary research method for this study. These will be semi-structured interviews which will be undertaken with both Church Ministers as well as Government officials. The general line of questioning will differ between the two groups and where permission has been granted, interviews will be audio recorded. The form of interviewing was semi-structured, where some of the questions had been predetermined based on the research questions and the literature review, but there was still flexibility in the ways that key informants addressed issues (Hay, 2010). Strengths of the semi-structured interview technique is that it allows for insights into differing opinions on a topic, allows the key informant to reflect on their experience, allows disclosure of detailed information and in some cases can reveal some consensus on the issue (Hay, 2010). A limitation however, is that there will only be a limited amount of people whose knowledge the research will gain from. However, there are still more people with great insight into this topic but time constraints prevent them all from being interviewed.

1.8.2 Document Analysis

A small document analysis was undertaken to understand the statutory and non-statutory documents that are important in the comprehension of the relationship between religion,
culture, and decision-making processes. This enabled the researchers to have an in-depth understanding of the planning framework of Samoa’s institutions and how religion and culture fit into these.

1.8.3 Literature Review
A literature review analyses previous research based on the research questions. Undertaking a literature review will help in the researcher’s understanding of the general subject area, the ability to identify key themes and debates that shaped their research questions and methods further (Vogt, Gardner and Haeffele, 2012). The literature review will focus on the nature of culture and religion in Samoa and its role in decision-making processes of the Samoan Government. The literature review will also attempt to focus on the international literature for potential connections between religion, culture and government. The key themes that were established in the literature review will be reflected in the interpretation and analysis of the results and discussion chapters.

1.9 Structure
Following Chapter 1, Chapter 2 will outline the research methods and process undertaken to attain this study. It highlights how the research was designed by drawing on knowledge gained from reviewing literature about the topic at hand. This chapter also provide a link between the secondary data and primary research for this study.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will establish a more detailed background for this study. Chapter 3 provides the context which the study takes place. Due to the study being undertaken in Samoa, it is appropriate to provide a detailed context of the area in order for better understanding of the rest of the study. Chapter 4 then goes on to review the academic literature around Samoa’s history and the institutes that were in place before the arrival of Christianity. It will then examine the relationship between religion and government in both Samoa and other countries. It provides the theoretical grounding for this study and places it in an existing body of literature.

Chapter 5 presents the results from the document analysis and the primary research undertaken in this study. In addition, it will discuss these results using the 4 key objectives as guiding themes. It looks at the significance of religion in Samoa, the nature of the relationship between religion and government, the influence religion has on planning and decision-making processes, and lastly, the hierarchy of importance in government of religion and culture.
Finally, Chapter 6 will deliver a conclusion for this study. It reviews the finding of each of the chapters, synthesizes the research, and the contribution this work makes to existing research around religion, culture and government in Samoa.
Chapter 2  Methodology

This chapter will discuss the methods used in this research to achieve the objectives of the study. Qualitative data was used in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which religion and culture influence planning and decision-making processes in Samoa. Research was also undertaken into the government of Samoa and how it operates with relation to religion and culture. This research included primary data collected in the form of semi-structured key informant interviews. Secondary data was derived through a review of the literature and a review of the relevant legislation, and planning and planning framework that exists within Samoa. This chapter will justify the research methods, the analysis and interpretation of the results, limitations and reflections, and explains ethical considerations that were taken into account during the research.

2.1 Research Design

The research design represents the first step in organising and planning the research process once the research idea and research hypothesis have been clearly outlined (Toledo-Pereyra, 2012). In order to find out how much influence religion and culture have on planning and decision-making processes in Samoa, it was decided that a solely qualitative research design would be most appropriate. Considerations of the nature of the research as well as the nature of the culture of the people to be researched were taken into account when making this decision.

The overall aim of this study is to establish the extent to which religion and culture influence planning and decision-making processes in Samoa. To answer this aim, four key questions were established to guide the research and these are:

1. What is the significance of religion in Samoan society?
2. Is there a relationship that exists between religion and the government of Samoa and what is the nature of this relationship?
3. What kind of influence does religion have on government planning and decision-making processes in Samoa?
4. Does culture have more of an influence than religion in government processes?

To answer these questions, the qualitative research design gathered the thoughts, knowledge, feelings and beliefs of Samoan people from both a religious perspective and government
official perspective. From these accounts, valuable research findings and conclusions were able to be produced and analysed.

Secondary research was also undertaken in the form of a literature review chapter. A literature review sets the context of the study, clearly demarcates what is and what is not within the scope of the investigation, and justifies those decisions (Turner, 2011). For this study in particular, the literature review included an extensive context and history of Samoa, its religion, culture, and government. Providing this information was important in allowing the reader to understand the wider context in which the current study is situated and finds its relevancy. A document analysis of the relevant documents was also undertaken. This was done to inform the research of the current statutory and non-statutory documents that exist in the current Samoan government system (Guthrie, 2010).

2.2 Qualitative Research Approach
For this study, a qualitative research approach was the most appropriate research method to use. Qualitative research is the methodical inquiry into social phenomena that includes, but is not limited to, how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and or groups behave, how organisations function, and how interactions shape relationships (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Samoa’s traditional culture is one of oral story-telling and communication (Davidson, 1967). Although modern knowledge and technology have allowed for cultural enhancements to be made, its traditions and customs have stayed relatively the same. This is why it was believed that using a qualitative research approach would be most appropriate and would provide the greatest results. It taps into the tradition of the people and allows for them to express their knowledge, experiences and stories in a way that is comfortable for them.

2.3 Secondary Research
The collection of secondary research was also necessary in completing the present study. Secondary research was collected in the form of a literature review and a document analysis. This secondary data was collected to enable a conceptual framework for the study to be established, by identifying the current knowledge available on the subject.

2.3.1 Literature Review
Literature reviews are fundamental to good research (Vogt et al, 2012). A literature review enables the researcher to analyse previous research that has been done on the topic. During the literature review, a further understanding of the research topic was obtained which allowed for
the identification of key themes that further shaped the research questions and design of primary research (Vogt et al, 2012).

The literature review that was undertaken for this research involved a critical review of literature and theories pertinent to the current research problem. It has provided a theoretical understanding of Samoa and the history of religion, culture and government and the relationship the three aspects share with each other and how it influences planning and decision-making processes currently.

An extensive history of Samoa was provided to allow for the reader to understand why culture and religion play a significant and inimitable role in the way of life for Samoan people. It also provides the context of why the current research is one of relevance and importance. In addition, an investigation was made into international literature on religion and its influences on government planning and decision-making processes. The key themes that were established in the literature review will be reflected in the interpretation and analysis of the results and discussion chapters.

2.3.2 Document Analysis
A document analysis was undertaken to understand the statutory and non-statutory documents that are important in the comprehension of the relationship between religion, culture, and planning and decision-making processes. This enabled the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the planning framework of Samoa’s institutions and how religion and culture fit into these. The following policy documents were reviewed by the researcher:

- Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment
  - Planning and Urban Management Act 2004

2.4 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION
Primary data collection was undertaken to gain an understanding of how Samoan people, mainly church ministers and government officials viewed the relationship that exists between government planning and decision-making processes and religion and culture, and the extent to which the latter two institutions influence the former. Primary data collection allows the researcher direct discretion on how they will conduct the research in order to gain the kind of information and results they require (Davies, 2003). Primary data was collected in the form of key informant interviews. Because the research was undertaken outside of New Zealand with
the people of Samoan culture, positionality must also be covered in order for transparency of the knowledge and information attained to be understood as part of that culture and not to be colonised.

2.4.1 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews are a useful method to gain access to information about opinions and experiences (Phillips and Johns, 2012). Key informant interviews are able to collect diverse insights in which informants use their own words, whilst also revealing consensus on some issues (Hay, 2010). When considering religion, culture and the Samoan government it was essential that the key informants understood these topics to allow for informed expert opinions.

Key informants were selected based on their involvement or interest with religion, culture and the government of Samoa. Key informants were recruited through purposive sampling for their positions within these different industries (Phillips and Johns, 2012). This resulted in 12 key informant interviews being undertaken with a range of key informants as detailed in the results and discussion section of this thesis.

Field research for this study was purposely undertaken in Samoa between May 14th and June 14th. During this time, the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa held their annual Ministry conference where all the church Ministers and church members from across the globe gather for two weeks to discuss topics and issues pertaining to the church. The researcher’s father is a Congregational Christian Church of Samoa Minister and it was through this connection that some church Ministers were chosen as key informants. In addition, the researcher’s aunty works for a government department and it was also through this connection that government officials were chosen as key informants. Reflexivity on the part of the researcher must be reflected on due to these relations and the researcher is well aware of this.

The interviews were semi-structured, with a set of questions that guided the interviews however, there was room for flexibility in the ways that the key informants addressed issues (Phillips and John, 2012). Flexibility in questions also allowed for insights into differing opinions on a topic as they key informant could reflect on their own knowledge and experience and share detailed information (Phillips and John, 2012). Interviews were conducted by the researcher on her own however, she was accompanied by a family member who also waited for interviews to be finished, but was not present in the interviews. This ensured health and safety protocols were met. Interviews were recorded with prior permission from the participants. Although audio recordings were done, notes were also taken during interviews,
audio recordings were useful in recalling anything that was missed during note taking. The interviews were then listened to again to recall any missed quotes and allowed for data analysis to be undertaken.

2.5 POSITIONALITY
The term positionality both describes an individual’s world-view and the position they have chosen to adopt in relation to a specific research task (Pope, 1999; Chiseri-Strater, 1996). Positionality is multidimensional, and it is not uncommon for the researcher(s) to be closely positioned to the participants on some dimensions and not on others (Rowe, 2014). These disparities can create conflict, changing the process and outcomes of the study. Kimberly Huisman (2008) eloquently describes these tensions in her ethnographic study with Bosnian women. Huisman (2008) closely identified with her participants as a woman, friend and confidante but found that they were on different platforms in terms of life experience, culture and goals. While Huisman was acutely aware of her outsider privileged status and the multitude of different values and world experiences, she strived to build a collaborative relationship with her participants as insiders joining culturally where she had values in common as women.

2.6 INSIDER VS OUTSIDER PERSPECTIVE
One of the common distinctions made in research is the perspective and position of the researcher as being either an insider or outsider relative to the culture being studied (Bourke, 2014). The insider perspective is referred to as an emic account whilst the outsider perspective is identified as an etic one. Some have identified the insider as someone whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation and so on) gives them a ‘lived familiarity’ with and prior knowledge of the group being researched (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The outsider is a person/researcher who does not have any prior intimate knowledge of the group being researched (Cohen et al, 2011).

There are various lines of argument put forward to emphasise the advantages and/or disadvantages of each position (Brydon-Miller, 2014). In its simplest articulation the insider-perspective essentially questions the ability of outsider scholars to competently understand the experiences of those inside the culture whilst the outsider-perspective questions the ability of the insider scholar to sufficiently detach themselves from the culture to be able to study it without bias (Cohen et al, 2011).
The researcher in this study identifies as being a Samoan who and has lived in Samoa for a few years. However, she has lived majority of her life outside of Samoa while still being brought up with the language, traditions, and customs parallel to someone who was brought up in Samoa. For this reason, the researcher views themselves as being an insider who stands from a position of biography that gives them a lived familiarity with prior knowledge of the group being researched. Although this is seen as an advantage from a research planning perspective as this allows for access to knowledge and people to become easier, difficulty may arise with the researcher’s ability to detach themselves from the studied culture in order to make unbiased and objective analysis and interpretations. However, this can also be seen as an advantage as it means the researcher is passionate about her study.

2.7 Reflexivity
Reflexivity has been increasingly recognised as a crucial strategy in the process of generating knowledge by means of qualitative research. Reflexivity can be described as examining the research process in the context of my positionality at least in part. Reflexivity involves a self-scrutiny on the part of the researcher; a self-conscious awareness of the relationship between the researcher and an ‘other’. Smith (2006) challenges that reflexivity should mean that researchers question assumptions about power relations when interviewing elites. The researcher realises their position as an insider and has made conscious efforts to detach themselves as much as possible and this has been attempted through constant reflection and realisation of one’s own knowledge, experience and beliefs during the research process.

2.8 Conclusion
Chapter 2 has provided an outline of the methodology used for this research. Each method has been provided with a rationale as to why it was the most appropriate to use. These approaches were used to obtain the opinions, views and beliefs of different stakeholders which aimed to provide a greater insight and understanding of the present research problem. Key informant interviews were solely responsible for primary data collection which was analysed, organised and interpreted to draw key findings. These findings were then presented and analysed in the results and discussion chapter which led to conclusions being made that draws the whole research to a close. Secondary data collected through a document analysis and literature review was assessed against results.
2.9 **DATA ANALYSIS**

Key informant interviews were recorded and relistened to. In order to analyse the key informant interviews, themes based on the key ideas that emerged in the interviews and literature review were constructed. These themes were based around religion and its relationship with government, culture and its relationship with government, and influences of religion and culture on planning and decision-making processes of government. Data being categorised into these themes allowed the researcher to make sense of them and allowed for easier analysis and interpretation of the results. These themes allowed researcher to analyse the data, and thus, assisted in writing the results and discussion chapter if this thesis.

2.10 **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical consideration is a necessary method in any research being undertaken, especially research which include human participants (Hay, 2010). Dowling (2008) defines ethics as broadly being the conduct of researchers and their responsibilities and obligations to those involved in the research, including sponsors, the general public and most importantly, the subjects that must be dealt with in your research.

The present research was conducted overseas in Samoa where the people and culture differ from that of New Zealand. As a result, the protocols and practices particular to Samoan culture were to be followed in order to proceed successfully with the research. Before the research was conducted, a letter was prepared, different from the information sheet, that was addressed to each participant to show the research that was being conducted was approved from the University of Otago. This letter was shown to each participant before interviews were conducted The Pacific Island Centre at the University of Otago facilitated the writing of these letters. The manager of the Centre in particular offered invaluable assistance commencing this process. David and Sutton (2004) stress that interview participants who offer strong and contentious opinions can be exposed to harm. Research topics which involve religious and cultural beliefs also heighten the need for ethical practices and the need to be highly respectful and sensitive to the views of the informants.

To start this process, a University of Otago Human Ethics Application form was submitted and granted by the University in accordance with their ethical guidelines. The process ensured that all participants were briefed about the details of the research project and given an information sheet. This sheet provides information about the aim of the research, the type of participants that will be involved in the research, what the expectations are of each participant and how the
information provided by participants will be used. A consent form was also included for participants to sign once they understood the research and were happy to comply. The consent form signalled their agreement to be part of the research. It also allowed them to feel comfortable to express their knowledge, thoughts and experiences more freely with the understanding that the researcher would treat them and their knowledge with appropriate respect.

In this thesis the identity of all 12 key informants has been withheld to protect their confidentiality. Because of the contentious and differing opinions on the present topic, the researcher believes that naming these participants or identifying them in any way may expose these informants to harm. The researcher is concerned that with the current situation within Samoa, research findings may cause further distrust between government and particular religious denominations. The present research has provided all key informants with complete anonymity, gender included.

2.11 REFLECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

For any research, reflection is important to allow the researcher to think back and identify any limitations that may have risen during the research process (Hay, 2010). This is important as it can facilitate further research which can then address these limitations in the future. Reflection is also important in identifying the researcher’s positionality through reflecting on one’s identity, behaviour beliefs and motivations (Smith, 2006). The researcher’s positionality is discussed clearly in the positionality section of this chapter.

During the interview processes, it was difficult to be neutral and impartial especially when speaking to key informants who I, the researcher, had a connection with, whether familial or through friends. A semi-structured interview technique assisted in allowing the informant to take the lead in interviews rather than me taking control (Hay, 2010).

