

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF SAMOANS ON THE  
UNDERREPRESENTATION OF  
WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT**

by

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This is a Supervised Research Project paper submitted  
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## DECLARATION

### Statement by Author

I, Easter Manila-Silipa, declare that this Supervised Research Paper is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published, or substantially overlapping with material submitted for the award of any other degree at any institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

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The research in this Supervised Research Paper was performed under my supervision and to my knowledge is the sole work of Ms. Easter Manila-Silipa.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to find out the perceptions of Samoans on the underrepresentation of women in the Parliament. The Parliament of Samoa consists of forty-nine seats and currently, only four seats are occupied by women.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in this research. The qualitative information was obtained from a content analysis of existing literature related to the topic. The quantitative research data and information were gathered from research questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews. Two hundred and forty questionnaires were administered with the target sample of two hundred and forty; two hundred and ten responses were received.

The findings from the questionnaires, FGD and in-depth interviews revealed a high level of Samoans' perceptions regarding the under representation of women in Parliament. When asked about their perceptions on the need for women in Parliament, ninety-two percent responded there is a need for women in Parliament and eight percent responded no. All respondents perceived that it is Samoa's current Electoral Act, the fa'aSamoa, the agenda of political parties and the current electoral voting system that contributed to the underrepresentation of women in Parliament. In regard to the challenges facing former and current women in the Parliament, the majority of respondents perceived that women are not addressing issues discussed in the Parliament. When asked about their perceptions on what the Government of Samoa should do to address the issue, most perceived that the Government should have in place voting and candidacy education for women, to provide financial assistance for women candidates and to amend the Electoral Act. Lastly, respondents were asked what they perceive as solutions or recommendations to address this issue. The respondents mostly perceived that amendment of the Electoral Act, changes to the current political system, establishment of funding for women candidates and the conduct of voting and candidacy education programs for women to be the greatest need.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ACEO	-	Assistant Chief Executive Officer
AUA	-	Apia Urban Area
BV	-	Block Vote
CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
FPP	-	First Past the Post
GWR	-	Government Women Representative
MWA	-	Ministry of Women Affairs
MWCSD	-	Ministry of Women Community and Social Development
NGO	-	Non Government Organization
NWU	-	North West Upolu
PPSEAWA	-	Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association
PSC	-	Public Service Commission
ROA	-	Rest of Upolu
UN	-	United Nations
USP	-	University of the South Pacific

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

My years spent working at the then Ministry of Women Affairs (MWA) instilled in me the interest in and knowledge about women's issues in Samoa. When I was recruited by the Public Service Commission (PSC) to work in the MWA as a Policy and Planning Officer, I had no idea what kind of work I would be doing, since I did not have any prior experience or interest in women's issues generally. From there on, I became interested and started to involve myself in the development of women and children's welfare in Samoa. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to carry out further studies, which provoked me to carry out research on the specific issue of women's underrepresentation in Parliament. The issue of women's representation in Samoa is a major area of concern because it is still a very sensitive issue for public discussion due to Samoan traditions and customs associated with it.

Furthermore, the absence of research on this issue in Samoa has driven me to conduct research based on the perceptions of Samoans. Since Samoa is a country that was founded on faith in God, and based on democratic values and principles, every citizen is equal under the constitution. However, Samoan women are underrepresented in Parliament since Samoa became politically independent in 1962. Nevertheless, Samoa is not the only country in the Pacific which has this problem. In fact this is common throughout the Pacific Islands and most of the developing nations in the world. It is with hope that findings from this research will determine whether the people of Samoa perceive that women are underrepresented in Parliament or not. If so, what could be possible policies or strategies to ensure that women are represented in Parliament in the future? Due to limited time allocated to conduct the research work, the research paper is mainly a primary stage or initial stage of attempting to research such a big issue, which can be expanded into a major area of study in the future.

The research paper is divided into six sections. Section one provides the background information on the issue, in terms of the traditional roles and status of women in Samoa before the arrival of missionaries and colonialism and how they influenced Samoan women. Section two is about the purpose or reasons why this issue is under investigation. Section three looks at the research methods used to conduct the research. Section four highlights the main findings of the research conducted in which Samoans were asked about their perceptions on the need for women in the

Parliament; who the women are that should be in the Parliament; factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in Parliament; challenges facing former and current women Ministers in the Parliament; what the Government of Samoa should do to increase the number of women in the Parliament; and respondents' perceptions on strategies or solutions to ensure that women are represented in the Parliament. Section five looks at the challenges and difficulties encountered during the research, in particular the time available for the field work. Finally, section six lays out the recommendations that could assist the Government of Samoa, non government organizations (NGOs) or interested parties in ensuring that women are not underrepresented in Parliament in the years to come.

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 2.1 *Samoa women prior to Christianity and Colonialism*

For the purpose of this research, I will not go into in-depth details of the history of Samoa but I will just briefly talk about it in order to get a fair understanding of the status, roles and responsibilities of women in the traditional context. Prior to the landing of missionaries and the coming of colonial powers in Samoa, women were recognized through the work of two famous women, namely Nafanua and Salamasina. Nafanua according to Fa'alafi, (1982) was a war goddess who was needed by many villages to lead them to victory at times of wars amongst villages and polities. Some Samoan proverbs reflecting women's capabilities derive from legends of Nafanua. Orators use them today, for instance, '*E au le ina'ilau a tamaitai ae le au le ina'ilau a alii*'. This means that the ladies' row of thatches is complete but the gentlemen's row of thatches is incomplete. The proverb is from a legend that happened in the village of Falealupo<sup>1</sup>, which emphasized the success of women in completing a task that was normally seen as men's work, attaching thatch pieces in rows to the beams of a house in which men failed to complete their share of work. The other proverb commonly used by orators is '*Ua logo ia Pulotu le mapu a Tai'i*' which means Tai'i's groaning had reached Pulotu which was the home of Nafanua. The legend says that Tai'i was a talking chief also from the village of Falealupo who was punished by the people of Salega<sup>2</sup>, by forcing him to climb the coconut tree upside down. His panting louder and louder until it reached the home of Nafanua where she sent her people to help Tai'i and as result, Nafanua became a champion. For those reasons, Nafanua's fame had spread far and beyond Samoa and everyone admired her. Nafanua is known to have prophesied the arrival of Christianity in Samoa. The literature stated that Malietoa had asked Nafanua for a title so he can become the king of Samoa. Since there were no titles in her possession at the time, she told him as related by Lambie (1969):

*“alas you have come but the ruling title is gone. Nevertheless, you will receive a kingdom from heaven and you will be its head” ... a week or so after this, the ship of John Williams arrived in Sapaalii to bring Good News (Christian Religion) to Feagaimaleata at Mataniu (residence of Malietoa)...the Malietoa said to himself:*

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<sup>1</sup> Samoan village located in the island of Savaii.

<sup>2</sup> Districts situated in the island of Savaii.

*no doubt this is the kingdom Nafanua referred to when she said – “your kingdom will come from heaven. Therefore, it must be received” (page 131)*

The many authors of Samoan history believed that this is the reason for the rapid and extensive spread of Christianity in Samoa compared to other Pacific Islands.

Salamasina on the other hand was regarded as the only Queen of Samoa because she was the first and only person who held the four titular titles (tafa'ifa) namely Tui A'ana, Tui Atua, Gatoaitale and Tamasoali'i and it was made possible when Nafanua agreed to bestow them onto Salamasina as she was the rightful person (Hart, Wright, Patterson, 1971:27). The islands of Upolu, Savaii and Tutuila came under Salamasina's rule for more than forty years. It was she that most of the future kings in Samoa descended from, belonging to the Tui A'ana line of the Samoan royal family (Lambie, 1969). According to Lambie (1969) there was no record of wars taking place during Salamasina's reign and she was well known throughout Samoa for maintaining peace and harmony amongst its people. The Queen of Samoa placed emphasis on the importance of young men and women choosing their own husbands rather than families arranging it for them. In doing so, she taught the young Samoan women to respect and treat their husbands well and to bring up their children in a healthy and loving environment. She also encouraged and taught the Samoan women on how to make the *siapo*<sup>3</sup> and the *ie toga*<sup>4</sup>, which played an important part in Samoa in the olden times.

According to Turner (1884), most of the Samoan legends about village gods and family gods were associated with women and perhaps the influence of these legends is seen in the social structures of the *fa'aSamoa*<sup>5</sup> in which *tapu*<sup>6</sup> or *sa* are given to female, for instance, the brother and sister relationship called the *feagaiga*<sup>7</sup> which is seen as the most significant brother and sister relationship in the *fa'aSamoa*. Davidson (1967:23) expanded on this relationship by saying that '*Brothers had an obligation to consider the interests of their sisters and their sisters' children. Sisters were held to have the power of cursing their brothers and their descendants if*

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<sup>3</sup> Samoan native cloth made from the bark of the mulberry tree. Known in other parts of Polynesian as *tapa*.

<sup>4</sup> Samoan traditional fine mat.

<sup>5</sup> Traditional Samoan way of life.

<sup>6</sup> Samoan translations of the word sacred.

<sup>7</sup> Covenant bond between brothers and sisters.

*this obligation were neglected*'. The author further explained that the term not only conveys the brother and sister relationship, but also the honour and powers of the eldest sister within the *aiga*<sup>8</sup>. The eldest sister is expected to work alongside the family's chief for family functions, affairs and decision making. Still, she had to respect and love her brothers and relatives for her own personal welfare and to avoid sexual contacts before marriage (Churchill, 1902).