Time constraints was another limitation that must be discussed in relation to the present research. Due to strict deadlines being set before the research was started, practical decisions needed to be made in order for the final project to be completed before the due date. The researcher spent 4 weeks in Samoa conducting interviews and although this may seem like a lot of time, reaching certain people was difficult as they had their own personal affairs to attend to first. I would have liked to interview more people to attain a greater depth of understanding of the present study and having more interviews would have provided further support to views and opinions already given.
Location was also a limitation as Samoa is quite a distance away. This meant that any interviews that I wished to conduct face to face had to be done within the 4 weeks I was in Samoa. Once I had left, the only other forms of communication were through email or phone call.
Chapter 3  CONTEXT

This chapter will provide the context for the research being carried out in Upolu, Samoa. It will begin with an overview of the geography of the region including the physical geography, and population, along with statistics about the country. It will then go on to discuss the general history of Samoa and when religion came to be in the country. Samoan culture plays a vital role in all things to do with Samoa, its people and its lifestyle therefore, this will be touched on. A context will also be given on the Samoan government deliberating its origins and its current position in the island.

3.1 GEOGRAPHY
Samoa lies south of the equator, about halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand in the Polynesian region of the Pacific Ocean (Curry, 1955). Samoa consists of four inhabited islands; Savaii, Upolu, Manono and Apolima, and five uninhabited islands; Nu‘utele, Nu‘ulua, Namua, Fanuatapu and Nu‘ulopa (Curry, 1955). All these islands together produce a total area of 2,842 square kilometres (Curry, 1955). Unlike most Pacific countries which are scattered across vast areas, all of these islands are in one main cluster, which make getting around fairly easy. The total population of Samoa taken from the 2018 census is at 199,052 people where 37,599 of them reside in urban areas and 161,453 are rural dwellers (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017).
The two main inhabited islands of Samoa are Upolu and Savaii. The biggest of the islands is Savaii which covers 1,707 square kilometres and rises to maximum elevation of 1,858 metres at Mount Silisili, a volcano at the island’s approximate centre (Keating, 1992). The island of Savai’i is also referred to by Samoans as Salafai, a classical Samoan term used in oratory and prose. The island is home to 43,560 people representing 22 percent of the country's population (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The only township and ferry terminal on the big island is Salelologa, the main entry point to the island, situated at the east end of Savai’i (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). A tar sealed road serves as the one main highway, connecting most of the villages with local buses reaching most settlements (Keating, 1992).

Referring to Figure 2, Savai’i was originally made up of six itūmālō (political districts) and they are Fa’asaleleaga, Gaga’emauga, Gaga’ifomauga, Vaisigano, Satupa’itea, and Palauli (Lee, 2009). Each district is made up of villages with strong traditional ties of kinship, history, land and matai chief titles (Davidson, 1967). There is also some limited ecotourism development which operates mostly within the villages. The Mau, Samoa's non-violent movement or political independence during colonialism in the early 1900s, had its beginning on Savai’i with the Mau o Pule movement (So’o, 2008). Sapapali’i, a village on the
north east coast of Savai’i is also where John Williams, the first missionary to bring Christianity to Samoa, landed (So’o, 2008).

![Map showing original Political Districts](image)

The more developed and populous of the two islands is Upolu. Upolu is where the capital of the small island nation Apia is located, in the middle of the north coast with the airport, Faleolo International Airport at the western end of the island (Huffer and So’o, 2000). The island is 75 kilometres long, 1,125 square kilometres in area, and is the second largest in geographic area with 151,439 people representing 77 percent of the total population (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Upolu is situated to the southeast of the "big island", Savai’i. Despite it being the smaller of the two main islands, Upolu is the main centre or hub for all things economic (Aiono-Iosefa, 2001). The capital is situated here along with the airport, main government building, industries, businesses, attractions, visitor facilities as well as majority of the Samoan population (Aiono-Iosefa, 2001).

Like Savaii, Upolu was also made up of its own political districts which are Tuamasaga, A’ana, Aiga-i-le-tai, Atua and Va’a-o-Fonoti and this is shown in Figure 2 (Davidson, 1967). These districts are also made up of villages with strong traditional ties of kinship, history, land and matai chief titles (Davidson, 1967). While the Mau movement originated in Savai’i, Upolu
was where the main protests, shootings, and the traumatic events of Black Saturday took place between the Mau Movement and New Zealand troops as this is where the New Zealand government was positioned during their administration over Samoa (Fielding, 1991).

Referring to Figure 3, Manono and Apolima are the smallest inhabited islands in Samoa with a combined population of 980 people which share a total of 0.5 percent of the population (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). There are 4 villages in Manono and there are no cars or roads and these islands and the main thoroughfare is a footpath that follows the coast. In the early 19th century, the island was sometimes called Flat Island, because it consists of a small, flat hill and surrounding low-lying terrain, which is only visible at close approach (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). During the 1800s, Manono island was a stronghold for the Methodist church and its early mission in Samoa (Davidson, 1967). At an annual church meeting held here on the 21st of September 1859, a decision was made to establish a training institution on Upolu island which eventually led to the establishment of Piula Theological College in Lufilufi (Davidson, 1967).
Apolima is the smallest of the four inhabited islands of Samoa and situated in the Apolima Strait, between the country's two largest islands Upolu to the east and Savai'i to the west. The island has one village settlement, Apolima Tai and the small settlement is situated in the interior's flat plateau on the northern side (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Apolima is a rim of an extinct volcanic crater with a maximum height of 165 m and is a little less than one square kilometre in size and the only access to the island is by boat (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The tiny island lies 2.4 kilometres northwest off the westernmost edge of Upolu's fringing reef and 7 km (4 mi) southwest of Savai'i island (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The island's appearance is of an upturned bowl with surrounding steep cliffs and a broad opening to the sea on the northern side which is the main entry point by boat (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Apolima and Manono islands are both part of the political district of Aiga-ile-Tai (Davidson, 1967).

3.2 Political Districts
Samoa was made up of these eleven itūmālō (political districts). These are the traditional eleven districts that were established well before European arrival. Each district had its own fa’avae (constitutional foundation) based on the traditional order of title precedence found in each district’s fa’alupega (formal chiefly greeting) (Davidson, 1967). The capital village of each district administers and coordinates the affairs of the district and confers each districts’ paramount title, amongst other responsibilities. For example, the District of A’ana has its capital at Leulumoega and the paramount title of A’ana is the TuiA’ana (Davidson, 1967). The orator group which confers this title, the Faleiva (House of Nine), is based at Leulumoega and this is also the same for the other districts. In the district of Tuamasaga, the paramount title of the district, the Malietoa title, is conferred by the Fale Tuamasaga based in Afega (Davidson, 1967). Through the years and with the changes that came with foreign powers, these districts have expanded ad there are now many more political districts and these can be seen in Figure 4.
3.3 POPULATION

Samoa’s population as of the 2018 census totals 195,979 people and counting but this is not made up of only Samoan people. This number also includes people of other Pacific Island origins, Europeans, mostly from New Zealand, some Chinese, as well as other nationalities. (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Before the arrival of missionaries in the early 1830s, very little is known about the size of the population of the Samoan Groups as Samoan culture was an oral culture and written records were not kept (Meleisea, 1987). Estimations of population numbers may be found however, the knowledge about the islands was too inadequate and estimates made by early settlers were generally unreliable (Henry and Pula, 1980). Missionary reports improved this situation in following years however, it was still difficult to collect and verify figures and as a result, there were considerable variations of early estimations making the accuracy questionable (Henry and Pula, 1980). Over time however, this situation continued to improve after finally, accurate population records were achieved (Henry and Pula, 1980). This relative stability over time was a consequence of the balance between the high birth rate, which led to rapid growth in some years, and the high death rates in other years as epidemics
of diseases spread through the country (Meleisea, 1987). The population of the Samoan archipelago since or even before Western contacts has been the subject of much discussion. More reliable population figures are available from censuses carried out during the twentieth century. The German Authorities made population counts in 1900, 1902, 1906 and 1911. In 1917 the New Zealand administration carried out its first census of Samoa and from 1921 introduced a regular 5 yearly census (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). In 1905 the German authorities also instituted a system of birth and death registration. The population as recorded at the various censuses from 1906 to 2016 is shown below (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

In the beginning of the twentieth century several epidemics reversed the increasing trend in population growth that had occurred in the earlier years. The 1918 epidemic placed great pressure on New Zealand as the governing body of Samoa to improve health conditions and sanitation (Tomkins, 1992). The rate of population growth in the next decades proved these improvements in health conditions and sanitation to be a great success (Tomkins, 1992). Fertility levels continued to increase which was favourable for Samoans as they preferred large families, and while mortality decreased (Boyd, 1980). Emigration was affected population numbers. It was only during 1960s that the trend of extensive overseas migration, especially to New Zealand began to accelerate. The impact of overseas migration on the growth of the population has been of major importance, and has also had a profound influence on the social and economic structure of the country. The greater part of the slowing growth rate at least up to the late 1980s, must consequently be explained by the large out flow of people from Samoa to outside countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the US.

3.4 History
There is popular belief that Samoa is the cradle of Polynesia where Polynesians originated from the island of Savaii, thought of as the legendary island of Hawaii. The Polynesians who later explored the Pacific from Hawaii to Rapanui or Easter Island (Goss and Lindquist, 2000). New Zealand archaeological research carried out in Samoa suggests that the islands have been inhabited for at least 2,500 years (Martinsson-Wallin, 2007). The first European who sighted the group and made brief contact with the population of Manu’a (American Samoa) was the Dutchman Jacob Roggerveen in 1722 (Martinsson-Wallin, 2007). The first ‘papalagi’ (white people) to settle in Samoa were sailors, whalers, beachcombers and escaped convicts, many of whom landed by chance in Samoa (Martinsson-Wallin, 2007). The first notable ‘agents of
change’ were the missionaries (Davidson, 1967). After the arrival of John Williams of the London Missionary Society in the 1830’s the Samoans were rapidly converted to Christianity.

Methodist and Catholic Missionaries established Missions in the following years. From the 1840’s onward, Germany, the United States and Great Britain extended their influence on the island groups (Davidson, 1967). The 1880’s saw nation-rivalries amongst the largest districts and factions increase so the Samoans turned to the foreign powers for support. (Davidson, 1967) Word had reached Berlin about the rivalries and as a result, the major powers decided on an elaborate agreement to bring peace (Davidson, 1967). After some initial problems, the German Administration was relatively stable and Samoa prospered.

Governance of Samoa was soon after transferred to New Zealand who assumed occupation in 1914 and in 1919 was granted a ‘League of Nations’ mandate to administer the country (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Over the years, challenges to the New Zealand authorities grew, especially from amongst the matai (chiefs), the traditional leaders, who organized themselves in forming a peaceful movement advocating independence (the Mau movement) (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Attempts to crush this movement failed and finally in 1936, with the Labour Party in power in New Zealand, the Mau was recognized as a legitimate party and their success was in 1953 as New Zealand started preparations for the transition to independence (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017; So’o, 2008). Independence was finally obtained in January 1962 making Samoa the first South Pacific Island Nation to attain such status and 2018 saw the celebration of 56 years of this independence.

3.5 GOVERNMENT
Samoa is a parliamentary democracy with a unicameral legislative assembly now consisting of 50 members elected by citizens aged 21 years and over. However, only holders of matai titles are eligible to be elected as Members of Parliament. Therefore, according to the 2011 Census this means that presently only about 15,021 males and 1,766 females are actually eligible to stand for election (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). General elections are held every five years. The Prime Minister is elected by Parliament and he/she in turn appoints thirteen cabinet members.

The 1990 Village Fono Act and 2017 Village Fono Amendment gives village councils authority over village law and order, health and social issues (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The
main council or fono as Samoan people know it, is made up of matai and Sui o le Malo (village mayor) leads this fono in each village (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). A Sui Tamai (female representative) is also appointed by government and this representative is chosen through the recommendation of the Women’s Council as the main contact between the government and the women of the villages (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017. Rooted in this social organization is the Samoan Way or ‘faasamo’, which places great importance on the dignity and achievement of the group rather than its individual members.

3.6 RELIGION
A substantial amount of Samoan people are strong adherents to the Christian faith and this is telling of the important role that religion plays in the Samoan way of life. This is reflected in the national emblem as mentioned earlier, and when one drives through the main streets of Samoa, the physical expression of religious importance is seen through the number of beautiful church buildings scattered around the country. Based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing, the predominant church affiliations are Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano I Samoa or Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, Roman Catholic, Latter Day Saints and Methodist Church with 29.0 percent, 18.8 percent, 16.9 percent and 12.4 percent respectively (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The social and cultural institutions of Samoa Society are strong and more intact than in most parts of Polynesia. The country’s system of village government is particularly well organized and coherent and is the focal point of a network of social relationships that provide honour and prestige to its members (Davidson, 1967).
Figure 5: E.F.K.S Church of Sapapali‘i in Savai‘i

Figure 6: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Apia
Figure 7: E.F.K.S Jubilee Church in Malua Theological College

Figure 8: Safotu Catholic Church
Figure 9: Piula Theological College

Figure 10: Apia Protestant Church
Chapter 4  LITERATURE REVIEW

“Each society’s specific history of discourse shapes the concrete ways in which religion-state relations within it unfold” (Lefebure, 2016: XXII). Considering Lefebure’s advice, this literature review has a heavy focus on the religious and cultural history of Samoan society. The aim of this study is to find out the extent to which religion and culture influence government in Samoa. To do this, it is necessary to reflect on the indigenous religion that was the footing of Samoan society before the arrival of outside powers and influences. It is also appropriate to give a record of Samoan culture and how both indigenous religion and culture were changed as a result of the arrival of western religion or Christianity. A timeline of decision-making authority within Samoa will also be provided and how this process has been passed through different groups as a result of the colonisation of Samoa by different countries. Lastly, this chapter will attempt to situate this study within existing literature by viewing existing arguments around the religion and government relationship.

4.1 SAMOAN INDIGENOUS RELIGION

Before Christianity as we know it today arrived to the humble shores of Samoa, Samoans had a religion of their own as they worshiped supernatural beings and from these beings, Samoan people attained their own religious beliefs in all aspects of their lives much like those taught and learnt from Christianity today (Powell, Pratt and Frazer, n.d). These supernatural beings have parallels to those told through Maori creation stories. These religions usually trace the origins of nature to a creating god, similar but not the same as the God of Christianity, and in one way or another, they preach to humans a duty of being responsible stewards of nature’s goods much like beliefs evident for Māori (King, 2013). They promoted a sustainable relationship with the environment based on respect for and kinship with the natural world. The Samoan indigenous religion and spirituality are rooted in the Polynesian Myths of Creation held by the Samoan people (Fraser, 1897). *Tala o le vavau* (myths) seek to reveal truth, and for the Samoans these myths were important and their influences pervade the spirituality, mysteries of life, their understanding of God, creation, rituals and culture, and how they see the universe and the world around them (Tufuga Efi, 2005). Hence, there is a need to revisit these myths of creation that made up indigenous religion in Samoa in order to understand fully the way religion stands in Samoa today.
Myths and legends of Samoa differ throughout Samoa, depending on the district. Samoan Indigenous Religion believed in the existence of many gods, and a Supreme Being whom they named Tagaloa or Tagaloalelagi (Powell et al, n.d). Tagaloa was believed to be the creator of all things who made papa (rock), the solid base and foundation which he used to create the world with the sea, fresh water and the high mountains (Charlot, 1991). Lagi (the heavens) and lalo-lagi (the earth) were Tagaloa’s first creations and immediately after, he populated the earth with the creation of tagata (people) (Charlot, 1991). Tagaloa split the people into two, male and female, and endowed them with his own spirit, heart, will and thought, and thus humans became living souls with loto (affections), finagalo (will), manatu/masalo (power of thought), atamai (human intelligence) with a physical and spiritual complex nature (Charlot, 1991). Tagaloa then set forth humans as the living spirits on the earth. Traditional Samoans believed that they originated from the gods, Lagi and Papa, who were issues of Tagaloa, their first ancestor and progenitor. They also believed Tagaloa created the cosmos, the earth, all life forms including humans. The Samoans were convinced that their connections and relationship with all creation were rooted in their common divine ancestral beginnings (Powell et al, n.d).