Before European contact, Samoa used to have an open and reasonably inflexible sexual division of labour. The division of labour placed women in *mama*<sup>9</sup> and *mama*<sup>10</sup> work that was focused on the central village and household areas. The works allocated to men were seen as *mamafa*<sup>11</sup> and *palapala*<sup>12</sup> which were associated with the bush or far from the centre of the village or deep sea. The Table 1 in Appendix 1 clearly notes the different works allocated to men and women before missionaries came to Samoa. The table shows that the light and heavy allocation indicates that women's work appeared to be in the centres of the village and domestically focused, such as in the household.

## ***2.2 The influences of Christianity and Colonialism on Samoan women***

The missionaries introduced Christian principles and values together with the European way of living to the Samoans, such as trying to bring to the fore the status, roles and responsibilities of women from being inferior to men and organized them into church groups with the focus on the improvement of their wifely duties within the families, the village and the church. However, it was noted that their influence was not to transform or introduce new ideas but to strengthen then existing roles and responsibilities by incorporating how they do things in Europe. For instance, women were taught how to sew Western clothing, which undermined *siapo* making as a means of clothing. The women's roles in cooking were changed to cooking light or protein foods such as soup, fish, meat and others in pots rather than assisting the men in cooking food in the *umu*<sup>13</sup> or outside the house on an open fire. Sewing machines and metal needles were introduced as well for manufacturing new fashions of clothes. The most important influence brought by the

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<sup>8</sup> Samoan translation of 'family'.

<sup>9</sup> Samoan translation of 'light'.

<sup>10</sup> Samoan translation of 'clean'.

<sup>11</sup> Samoan translation of 'heavy'.

<sup>12</sup> Samoan translation of 'dirty'.

<sup>13</sup> Samoan oven used to cook food such as taro and breadfruits and meat such as pigs.

missionaries was the introduction of education. A school for girls only was established called *Papauta Girls College*<sup>14</sup> to teach young girls on how to be good wives and to care for their families.

Colonialism, on the other hand, did the same thing in reinforcing the existing division of labour and the introduction of women into politics. During the New Zealand Administration under Major Richardson's leadership the Samoans opposed his proposal for each Samoan to own his land rather than the *matai*<sup>15</sup>, for economic development. The Samoans organized themselves in a Mau movement which took to the streets of Apia in 1926 with its main objective of Samoa for Samoans (Wood, 1975). The Samoan women in the past were never involved in politics but the Mau movement by men saw the establishment of the Women's Mau. The Women's Mau was mocked by the New Zealand Administration and they dispersed and organized themselves into groups to raise money and food to support the Mau Movement led by men for the independence of Samoa. From here on, women are seen as playing supportive roles in politics, such as supporting their husbands and voting for male relatives who are contesting in the general elections.

When the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa was developed, it clearly stated the Parliament of Samoa's entrance criteria whereby only those with matai titles are allowed to contest in the general elections or basically to enter Parliament (Government of Samoa, 2005). A Samoan saying, '*O Samoa ua uma ona tofi*' meaning Samoa is a land where all positions have been allocated, reinforces the belief that men are the heads of the families and only men should have matai titles (So'o, 2008). As a result of this belief, matai titles were not in the past bestowed on women. However, Samoa is exposed to new ideas and influences from overseas, which eventually led to women obtaining matai titles in a limited way. Although women were given the opportunity by their families to have matai titles, their importance was confined within their family boundaries until the first general election in 1961, when one woman ran as a candidate. Since the general election in 1961, more women have started to contest the general elections and the first woman to enter the Parliament of Samoa did so in 1970. She was elected unopposed,

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<sup>14</sup> Samoa's first school for girls only established by the London Mission Society the first mission to arrive in Samoa.

<sup>15</sup> Samoan chief.

meaning she was chosen by her village and constituency to be their representative in Parliament. Table 2 in Appendix 2 shows the number of women candidates contesting the general elections from 1961 to 2006 as well as the numbers and percentage of women candidates that succeeded and became Members of Parliament.

Although more women have been attempting to enter politics and make their way into Parliament away from their traditional roles and responsibilities, women are still underrepresented in Parliament in comparison to the number of men entering Parliament after every general election. This is contrary to the claim that there is no discrimination against women wishing to contest in the general elections to enter Parliament, as allowed under the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa. As noted earlier, entrance criteria into Parliament prohibited those without matai titles from contesting the general elections and since there are not many women holding matai titles, the chances of women contesting is very low. It is estimated that there are about thirty-thousand registered matais in Samoa but only sixteen-thousand live in the country and from that sixteen-thousand; only sixteen per cent are women (Gotts, 2000). This argument is supported by Huffer, (2006) who suggests that this is a major contributing factor for the underrepresentation of Samoan women in Parliament, amongst other factors. This is illustrated by the fact that only four women are currently occupying the forty-nine seats in Parliament. This accounts for 8.1% as opposed to the 30% international target set for Parliaments worldwide by the United Nations (UN) in 1990.

The study carried out by Fraenkel (2006) highlighted that one possible reason for the underrepresentation of women in Parliament is the current electoral system used in Samoa, which is the First Past the Post (FPP) and Block Vote (BV). It has been argued that these election voting systems do not guarantee the election of women into Parliament as they are not gender-based and whoever gets the most votes, gets into Parliament. Since Samoa still values traditional customs and practices when it comes to electing leaders, women will find it difficult to enter into Parliament under these circumstances. In addition to these reasons was the issue put forward by the Samoa's Non-Government Organizations Shadow Report prepared by PPSEAWA (2004) for the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee meeting in 2004. The NGOs reported that political parties in Samoa do

not have any gender sensitivity manifesto or voluntary quota for women candidates. Their manifestos neither encourage nor support women who wish to contest in the general elections because they will have to contest on the same grounds as men. It points out that the number of Samoan women in Parliament is way below the international target for women Parliamentarians despite the fact that women now outclass men in holding top management positions in Government and are doing extremely well academically (Dunlop, 2003). The Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development's (MWCSO) Draft National Policy for Women 2010 highlighted the issue of women's underrepresentation in Parliament as one of its main objectives needing urgent priority and attention not only from the Government of Samoa but from the people as well (Samoa MWCSO, 2010).



### **3. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

The main purpose of this research paper is to find out the perceptions of Samoans on the issue of women's underrepresentation in the Parliament of Samoa. The issue under study has come under the attention of many Pacific authors, International NGOs, overseas donors and other interested parties working in the advancement of women's participation in politics. However, the studies that have been conducted were mainly adapted from existing reports prepared by either the MWCSD, NGOs with women's interests or overseas based researchers on the basis of what they know or think is happening in Samoa. When the literature review was carried out, it was realized that none of the articles or reports available at the University of the South Pacific (USP) Library and on the Internet were prepared from the perceptions of the Samoans regarding the issue in the country.

Furthermore, careful scrutiny of the Draft National Policy for Women in Samoa 2010 drafted by the MWCSD, suggested that women's underrepresentation in Parliament was one of the main objectives that needs to be addressed in Samoa. The Assistant Chief Executive Office (ACEO) of the Division for Women in the MWCSD was consulted and realized that this is in fact a major issue and a major concern for the Ministry because women have excelled in other areas except in the political arena. As a result, this research has been the outcome of that consultation, which added to my own interests in finding out more about the issue based on the perceptions of Samoans living in Samoa. The issue is still very much debatable and very sensitive when it comes up for discussion because it has to do with traditional leadership, fa'aSamoa and status as well as the position of women in Samoan society. Therefore, in order to put the research in motion and to ensure that the research will produce useful and relevant findings, the research was divided into five objectives and five research questions.

The main objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To discuss Samoan perceptions on the need to have women in Parliament;
2. To discuss Samoan perceptions on the reasons and challenges for the underrepresentation of women in Parliament;
3. To identify issues facing current women Parliamentarians;
4. To discuss the Government of Samoa's position in addressing the issue; and

5. To discuss Samoan perceptions on solutions and recommendations for the underrepresentation of women in Parliament.

The main research questions this research will concentrate on are as follows:

- Why does Samoa need women in Parliament?
- What are the reasons and challenges behind the underrepresentation of women in Parliament?
- What are the issues facing women Parliamentarians?
- What is the Government of Samoa's position on the issue?
- How can this problem be solved in Samoa?

#### **4. RESEARCH METHODS**

The research was conducted using the triangulation approach whereby a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods was applied.

In terms of quantitative research methods, a target group or a sample of two hundred and forty respondents living in Samoa was interviewed using a questionnaire. The respondents were from two groups of youths, two groups of community women, two groups of Government Women Representatives (GWR) and two groups of Village Mayors. The sample was chosen from the islands of Upolu and Savaii. In each group, there were thirty respondents with ages ranging from ten to fifty years and over. The youth groups were a combination of females and males, the community women and GWR groups were females only and the Village Mayors groups consisted of males only. During the research, only two hundred and ten respondents participated in the study due to unforeseen circumstances that were beyond control. Table 3 in Appendix 3 displays the overall demographic characteristics of the respondents, which are further elaborated in section 4.

A questionnaire, which was developed in English and translated into Samoan, was used to interview respondents. The questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives using simple language in accordance with the level of education of respondents and their capacity to answer the questionnaire. The respondents were given the questionnaire and I was present to answer any queries and to make sure they have completed all sections (refer to Appendix 4). The focus group discussions (FGD) were carried out using respondents from groups that completed the questionnaires. A total of eight FGD took place, each group, consisting of between five and ten members. Discussion was conducted using focus group interview questions that were developed in English and translated into Samoan (refer to Appendix 5). The questionnaires and focus group discussions were carried out and completed over a period of four weeks.

The in-depth interviews were carried out with politicians, public servants, private sector employees, academics and church leaders using interview questions (refer to Appendix 5). The interviews were conducted in both English and Samoan depending on the interviewees' preference. The interviews started in June during semester break for a period of three weeks and

they were continued and finalized in late September when I went back to Samoa to finalize the field research. Since the research issue is a very sensitive topic in Samoa, identities of those interviewed as well as respondents participating in focus group discussions and answering the questionnaires are to be kept confidential and cannot be revealed. They were assured and given confirmation of confidentiality.

As for qualitative research methods, a content analysis was carried out to obtain background information on the research issue. In view of the fact that there has been no other research conducted in Samoa on the issue based on Samoan perceptions, it was a hard task to find relevant information to kick start the research. However, related information was obtained from such sources as academic journals, newspaper articles, reports and books, available at the USP Library, the National University of Samoa Library, and the Nelson Memorial Public Library in Samoa and from the Internet.

## 5. FINDINGS

This section will elaborate on the findings of the research carried out. The analysis is divided into seven sections and each section will be highlighted in tables and graphs with detailed explanations. The main sections are based on questions from the questionnaire, focus group discussions as well as in-depth interviews.

### *5.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents*

Table 3 in Appendix 3 shows the overall demographic characteristics of respondents participating in the research. The table shows a total of one hundred and fifty-four female respondents and a total of fifty-six male respondents. The respondents were divided into age groups of 10 to 20 years, 21 to 30 years, 31 to 40 years and 41 to 50+ years whereby the age group 10 to 20 years accounts for thirty-two respondents, 21 to 30 years accounts for forty respondents, 31 to 40 years accounts for thirty-eight respondents while 41 to 50+ years accounts for one hundred respondents. The respondents were also divided into the areas used by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics: the Apia Urban Area (AUA), North West Upolu (NWU), Rest of Upolu (ROA) and Savaii. The AUA regions mainly refers to villages surrounding the main city of Apia while the NWU, ROU and Savaii regions refer to the rural population in Samoa. The table shows that thirty-five respondents were from the AUA region, twelve from the NWU region, fifty-three from the ROU and the majority of one hundred and ten were from the Savaii region. Graph 1 characterises the overall number of respondents by gender, by age group and by area of residency. The data presented in the table and characterized by the graph show that the majority of respondents were females, most of the respondents were in the age group of 41 to 50+ years and most of them lived in the Savaii region.

Table 4 shows a detailed characterisation of respondents which shows the specific numbers of female and male respondents by age group and by area of residency as in Appendix 3. The other half of the table highlights the number of female and male respondents by area of residency. It shows that the Savaii region is where the majority of respondents were from. The overall finding from the table is that most of the female and male respondents were in the age group of 41 to 50+ years and the majority of them lived in the Savaii region. Graph 2 of the research paper looks at the percentage of females by age group participating in the research and Graph 3 looks at the

percentage of male respondents by age group that also participated in the research as in Appendix 3. Graph 2 shows that female respondents in the age group 41 to 50+ years account for 51%, those in the age group 30 to 41 years account for 19%, the 21 to 30 years account for 17% while the 10 to 20 years group accounts for 13%. On the other hand, Graph 3 shows that most of the male respondents were from the age group of 41 to 50+ years, 21 to 30 years and 10 to 20 years while the age group 31 to 40 years accounts for a lower number of respondents. Graph 4 highlights the number of female and male respondents by area of residency that participated in the research as in Appendix 3 of the research paper. As mentioned earlier, most of the female and male respondents lived in the Savaii region while there were fewer respondents from the NWU region.

### ***5.2 (a) Respondents' perceptions on the need for women in Parliament***

This section looks at the perceptions of Samoans on the need for women in Parliament. Respondents were asked if they think there is a need to have women in Parliament from their own perspective. Table 5(a) and Graph 5 in Appendix 6 show the total numbers of female and male respondents that say “yes there is a need to have women in Parliament” and the total numbers that say “no, there is no need for women in Parliament”. In detail, a total of one hundred and fifty-two females responded that there is a need to have women in Parliament compared to forty-two male respondents. As for those that said no, the majority were males compared to only 2 females. In terms of age groups, a total of ninety-eight respondents in the age group of 41 to 50+ years perceived there is a need to have women in Parliament. The same age group with a total number of seven respondents perceived there is no need for women in Parliament. As for the area of residency, more respondents from the Savaii region perceived the need to have women in Parliament in comparison to the other three regions.

The overall finding from Table 5(a) indicates that 97% of female respondents perceived that there is a need to have women in Parliament and 75% of male respondents perceived the same. For age groups, the age group of 41 to 50+ years perceived the need for women in Parliament while respondents living in the region of Savaii also perceived the need for women in Parliament. The findings surely confirmed some of the literature written on the issue as well as reaffirmed the views and opinions of some of the interviewees that men think woman's place is

in the house and therefore women are meant to stay home and look after their families (Huffer, 2006). Graph 5 in Appendix 6 shows the respondents' perceptions on the need to have women in Parliament and it clearly highlights that the majority of female respondents, age group of 41 to 50+ years and respondents from the Savaii perceived the need to have women in Parliament.

During the research, respondents were asked to explain why they said there is a need to have women in Parliament and why they said no there is no need to have women in Parliament. The following were findings from personal interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires. The respondents emphasize that women need to be present in Parliament because they are very good advisors and they can advise the men in Parliament when the going gets tough or on issues discussed, to make sure that the development of Samoa is well looked after. The respondents from questionnaires and focus group discussions perceived that women are more knowledgeable, educated, intelligent, show initiative, creative, better at decision making and more honest and patient than men. They believed that women are climbing the corporate ladder in Samoa and they seem to be pushing aside the men who used to dominate the public service. These perceptions reaffirmed the paper prepared by the Samoa Public Service Commission, which was heard at a leadership training in Samoa in 2003 (Dunlop, 2003) that women are becoming more educated in Samoa and are holding higher jobs in the public service than previously. The respondents further explained that having women with these characteristics in Parliament will create more opportunities for development in the country and put a stop to corruption and dishonesty in Parliament.

Some of the interviewees agreed with these perceptions because it may bring changes to the Parliament and to the Government of Samoa. The respondents on one hand perceived that having women in Parliament will address issues pertaining to development, which incorporate the development of families that is inclusive of women, men and children because they are the future investment of Samoa. Since they are women and they deal with these issues on a daily basis, they will have a very fair understanding of the issues and they will fight for them in Parliament more than men. The respondents clearly stated that men and women need to work alongside each other for the development of Samoa and having women in Parliament will be a stepping stone in tackling this issue and to providing for a gender balance in Parliament. Some of the respondents

put it nicely that God created the man first then the woman, in which case the Parliament of Samoa was established like that, with men entering the Parliament first but now it is time for women to enter the Parliament as well.

The interviewed respondents perceived that with Samoa's exposure to globalisation and signatures to international conventions pertaining to the development of women, and ensuring that women are well represented in all areas, there is a need for women to be in Parliament. They reiterated that if women can look after their families, they will absolutely do a great job in looking after the affairs of the country. However, they also perceived that women who wish to enter Parliament must stay true to themselves, committed and passionate so that they can make very good decisions to benefit the whole nation. Since Samoa is still based on the fa'aSamoa, it will take a long time for women to participate fully in politics as per the case of matai titles: in the last fifty years, only men were given matai titles, but nowadays, women can access them as well.

Those who responded there is no need to have women in Parliament stated that politics is dirty and it is a man's world. Due to the brother and sister sacred relationship mentioned earlier, men are reluctant to have women in Parliament because in Parliament, things that should not be said in the presence of women are raised. This perception was challenged by some of those interviewed. They responded that women are "man enough" to take on anything and as mentioned earlier, their presence in Parliament will change the men's mentality and help them focus on strategic ways to develop the country and to provide relevant criticisms rather than making personal attacks on other Parliamentarians. In addition, some respondents strongly believed that the fa'aSamoa decision making is men's business while women are bound to domestic duties. The respondents believed that women do play important roles in politics by advising their husbands and because they do so, men in Parliament are doing a great job thanks to their wives.

### ***5.2 (b) Respondents' perceptions on women that should be in the Parliament***

The second part of this section looks at the perceptions of respondents on who are the women that should enter Parliament. The respondents were asked from their own perceptions of who are



the women that they think and believe should be in Parliament. Table 5(b) in Appendix 6 shows the respondents responses and Graph 6 clearly shows the reasons and the number of respondents for each reason. In this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to answer more than one answer and to add to the list any other answers they could think of. The findings show that one hundred and sixty-one perceived that educated women are the ones that should in Parliament; forty-four perceived that women who have financial means of supporting themselves during campaigns and throughout their terms in Parliament; ten perceived that wives and/or daughters of matais while sixty-one perceived that women who are responsible for looking after the families and contribute to church and village activities should be in Parliament. The other respondents identified the combinations of either perception as noted in table 5(b) and further highlighted by graph 6 in Appendix 6.