The acceptance of Christianity’s God within Samoa can be argued to have been made easy for two main reasons. The idea of Tagaloa in Samoan indigenous religion and God in Western religion are very similar. The creation story told about Tagaloa is also very similar to that of the creation story about God told in the bible. The elimination of the term Tagaloa, expands the Christian theological concept of Atua, whom the Samoans now recognized as Supreme Being, the same Supreme Being worshipped by the Christians (Tufuga Efi, 2005). The Atua is not just for the Samoans but for the whole human world. The Samoans accepted the Christian explanation of God as the triune Godhead because the Trinitarian doctrine was not entirely new to them (Tufuga Efi, 2005). Rather, they viewed the god brought by missionaries as their own god, Tagaloa, the Supreme Being revealing himself to them in more than one way; the creator, visitor, messenger, progenitor, matai, and so on (Tufuga Efi, 2005). Therefore, when missionaries arrived with their ideas of Christianity and God as the supreme and ultimate ruler, Samoan people did not find it difficult to accept this concept and this God.

The other reason the acceptance of Christianity and abandonment of indigenous religion came easy was because, Samoan society believing in Tagaloa, lacked the physical landscapes in which their indigenous religion manifested; idols, temples, and powerful priesthood which had been encountered in eastern Polynesia (Goldman, 1970). Holmes (1980) argued that this is
because while many other pacific islands worshiped only gods, Samoan people worshiped their own social and political organisation, which is the matai system, just as much if not more. Because of Samoa’s great focus and worship of this system, it was a simple task for them to let go of their indigenous religion and god and replace it with a new one. However, for this same reason, the abandonment of the social and political organisation they worshiped, fa’asamoa, was not so easy.

4.1.1 Indigenous Religion and Fa’asamoa: one in the same
Samoan indigenous religion is not only seen through the god Tagaloa. It was also seen through the social and political organisation of the island (Holmes, 1965). In Samoa’s social and political organisation, the concept of ‘Aiga (kinship) is affiliated with producing the values in which religious beliefs affirm and expand (Tufuga Efi, 2005). This is because spirituality is relational and is grounded in a healthy self-image, and grows within the context of life affirming and nurturing relationships as Hamma (1999) stated. This nurturing relationship is seen through the social structure and organisation of the ‘aiga as family mentors or elders take up the responsibility of guiding and directing children as they continue to experience the wider perspective of Samoan life and culture (Kamu, 1996). The lessons shared through this relationship is exemplified in the proverb, “O fanau o manu e fafaga i fuga, a o fanau a tagata e fafaga I upu ma tala”, the children of birds are fed with plants and flowers but the children of humans are fed with words. These words teach the young people and allow them to remain solid in their foundation, that healthy self-image, life and spirit of a people; its living way of life, the fa’aSamoa way of life (Kamu, 1996).

It is in the ‘aiga and village community that young adults are exposed to the ‘life of service’ and ‘the art of serving others’ as this proverb also affirms ‘o le ala I le pule o le tautua’, meaning the way to leadership is through service (Aiono-Iosefa, 2001). These two cultural values in Samoan traditional society are also values taught in the teaching on service; Jesus, the ‘man for others’ who came to serve and not to be served.

Traditional Samoan leadership emphasizes the cultural values of service, sharing and caring. It is a system that works well if it is built on alofa (love) and fa’aaloalo (respect) (Tofaeono Tu’u’u, 1999). Christian teachings also teach this as Christ’s way, a model of leadership that strengthens the spirit of serving, sharing and caring in the ‘aiga as well as the wider community.
Christianity, just like indigenous religion expands the concept of ‘aiga to include the world human family and Christ as head.

The recollection of Samoa’s indigenous religion is important as knowledge must be understood not only in relationship to other knowledge, but also as interconnected with the community and the place in which it has come from (King, 2013). Although the overall focus of this study is not based on indigenous religion, it is important to understand the history of Samoan people’s traditional religion in order to further understand their relationship with the religion that was later introduced and now exists. Some argue when undertaking research about Mi’kmaq language and land, indigenous language, myth, ritual, culture, and land are inseparable parts of as a whole and as a result, each thing is not itself without the larger context (Sable and Francis, Lewis and Jones, 2012). In the case of Samoa, this argument reigns true. Taking the time machine back in order to understand indigenous religion has shown why the acceptance of western religion was an easy task for Samoans but the taking away of culture, fa’asamoa, was not.

4.1.2 Conversion from Indigenous Religion to Christianity

As aforementioned, it was not difficult for Samoans to accept the Christian God. Since the arrival of Christian missionaries to Samoa early in the nineteenth century, the churches they founded have achieved a central place in Samoan society (Macpherson and Macpherson 2011). The Methodist church, London Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Church all arrived within the first 15 years scattered around the island. The Method church found its grounding in the village of Satupa’itea in 1828 and two years later, the London Missionary Society arrived and set up mission at Sapapali’i in 1830 (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2011). The London Missionary Society went on to teach missionary work to indigenous people of Samoa and as a result, the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa was born. The last major denomination to commence missionary work was the Roman Catholic church who was established in Apia in 1845 (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2011). Conversions were widespread, rapid and changed indigenous religious beliefs of polytheistic religion to a monotheistic one (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2011). By the 1850s indigenous religion was considered extinct and the early work by these three denominations, referred to as the mainstream churches, ensured that they became, and remained, the largest and most influential denominations in Samoa (Robson, 2009). This is still the case to this very day.
4.2 Samoa accepts Christianity

Although it is argued that Methodist religion was the first to arrive to Samoa in 1828, influential religious change did not occur until Reverend John Williams of the London Missionary Society landed in 1830. Ever since Rev. John Williams landed, the Samoans have taken Christianity very seriously and Samoan missionaries have gone on to convert the residents of many other island groups such as Tuvalu, the Solomons, and New Guinea (Robson, 2009). Williams spent a total of less than a month in Samoa in 1830 and 1832, and he and Malietoa Vainuupo, the chief king who had conquered all of Samoa at the time, met only a few times (Robson, 2009).

The meetings between Williams and Malietoa were described through William’s missionary Enterprises and journals as affable, and after the first meeting, Malietoa agreed to protect the missionary teachers whom Williams planned to leave in Samoa (Robson, 2009). There were multiple reasons for why this agreement was made so easily including prior encounters between Samoans and Europeans, prior knowledge of Christianity among Samoans, a convenient Samoan legend, and Samoan familiarity with Western trade goods (Robson, 2009). Malietoa himself did not take long to be converted to Christianity and as a result, his followers, the people of Samoa followed suit (Hempenstall, 2004). It is well noted that Williams’ approach in converting Malietoa was one of strategic thinking as he was aware of the way of Samoan people and their loyalty to their king (Hempenstall, 2004). It was inevitable that they too would simply be converted following in the footsteps of their king.

Presently, every Samoan banknote bears a radiant cross and the slogan ‘Fa’avae i le Atua Samoa’. Some 61,500 Samoans belong to the Congregational Christian Church, 26,5000 are Methodist, 24,750 Catholic, and 22,500 Mormon (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2018). While the London Missionary Society, Methodist and Catholic churches were the first and most dominant denominations in Samoa, a number of other denominations such as Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Assemblies of God have grown rapidly in the last decade.

Samoan people’s conversion to Christianity was easy, wide spread and fast occurring. However, this success should not be credited to any charismatic or superiority of missionary teaching. Rather, the people of Samoa saw the possibility for of “increasing its material prosperity and its regional prestige” (Waiters, 1959; 399) through missionaries. It can be argued then that the people of Samoa did not convert and follow a new religion because of
their belief in the Word of God, but instead because of the resource stability that came with this new religion. They were a people who saw the opportunity that came with the missionary’s religion and utilised this opportunity for their own gain. The acceptance of this new religion however did not come without consequence.

4.2.1 Cultural change following Christian acceptance in Samoa

Christianity brought many changes to Samoan culture. Some of these changes were the result of the pioneer English missionaries feeling that English ways were superior to those of the Samoans (Waiters, 1959). Other changes were the result of conflict between Samoan customs and the teachings of the Bible. For example, the Bible does not specify how people should dress or do their hair, but English missionaries persuaded Samoans to wear shirts and dresses and change their hair-styles to suit western ideas of presentability (Shankman, 2009).

Pre-Christian Samoans only wore clothing below the waist. Hair for males were worn long and pinned in a knot on top of their heads and women wore their hair short and brushed up with the use of breadfruit sap to make it stiff and stay in place (Meleisea, Meleisea, Leatio’o, Fitisemanu, Sib, Tavale, Fido, 1987). Both sexes used lime to bleach their hair reddish-brown. Before marriage, girls wore long side-locks of hair, with the front shaved back from the forehead. In contrast, a Christian in the early days of the church signified his belief by dressing in the English style; clothed above the waist in a shirt, dress or a tiputa which was a cloak made from siapo or the silk removed from an umbrella, with short hair, if male, or long hair pinned up, if female (Meleisea et al, 1987).

In addition, ideas of gender roles were also changed due to Christianity conversions. The idea that it should be women who did the cooking was indoctrinated into Samoan people. this was traditionally the role of young men however; the missionaries disbanded the aualuma (circle of female) in Christian villages. Instead, it was imposed by missionaries that unmarried girls, instead of living with the aualuma, had to live with the pastor and his wife (Meleisea et al, 1987). In doing this, the young girls would learn to cook in the papalagi way, using an indoor stove and pots and pans, as well as learning sewing and other papalagi women's work (Meleisea et al, 1987).

Control of time was another change that followed the acceptance of Christianity in Samoa. Missionaries present in Samoa were of lower middle classes of England who believed hard
work was the duty and responsibility of a Christian (Meleisea et al., 1987). They believed the people of Samoa lacked this sense of duty and responsibility as they had no sense of time because the hours that people worked were so different to those of the English. As a result, the missionaries wanted to make Samoans more industrious and took upon themselves to do this. One way of doing this was by introducing new goods to the people which necessitated their working for wages, or selling product, in order to obtain them (Meleisea et al., 1987). The idea which the missionaries had of the way Samoans should live, was based upon the ideals of the middle classes of England where households consisted of the married couple and their children. The man was the breadwinner, and produced the food, working regular hours outside the home. The woman was the home-maker, and cooked and sewed clothes in the house for her family (Meleisea, 1987). This ideal has never been completely accepted by Samoan people, since the extended family household, and working in groups, has always been a practical economic arrangement. Nevertheless, the village pastor and his wife were expected to present to the people this new example of how every family should live ideally (Meleisea et al., 1987).

Many changes occurred because Samoan customs and practices conflicted with the teaching of the Gospels. The changing of one custom often led to a series of changes. For example, the Gospels teach that men and women should have only one marriage partner and should be faithful to one another (Meleisea, 1987). Chiefs wishing to become Christians were asked to choose one wife for the rest of their lives, and to permit their previous wives to remarry. Since the main reason for chiefs contracting so many marriages was the Samoan political system which was similar to King Henry VIII of England, who married six times, initially for a political alliance, later in an attempt to have male heirs, changing that custom also greatly changed the political system of Samoa (Meleisea, 1987; Davidson, 1967). It was another eight years after 1830, before Samoans really accepted the new teachings on marriage, and when they finally did, the conferring of taupou (virgin girl) titles became less important (Meleisea, 1987). This is because the institution of the taupou was closely associated with chiefly marriage, which linked families and villages all over Samoa through the multiple marriages of chiefs to high ranking ladies (Meleisea, 1987).

Christianity also changed ideas about the authority of chiefs. In pre-Christian Samoa, the highest chiefs could do almost anything they wished because so great was the mana they received from the gods (Meleisea, 1987). In principle they could even demand human flesh for their food, as legend says Malietoa Faiga, another Samoan king, did until his son stopped him,
by having himself plaited in a coconut leaf and served to his father (Meleisea, 1987). The conferring of certain Ali‘i Pa‘ia (high titles) made the chiefs who held them sacred, with god-like powers which prevented them from being restricted by normal codes of behaviour.

Christian Samoans still believed that chiefs had divinely-inspired authority. But that power came from the Christian God and required the chief to follow God's laws and to set a Christian example for his family and village (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2011). The sacred power of the old chiefs was transferred to the pastor who was given the chiefly form of address 'Susuga'. (Catholic priests are addressed as 'Afioga') (Robson, 2009). The pastor was termed 'o le feagaiga' (the covenant) because of his covenant with the village, and in recognition of the covenant between God and man (Robson, 2009). One of the most emphatic teachings of the missionaries was that of peace. Although the sad facts of history show that Christian has fought and killed fellow Christian in Europe for the past two thousand years, the Evangelical missionaries emphasized peace as one of the greatest of Christ's messages (Robson, 2009).

Experiences gained in Tonga and Tahiti had taught the missionaries the dangers of involving the church too deeply in politics, so through-out the Samoan civil wars of the nineteenth century, most missionaries made a determined effort to avoid direct involvement of their church (Forman, 2000). They sought a peace-making role when possible. This often-placed chiefs in a terrible dilemma because their traditional obligation was to go to war, and their Christian duty was to promote peace (Forman, 2000). This was one reason why pastors and catechists were asked not to take matai titles; they had to remain neutral in political and military conflicts (Davidson, 1967; Forman, 2000). This separation can be thought of as analogues to the separation of religion and government as a whole in Samoa. That in order for peace between the two, there must be a separation. However, this ideology is not as simple as it seems.

Although there is evidence that Christianity 'revolutionized' Samoan culture during the mid-nineteenth century, these changes were absorbed and changed to suit Samoan culture (Meleisea et al, n.d). The second generation of Christians accepted the Lotu (church) and many of the new ways taught by the missionaries, as Samoan culture, often interpreting new things in old ways. For example, after 1830, the custom of exchanging 'oloa', men's products of food, tools and money, for 'toga', women's products of mats, tapa and 'ie toga, at weddings, was replaced by a mission custom (Tuimaleali’ifano, 2001). When young pastors or catechists married they were presented with a dowry of furniture by their wives' relatives. Both sides presented 'ie toga;
soon this custom was practised in chiefly families, and eventually became widespread (Tuimaleali’ifano, 2001). Another example is the way that introduced things, such as tea and tea cups, and saucers and mugs, are used. When all ali‘i or pastor is served tea he receives a china cup and saucer. A tulafale receives his tea in a cup without a saucer, or in a mug (Tuimaleali’ifano, 2001). New goods came to be used in old ways to indicate distinctions of rank and status. In this way, over the past one hundred and fifty years of Christian Samoan history, Christian and papalagi customs and institutions have been made distinctively Samoan (. Christianity has now become an important art of Samoan culture as evidenced by the Samoan.

The arrival and acceptance of Christianity in Samoa brought about many changes in the societal landscape of Samoa. Religious changes brought about cultural changes and as a result, a whole series of changes was in effect. It can even be argued that the cultural traditions and customs of Samoa are not what the same as they were pre-Christianity. However, Samoan people were unique in that they accepted Christianity without completely emancipating themselves of their culture. This culture has definitely seen many changes but these changes can be seen as the people’s way of adapting without completely conforming to the intruding culture.

4.3 CULTURE – FA’ASAMOA – THE SAMOAN WAY OF LIFE
The Samoan matai system has been described by many as one of, if not the most important pillar upon which Samoan culture is rested. For Samoan people, the existence of their culture is based on those institutions and practices associated with chiefs in which Samoan culture finds its most elegant concentration. This system has been mentioned throughout the previous sections of this chapter. This is telling of the prevalence and importance of such a system in Samoan society. Through indigenous religion and the arrival of Christian religion, it has been present and while a lot of things changed through the process of time, fa’asamoa has remained. However, this system of leadership is not an easy concept to grasp. It is an intricate and complicated system that takes much practice to become familiar with.

4.3.1 Origins of Matai System
The Samoan matai system is the longest standing tradition held by Samoan people as it originated from the beginning of Samoa as a nation. In the beginning, Samoa was populated by only a few families known as ‘Aiga Tupu (royal families) and each of these families were named after their leader and inhabited different parts of Samoa (Davidson, 1967). Over time, areas of Samoa separated into districts and villages, and leaders of these divisions were
honoured with their own māta'i titles, many of which were named after significant events in history, or to acknowledge a service rendered, or to pass on a morsel of Samoan wisdom (Davidson, 1967; Huffer and So’o, 2000; Milner and Lockwood, 1972). Over time, districts and villages continued to separate and more māta'i titles were created until it became the intricate and complicated system that it is today. Its importance is weighed on its kinship connections as without these relations, a māta'i title is made void (So’o, 2008). An untitled man becomes a chief through the consensus decision of the assembled members of the descent group following what are often extended discussion and debate. There is no single rule or criteria that one must meet in order to be chosen rather, each kinship group employ a number of different norms for selecting (So’o, 2008). Not even blood relation can guarantee a title as adoptive children who have whole-heartedly served the descent group with pride and dignity may be chosen over someone of bloody relations (So’o, 2008).

4.3.2 What/Who is a Matai – Kinship Connections to and through the Matai

Matai is the Samoan word for leader or chief. In the Samoan context however, this title comes with many responsibilities and obligations that need not only the work of the person that carries the title, but all of his family immediate, as well as extended (Davidson, 1967). Shore defines the matai in the Samoan context as “a person empowered through possession of a chiefly name or title, with pule (authority) over lands and people. The power of the chief lies not so much on in the personal qualities of the holder, but rather in the title itself; a name confers power on its holder” (1982, 59). All chiefs share a number of characteristics including possession of a title, pule within both kinship groups and villages, and a general honour and dignity that attaches to his title (Davidson, 1967). Matai are also importantly different from each other in terms of rank, general prestige, and in the kind of power they possess. Some are ali’i, noblemen with formal powers to command. Other matai are tulafale who are orators for the ali’i and speak on their behalf and wield other more active, executive power that we recognize as explicitly political (Huffer and So’o, 2005)

4.4 Governance through the Matai System – How does it work?

Samoan Political organisation through the matai system places matai at the top of the hierarchy however, it does not make them the only voice when it comes to decision making (Davidson, 1967). Kallen gave a long but accurate description of fa’asamoa stating,
“Fa’aSamoa is a total phenomenon. It is at once a world view; a way of life; a cherished heritage; a set of structural principles for ordering social life; a plethora of formidable constraints upon behaviour; and an ideological underpinning for strongly positive ethnocultural identification” (1982, 35).

It is no wonder that such a traditional system of governance has survived the test of time. It is a system that accounts for all the activities, practices and traditions of a large group of people at the nuclear family level, village level and the national level. All have a role within their society starting with the nuclear family and expanding out to the collective village and each role is essential in maintaining successful social control (Vaiao and Alailima, 1994). The core of fa’asamoa is found within the matai system as explained in previous sections.

Political organisation in Samoa pre-colonisation was similar to that of other Polynesian islands and they were based on kinship and locality. The structure of authority within territorial units and the character of the relationships between them, derived from the network ties between their constituent lineages (Davidson, 1967). The main territorial unit where political and economic activity took place was at the village level. However, the day to day processes of life was predominant at the family level (Davidson, 1967). Village boundaries were made known through reference to natural features such as streams, rocky knolls, and the watersheds of mountain ranges, or sometimes where these were not available, by the building of stone walls (Davidson, 1967; Macpherson and Macpherson, 2011)

Socially, each village was defined by its fa’alupega, which contained a highly formalised greeting of its principal matai (Tuimaleali’ifano, 2001). The correct place and dignity were accorded to each; and the relationship of local matai titles to the broader lineage structure of Samoa was made explicit (Tuimaleali’ifano, 2001). The possession of such a fa’alupega was, in effect, the required demonstration of a particular village’s history, in terms of kinship and social status, and defined the constitution of its fono (council) (Tumaleali’ifano, 2001; Holtz 2013). The appropriate fa’alupega were recited on all formal occasions, such as meetings of the fono or the reception of guests from another village. Decision-making itself took form in three different settings, the individual household settings, the village-wide setting and the national level (Tuimaleali’ifano, 2001; Holtz, 2013). In those days however, meetings at the national level were seldom held as matters were settled at the village level majority of the time.
4.4.1 Planning and Decision-making at Household, Village and National Level

The individual households composing the village community were each headed by a matai, who possessed authority over its members and regulated their activities such as agriculture or fishing, or of the reception of guests (Davidson, 1967). Family resources were similarly distributed under his direction. These functions were not performed, however, where the tradition was observed, by simple dictation but after consultation, a practice that was highly developed in Samoan society at every level (Davidson, 1967).

At the village level, people were organised in groups that cut across the individual households and the most important of these was the fono composed of matai; this was the general government and planning body of the community (Davidson, 1967; Holtz, 2013). The rest of society except children, had their positions similarly defined. The untitled men belonged to the ‘aumaga; the women who were members of local families by birth or adoption belonged to the aualuma; and the wives of the matai belonged to the potopotogo o faletua ma tausi (Davidson, 1967). The wives of untitled men formed a less clearly defined group however, they still had roles within the village. Each of these groups had its recognised position within the community and its network of rights and obligations (Davidson, 1967).

Providing authority for all these activities was the fono, as the governing body of the village. Its structure and conventions reflected both the general characteristics of Samoan society and the particular characteristics of the individual village (So’o, 2008). The members of this fono were the matai who possessed one of two titles of status; the ali’i (chief) or the tulafale (orator). When faced with public affairs at the village level, the two work together to make plans and decisions, and regulate these affairs. The ali’i is the ultimate source of authority while the tulafale performed for the chief a variety of duties which it was contrary to decorum for the chief to perform for himself (Davidson, 1967; Meleisea, 1987). The tulafale was the source of genealogical knowledge, of history and legend; he made formal speeches on behalf of the ali’i with whom his particular title associated with or on behalf of the village (Davidson, 1967). He also organised the ceremonial distribution of food and he acted as master of ceremonies when a chief’s title was being bestowed. During a fono, matters of general interest or concern would be discussed; regulations regarding the conduct of village affairs would be made; and decisions would be reached regarding the topics at hand.
Politics and decision-making at the national level resembled that at the individual village and differ in functions and complexity. At this level, it was the job of the most important chiefs of each district to assemble and create a council in which decisions could be made (Davidson, 1967). However, at this level where lineage interests involved were far more important and necessities of day to day administration were wholly absent, they effectively prevented the growth of a central government (Davidson, 1967; Meleisea, 1987). Due to the lack of this central government, peaceful decision-making proved difficult and as a result, chiefs resorted to war and conflict as a way of resolving issues.

Decision-making in traditional Samoan practice was carried out at firstly, an individual household level. At this level, the matai of the family performed planning and decision-making duties and held a regulatory position within the family. When matters needed to be dealt with at the village-wide level, the matai of each household created the fono where matters were discussed and planning and decision-making functions were bestowed upon the chiefs as a group. The same was done at the national level however, it was a lot more difficult for reasons previously mentioned. It is clear that pre-Christian Samoan society functioned well because of the well-defined roles that was conferred to each person. While it may not have been a society run on the western idea of central government, its functionality ran on the cohesiveness that each group at each level had with each other. Planning and decision-making functions in particular were bestowed upon matai at every level however, influence of Christianity and outside powers slowly but surely resulted in this function being transferred.

4.5 Democratic Samoa
Similar to Christianity in Samoa, its current democratic government was also introduced by outside powers. While missionaries brought about widespread religious change, during the same time, America, Britain, and Germany were becoming more and more interested in the domination of Samoan politics and way of life (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2011). But before these outside influences brought their democratic government, Samoa had their own matai (chief) system that was responsible for the governance of the affairs of the people. Samoa at present, has two levels of government: national government based on modern state system and village local government based on traditional structures (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). There is a distinction between the national institution of government, the Malo, represented by Parliament and Cabinet, and local or village administration represented by the fono a le nu’u (meeting of the village) (Davidson, 1967). The fono a le nu’u perform duties just
as the matai system did before the arrival of the new government. Both are part of a continuum or a whole which links the family, the village fono, the traditional districts and the national fono. The latter’s existence and legitimacy depend on the matai system, which is at the heart of governance in Samoa.

4.5.1 History of Government in Samoa
The western model of government first started to take form in Samoa in the late 1830s. During this time, Samoa saw an influx of European settlers arrive to its shores. As a result, in the first half of the 19th century Samoa went through a series of civil wars in which foreigners became increasingly involved, and by 1899, an international agreement to annex and partition Samoa between Germany and the United States was made (Davidson, 1967).

This code of law was further added to in the following year and remained law until the 1860s. In 1865, J.C Williams, son of Reverend John Williams called a meeting with ‘principal matai’ where the outcome was the declaration of a code of law that was binding upon all of the political district of Tuamasaga (So’o, 2008). The headquarters of the Tuamasaga government was at Matautu on the outskirts of Apia which was not traditionally seen as a political centre by Samoan people (Davidson, 1967; So’o 2008). This location signified the interest of foreign communities in establishing a government that would serve their commercial interests. Over the next 35 years a great deal of blood was spilt in trying to get Samoans to adjust to this vision (So’o, 2008).

4.5.2 First Central Government
European communities, mainly missionaries and business men wanted to establish district-wide laws in hopes of developing a central government to administer Samoa’s national affairs (Davidson, 1967). Because the growing port-town of Apia was situated within Tuamasaga, as were most of the commercial plantations, this is where they wanted this government to be located despite it not being a known capital village to the Samoan people. The settlers hoped that the establishment of a government would regulate relations and transactions between settlers and Samoans (So’o, 2008). The first form of written code of law in Samoa was drafted by Drinkwater Bethune, a European lawyer, with provisions relating to port regulations among other important laws (Huffer and so’o, 2000). Several civil wars broke out across Samoa such as the War of Faatasiga, due to debates over who should be the head of the newly proposed government as this new form of government continuously superseded the authority of indigenous Samoan institutions (So’o, 2008). It was not until 1873 that war and conflict ceased
through mediation by three consuls, three London Missionary Society missionaries, one Wesleyan missionary, the Roman Catholic bishop and several priests (So’o, 2008). This is where the first signs of religious influence in government affairs is seen.

1873 saw the drafting of the first united Samoan government’s constitution (Davidson, 1967; So’o, 2008). The constitution provided for one ta’imua (leader) for each of the country’s seven major political divisions, three from Savaii being Ituotane, Ituoteine, and Falesalele’aga, three from Upolu being A’ana, Tuamasaga, and Atua and one comprising Apolima and Manono (So’o, 2008). This constitution aimed to reflect some elements of the Samoan order; each of the seven ta’imua constituencies comprised of 40 faipule (authorities), who in turn elected the seven ta’imua (So’o, 2008). Only matai were eligible to be candidates and to elect the ta’imua and faipule. The elections were held not by a secret ballot, but by consensus of matai in village councils, thereby continuing traditional modes of decision-making (Huffer and So’o, 2000). In addition to the law-making responsibilities that they shared with the faipule, the ta’imua were responsible for the executive government, which conducted relations with foreign powers, maintained law and order in the Apia area and appointed certain district officials (So’o, 2008). The constitution also provided for the first nationwide administration comprising judges, clerks and police to be appointed for districts and subdistricts, and rules were made for their guidance (So’o, 2008). Despite the many changes occurring at the national level, the drafting of the 1873 Constitution specifically guaranteed the retention of traditional powers by district and village authorities. The government was to have power in respect of village government and matai authority; a provision that has been upheld to the present day. The provision was clearly intended for the resolution of disputes between Samoan polities, rather than to give government direct authority over them.

Much more conflict and war occurred in the following years as disputes between opposing Samoan district leaders, as well as Samoan people and foreign powers whose influences were becoming more and more authoritative within the country (Huffer and So’o, 2000; So’o, 2008). Germany, USA and British powers made their presence more and more prevalent in Samoan affairs and as a result, in 1899 an international commission comprising representatives of the three powers arrived in Samoa and induced King Tanumafili to abdicate his kinship position (So’o, 2008). Before leaving, the commissioners established a provisional government comprising three consuls, a German as president of the Apia municipality, and American consul as the acting chief judge (So’o, 2008). A convention was signed December 1899
allowing for the partition of Samoa into Western and Eastern Samoa under the respective control of Germany and the USA (So’o, 2008). However, the Samoan people were not consulted about this partition.

4.5.3 German and New Zealand rule over Samoa

Germany’s major interest in Samoa was its coconut plantations. The German objective was to create a political environment that was conducive to the commercial interests of major plantation and trading company (Hempenstall, 2016). When Samoan indigenous power structures threatened, or became a struggle to the realisation of German interests, the German governors in Western Samoa made it one of their objectives to undermine them (Hempenstall, 2016). German governor continued to attempt to undermine Samoan indigenous administration by shifting power from the villages and districts to the central government but this proved to be a difficult mission (Hempenstall, 2016). During the 14 years of German rule over Samoa, its economy grew dramatically as new companies were formed to greatly expand agricultural activities which in turn increased tax revenues for public works that further stimulated economic growth (Hempenstall, 2016). Infrastructure such as roads were also created which allowed increased access around the island. In 1914, on the onset of World War I, New Zealand sent a military expedition to seize the islands and for Samoa, it was met with no retaliation from the German government (Hempenstall, 2016). Not long after, New Zealand now had control of Samoa.

New Zealand administration over Samoa is a story similar to other stories of colonisation. New Zealand developed authoritarian policies towards Samoans as they believed they were a splendid but backward native race (Ross, 1969). Samoan people deeply resented these foreign attitudes and had issues implementing their own laws as their indigenous government had no power at this stage. The Fono of Faipule, an advisory body of Samoan leaders established by the German administration and retained during New Zealand's military occupation, was not given legal recognition until 1923 (Hempenstall, 2016). Between 1914 and 1935, New Zealand appointed Administrators from military backgrounds who tended to take an autocratic approach to governance (So’o, 2008). They lacked experience of Pacific Island cultures, and were often ignorant of or unsympathetic towards Samoan customs and practices. As a result, the people of Samoa began to rebel and the Mau Movement was born as a result. The Mau Movement was a peace protest movement who aimed to resist the governance of New Zealand administration (Chapell, 2000). After the tragic incident of Black Saturday where New Zealand troops opened
fire on protesting crowd, leaving at least eight dead, changes were finally seen though it still took many years before independence was gained (Field, 1991).

The Labour Party victory in New Zealand's 1935 general election broke the political impasse in Samoa. A goodwill mission to Apia in June 1936 recognised the Mau as a legitimate political organisation, the Samoan Offenders Ordinance was repealed, and Olaf Nelson's exile was revoked (Field, 1991). The Mau held majorities in both a newly elected Fono of Faipule and the legislative assembly (Field, 1991). But dissatisfaction remained. Samoan self-government was slow to emerge, due in part to the Great Depression and the Second World War. A worldwide trend towards decolonisation after the Second World War and increased pressure from the newly formed United Nations led New Zealand to prepare for Samoan independence. Western Samoa achieved independence on 1 January 1962 (Field, 1991). Tupua Tamasese Maeole, son of Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III, became joint head of state with Malietoa Tanumafili II, the son of New Zealand Administrator George Richardson's fatua (adviser), Malietoa Tanumafili I (So’o, 2008: Field, 1991; Davidson, 1967).