The findings from interviews and focus group discussions reaffirmed the respondents' answers in which they mostly perceived a need for educated women in Parliament. However, most of the interviewees and respondents of focus group discussions added that women should not only be educated academically but must also be knowledgeable in the fa'aSamoa. The respondents believe that women equipped with both characteristics will no doubt play a major role in performing the Parliamentary responsibilities of women entering Parliament. The findings in addition correlate with characteristics of current and former women in Parliament. The MWCSD Directory of Women Parliamentarians shows the profiles of former and current women in Parliament. In a brief analysis of the publication, most of the women Parliamentarians are well educated; from families with financial security; and have political affiliation because of their families or husbands, for instance, the current Minister of Health who is the daughter of the former Prime Minister, the current Minister of Women, whose father was the first Prime Minister of Samoa and her mother was also a former Member of Parliament; and the other woman Parliamentarian whose husband was also a Member of Parliament. This quick analysis confirms the perceptions of many Samoans that have been mentioned so far. Overall, all of the respondents perceived all characteristics mentioned should be in a woman that wishes to enter Parliament and to make it her future career.

The other reasons given by respondents, which were not included in the questionnaire, were for women to obtain matai titles as this is part of the entry requirement into Parliament as written in the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa. Respondents considered as necessary for women wishing to enter Parliament the characteristics of kind-heartedness, intelligence, honesty and patience. An interesting finding was the perception that unmarried women with matai titles are the ones that should be in Parliament because they do not have the extra responsibilities of married women. The respondents pointed out that one prominent woman politician in Samoa is unmarried and she had been a politician since the 1970s and she is doing a great job, and she should be a role model for young women that wants to enter Parliament. In addition, the idea that women wishing to enter Parliament must be passionate and committed to their calling once they become Parliamentarians had also been mentioned and most of the respondents perceived this as an important aspect of a woman that should be in Parliament.

### ***5.3 Respondents' perceptions on the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the Parliament***

This section of the research paper looks at the reasons why women are underrepresented in the Parliament of Samoa. The respondents were asked about their perceptions on what they think are the reasons for the low number of women in Parliament. Table 6 and Graph 7 of Appendix 7 shows the respondents and their perceived reasons for the under representation of women in Parliament. They were asked to answer more than one answer and to include other answers they perceived. From the data presented in table 6, the majority of respondents, which accounts for one hundred and twenty-two, perceived the current Electoral Act as the major reason for the low number of women in Parliament. The fa'aSamoa was perceived by thirty-nine respondents as the other reason because men as the heads of the families are the only ones to be involved in the decision-making process. The way political parties in Samoa campaigned in the general elections was perceived by thirty-eight respondents as another contributing factor in the low number of women in Parliament. The respondents argued that none of the political parties has a gender manifesto in place to encourage and to ensure that there are women candidates contesting in the elections. The current electoral voting system, which is FPP and BV, was perceived by twenty-three respondents as the other contributing factor in the underrepresentation of women in Parliament.

The responses from focus group discussions also perceived the four main reasons highlighted as the major contributing factor for the underrepresentation of women. As for interview respondents, their perceptions were the same as this but they placed emphasis on the need for Samoa to maintain its traditional form of leadership whereby only matais are involved in the decision making process, to ensure stability and harmony in the country. This is in relation to Samoa's Electoral Act, they strongly feel that women are starting to obtain matai titles and very soon they will dominate the Parliament of Samoa. On the other hand, it will give them the same opportunity to compete as men in the same play ground. The findings confirmed some of the reasons pointed out by Fraenkel in 2006 for the low number of women in the Parliament of Samoa.

The other reason given as perceived by some respondents is to do with the fact that some villages simply do not allow women to have matai titles, which contributes to the already limited number of women with matai titles in Samoa. Some respondents perceived that women's representation in Parliament is low because women voters do not vote and support women candidates, for their own reasons. The interview respondents supported this reason because they said that sometimes women feel threatened or even worse jealous because some women can do better than them. A common perception as heard every day is that women are not meant to be in politics or women are not interested in politics; they are, rather, interested in decorating and maintaining their households. One of the two most interesting findings from the research shows that respondents perceived women candidates as not knowing how to run effective election campaigns compared to men candidates. People often responded that women are not as hard, committed and ready to enter politics as men in carrying out their campaigns because from there, voters tend to go with the candidates that sell themselves and dish out plenty of money to the voters. The second most interesting finding is to do with the fact that when a woman Parliamentarian is pregnant, which requires a minimum maternity leave of two months, who is going to represent the constituency in Parliament particularly if important issues are discussed affecting the constituency?

#### ***5.4 Respondents' perceptions on the challenges for the underrepresentation of women in the Parliament***

This section of the research paper looks at the perceptions of respondents regarding the challenges facing women who wish to enter Parliament. The respondents were asked about their perceptions on the challenges for women who wish to enter Parliament, taking into consideration their experiences from previous general elections or what they think could be the reasons.

Table 7 in Appendix 8 shows that one hundred and nine of the total respondents perceived that the cultural perspective of a woman's place is in the house as the most challenging factor for women who wish to enter Parliament. This reaffirms that belief of a traditional society based on Christian principles and values with westernized influences that only men are to be involved in the decision making process. The second challenge perceived by seventy-six respondents was the lack of financial support to contest in the general elections. The respondents indicated that campaigns in Samoa are just like election campaigns overseas; a candidate needs to have a lot of money to run a campaign to attract voters to make sure that he or she is elected into Parliament. Since women mostly depend on men who are the bread winners of the family for financial support, they are not able to contest in the general elections. In addition, some respondents believe that women tend to prioritize the financial needs of their families rather than spending it on an election campaign. As mentioned earlier, some villages do not allow women to have matai titles because of their own rules and protocols and this was supported by forty-three respondents. The lack of moral support from families accounts for thirty-eight of the total respondents. The other respondents agreed that all of the challenges mentioned are faced and will be faced by women who wish to enter Parliament and some other responses are noted in table 7 and graph 8.

The interview respondents perceived that it is the lack of financial support that prohibits women from participating in the elections. If there is no money to support a candidate, it does not matter whether it is a man or woman, there is no guarantee that he or she will be able to get into Parliament. The only way to guarantee election into Parliament is when he or she is elected unopposed because the constituency has decided they will not go to the polls to elect its representative. This takes us back to the issue discussed earlier regarding former and current women in Parliament. According to their profiles, they all have means of financial assistance to

assist them in their campaigns which guarantees their entrance into Parliament. The interviewees perceived that it is a woman's choice whether to enter politics or not, because if they are forced to, they will not perform to the expectations of the people because they are not passionate and committed to their newfound roles and responsibilities. Lastly, most of the interviewees perceived that women have many responsibilities at home such as looking after their families and ensuring that everyone is cared for. As a result, they wait until their children have grown up before they focus on what they want and mostly end up entering Parliament. This perception reaffirmed the women's profiles whereby most of them entered Parliament in their late forties to early fifties.

The other respondents perceived education as a major challenge for many women particularly those living in the communities. Although they are the ones looking after their families and villages, when election comes, it is women living overseas or in the main town of Apia who represent their villages, because they are well educated and have financial support. In addition, the lack of interest and low self esteem is marked amongst women because they are not fully aware of their political rights due to the lack of voting and candidacy education for women. They perceive that if women are aware of their rights, they will be interested and want to come out of the comfort zones and try on new challenges.

### ***5.5 Respondents' perceptions on the issues facing former and current women in the Parliament***

This section of the research paper looks at the respondents' perceptions on the challenges facing former and current women in Parliament. The respondents were asked on what they perceive as the issues that faced former and current women Parliamentarians in Parliament. Table 8 in Appendix 9 shows that one hundred and fifty-three respondents perceive that the main issue faced by the former and current women in Parliament is to do with them not addressing the issues discussed in Parliament well and clearly. This could be the result of not understanding the issues under discussion, feeling threatened by too many men in Parliament or not having many women in Parliament to support their views and opinions expressed. The second major issue is to do with the types of cabinet portfolio given to women, such as social welfare, education and health, which were perceived by respondents as weak and more feminine in comparison to

portfolios given to men Parliamentarians. The other respondents perceived that both of these issues played a significant part in the performance of women Parliamentarians. Graph 9 in Appendix 9 clearly shows the respondents' perceptions on the issues faced by former and current women in Parliament.

The perception that women in Cabinet are given low and feminine portfolios was not agreed to by the interview respondents, in which they perceived the portfolios given to women, particularly health and education, as the major areas of development in Samoa. Most of the interviewees reiterated that the health and education sectors are major areas of development in Samoa. Therefore having women to administer these sectors is a blessing for Samoa because women know what they are doing and relate to what people are saying about these services. The other respondents believe that maybe women Parliamentarians in the future with finance or engineering education background will be given the finance and works portfolios. As of now, none of the women who have entered Parliament so far had an education background in such areas, otherwise a woman would have been appointed in those areas. The other respondents perceived that these could be reasons why men and people do not want women in Parliament because they cannot address the issues discussed like men and they are not good enough to be given portfolios in male dominated areas. The respondents emphasized the point that women Parliamentarians need to be fully aware of the issues discussed in Parliament so that they will not be caught off guard by men while at the same time fight for what they understand and are well aware of. However, the interviews highlighted that women are not facing any issues in Parliament, they are treated with respect and absolutely, there is no discrimination against women in Parliament. This was confirmed with interviews with women Parliamentarians and men Parliamentarians interviewed when asked about their views on the issue.

### ***5.6 Respondents' perceptions on what the Government of Samoa should do to address this issue in Samoa***

This section of the research paper looks at perceptions of respondents on what the Government of Samoa should do to address the issue in the country. The respondents were asked about their perceptions and they are categorized into gender, age groups and areas of residency. Table 8 and Graph 10 in Appendix 10 shows the number of respondents that perceived the Government of

Samoa should do something and the number of respondents that perceived the issue under research is not a problem in Samoa, therefore, the government does not need to change the way it is.