4.5.4 Present Government

The independent state of Samoa now is a unitary state with a unicameral democratic parliamentary system. The parliament is known as the fono and sits for a five-year term. The head of state, the Ao o le Malō, is elected by parliament for a term of five years. The head of government is the prime minister, who appoints a 13-member cabinet from amongst the elected members of parliament (MPs) (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The legislature comprises 49 MPs, including the speaker of the house. Forty-seven are elected to represent 41 constituencies (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). They are elected by universal adult suffrage but may only be contested by matai title-holders (chiefs of extended families, of whom there are 18,063) (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The two other members are elected on a separate voters’ roll comprising citizens of European, Asian, Pacific Islander and another ethnic groups’ descent (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Following the 2016 elections, 10% (5/50) MPs were women: four elected as constituency MPs, and one under a quota system ensuring a minimum of 10% female representation (Samoan Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Existing alongside the country's Western styled political system is the fa'amatai chiefly system of socio-political governance and organisation, central to understanding Samoa's political system (So’o, 2008). From the country's independence in 1962, only matai could vote and stand as candidates in elections to parliament. In 1990, the voting system was changed by the
Electoral Amendment Act which introduced universal suffrage (So’o, 2008; Huffer and So’o, 2000). However, the right to stand for elections remains with matai title holders. Therefore, in the 49-seat parliament, all 47 Samoan Members of Parliament are also matai, performing dual roles as chiefs and modern politicians, with the exception of the two seats reserved for non-Samoans (So’o, 2008). At the local level, much of the country's civil and criminal matters are dealt with by some 360 village chief councils, Fono o Matai, according to traditional law, a practice further strengthened by the 1990 Village Fono Law (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

The national government (malo) generally controls the legislative assembly as it is formed from the party which controls the majority seats in the assembly. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in the assembly, but the government generally controls legislation through its weight of numbers in the fono.

4.6 RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT
The relationship between religion and government has been a focus of research for many years. The relationship itself can be traced back to ancient medieval times. For example, during the Middle Ages in Europe, the Christian religion determined the position of the state as well as the position of the Church (Nieuwhenuis, 2012). Religion in fact, reigned supreme and gave state authorities and powers their legitimacy and in return, the government was the protector of the Christian faith. Nowadays, it seems evident that religion no longer holds this supremacy. Rather, it is democracy and the rule of law that are the fundamental starting point of nations.

4.6.1 Typology of the relations between religion and government
Throughout history, the relationship between religion and government have taken shape in a variety of different ways. The first two is seen through state domination of religion and vice versa (Turner, 2011). State domination of religion is when the state uses religion to support and legitimise the government and this type of relationship was present in Lutheran Germany. In this case, the church failed to question and criticize the unjust actions of the state and as a result, it was not hard for state to take control (Turner, 2011). Religious domination of state occurred in western European history as the Pope abused his power through using a forged document called the Donation of Constantine to declare that he as the Pope, had the authority to appoint and dispose kings (Nieuwwhenuis, 2012). Any opposition of this authority would lead to excommunication.
The Vatican state is an example where Theocracy was the type of government that led the Vatican people (Lefebure, 2016). Theocracy is based on the idea that divine power governs an earthly human state, either in a personal incarnation or in most cases, via religious institutional representatives (Lefebure, 2016). The type of government which is the opposite to this is the separation of church and state in which there is religious freedom and all religions are treated as equal however, no religious body has any official influence over the state (Esbeck, 1988). The result can be the formation of a civil religion with pledge of allegiance and where the symbols of the state, such as the flag, take on a quasi-religious status (Esbeck, 1988). This type of religion-state relationship is present in the governance of the United States of America. These are only 4 of the many different religion-state relationships that exist all over the world.

4.7 Religion vs Government
The relationship between religion and government differs from country to country as evidenced by the relationships mentioned previously. The relationship between government and religious groups is also a complex one that has shifted over time and in more recent times, religious groups exercise more political power on some issues than others Lefebure (2016) believes. Nieuwhuis (2012) acknowledges that the secularisation of the state and constitutional theory has resulted in constitutional discourse no longer having a religious basis. However, his argument is that despite this belief, it is not completely true because the phenomenon of secularisation has never been a global phenomenon. He withstands that the twentieth century may have seen the idea come into being that, as a result of modernisation and rationalisation, religion’s role would fade away or would, at least, be limited to the private sphere but this is only true in some countries, but not all.

4.7.1 Religion and government relationship in the United States of America
Similarities between religion and government relationship can be picked out from the model of the United States of America (US). Firstly, just as the Samoan national emblem refers to God, the US official national motto is ‘In God we Trust’. From first observation, this motto gives the impression that the US government must take into consideration religious beliefs and values when making decisions. However, as Davis states, the “Separation of church and state has become the customary way of describing the relationship between religion and state in the American system” (1996: 6). However, Davis (1996) argues that the separation between the two is only an ‘institutional separation’ that is important in order for the two institutions to achieve mutual independence and autonomy based on the belief that they will function best if
neither had authority over the other. Despite this separation of state and church, integration of religion and politics is still encouraged. Political processes still encourage the participation of religious voices from religious people, faith communities, and religious organisations (Beneke, 2006). Although the state and the church are separated, this right of churches and other religious bodies to engage in political advocacy and make political pronouncements has never been questioned and stands to be the present state of religion and church in America (Davis, 1996).

4.7.2 Theocracy in Afghanistan
Opposite to the example of the United States of America, Afghanistan presents a theocratic government in which political power lies almost exclusively in the hands of the religious leaders of the fundamentalist regime (Travis, 2005). Afghanistan’s history is one of great political and religious struggle as wars have broken out for centuries over government rule and religious freedom. Afghanistan is an Islamic republic where Islam is practiced by majority of its population (Travis, 2005). The religion of Islam has always been integrated into the political and educational system of the country. Afghanistan’s constitution is derived from Islamic Sharia laws, which has combined religious and secular systems. Under Islamic law, Afghanistan’s constitution renders other religions “free to exercise their faith and perform their religious rights within the limits of the provisions of the law” (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2011). However, the constitution also declares Islam is the official “religion of the state” that “no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam and the regime of the Islamic Republic cannot be amended” (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2011).

Afghanistan’s constitution is an example of a clear-cut theocracy that acknowledges one main religion that holds authority and through this one religion, all decisions are made and no provisions shall go against this. It sets Islam as both the religion and government of the people of Afghanistan but still allows for freedom of religion to be expressed for minority religions. However, through the history of Afghanistan, this freedom is not as widely accepted as the words state. Rather, people of minority religions continue to face issues of religious discrimination and profiling.

4.8 Conclusion
This chapter reviewed the relevant historical and academic literature on indigenous religion, religion, culture and government of Samoa. In doing so it contributes key understandings and formulates arguments for addressing and analysing the primary research data in Chapter 5.
Samoa has had a vast history that has shaped the way it functions in the present day. These histories were important to be reflected on in order to understand the current relationship between culture, religion and government. In addition, looking at government models of other countries is also useful drawing comparisons and contrasts to the government of Samoa.
Chapter 5  **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the results compiled from information derived from the document analysis as well as key informant interviews and critically examines and discusses the implications of these results. This chapter will commence by outlining the statutory frameworks which determine planning and decision-making processes in Samoa. It will clarify these processes and attempt to examine how religion and culture are currently integrated into these systems. The key documents include the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa 1962 as the supreme law of Samoa, and the Planning and Urban Management Act 2004 as the main planning legislation. It will then present the findings from key informant interviews which have been analysed and categorised into the 4 key questions that were established to help answer the overall aim of this study. These questions are:

1. What is the significance of religion in Samoan society?
2. Is there a relationship that exists between religion and the government of Samoa and what is the nature of this relationship?
3. What kind of influence does religion have on government planning and decision-making processes in Samoa?
4. Does culture have more of an influence than religion in government processes than religion?

5.1 **CONSTITUTION OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA 1962 (THE CONSTITUTION)**

The Constitution is the supreme law under which the Government of the Independent state of Samoa operates. It provides for parliamentary system of government and provides for the separation of powers in Parts 4, 5 and 6. Under the constitution, the Cabinet, comprising of the Prime Minister and other Ministers, is the central decision-making authority of the executive Government (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The 1960 Constitution, which formally came into force with independence from New Zealand in 1962, is based on the British pattern of parliamentary democracy, modified to take account of Samoan customs (Davidson, 1967). In July 1997, the constitution was amended to change the country's name from Western Samoa to Samoa, or formally the Independent State of Samoa (Davidson, 1967; So’o, 2008).
It is important to recognise the uniqueness of the Samoan government because of the fact that it did not just adopt a foreign system of governance, but instead took it, and modified it to fit a system of traditional governance that already existed within Samoa pre-colonisation. This shows the importance of culture for Samoan people as even under foreign rule, they were unwilling to part with their culture, traditions and customs and refused to accept a system of governance that did not include them. This sheds light on the role and importance of culture in the Samoan government.

5.2 PREAMBLE

The preamble of the Constitution states,

“In the Holy name of God, the Almighty, the ever loving whereas sovereignty over the Universe belongs to the Omnipresent God alone, and the authority to be exercised by the people of Samoa within the limits prescribed by His commandments is a sacred heritage. Whereas the Leaders of Samoa have declared Samoa should be an Independent State based on Christian principles and Samoan custom and tradition.”

It is clear from what is written in the preamble of the Constitution that the people of Samoa recognise God to be the ruler of all the universe whose “authority” is to be “exercised by the people of Samoa within the limits prescribed by His commandments”. This statement indicates the procedures of laws, legislations and decisions made by the government of Samoa are to be made within the “limits” set by “His commandments”. Although not explicitly mentioned, it is believed these commandments refer to those provided for in the Decalogue, also called the Ten Commandments, written in Exodus 20:1-17. Some of these commandments include, but are not limited to:

‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me (20:3) … Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord they God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vein” (20:7) … Remember the Sabbath day, to keep holy (20:8)”.

Furthermore, the Constitution continues to refer to Samoa as an independent state based on “Christian principles and Samoan custom and tradition”. This reiterates the importance of God’s role as ruler, teacher and all-round influencer on the way Samoa is, or should be governed. It goes beyond the use of commandments as the guiding values for which decisions
are based on to include Christian principles which includes any teachings of God presented in the Holy Bible. Samoan custom and tradition have been discussed in previous chapters and its significance is also highlighted in the preamble of the CISS. It is one of the two guiding principles that the people of Samoa live by and evidently, an aspect that the government should also be guided by. The question to be asked however, is whether the Samoan government does in fact follow this ‘authority’ and make decisions based on the Christian principles provided for in the preamble. Are decision-making processes being guided in the way that the preamble speaks of or are these just writings that acknowledge God’s presence, but do not bind the government to do as is being said?

Part II sections 11 and 12 of the Constitution talk about Freedom of religion and Rights concerning religious instruction. Clause 1 of section 11 states every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and can practice this freedom however they wish to practice it. This freedom however is limited in Clause 2 which states,

“nothing in clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law in so far as to that existing law or the law so made imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred under the provisions of that clause in the interests of national security or of public order, health or morals, or for protecting the rights and freedom of others, including their rights and freedom to observe and practice their religion without the unsolicited interference of members of other religions”.

Section 11 shows the government’s stance in relation to freedom of religion. Clause 1 highlights freedom of religion to be a right for everyone to practice in whatever way they wish however, Clause 2 disallows this freedom of religion from interfering with the laws of the government whether already existing or to be passed in the future.

Section 11 provides insight into the relationship between religion and government. While clause 1 provides for the freedom of religion for all citizens of Samoa, it does not stop government from intervening or prevent government from passing laws, bills or make decisions that may go against this religious freedom. It is clear through this that the government is in fact supreme and therefore places religion in a backseat position. Despite the preamble, government still has the final say.

Section 12 speaks about religion and educational institutions. Clause 1 highlights a person’s freedom from participating in the practices of a religion that is not their own. Clause 2 states
religious communities’ right to establish and maintain their own educational religion and Clause 3 states despite Clause 2, the state has the power to make laws that require the inspection of these educational institutions to make sure they are in keeping with the general educational level in Samoa.

Samoan customs and traditions are also incorporated in the constitution in several different sections. As stated in Part V, section 44, clause 1, subclause (a) one member (of the Legislative Assembly) shall be elected from villages or sub-villages. Under the section 5 of the Electoral Act 1963, these candidates must be holders of matai title. Part IX, sections 100-103 speak of matai titles in relation to land and titles. Section 100 relates to matai titles being held in accordance with Samoan custom; section 101 states all land in Samoa is customary land, freehold land or public land; section 102 provides for the prohibition of customary land to be alienated; and section 103 establishes a Land and Titles Court with jurisdiction in relation to matai titles and customary land. Lastly, section 111 of the constitution interprets “law” in a way that is “not excluded by any other law in force in Samoa, and any custom or usage which has acquired the force of law in Samoa or any part thereof under the provisions of any Act or under a judgement of a Court of competent jurisdiction”.

It is important to highlight how culture, customs and traditions are also incorporated into the Constitution. There are a number of provisions in the Constitution that cater for culture and this sheds light on the difference of its role in the government from religion. There is significantly more emphasis placed on culture than religion in the Constitution and this shows the hierarchy of importance between the two within the government. While the preamble places greater importance on God and Christian principles as the guiding values in which laws and decisions made, in reality, culture plays a greater role in doing this.

The CISS’s preamble talks about the basis of Samoan culture and governance being God, Christian principles, and Samoan customs and traditions. It places great significance on God having sovereignty and who’s authority is to be exercised by the people of Samoa. This implies that although power is given to the people of Samoa or the Samoan government, decisions made should be done within the will of God and his principles. However, this is not the reality. As mentioned before, sections 11 and 12 talk about freedom of religion and religions rights to open educational institutions. However, this does not stop government from passing any laws that go against both these freedoms. Sovereignty can then be said to be placed on government and not God in this sense.
Planning practice in Samoa follows the regulations and guidelines that are stated in the Planning and Urban Management Act 2004 (PUMA). PUMA is the Samoan version of New Zealand’s Resource Management Act 1991. Under this Act, developments are required to follow the regulations and guidelines provided in an appropriate manner. PUMA is important because it is the main planning document of Samoa. It is relevant to the study as it will show how religion is or is not integrated to the current planning processes of Samoa.

5.3 Planning and Urban Management Act 2004 (PUMA)

The Planning and Urban Management Act 2004 provides for the establishment of a Planning and Urban Management Agency. This agency works towards the implementation of a framework for planning the use, development, management and protection of land in Samoa in the present and long-term interests of all Samoans and for related purposes.

Part II of PUMA provides for the establishment of the Planning and Urban Management Agency, Planning and Urban Management Board and the appointment of officers and employees for the Agency. Section 5 Clause 2 states the Board to consist of:

(a) The Minister, as Chairperson;

(b) Then members, comprising 5 government and 5 community representatives, as determined by the Head of State, acting on the advice of the cabinet.

Part III provides the objectives, functions and powers of the agency. Part IV provides for the making of sustainable management plans. Section 12 states, “A national, regional, district, village or site-specific sustainable management plan may be made in accordance with this Part to achieve any of the objectives of this Act”. Section 17 provides for the notification of the intention to prepare a plan. Clause 1 states:

Where the Agency is directed to prepare a sustainable management plan, the Agency shall give public notice in accordance with the regulations stating:

(a) the Agency’s proposal to prepare the plan;

(b) the reasons for preparing the plan;

(c) the aim and objectives of the proposed plan;

(d) a description of the land to be affected by the proposed plan; and

(e) any other matters which the Agency considers relevant
Clause 2 states: Any owner, occupier and person with an interest in the land affected by the proposed plan whose name and address are readily ascertainable, shall also be notified under subsection (1). Section 18 supports consultation of all stakeholders where possible and shall provide them with all relevant information on the environment of the planning area so far as it relates to the aims and objectives of the proposed sustainable management plan.

The sections of the PUMA mentioned above are relevant as firstly, they show how planning works in Samoa and the processes which take place when a development is being introduced. Second and most importantly, it is during these specific steps in the process that the church, as a stakeholder or general members of the public is able to participate in the process. The notification and consultation parts of the process are not catered specifically for the church to have a say or be an influencer however, it is during this time that they can participate.

Looking at PUMA, it is clear that there are no specific provisions that allow for the particular input of religion during the time decisions are being made. An agency for planning and management is present under this act however, this agency does not have an explicit role for someone who voices the opinions from a religious vantage point. Although there are five seats for community representatives which may have someone who represents religion, the Head of State is not obliged to choose someone for this purpose. Again, this shows religion’s role in decision-making processes and that there is a lack of provision allowing for religion to influence planning systems and decisions being made.