From the total number of one hundred and fifty-four female respondents, one hundred and forty-four perceived that the Government of Samoa must do something to address the issue in the country compared to the forty-nine male respondents out of the total of fifty-six. In terms of perceiving that the issue researched is not an issue, only ten female respondents said yes while seven male respondents said no when they were asked. As for age groups, the age group of 41 to 50+ years had the most respondents, which accounts for ninety-nine and it is the same age group that perceived the government is not to do anything because it is not a problem in Samoa. For respondents' areas of residency, those who perceived the government should do something are from the Savaii region which accounts for one hundred and six. The Rest of Upolu region perceived the most with eleven respondents that there is no need for the government to do something because things are all right the way they are. The findings indicated that both female and male respondents perceived that the research issue is a problem in Samoa and wanted the Government of Samoa to address it immediately to ensure the participation and equitable representation of women in Parliament. In terms of respondents' age groups, the age group of 41 to 50+ years tends to perceive there is a problem and also perceived it is not a problem in Samoa; and a majority of respondents from the region of Savaii perceived that the government must address the issue, in comparison to the other regions.

The solutions perceived by respondents range from the government to have in place strategies to ensure that women and men are equally represented. These strategies could be in a form of community education on voting and candidacy for community women; to have in place scholarships; and to put in place political work attachment for working women to instil in them the importance of politics and to stir interests in educated women to pursue careers in politics. The government on one hand lends support if they cannot morally support the women candidates, and then at least provide financial assistance to women candidates to ensure that they are elected into Parliament. Since Samoa is a signatory to many international conventions governing the issue of women in politics, the government should really ensure that women are

well represented in Parliament or that there is gender balance in Parliament to honour its acceptance of these international conventions. The government, according to the respondents' perceptions, must amend the current Electoral Act to make way for potential women without matai titles that are interested in politics to enter Parliament. If it is impossible, then legislation ensuring that women have equal access to obtaining matai titles should be in place so that women can contest against men in the general elections. In view of the fact that whether women have matai titles or not, they are not contesting in the general elections, the government should encourage villages and constituencies to make sure that there are women candidates contesting in their seats and to make sure that all women eligible to vote are casting their votes rather than staying behind to look after the children. The interview respondents came up with a very interesting finding, called head hunting, which they perceive as the most important one. The government would target educated, knowledgeable and good public speaking women and encourage and mentor them over the years so that when they are ready, they will enter Parliament whole heartedly and they will perform exceptionally in Parliament. In addition to head hunting, the interview respondents believed that voter and candidacy education must be carried out with NGOs or otherwise people will think that the government is initiating this idea in order for them to stay in Parliament, and also the NGOs have more contact with the grassroots level rather than government.

In terms of those that perceive there is no need for the government to address this issue, this is because they perceive that there is nothing wrong with the Parliament at the moment. Although there are only four women in Parliament, they are doing all right despite being dominated by men. They also perceive that women will eventually enter politics in the future just as they gradually attain matai titles. The respondents also perceive that it is good for women to contest the seats on the same play ground as men so that people will not think they have easy access into Parliament. Further, there are other issues such as whether special needs people and youth should be asking for special seats in Parliament which will undermine the status of the Parliament of Samoa.



### ***5.7 Respondents' perceptions on solutions and recommendations to address this issue in Samoa***

This section of the research paper looks at the respondents' perceptions on possible solutions and recommendations to address the issue in Samoa. The respondents were asked about their own perceptions on what they think should be done to address the issue in the country. Table 10 and Graph 11 in Appendix 11 show the responses from respondents regarding their perceptions on possible solutions and recommendations to increase the number of women in Parliament.

The data presented show that eighty-eight of the total respondents feel that it would be a good move to amend the current Electoral Act to make way for potential women without matai titles to enter Parliament. The respondents perceived the establishment of funding for women candidates in order to support them when contesting in the general elections as another solution; seventy of the respondents suggested this. The other sixty-nine respondents perceived a need to conduct voting and candidacy education programs for women to make them aware of their political rights, to make them know how to vote and to vote for the better candidate and most importantly, to inspire them to take up politics as a career in the future. In terms of changing the current political system in Samoa, twenty-seven respondents perceived that this should be changed to ensure the representation of women in Parliament. The new changes when asked were the introduction of special seats and/or quotas for women in Parliament. This perception did not sit well with the interview respondents, because they perceived that if women enter Parliament under such special conditions then other groups such as the youths and people with special needs will want to have their seats in Parliament. In addition, women will be labeled as weak because they cannot contest in the general elections on the same grounds as men.

In addition to the four main perceptions mentioned above, the other respondents perceived that if this is the case in the Parliament of Samoa, then the government must establish a separate Parliament for women so that women's issues can be discussed and in doing so, women will be well represented in Parliament. The respondents also perceived that women who wish to enter politics must start to be involved in village and constituency activities to engage supporters and to be involved with people at the community level especially if they are living away from the village. A person wanting to be a representative of the village must gain their respect and support

or otherwise it will be useless to contest in the general elections. The villages and constituencies must encourage potential women candidates from within their villages and constituencies to contest in the general elections with their full support as perceived by some respondents. The encouragement shown to women must be genuine instead of using the candidates for personal benefits of others. The need is for families to bestow matai titles on women who have good potential and intention for a political career so that in the future, they are able to contest in the general elections. Lastly, all the women in Samoa must rally for the representation of women in Parliament and their overall participation in politics. The respondents perceived this idea as very important because that is how women's development in overseas countries came about due to the fact that women fight for their freedom from men's oppression and for the rights to be heard in all areas. They perceived that if women in Samoa can do this, they will excel in all areas including their representation in Parliament.

## **6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The main limitation found during the research was the unavailability of one group of Village Mayors, a total of thirty males identified for the questionnaire to be administered and to conduct a focus group discussion. As a result, it limited the number of participants to two hundred and ten from the original sample of two hundred and forty. This was the result of a lack of communication between the designated person from the MWCSO and the Village Mayors of Upolu.

The other limitation deals with people identified for the research not willing to make themselves available for interviews regardless of numerous phone calls and constant emails to ask for interviews on the research issue. The others agreed to be interviewed when approached earlier but when the researcher arrived at their offices or working places, either they had gone out or had totally forgotten about the interviews scheduled. In addition, some were reluctant to be interviewed because of the sensitivity of the issue, despite being assured that all information provided would be for research purposes only and their identities will remain confidential.

Lastly, the time limit under which the research was conducted was too restrictive. Since the field work was done within four weeks, and the main focus of the research paper, it would have produced well structured responses from respondents if there was ample time given to the respondents to complete the questionnaires. Due to the time limit, most of the questionnaires and focus group discussions were carried out during their monthly meetings and choir practices.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the research produced the following recommendations. I would like to point out that there were a number of strategies, solutions and recommendations mentioned by the respondents but the following are the summary and possible recommendations to take into consideration to increase the number of women in Parliament. The following recommendations are:

- i) To conduct nationwide research based on findings from this research on Samoans' perceptions because from what the respondents have mentioned, there is clear indication that they are aware of the underrepresentation of women in Parliament;
- ii) To have a quota<sup>16</sup> for women in Parliament. It was clear from the research findings that Samoans participating in the study did not perceive this as a possible solution. However, the findings also show that if this special measure is not introduced in Samoa, women will never be well represented in Parliament. This is because of the fa'aSamoa, financial challenges and people's attitudes towards women. I believe this will take ages before it happens; perhaps now it is only a recommendation but further research into the issue will make it a reality in the Parliament of Samoa. It is also recommended that political parties can start off with introducing a political party quota system by allocating how many candidacies in the parties for women. This sort of opportunity will boost the morale and interest of women in becoming Parliamentarians because they know they have a chance of entering Parliament;
- iii) To develop and carry out education programs for women voters and women who wish to contest in the general elections as highlighted in the respondents' perceptions. This might engage the interest of women particularly the potential ones to enter politics as a major career in the future. The NGOs are recommended to conduct these education programs to put to rest the mentality that the government is initiating these programs to gain more support for the upcoming general election;
- iv) To amend Samoa's current Electoral Act to make way for potential women without matai titles to enter Parliament, and in doing so, it will ensure the representation of women in Parliament. It is true this is hard to amend because of the fa'aSamoa, but Samoa is already exposed to globalisation and the Government's commitment to international conventions on women's welfare including women's participation in politics. Therefore, it is recommended

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<sup>16</sup> *The main idea behind the quota is to ensure that women are adequately represented in Parliament.*

to amend the current Electoral Act to allow eligibility to all people twenty-one years and over to enter Parliament;

- v) For the Government of Samoa to establish a candidate fund for women candidates to encourage and to support them to contest in the elections. The respondents' perceptions and literature indicated the lack of financial support as the major contributing factor for the underrepresentation of women in Parliament. The government can kick start and maybe later on the overseas donor communities will step in and provide the funding as this is an important area of women's welfare and development;
- vi) Head hunting: the Government of Samoa to target and offer scholarships for potential young women in the area of politics and to have work attachments for working women in the same. In doing so, women will be trained in politics so that in the future, these women can become Parliamentarians in their own right and be able to contribute to the development of Samoa as a nation and their families as well; and
- vii) For the NGOs working in the advancement of women to stand together and fight for women's representation in Parliament. The NGO's to work together and come up with strategies to overcome this issue in Samoa. I believe that the overseas donor agencies will be happy to support them as long as their cause and actions are genuine.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The research findings show that the majority of Samoans who participated in the research perceived that women are underrepresented in Parliament. The findings clearly stated that there is a need to have women in Parliament and the contributing factors such as the Electoral Act, the fa'a Samoa, Political Parties not having gender manifesto agendas and the current electoral voting system contributed to women not being well represented in Parliament. However, respondents perceived women not addressing the issues discussed in the Parliament as a major challenge faced by former and current women in the Parliament. This is regardless of the fact that there are not many women in the Parliament to support views and opinions expressed by women Parliamentarians. In order to increase the number of women in the Parliament and their participation in politics, respondents perceived a need for the Government of Samoa to amend the current Electoral Act to make sure that women without matai titles wanting to enter the Parliament are represented as well as having in place voting and candidacy education programs for women and to assist women contesting in the general elections financially. In addition, the respondents perceived the same solutions with the exception of changing the current political system to increase the representation of women in the Parliament.