PUMA being the main the planning document of Samoa is relevant for this study as it shows religion’s integration into planning systems. However, this analysis shows that religion does not have a specific role within planning systems of Samoa. When analysed against the primary data that was collected, there are quite differing realities in what people believe about the influence of religion, and what the legislation says. Majority of key stakeholders, particularly religious stakeholders, believe that the influence of religion on planning and decision-making is significant. Their responses imply that this influence is supported in some way by legislation however, after undertaking analysis, it quite the opposite. The preamble of the Constitution and Sections 11 and 12 are the only legislations that deal directly with religion however, this is still at the discretion of government. The key documents show that religion does not have a legal influence in the planning and decision-making processes of the Samoan government.
5.4 Primary Research Data

This section of the results chapter will present the findings from key informant interviews. The structure of this section will start with explaining the relevant responses from Religious Stakeholders and Government stakeholders organised by the questions asked in the interviews. To clarify this, Table 1 shows the abbreviations used within the findings and discussion section.

It was recognised in the methodology that the number of key informants interviewed as part of this research is relatively low, and as such the results presented should only be considered to represent a general or indicative level of opinion. However, the responses gained from the interviews were detailed and in depth and revealed very clearly the views and opinions of key informants around this topic. As mentioned earlier, this material provides a basis for discussion in the following chapter, where the key themes of this study are analysed.

Table 1: Descriptions of the stakeholder groups used to analyse the research findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Stakeholders</td>
<td>These stakeholders comprise religious experts whose theological training was undertaken in Samoa. All of these Ministers after receiving their theological training stayed on in Samoa to serve as Ministers. Some have now serving as Ministers in New Zealand and Australia.</td>
<td>RS1-RS6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Stakeholders</td>
<td>These stakeholders comprise of representatives of nationwide organisations in Samoa which have a role in planning or decision-making processes.</td>
<td>GS1-GS6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of the relationship between religion and culture, and the government of Samoa as well as the influence these two aspects have on planning and decision-making processes within the government will be undertaken. It will analyse first the opinions and information presented through interviews with religious stakeholders and then analyse opinions and information given by government stakeholders. The purpose of this is to gain knowledge on the two different perspectives on religion, culture and government and then through this, gain an understanding of where religion and culture influence government planning and decision-making processes.
5.5 **Religious Stakeholders versus Government Stakeholders**
The present research focuses on religion and as a result, it was only appropriate that people with a knowledge of religious practices in Samoa were sought to present their knowledge and experience on the topic. The religious stakeholders chosen for this study comprise religious experts whose theological training was undertaken in Samoa. These religious stakeholders have studied in Samoa and stayed in the country a few years to serve as minister. Some of them have now moved on to serve in different churches in New Zealand and Australia.

It was also important to contact people whose expertise were based around government systems and planning processes. This is why Government Stakeholders from different government organisations including the main planning organisation of Samoa were contacted. These government stakeholders were able to shed light on the processes in government departments that were relevant to my research. Their insights allowed for a broader understanding of the research and knowledge from a government perspective to be attained. They were asked questions around religion and its relationship to government and the data relating to this was collated and grouped according to the themes as revealed by the 4 following key research questions.

5.6 **Question 1: What are your thoughts on the significance of religion on Samoan society?**
This above question was asked as it was important to establish first the role of religion in the lives of Samoan people. The answers were collected from religious and government stakeholders and included the following responses.

5.6.1 **Identity**

“Since the inception of Christianity, a Samoan person cannot walk away from church. It is like you are born into a church. Samoa is a Christian nation. The role of church and its significance holds Samoan society together.” RS1

“Where ever a Samoan goes, they go and take the church or their religion with them. Even people who live outside of Samoa. It brings society together and holds them together in peace. So, there is a big role that church plays. It’s part of our life and system.” RS1

“100% of Samoans are religious with 98% Christians. Statistics show a totally influenced society in regards to their beliefs, so their mindset, and practices, their way of life. Anyone born in Samoa is provided with a physical and spiritual balanced upbringing. They have access to both cultural, traditional and spiritual lessons and practices that eventually enhanced a typical Samoan adulthood. Such adulthood at times of decision making is always culturally and biblically based.” RS5
“Discipline people to fear God, Samoan people are taught to follow ten commandments from the bible because it has an impact and those impacts are love, service and respect. Even our Tagavai (Emblem Samoa) states this. Faavae I le Atua Samoa or God is the foundation of Samoa. Religion is part of Samoan values and belief.” RS6

The above responses from religious stakeholders’ answers view identity as being based on the significance of religion on Samoan society. RS1 states that religion is in fact instilled in the life of a Samoan person from birth and as such, a Samoan person will always identify themselves as being a Christian or a religious person no matter where they find themselves. This religious identity is in fact shared by all Samoans and it acts as a glue that holds not only Samoan society within Samoa together, but also Samoan societies outside of Samoa. RS5 and RS6’s responses emphasise religion as the basis of Samoan culture and practices. Samoan people are brought up with biblical teachings and without such teachings, the life of a Samoa person would be imbalanced. These responses reflect the national emblem of Samoa as they show religion to be a foundational aspect of Samoan life and Samoan identity. Without it, Samoa would not be the Samoa that it is now.

Statistics show that there are non-religious people who live in Samoa however, this number is significantly low and as a result, it is difficult to come across them. In addition, it is frowned upon in Samoan society to be non-religious so people who are generally keep quiet about their beliefs. It is clear however, that Samoan society would not be the same if their ancestors chose to reject religion when it arrived. It is believed that if religion was rejected when it originally arrived, Samoan people may still have strong beliefs in their indigenous religion and the god Tagaloa. Samoan society and culture may not have changed so dramatically as a result of the acceptance of religion and with not have such a strong identity in this religion.

Some Government stakeholders also had similar sentiments with the following responses.

“From birth I have been brought up with the church. We as Samoan kids are taught God is our creator and Jesus is our Saviour. I was born and grew in Samoa and this is the same for all other people I have grown up with. So yeah, it is very significant. It is part of who we are”. GS4

“Majority of Samoans believe in God and Christianity is almost encrypted in us since its arrival to Samoa back in the day. Its part of the Samoan way of life”. GS5

“Christianity is really significant in Samoa. You can see that when you drive through different villages because the biggest buildings you see are always the churches and you can guarantee that almost everyone in those villages will be at church on a Sunday. Its normal practice in Samoa”. GS6

The above responses by government stakeholders further emphasise the importance of religion on Samoan society. There is major recognition of the significance of religion in the
identity of a Samoan person. No matter what they grow up to be, a Samoan person is raised with religious beliefs and these beliefs mould their identities as Samoan people.

5.6.2 PEACE
Another major theme that was identified from asking this question was the significance of religion in bringing peace among the people of Samoa.

“Looking from a minister’s perspective, there is a really big influence of religion in the life of Samoa. For example, Samoa before Christianity came, there were a lot of conflict and war within Samoan families. Christianity came, there were still conflicts but then it started to fade away because of Christian teachings.” RS3

“Rivalries happened between main families, but as religion slowly grew, those rivalries started to fade away. Why? The teachings of the church prohibit this behaviour. Like conflict and murder.” RS4

These responses view religion to be significant as it brought about peace within Samoan society. RS3 and RS4 hinted to a Samoan society before Christianity as people being in conflict and at war with one another. These conflicts and wars stopped over time as religious teachings began to take over and preach bible teachings such as peace and as RS1 quoted, “That is also why Samoa is a peaceful nation”. Some government stakeholders also brought up peace as being a result of religion being present in Samoan society. GS2 stated, “Samoa is peaceful because of what the bible teaches”. GS6 further supports with the response, “Samoa is peaceful. Even though our economy is not that great, it is peaceful because we are taught this in church.”

5.6.3 LOVE
The final theme that was brought out from this question was love. Stakeholders articulated that religion is significant because it teaches people of Samoa to “live by the rule love thy neighbour” RS4. RS1 also stated “It [religion] encourages people to love one another”. Religion in Samoan society is significant because it teaches people about love for oneself and most importantly, love for one another.

“Samoa is used to looking after one another, families. If something happens to this person, the whole family will gather in support. Faaulufalega, oki, saofai. Times like that you will bring all of Samoa together, especially those related to the people. The bible teaches this. In everyday life in Samoan society, we live by the rule love thy neighbour. No matter who our neighbour is, we share. Religion affects the lives of Samoans very strongly and we are proud of this. Outsiders view Samoa as unique.” RS4
“And that’s what Samoa was taught when Christianity came. Even up to now, that is what ministers teach. Love. Love that was shown by God through his son. Love that can unify different people and that allows forgiveness.” RS5

“There is also a significance as churches create schools that help out the government. This should be the role of the government, but the church has helped them out.” RS1

RS4 uses the example of family to portray this idea of love. In times of need, no matter the occasion, Samoan people will always show love and support for their families and community members and this is because of religion and its teachings. RS5 emphasises love as the being what ministers teach in their churches and parishes. According to RS5 the teachings of love and religion are “the biggest influence that church has had on Samoan culture.”

“It also teaches love. No matter what we do and who we encounter, we are taught in church to give a helping hand because we never know when we will also need help” GS6

When combining both religious and government stakeholders’ responses, it is clear that religion plays a significant role in the day to day lives of Samoan people. Ever since its arrival in Samoa, religion has made a home for itself within the core beliefs and values of Samoan people and many of the responses above vouch for this. As mentioned frequently, it teaches important values such as love, peace, community unification, forgiveness and more. Not only this, but it is something that the people will always take with them whether they are residing within Samoa itself, or outside of Samoa. It is an identifier and a way of life for people of Samoa.

These responses show that peace is a primary message that has been taught through religion and has had a positive outcome on Samoan society. However, it must be acknowledged that Samoa still has many issues with crime and violence. This is evident in the Samoan State of Human Rights Report 2015 which highlights the high levels of violence against women that occurs throughout Samoa. In light of the responses presented by key stakeholders, Samoa, just like any other country, still has noteworthy issues around violence, in particular, violence against women that need to be addressed.

5.7 Question 2: Is there a relationship that exists between religion and government and what is the nature of this relationship?

Question 2 was asked to identify whether or not a relationship already exists between religion and the government. This relationship is important to understand as it establishes the
boundaries that already exists between religion and the government and how they work. There were different answers that were provided by religious and government stakeholders but there were also a few main themes that arose. Some believed there was a strong relationship, others gave examples of how this relationship manifested and one stakeholder believed that the relationship was becoming one sided with government trying to pull away from religion.

5.7.1 YES, THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP!
The majority of the stakeholders that were interviewed strongly believed that there is a relationship that exists between religion and the government. RS1 stated, “there is a big relationship between government and church, they are like a partnership in a lot of things”. RS4 shared the same sympathies when stating “I believe there is a close relationship between government and church. Without that relationship, neither church nor government will survive.”

RS5 spoke about the origin of the relationship between the church and government in the response below.

“I think the relationship was originally introduced by the Nafanua and Malietoa incidence. Nafanua was the ancient Samoan female god warrior. When Malietoa asked her for a head for his government. She said all the heads she had were taken but wait for the one coming from heaven. Later on, it came to him in the form of missionaries that brought religion where God is the head and later on, these missionaries brought what we now call government.”

This particular quote implies that the arrival of religion to Samoa was also the arrival of government although the two were not established at the same time however, the people who brought religion, also brought government. If it was missionaries that went on to form the government, then the input of religion in decision-making processes should be significant.

Some government stakeholders also agreed that there is a relationship between the church and government. “Well I believe there is. The church and government have always worked together I think and this is seen through different celebrations we have.” GS4

“I think the church and government help each other in different ways so yeah I believe there is a relationship that exists there. I don’t think there is one in writing, but we see that they help each other in different ways” GS6

The responses above by religious and government stakeholders show that there is in fact a relationship that exists between religion and the government in Samoa. Religious stakeholders particularly believe there is a strong relationship that exists between the church and the government. RS5’s recount of the history of this relationship describes it to have existed before
government is what it is now. Government stakeholders also believe this. GS6 particularly touched on the fact that although it is not written on paper, this relationship is still there. This particular response shows the reality of the relationship between religion and government. Religion is highly important in Samoan society and through the CISS, we see that preamble states religion, namely Christianity, should be where decisions-making processes should take guidance from however, other government documents do not follow this. PUMA in particular has no provisions that relate directly to religion as a decision-making power however, it is clear that there is still and underlying sense of direction that religion does provide.

5.7.2 THE CONSTITUTION AND THE NATIONAL SAMOAN EMBLEM

Many of the stakeholders referred to the preamble of the Samoan constitution as well as the Samoan emblem as a sign of the relationship that exists between the government and religion in Samoa and the following responses by RS1 and RS3 show this.

“The Preamble of the constitution refers to Samoa being led by God. Even government boards, they use ministers as board members, so they act as spiritual advisors. Even members of parliament like the prime minister are church people. The relationship is there and is warm” RS1

“When decisions were being made, you can tell that they were made on biblical teachings and that was reflected on what they did. Especially with their motto Samoa is founded on God” RS3

“There should be [a relationship]. In order for them to get along, there should. The constitution of EFKS, there is a clause that states the congregation will support the government for the greatness of the wider country. For EFKS itself, there has always been a relationship between them and government. Majority of Samoans are EFKS” RS4

The preamble of the Samoan constitution was talked about in the previous section of this chapter. It does state that Samoa and its laws should be guided and governed by God and Christian principles and the previous responses by religious stakeholders recognise this. They recognise that the founding document and national emblem are of importance and they make reference to God and his role within Samoa as a country and this is where the relationship between church and government starts. However, what is written in the Constitution and the reality of what happens, and this relationship, is not the same and this has been discussed in the previous section. The fact that these religious stakeholders still hold the Constitution to what it says shows the need for government to either uphold what is written, or for the Constitution to be altered to reflect the reality of what is happening.
Government stakeholders also referred to the constitution and the national Samoan emblem as representation of the relationship between church and government.

“Our emblem as well as the constitution makes reference to God and those are official government documents so yes, that’s the first place you see the relationship between church and the government” GS5

“Go back to the constitution and you will see. The constitution talks about religion and how the government deals with it and its rights as well as the people’s right and freedoms. That relationship is seen there” GS3

“The history of Samoa will tell you there has always been a relationship between those in charge, now the government, and religion or the church. Just looking at that emblem you know that our government does represent God in a way” GS4

Government stakeholders like the religious stakeholders also view the Samoan constitution and national emblem as an indicator of the relationship that exists between religion and the government. GS4, GS3 and GS5 emphasise the relationship is there and is evident because of what is written in the constitution and the national emblem.

5.7.3 GOD BEFORE AND AFTER

Religious and government stakeholders also spoke of the different ways the relationship between religion and the government are demonstrated. While the first signs of this relationship are seen through the constitution as well as the national emblem mentioned previously, this relationship is also demonstrated in different ways as the following responses by religious stakeholders prove.

“Our of this relationship comes the idea of worshipping God before and after almost all Governmental sessions, in schools, work places, in parliamentary gatherings as well as in national celebrations.” RS5

“For Samoa itself, anything that is held, any event or occasion, it starts with a prayer and ends with a prayer. No matter what. Even the independence. Why? Because of the relationship that government and church have. It’s like the government uphold the church and vice versa so they should go together.” RS4

“For example, government uses the church for their devotion and prayers. No matter what the event or occasion is. Government has created the faletatalo (prayer house) for the church.” RS1

The relationship between church and religion can be seen through practices and protocols as the above responses prove. Before any major celebration in the country, “a prayer of thanks is given to God and to ask for guidance so that the event or occasion goes well. The same is done in our daily lives. Wake up pray, before going to sleep, we pray” RS6. The same is done when
the event comes to a close. Government stakeholders also stated this relationship to be the case in Samoa.

“Samoan Independence for example starts off with thanks being given to the man above. It’s the church that help government with this. Its little things like this that show the relationship between church and government” GS4

Both religious and government stakeholders talked about the relationship between religion and government being shown through the practice of prayer before and after major parliamentary occasions and events. They all agree in the previous responses that this is one way of recognising this relationship and knowing that it exists to this day.