Therefore, it can be said that Samoans are aware of the situation of Samoan women in the Parliament. The research shows that Samoans are aware and knowledgeable regarding the contributing factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in Parliament. This is interesting taking into account the fact that the majority of the people involved in the research lives in the rural areas and has limited education. However, they pointed out the Electoral Act, the type of voting system used and political parties having no gender manifesto as the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in the Parliament. As mentioned earlier, this issue is of major concern when it comes up for public discussion because it is associated with Samoan traditions and beliefs. Yet, the research has brought out some of the views and opinions that people have been holding on for a very long time. The research has also cleared the generalisation that males will not support having women in Parliament because of the faa' Samoa. To the contrary, the males participating in the research showed their support and commitment throughout the research process. The male respondents believed in gender equality and encouraged women to enter politics and make a stand for themselves. On the other hand, the

findings indicated that Samoans are aware that women apart from those with matai titles can easily enter Parliament. This could be Samoans perceptions from observing women candidates and women that successfully entered Parliament after every general elections and it correlated to the profiles of women entering Parliament.

As a final point, I would like to reemphasize that this research is basically a baseline research which can be expanded into a nationwide research to be carried out by the MWCSO in Samoa. An individual or a group can carry out an in-depth research into this issue from a different aspect. The interesting point to keep in mind is that if I was able to interview people on their perceptions without them being inferior to others, assuredly in the future, people will be willing to discuss this issue in public. The exposure of Samoa to globalisation will undoubtedly change the views and opinions of Samoans in the near future regarding the representation of women in Parliament. This will be a great challenge to any future researchers who are interested in this field to go deeper into this issue and to assist in the advancement of Samoan women in politics.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**TRADITIONAL SAMOAN SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR**

**Table 1: Traditional Samoan Sexual Division of Labour**

<b>MEN'S WORK</b>	<b>WOMEN'S WORK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plantation</li> <li>● Planting taro and other root crops</li> <li>● Deep sea trolling</li> <li>● Hunting wild pigs and pigeons</li> <li>● Cooking</li> <li>● House building</li> <li>● Canoe</li> <li>● Tattooing</li> <li>● Village and village interest affairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work focused in village centre</li> <li>● Planting mulberry and pandanus trees</li> <li>● Lagoon to collect shellfish</li> <li>● Weaving and cloth making</li> <li>● Ornamentation and decoration</li> <li>● House and compound cleaning</li> <li>● Child care and mid-wife</li> <li>● Hosting guests</li> </ul>

*Source: Fa'alafi (1982).*

## APPENDIX 2

### WOMEN CANDIDATES IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS, 1961 TO 2006

**Table 2: Number of women candidates in the General Elections, 1961 to 2006**

General Elections	Number of Candidates	Successful Candidates	Percentage of Candidate who succeed	Remarks
1961	None	None	N/A	
1964	1	0	0	
1967	None	N/A	N/A	
1970	3	1	33	MP was elected unopposed
1973	1	1	100	
1975 By-Election	1	1	100	MP was elected unopposed
1976	5	2	40	
1979	8	1	13	
1982	5	1	20	
1985	4	2	50	
1988	5	1	20	
1991	4	2	50	
1996	9	5	56	
2001	10	3	30	
2006	21	4	19	

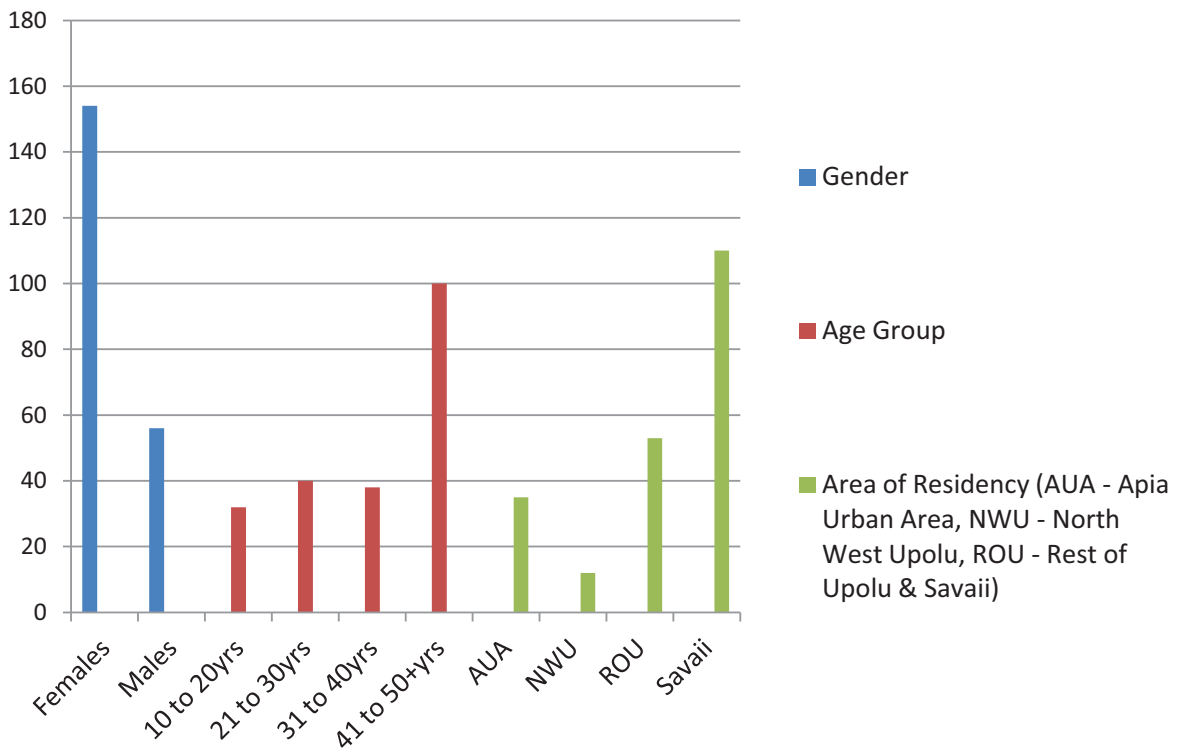
*Source: Legislative Department of Samoa, 2010.*

**APPENDIX 3**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

**Table 3: Overall demographic characteristics of respondents**

	Females	Males	10 to 20 yrs	21 to 30 yrs	31 to 40 yrs	41 to 50+ yrs	Apia Urban Area	North West Upolu	Rest of Upolu	Savaii
Gender	154	56								
Age Group			32	40	38	100				
Area of Residency							35	12	53	110

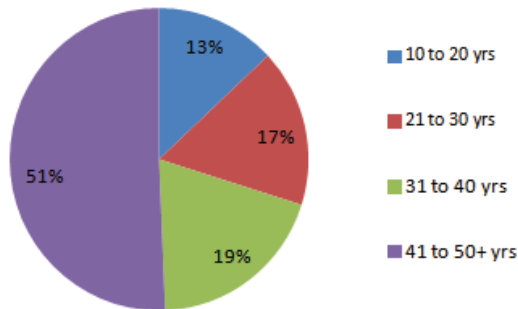
**Graph 1: Overall demographic characteristics of respondents**



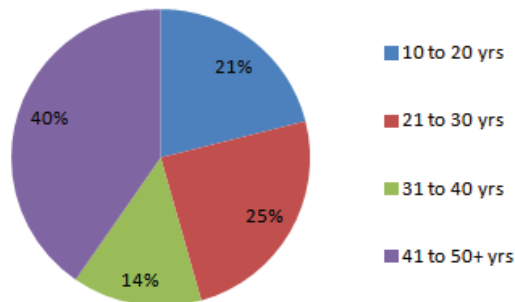
**Table 4: Gender by Age Group by Area of Residency**

	Age Group					Area of Residency				
	10 to 20 yrs	21 to 30 yrs	31 to 40 yrs	41 to 50+ yrs	TOTAL	AUA	NWU	ROU	Savaii	TOTAL
Females	20	26	30	78	154	19	9	47	79	15
Males	12	14	8	22	56	16	3	6	31	56

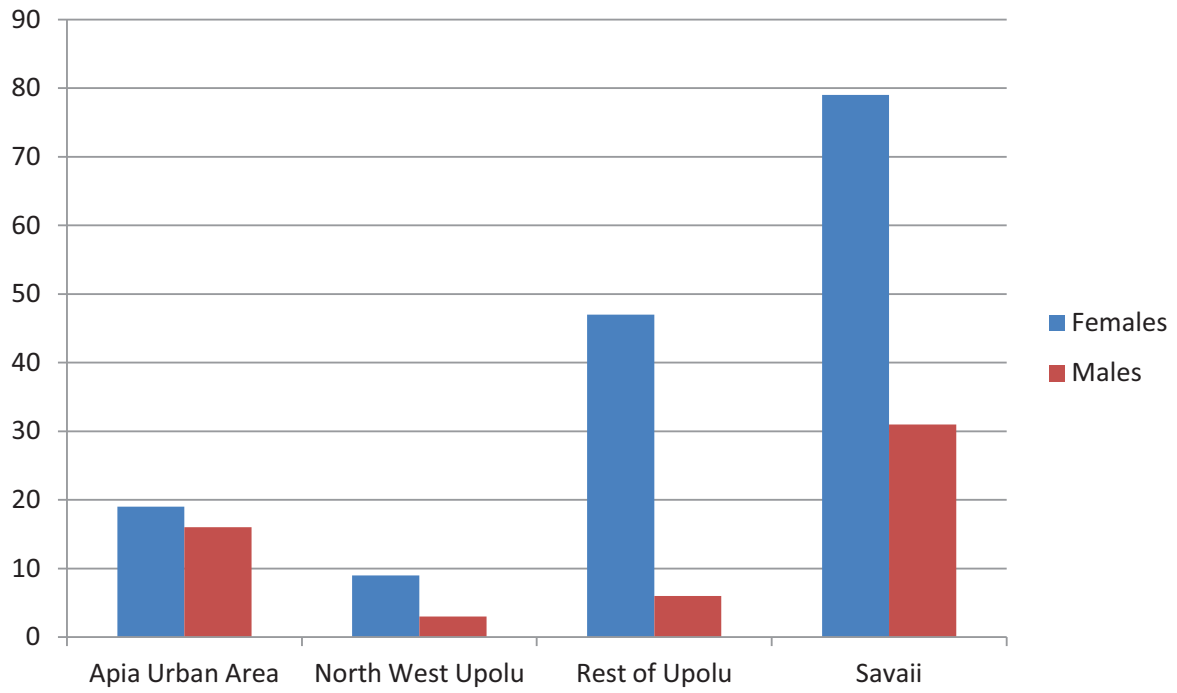
**Graph 2: Female respondents by Age Group**



**Graph 3: Male respondents by Age Group**



**Graph 4: Female and Male respondents by Area of Residency**



**APPENDIX 4**  
**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

Code No.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

**RESEARCH TOPIC:**  
**THE PERCEPTIONS OF SAMOANS ON THE UNDERREPRESENTATION  
OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT**

The main purpose of this research is to find out the perceptions of Samoans regarding the under representation of women in Parliament in Samoa. The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To discuss Samoan perceptions on the need to have women in Parliament;
- To discuss Samoan perceptions on the reasons and challenges for the underrepresentation of women in Parliament;
- To identify issues facing current women in Parliamentarians;
- To discuss the Government of Samoa's position in addressing the issue; and
- To discuss Samoan perceptions on solutions and recommendations for the underrepresentation of women in Parliament.

The findings from the Questionnaire will assist in putting together a Supervised Research Project Paper as a requirement of the Masters of Art in Governance Programme. I would like to inform you that your views and opinions given in this questionnaire will be treated as confidential and for research purposes only. Your participation and honesty is much appreciated in anticipation of the success of this research.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

**A. Questionnaire Identification**

Questionnaire Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer / Self-administered:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Prepared by Easter Manila-Silipa, Governance Programme – School of Government,  
Development & International Affairs, University of the South Pacific, Suva – Fiji*

**PART 1 - DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS. PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSES.**

1. Gender

1. Female

2. Male

2. Age Group

1. 10 to 20yrs

2. 21 to 30yrs

3. 31 to 40yrs

4. 41 to 50+yrs

3. Residential Area

1. Urban Areas

2. North-West Upolu

3. Rest of Upolu

4. Savaii

**PART 2 –PERCEPTIONS ON THE NEED FOR WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT**

4. Do you think there is a need for Samoa to have women in the Parliament? Please circle Yes or No and explain why.

1. Yes

2. No

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5. From your own perspective, who are the women that most likely to enter Parliament or to become Parliamentarians?

1. Educated women

2. Women with financial support

3. Wives and daughters of chiefs

4. Women who contributed to community & church obligations in the villages

5. Others

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**PART 3 – PERCEPTIONS ON REASONS FOR THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT**

6. What do you think are the reasons for the underrepresentation of Samoan women in Parliament?

1. Legislations (only matai's are allow to enter Parliament)
2. Samoa's electoral system
3. Political Party system
4. Church & the Fa'aSamoa
5. Others

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**PART 4 – PERCEPTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES FOR THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT**

7 What do you think are the challenges for the underrepresentation of Samoan women in Parliament?

1. Lack of financial support
2. Lack of support from families
3. Cultural views on women
4. Village protocols & procedures
5. Others

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**PART 5 – PERCEPTIONS ON ISSUES FACING WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

8. What do you think are some of the issues facing women in Parliament?

1. Government portfolios given to women
2. How they perform in a male dominated field

3. Others

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**PART 6 – PERCEPTIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA’S POSITION IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE**

9. What do you think the Government of Samoa should do to address this issue in order to increase the number of Samoan women in Parliament? Please circle Yes or No and explain.

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

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**PART 7 – PERCEPTIONS ON SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE**

10. What do you think are some of the solutions to address this issue in Samoa?

- 1. To amend the current legislations
- 2. To amend the Electoral Act
- 3. To change the Political Party systems
- 4. To establish a contesting fund for women candidates
- 5. To conduct leadership trainings for women
- 6. Others

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**THANK YOU & GOD BLESS**

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **RESEARCH INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

#### **RESEARCH TOPIC:**

THE PERCEPTIONS OF SAMOANS ON THE UNDER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

#### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

1. To discuss Samoan perceptions on the need to have women in Parliament;
2. To discuss Samoan perceptions on the reasons and challenges for the underrepresentation of women in Parliament;
3. To identify issues facing current women Parliamentarians;
4. To discuss the Government of Samoa's position in addressing the issue; and
5. To discuss Samoan perceptions on solutions and recommendations for the underrepresentation of women in Parliament.

#### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

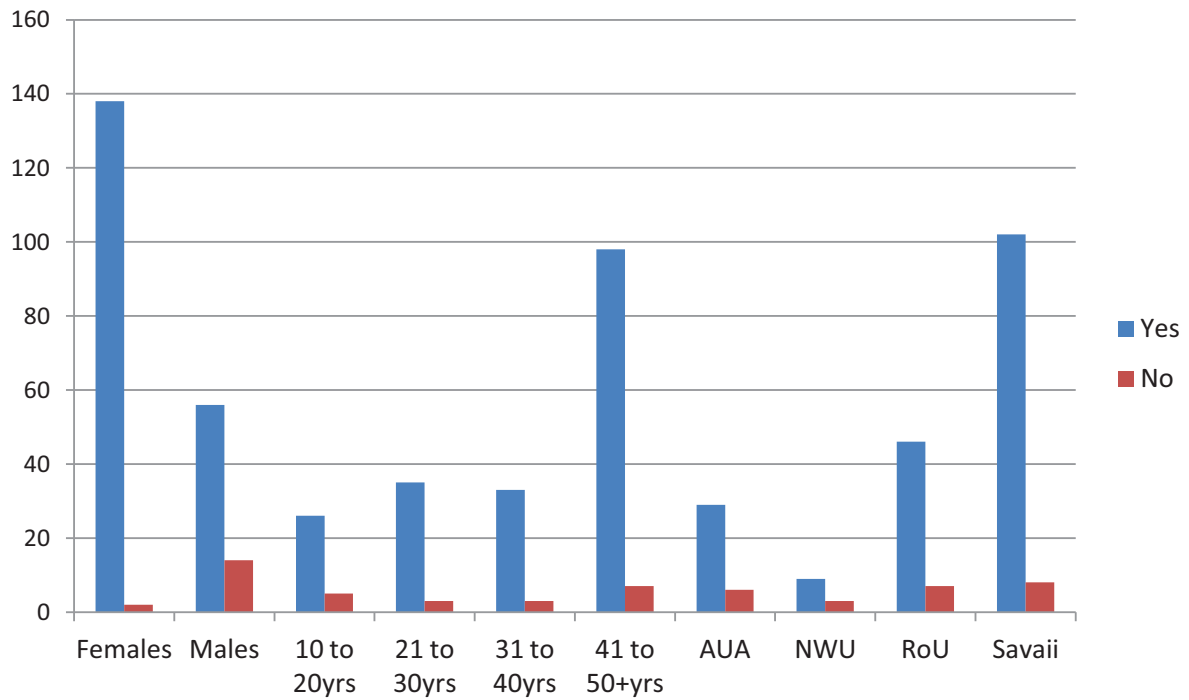
1. Why does Samoa need women in Parliament?
2. What are the reasons and challenges behind the underrepresentation of women in Parliament?
3. What are the issues facing women Parliamentarians?
4. What is the Government of Samoa's position on the issue?
5. How can this problem be solved in Samoa?