5.7.4 DEMONSTRATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Furthermore, religious and government stakeholders talked about the many other ways that the relationship between religion and government in Samoa is exemplified. The relationship between the two manifests itself through various forms of activities in which both religion and government take responsibility for and help each other with. It has been mentioned in previous responses that religion and government help each other out and the following responses talk about the different ways this is done. Religion supports the government by implementing schools and institutions that assist government,

“there is also a significance as churches create schools that help out the government. This should be the role of the government, but the church has helped them out” RS1

“In Samoa, there are educational institutes schools, aoga amata (pre-school), primary schools, secondary schools and even tertiary schools built by churches or religions to educate all children of Samoa. These schools are financed and made functional by churches to help the government with children’s future.” RS6

“The churches run about 20 school institutes from junior to senior levels which are well adopted by the government and at times the government distribute some of its fund to help facilitate those Church schools financially” RS5

Donations of money is also another way that religion and government help each other.

“The EFKS in particular donates tens of thousands of dollars to the Health Department yearly through its committee called Women Fellowship.” RS5

“EFKS or Congregational Christian Church of Samoa offers financial help when we have yearly conference at May to Health department to assist with patient’s treatments. This is for all Samoan people, never for Congregational Christian Church of Samoa people only” RS6

The above responses show another way in which the relationship between religion and church exists. These responses religious stakeholders show that in fact, the relationship does exist at more than just a spiritual level. The relationship between religion and government also exists
at a formal and somewhat statutory level. Religion and government assist each other in maintaining schools for children of all ages, as well as through financial assistance that goes both ways. While a few religious stakeholders brought this to light, only one government stakeholder talked about this particular kind of help.

“I think we also see this [relationship] through many schools that different churches have implemented to assist the government with the young people. Faatuatua College is run by the EFKS, Pesega is by the Mormon church and schools like St Mary’s and Marist are run by the Catholic church.” GS6

Like the religious stakeholders, GS6 also believed the relationship between religion and government has a more formal representation through these sorts of mutual assistance.

5.7.5 A DIMINISHING RELATIONSHIP

While majority of stakeholders did agree that a relationship exists, some believed this relationship was no longer what it used to be. RS3 in particular believed,

“today I think that relationship is slowly diminishing. Even before independence, there was an idea that church and state were exactly the same. Prime minister was a deacon of the church, Head of State was also a EFKS member and even Tupua Tamasese was Methodist. Sometimes you wonder if right now, that relationship is gone. It has disappeared. Why do I say that? 1, if you look at the constitution and the way the government has been trying to alter it especially regarding head of state, it can now be anyone, not a tama o aiga. 2nd, taxing of faifeaus [Congregational Christian Church of Samoa]. Government is trying to separate themselves of the church. Use to have church state governance but not anymore.”

A similar belief was shared by RS5 when they stated the following response,

“What usually tie the two [religions and government] is slowly being lost. The Government is highly materialistic that it now ignores most of the spiritual teachings the church is talking about. The founding emblem ‘Faave I le Atua Samoa’ is a mere writing. High population growth, financial difficulties, climatic changes, political corruptions and power are inevitable factors that I believe will generally forecast a total breakdown in the government-church relationship in the future.”

RS3 and RS5 strongly feel that the relationship between religion and government is slowly fading. RS3 talks about how this is being demonstrated through changes in the constitution that hinders the inclusion of religion within government. He also talks about the government placing tax on Congregational Christian Church of Samoa ministers which has never before been done. RS5 also felt that the relationship that once was, is slowly being lost because of the government turning away from religious teachings. Although it was only two out of 12 stakeholders who shared this opinion, it is important to highlight as it shows an opinion that is contrasting to others.
The above responses agree that there is a relationship that exists between religion and the Samoan government. Majority of the religious and government stakeholders believe there is a relationship and have provided various ways this relationship exists. Firstly, through the words of the constitution and the national emblem. Secondly, through the different ways religion and government help each with schooling and finances. Other stakeholders believe that there always should be a relationship between the two because without their cohesion, Samoa as a society will find it difficult to function the way it should. Lastly, a contrasting opinion about the relationship was brought to light. While majority of the stakeholders talked about an existing relationship, the last two responses talked about a failing relationship between religion and the government. This particular opinion questions government in its responsibilities to uphold what is written in the Constitution and the emblem of the Samoa.

5.8 QUESTION 3: WHAT KIND OF INFLUENCE DOES RELIGION HAVE ON GOVERNMENT PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES?

Question 3 asked directly about the influence that religion has on planning and decision-making processes and there were various ways that religious and government stakeholders believed this influence occurred.

5.8.1 CONSULTATION

The most talked about influence that religious and government stakeholders spoke about was the legislative process of consultation. When asked about whether they believed religious institutes had any influence RS4 answered, “not directly from the congregation but through public consultation”.

“I am also aware that during the passing of bills and things like that, there is a period when the public is made aware of the bill being passed and are asked for submissions. Although it is not a process targeted specifically to churches, but I know that this is another way that they can voice their opinions about the particular bill.” RS5

RS4 and RS5 referred to consultation as the time in which churches can influence the decisions of the government although RS5 is aware that this particular process is not designed for religion to hear only their opinions. Government stakeholders also brought up this legislative process when asked about the influence of religion on planning and decision-making processes.

“We advertise in the newspaper and on tv when there is an opportunity for submissions to be given regarding a legislation. So, through this process, is how we receive the public’s opinion on legislations and bills that are being passed. this particular process also includes churches” GS2
"If you read the constitution it states consultation as being a must and all relevant stakeholders must be consulted. This includes churches if the project at hand involves them as stakeholders” GS3

"Yes, when people go out to do consultation, we can use them to steer that. Because it is important to get feed-back from the community specifically on larger scale projects so we can go through the fiafeau. They are a stakeholder so they are involved but I know they hesitate a lot of the time because they think it takes too much time and it’s too much of a hassle” GS1

"I know we have consultation periods during decision making processes. This is open to the public including religious institutions. I think this is where they influence these decisions by using this time to voice their opinions” GS6

Religious and government stakeholders refer to consultation as a way that the church uses or can use to influence decisions that are made in government. Although this is a legitimate way, it was also recognised that this particular legislative process is not aimed directly at the church itself.

5.8.2 CHANGES TO LAW INFLUENCED BY RELIGION

Although there was no direct way of influence that was brought up, there were examples provided by stakeholders, namely religious stakeholders on when religious influence was made and upheld by government. Congregational Christian Church of Samoa since its establishment by London Missionary Society has paid their Ministers through donations made by church people. Since its establishment, these donations have gone untaxed however, in the last year, the government passed a bill that required Congregational Christian Church of Samoa Ministers by law, to start paying tax for these donations. This has caused much controversy amongst Samoan people as some believe that this is not right while others believed it must be done. Religious stakeholders hinted to this issue in their responses as stated the following,

“For example, looking at the tax. Government is making the law, which is the law of the land that everyone should abide by. But the church has stood its ground which all us ministers have to follow but bear in mind we are going against the law. But that proves the point that church and religion should have a close relationship” RS4

“2017 & 2018 Congregational Christian Church of Samoa Annual meeting in May a decision from the Samoan government to pay EFKS church ministers’ taxes which I believe that is not right. I understand that there are still writings between the general secretary of the church and the government about this issue...there are a few rules and laws that the church has had a say in and these include no jobs and work on Sundays, casino not happen in Samoa, clubs and beer and liquor store should close at 12.00am on Sundays or 12.00pm on Saturdays” RS6

“It is obvious the government is leading this relationship but its consideration of the church opinions on certain issues is acceptable. For example, introducing the Casino was challenged by the Church and although it’s still going on, it has regulations and
protocols that keeps the Samoans living in Samoa away from it so now, only those who hold foreign passports can play. The death penalty had long been denied in honor of the spiritual teachings and beliefs. Same sex marriages not legalized in Samoa as it is prohibited in the bible... The church also argued religious toleration to be limited to Christianity however, the government denied the bill and Freedom of Religion policy was uphold” RS5

The previous responses show examples of the kind of influence that religion has on decision-making processes and place religion in a position of no more than a stakeholder in the process. Other stakeholders share the sentiment that while the influence of religion is not direct, if the government introduced a law or policy that does not align with Christian values, then religion will interfere. RS5 in particular provides clear examples of this. These responses show that there is a form of influence that religion has over government policies and decision-making however, it is not through a recognised government process. Rather, it is through a case by case basis where the church will voice their opinion if the government is passing a bill or legislation that they strongly oppose due to it going against the bible and Christian principles. Government stakeholders did not share sentiments similar to these and this might be telling of their positions as government workers. Another way that was mentioned multiple times again by religious stakeholders as a way of influence was through members of government also being members of the church

5.8.3 GOVERNMENT MEMBERS ARE ALSO CHURCH MEMBERS
RS5, RS3 and RS1 believe there is an influence that is made through members of the parliament themselves as they are also members of religion, “In regards to the influence extent, I believe it’s highly effective due to the fact that all parliament members are God fearers” RS5. RS3 believed, “the church can only influence bills in parliament through members who are already in parliament.” RS1 also believed this as he stated, “even government boards, they use ministers as board members, so they act as spiritual advisors. Even members of parliament like prime minister are church people”.

Although RS3 stated the above response, he also believed that, “our [church] members who are also parliament members now go in there [to work] and don’t take their church [beliefs] with them anymore. They get isolated otherwise”.

These religious stakeholders’ responses show that there is faith being placed in government members to use their spiritual teachings to influence decisions being made. However, as RS3 stated, it seems these government members have separated their spiritual teachings when going into work as professionals so this influence is questionable.
Arguments were also made by religious stakeholders stating that in fact, the government have decided to try and separate religion from government.

“Influence of church is no longer there. You would think Methodist and EFKS being 50% of population would be big enough to influence. But they no longer influence those decision-making processes... Keeping the two separate helps the government. They keep the church there, but they don’t want the influence.” RS3

“Even now when the church is invited to say a prayer for government things. Back in the old days they use to be given about 30 mins to sing a hymn, give a sermon and say a prayer. But now, they’re only giving them 5mins. These are things that they are doing to lessen the influence of the church. It is tokenism.” RS6

“They [the government] said they held public consultation where everyone went against it [taxing bill], but they still went ahead and passed it saying that everyone has agreed. So, the integrity of the government is being lost.” RS4

These particular religious stakeholders strongly believed that the government is actively seeking to limit any existing influence that religion has on planning and decision-making processes in the government. These religious stakeholders feel that the government is now working in their own interest and in order to do this successfully, they must separate religion from government and stop its influence in order to make decisions freely without spiritual and moral opposition.

5.8.4 RELIGION SHOULD INFLUENCE PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN GOVERNMENT

Despite these opinions, it is clear that religious stakeholders believe religion should, without a doubt, have an influence on government planning and decision-making processes. They have spoken about the importance of religion on the lives of Samoan society and the need for this influence in order for government to maintain a peaceful and successfully run Samoa.

“I believe there should be a say by church to advise them when making policies. When the two go well together, it makes it easy for Samoa to be run smoothly because these two things go hand in hand. This is why the people of the government are church people. There should be a referendum for feedback by church people so Samoa can have policies that align with the constitution of Samoa. The Gospel should inform decision-making like it did in the old days.” RS1

“Since we have become independent we have been able to survive despite not having a great economy, we hold our own because of our belief system. We all know who we believe in and that is why we are always successful. Even when we leave Samoa, we take our beliefs and identity with us which is why we find it easy to get along with other Samoans outside of Samoa.” RS1

“We don’t override politics. We always have respect for government and its law making but we never allow the law to override what the church also has in place” RS2
“If they take it [religion] away, it is no longer Samoan society. So, they keep it controlled in a way that works in their [government] favour.” RS3

Interestingly, it has only been religious stakeholders that have given such responses. The majority of government stakeholders have only responded to this question through highlighting consultation as the legislative process in which the church can use to influence these decisions. Again, it is telling of their positions as professionals. It can be assumed that they do not wish to mix their professional positions with their personal beliefs. This then questions the idea of government people influencing decisions being made as they too are church goers. How can this be done if they choose to separate their religious beliefs from their professional lives?

5.8.5 SAMAON COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Lastly, two religious stakeholders spoke about the Samoan Council of Churches (SCC) that exists who are meant to be the voice of the church in government matters.

“The Church have no influence in the decision-making process however, its decisions that contradict or may threatened the people religious beliefs are intervened by the church through the SCC. SCC voices the churches arguments objections, provide spiritual advices to ensure the balance lifestyle of its citizens” RS5

“Government should recognise the church and vice versa. Policy making is the Government’s job. But there is a clause that says the congregation should help government. This shows there is a relationship and the church have a stance. As far as decision making is concerned, the government should recognise the church through the SCC as they are a recognised body by the government” RS4

“Like the taxing bill. There is an influence through the NCC. It like religious advice through National Council of Churches to the government. There is an influence through this” RS6

It is important to bring light to the SCC as it has been mentioned by these religious stakeholders. As mentioned by stakeholders, the SCC acts as the body in which the voice of religion as a collective can be heard by government. However, because of the lack of legislative inclusion, this council has no legal grounds in the planning and decision-making processes of the Samoan government.

Religion’s influence on planning and decision-making processes in Samoa is viewed differently by the different stakeholders that were interviewed. Religious stakeholders in particular had a lot more to say about this than government stakeholders. Government stakeholders seemed to touch specifically on the consultation process as the way in which religion can influence planning and decision-making processes. Religious stakeholders however, expanded more on this and stated the different ways that influence already occurs. Through interference if need be during the passing of a bill or policy, and through government
members themselves as they are church members too. Lastly, the SCC was also spoken about although the legitimacy of this council is questionable due to the lack of information about it.

5.9 Question 4: Does Culture have More of an Influence than Religion in Government Planning and Decision-Making Processes?

5.9.1 Yes, Culture Does Have More of an Influence

Question 4 touches on the culture aspect of this research. Religious and government stakeholders were asked if culture played a similar role in influencing government planning and decision-making processes as religion. The prominent answer that was provided was that culture in fact, played a bigger role in government planning and decision-making processes than religion as RS3 stated, “culture is the other major influence of government. I believe culture is a lot more influential in parliament and politics than the church”. RS5 shared a similar opinion when they said, “religion and culture are two different entities that are exercised in two different manners I believe culture and tradition sometimes are enforced whereas religious teachings is optional and by freewill”.

“I think yeah, culture does have more of an influence because it is culture. You know. Religion and government are foreign concepts that were introduced but Samoan culture has always been. Our government in considered unique because it also includes Samoan culture and traditions too it is not just western style” RS6

Government stakeholders shared similar opinions, “culture does have more of an influence and this can be seen through the incorporation of culture within the western system of democracy that our government has today” GS5

“Yes, we go through cultural processes when talking to villages and so on about a project or development. There are cultural protocols we must adhere to when undertaking certain processes and so it is important to go through with them. In terms of influence, I think it is more so than religion because we usually have to do them as part of our job”. GS1

These responses by religious and government stakeholders show that the influence on planning and decision-making processes from culture is more prominent than that of religion. Both religious and government stakeholders recognise that the uniqueness of the government of Samoa stems from the amalgamation of Samoan culture within the Western democratic system that was introduced into Samoa. It is therefore clear that culture does in fact, play more of an influential role than religion in government processes.
5.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the relationship or links between religion, culture and the Samoan government. It has done so by first analysing the Constitution and PUMA and examining how religion and culture are provided for in these documents. It then went on to present the primary data that was collected through asking the four questions previously mentioned.

After analysing the CISS, it was clear that religion is highly regarded in its preamble however, the application of this in real life is not so easy and has not been done accordingly. Also, when looking at sections 11 and 12 which dealt directly with religion, it showed that despite what is written in the preamble, government still have supremacy to pass bills that might go against religious beliefs. This gives us the first look into the relationship between religion and government and even the influence that religion has. The hierarchy between the two clearly places government before religion and as a result, the power or authority religion holds is limited by that of the government. Therefore, its influence sees the same fate. Despite the authority being given to God in the preamble, the reality places government in God’s position and therefore, the influence of religion in planning and decision-making is limited to government’s guidelines.

An analysis of the PUMA supports this argument. PUMA is the primary legislative document that planning in Samoa follows however, nothing in the provisions of PUMA provides for the direct input of religion when plans and decisions for projects and developments are made. A planning agency is established under PUMA with seats for 5 community members however, these chairs are open for all and not provided specifically for someone who will voice the opinions of religion. This further shows that religion does not in fact, hold a legal position in the areas of government that enable them to be part of decision-making processes and as a result, the influence of religion is not as prominent as one might think.

Primary data collected continues to provide information about this relationship and Question 1 allowed for the context of religion and its importance to Samoan society to be known. All religious and government stakeholders believed that religion is highly significant in Samoa’s society and has been since its arrival to the island. It was highlighted that without religion, Samoa would not be way it is now and a Samoan person would have the identity that they hold. In addition to this, with the arrival of religion came the arrival of love and peace as the bible taught. The time before religion arrived to Samoa is now known to Samoan as ‘aso o le pogiSā’ or the dark days. This is because these were days when war, conflict and even cannibalism
were prevalent. However, as stakeholders stated, all of this was taken away when religion arrived to the shores of Samoa.

Question 2 attempted to uncover if there is a relationship between religion and the Samoan government and what the nature of this relationship was. Unsurprisingly, the majority of stakeholders agreed strongly that yes, there is a present relationship between religion and government. Reference to the Constitution and the national emblem was made more than once as representations of this relationship. The nature of the relationship was revealed by stakeholders through highlighting the importance of prayer before and after any major government or public events held in Samoa. Furthermore, stakeholders alluded to the nature of this relationship through the mutual work undertaken between religion and government seen through the establishment of religion schools and financial aid that goes to and from the two institutions. Religion and government assist each other in these ways which help not only each other, but the wider society of Samoa.

The relationship between the two institutions clearly exists and is proven through the stakeholder’s responses. However, particular religious stakeholders brought to light the growing separation of the two and predict this relationship as coming to an end. These stakeholders acknowledged that while the relationship today is there, the future will see it diminishing due to the government wanting to become more independent from religion. This then places the future of this relationship under question as whether this will happen or not, and if it does, what then are the implications will this have on Samoa?

Question 3 looked specifically at the influence of religion on planning and decision-making processes. Government stakeholders in particular heavily referenced consultation periods during the passing of plans and bills as the time when religion can have it say and influence these decisions. However, as previously discussed, consultation is not a process for religion only. Religious stakeholders highlighted the different ways that religion’s influence occurs. Firstly, through religion’s interference if a plan or law is passed that goes against religious beliefs and if they believe this plan will bring not only spiritual harm, but also environmental, physical and social harm to people. Examples of this being done are mentioned in responses presented in the previous section. It is evident through these examples that there is some form of influence that religion has on plans and decisions that are made in government. Although there are no written provisions or statutory legislations that provide for this influence formally,
it still exists. It seems to be more of a private and case by case basis but it still must be recognised that it is there.

In addition, religious stakeholders alluded to the fact that government members are also church members and can use their religious beliefs to influence decisions made in government. However, as RS3 mentioned, government members today prefer to separate their religious beliefs from their professional lives. Although from the vantage point of religion this is not ideal, in professional settings today, it is a must to separate the professional from the personal and this is what is being done. Therefore, there cannot be a reliance from religion on this as a way of influencing decisions being made as it relies too heavily on the individual who will choose to do their job without the interference of their religious beliefs.

The SCC was an interesting council body to hear about. Two religious stakeholders indicated this body as the mouth piece of religion to voice any opinions and concerns of religion to government. However, because of the lack of legislative inclusion, this council has no legal grounds in the planning and decision-making processes of the Samoan government. This however, is an interesting body to look further into for future research but for the present research, it indicates that the relationship and influence of religion on planning and decision-making processes is only a discretionary one. While they can and do influence decisions made sometimes, it is only at the discretion of the government.

Despite all this, it is clear that religious stakeholders believe there definitely should be an influence by religion on plans and decision-making processes in the government. There is a common agreement on the need for spiritual and moral advocacy in the government to assist and influence decisions that being made as they affect Samoan people. Religious stakeholders feel that without this spiritual guidance, the cohesion of religion and government will be lost and as a result, the running of Samoa as a country will become difficult.

The last question that was presented asked whether culture had more of an influence than religion in government and it was clear through responses that yes, it did. This was unsurprising as Samoa’s current government took a foreign concept of democracy and incorporated Samoan culture, customs and traditions into it.
Chapter 6  CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to find out the extent to which religion and culture influence decision-making processes in the government of Samoa. This study has been guided by an investigation of religion and culture and how these two notions impact Samoan society. Indigenous religion was also examined to allow for a context of culture to be discovered and also a look at how religion that was introduced came to be accepted. Samoan culture was also closely analysed. Research was also undertaken around the relationship of religion and government at an international level and how this can be applied to the context of Samoa. These components of the research have been addressed throughout the chapters of this thesis. Chapter 3 provides the context for which the study took place and the background to allow for better understanding how religion and culture came to be in Samoa and why these two aspects of Samoan life are important. Chapter 4 situates the present study within academic literature and allowed for greater comprehension through analysis of work that has already been done around this topic. Chapter 5 then presents the results that were collected through document analysis and primary data collection. This final chapter will provide a conclusion and draw together the results in order to provide an answer for the research aim and highlight areas for further research.

6.1  YES, THERE IS INFLUENCE

This study has found that the influence of religion and culture on decision-making processes in the Samoan government takes form at different levels and do not occur to the same extent. It is evident from the results that culture plays a more prominent role in the government and as a result, the extent of its influence on decision-making processes is much greater than that of religion. When we refer back to literature, this finding is not unexpected. Throughout the history of Samoa, fa‘asamoa culture has remained consistent in its role and influence on Samoan life. While indigenous religion and the idea of Tagaloa being the supreme god was easily replaced by Christian religion and the idea of God being the ultimate creator, the people of Samoa never had intentions of replacing their fa‘asamoa system and culture. Fa‘asamoa has literally been the way of life for Samoan people since the beginning and despite the many changes that occurred in Samoa throughout history, fa‘asamoa has remained their way of life.

It is clear then why Samoan culture plays such a prominent role in both Samoan society and the Samoan government. Before the arrival of the democratic government that exists now, the
*fa’asamoa* matai system was the Samoan people’s government body who performed decision-making responsibilities. At the village today, this system is still in place in the form of the *fono o le nu’u*. At the village level, the *fono* come together to discuss issues that might need to be raised with government or issues that government wish to be made away to villages. This *fono* and its functions are also provided for in the CISS. We can see through this that the extent of fa’asamoa or Samoan culture’s influence on decision-making processes in government is significant. At the village level where the *fono* exists and at the national level, members of parliament are matai who continue to make decisions through this fa’asamoa system. There is no questioning how great this influence is.

### 6.2 Extent of Religious Influence on Planning and Decision-Making Processes

The extent of religion’s influence on decision-making processes is not so clear-cut and easy to understand. The results of this study conclude that religion does have an influence on decision-making processes of the Samoan government however, the extent of this influence is controlled by government. The preamble of the Constitution has been discussed thoroughly in the results and although it states God and his teachings to be the leader and guiding principles authorised by the people, this is not reflected in practice. Rather, it is evident that the central government of Samoa legally works independently in undergoing decision-making functions and processes at the national level. Despite this, religion is still situated in an informal position where they can influence decision-making processes when they believe it to be necessary. The results of this study show this in multiple ways.

The most obvious way of informal influence from religions are seen through the changes that have been made to laws that religion believes to be negative or harmful to Samoan society. Laws around liquors and clubs having compulsory closing times of 12am Sunday morning to recognise God’s Sabbath; the casino only being accessible by people who own foreign passports and no jobs to operate on Sunday. These laws, as well as others, were changed to accommodate for the requests of religion.

This kind of religion and government relationship in Samoa reflects the government situation of the US. The US religion and government relationship is recognised as being a separate one. In the US, religion and government work as separate and independent institutes in order to achieve mutual independence and autonomy. However, despite this separation of state and church, integration of religion and politics is still encouraged. Political processes still
encourage the participation of religious voices from religious people, faith communities, and religious organisations. The same can be said about the relationship between religion and government in Samoa. Legally, the government works independently to make decisions for the country at the national level however, the participation of religion is still encouraged. In Samoa’s case, this participation is encouraged through contributions during consultation periods. While this process is not just for religion’s participation, there is still encouragement from government for them to use this period have their say.

Legislation wise, apart from the preamble of the Constitution, religions not recognised as being part of a government body that can legally intercede and influence planning and decision-making at the national level. Despite the significance of religion in guiding the people of Samoa in decision-making in their everyday lives, the reality is, this is limited to the people and does not extend out to government. As previously mentioned, religion still has an informal influence on government decision making however, this influence is still controlled by government. This is seen through government’s implementation and passing of the bill to tax Congregational Christian Church of Samoa ministers despite the opposition from church people. The task of taxing Congregational Christian Church of Samoa ministers was never anticipated by the people of Samoa, however, this is now the reality of the situation. Although this bill has been passed, Congregational Christian Church of Samoa ministers living in Samoa continue to oppose this decision. The results of this opposition however, is not yet known. This situation shows the extent of religion’s influence and that is as far as government allows it. The influence of religion on the lives of Samoan people is not reflected the same way in government legislation however, this can be viewed as necessary in order for an unbiased running of the government although not all would agree with this.

This study has shown a glimpse of a possible future for the relationship between religion and government. While majority stakeholders acknowledged a relationship that exists between religion and government, two stakeholders provided a contrasting opinion to the rest. They believed the relationship that has always existed is now losing its ties as a result of government becoming more self-serving. These stakeholders predict a future of divide and as a result, the governance of Samoa will not be so cohesive. Whether this is true or not will only be known through the course of time. However, it is clear through these thoughts that the people of Samoa do believe the influence of religion on decision-making processes is greater than what it is in reality.
The results have shown the great significance of religion on Samoan society and how the positive influences it has brought since its arrival. It has also concluded that there is a relationship that manifests in different ways between religion and government. When examining the influence of religion, this study has determined that there is religious influence on decision-making processes. However, because of the lack of legislative support due to religion not being included in any other legislations beside the CISS, the extent of this influence is controlled by the government. Therefore, while religion does have an influence, it only goes as far as government allows it. In order for religion to have more of a say in decision-making processes through government, legislative support is required. Without this, the influence of religion will never go further than what government allows it.

6.3 Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research
One limitation about the overall research was the use of ministers only from the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa church as religious stakeholders as it only shows the perspective of only the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. This has some implications on the study such as having a one-sided denominational perspective about the relationship between religion and government. This is definitely not representative of religion in Samoa as a whole. However, due to time constraints and networking accessibility, this was the result. However, this leaves room for future research around this topic to be done better. There is still space for this topic to continue to be researched and include a wider span of not only ministers from different denominations, but also church people themselves to receive a wider range of perspectives and more inclusive results. It is undoubtful that ministers of other denominations will have completely different opinions and experiences with the government and as a result, the findings would be different but will bring greater understanding. Especially in a time where the religious context of Samoa is continually changing as more religious denominations different from the main ones, Christian, Methodist and Catholic, are starting to spread across Samoa. Religious beliefs would differ as historical backgrounds also differ between the main denominations and the newer ones.

Another opportunity that arises for any future research is the use of more research methods, not only key informant interviews. Upon reflection, there was a realisation that the use of public surveys in this research would have uncovered some great results. Because of the great significance of religion on the lives of all people in Samoa, everyone would have an opinion on its relationship with government, children included.
This study has been useful for explaining planning and decision-making processes in Samoa as it has questioned the influence of the two most significance aspects of Samoan life on these processes. It has obtained results that have provided insight into this relationship. Despite results showing a clear separation between religion and government, this is not how the people view this relationship. This study could be taken further to uncover a way in which this relationship can be made more equal. Whether through greater legislative inclusion or through more recognition, there is room for this research to be carried on.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION
Due to my positionality as an insider living outside of Samoa, the context of the research, the task of making recommendations is not an appropriate one. Although I am full Samoan, I have spent majority of my life living outside of Samoa and as a result, my work can only be used as a guiding research paper for future researchers who come out of Samoa. One thing that I do believe however, is that this research should be continued on by someone living and studying in Samoa. Whether it is continuing research on this relationship, looking at how religion can have more of a legislative say in government, or for any other reason related to this study, further research will allow for further understanding and this can only be a positive thing.
REFERENCES


Huisman, K. "Does This Mean You're Not Going to Visit Me Anymore?: An Inquiry into an Ethics of Reciprocity and Positionality in Feminist Ethnographic Research". Sociological Inquiry 78, no. 3 (2008): 372


APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

The purpose of the project is to investigate how planning and decision-making processes in the Samoan government take into account religious and cultural beliefs. The research is being undertaken by Ekrina Iose as part of the requirements for the Master of Planning course at the University of Otago.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

Participants are mainly church Ministers from Malua Theological College and Government officials. It is anticipated that 15 participants will be involved in the research. All participation is voluntary. Participants will have access to the findings of the research.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to answer several questions on the role of religion and culture in policies and decision-making processes in government. The time commitment is expected to be no more than 1 hour.

It is understood that some information around this topic may be confidential. Participants may choose not to answer any questions in which they are unable to provide information to.

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?
[There is a distinction between the raw data or information collected by the researcher and the data/information that will be written up in the completed research. The potential participant has a reasonable expectation to know:

Information will be collected about the influence that religion and culture have on planning and decision-making processes in the Samoan Government. If participants allow, interviews will be recorded and then transcribed at a later date. The recordings will be destroyed at the completion of the project.

The raw data and information will only be accessed by the student researcher and supervisor Professor Claire Freeman of the University of Otago. The processed data in its final form as part of a Master’s Thesis will be available to the public.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only the student researcher and Professor Claire Freeman will be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage. Any personal information held on the participants such as contact details, audio or video tapes, after they have been transcribed may be destroyed at the completion of the research even though. The data from the research will, in most cases, be kept for much longer or possibly indefinitely.

The results of the project may be published and will available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand), but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity. This project involves a semi-structured interviewing technique. The general line of questioning includes the nature of religion and culture in Samoa. How religion and culture influence planning and decision-making processes in the Samoan Government, what is the significance of religion on Samoan people at both the local level and national Government level. At your request statements and/or answers to a specific question or subject area can be withdrawn from the data/information you have supplied. You cannot review the information at a later date.

Where will the Interviews be Undertaken?

Interviews will be held at a time and public place which is convenient to the participant and in an area where they feel most comfortable undertaking the interview. These places may include a coffee shop or library. Government officials may also wish to conduct interviews in their work place.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable, you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage during or after the interview without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Participants can withdraw their statements from the interview until 31st June.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either: -

Ekrina Iose and Associate Professor Claire Freeman
Department of Geography

64 3 479 8785
This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph +643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

TO WHAT EXTENT DO RELIGION AND CULTURE INFLUENCE PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN SAMOA

CONSENT FORM FOR KEY INFORMANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;

3. I am free to choose whether I may or may not be named in any publications made from this research;

3. Personal identifying information such as audio recordings, will be destroyed after the project, but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;

4. I can decline to answer any question that I feel I am unable to answer, especially any questions in which answers are confidential;

5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.
I agree to be named in this project

Yes  No

..........................................................
(Signature of participant)  (Date)

..........................................................
(Printed Name)

..........................................................
Name of person taking consent
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are your thoughts on the significance of religion on Samoan society?
2. Is there a relationship that exists between the Samoan Government and Samoan religious institutions such as churches, bible study groups and others?
   a. If yes, what is the extent of this relationship?
   b. If no, should there be?
3. In terms of the process in which decisions are made by the Samoan Government, is there any influence that religion institutions have on these processes?
   a. If yes, how much of an influence do these religious institutes have?
   b. If no, should Samoan Government decision-making processes be influenced by religious institutions?
4. Are you aware of any policies or parliamentary bills that were introduced to the Samoan Government by religious institutions?
5. Does religion hold as much weight in the Samoan Government as culture and traditions do?
6. What are your general thoughts on the relationship between the Samoan Government and religious institutions?