**APPENDIX 6**  
**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE NEED TO HAVE**  
**WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENT**

**Table 5(a): Respondents' perceptions on the need to have women in the Parliament**

	Females	Males	10 to 20yrs	21 to 30yrs	31 to 40yrs	41 to 50+yrs	Apia Urban Area	North West Upolu	Rest of Upolu	Savaii
Yes	152	42	26	35	33	98	29	9	46	102
No	2	14	5	3	3	7	6	3	7	8

**Graph 5: Respondents' perceptions on the need to have women in the Parliament**

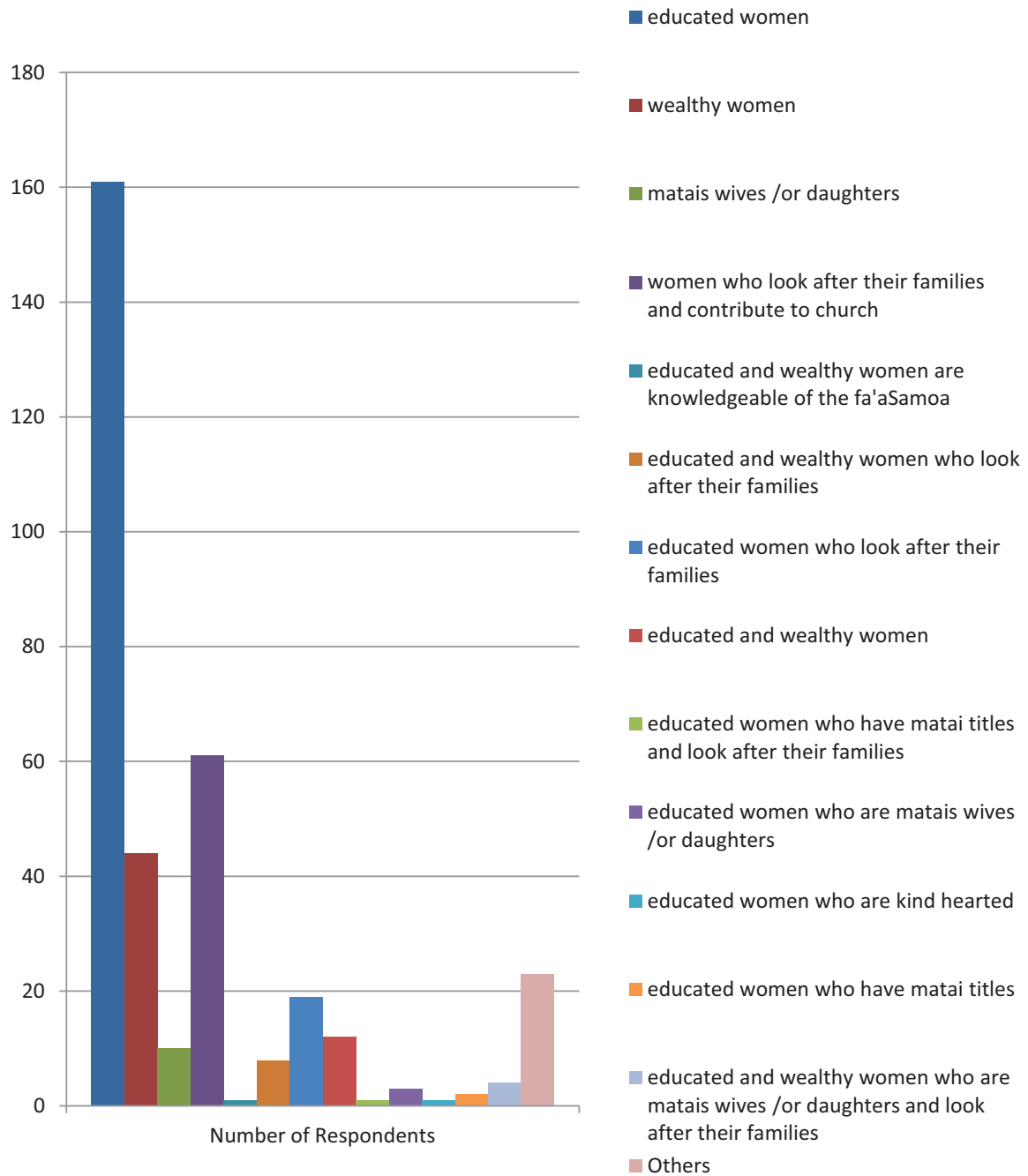


**Table 5(b): Respondents' perceptions on women who should be in the Parliament**

<b>Responses</b>	
Educated women	161
Women with financial status & support	44
Wives and/or daughters of matais	10
Women who looked after their families & churches	61
Educated, wealthy & knowledgeable in the fa'aSamoa	1
Educated, wealthy and who look after their families and contribute to churches	8
Educated women who look after the families and contribute to churches	19
Educated & wealthy women	12
Educated women who look after their families and contribute to churches and who have matai titles	1
Educated women who are wives and/or daughters of chiefs	3
Educated women who are kind hearted towards the people	1
Educated women who have matai titles	2
Educated women who are wealthy, wives and/or daughters of matais, who look after their families and contribute to the church	4

*Note: The total number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because multiple responses were possible.*

**Graph 6: Respondents' perceptions on women who should be in the Parliament**



**APPENDIX 7**

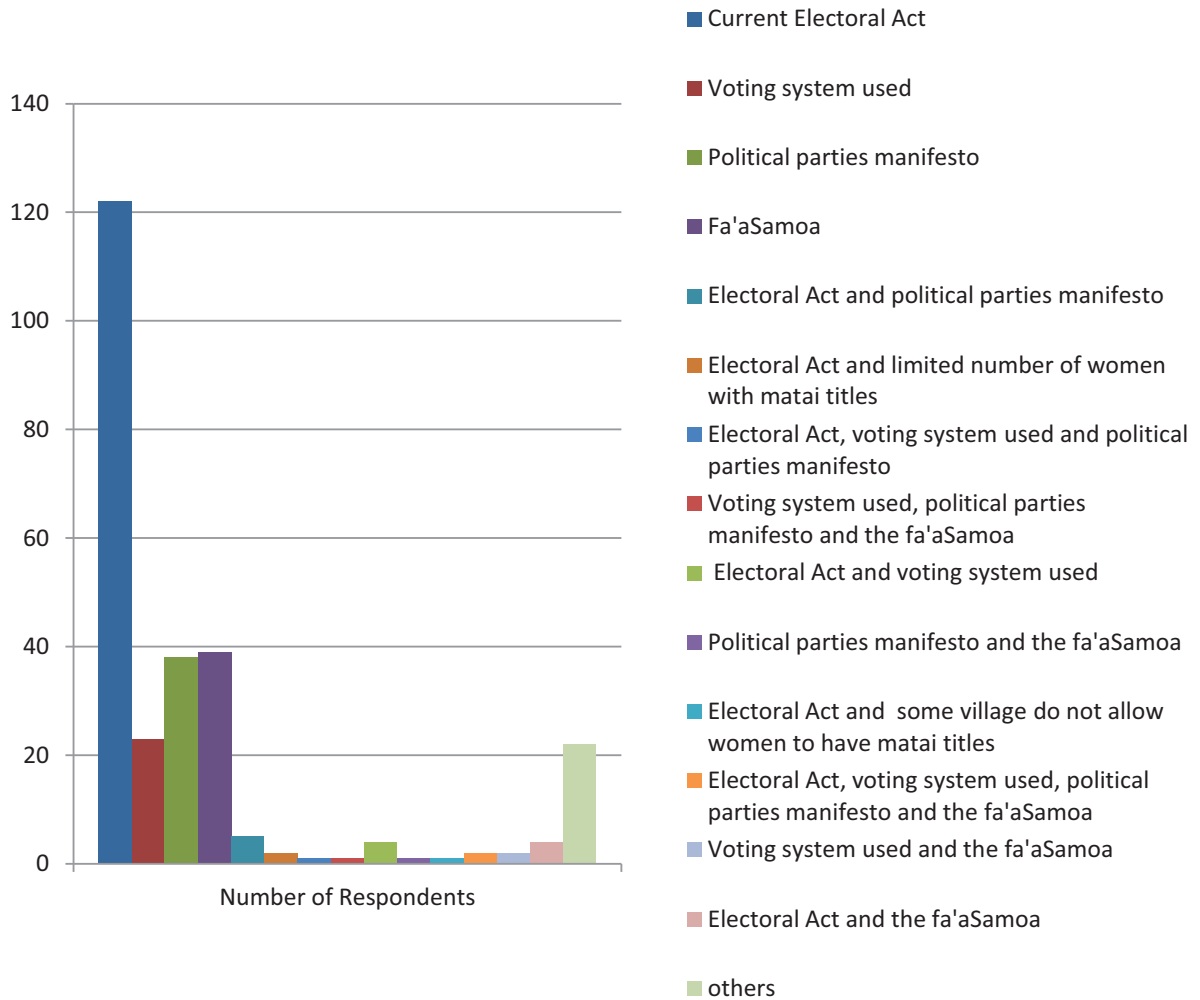
**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE REASONS FOR THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENT**

**Table 6: Respondents' perceptions on the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the Parliament**

Responses	
Electoral Act	122
Electoral voting system used	23
Political Parties mandate	38
Fa'aSamoa	39
Electoral Act and political parties	5
Electoral Act and need to have more women with matai titles	2
Electoral Act, electoral voting system and political parties	1
Electoral voting system, political parties and the faa'Samoa	1
Electoral Act and electoral voting system	4
Political parties and the fa'aSamoa	1
Electoral Act and some villages do not allowed women to have matai titles	1
Electoral Act, electoral voting system, political parties and the fa'aSamoa	2
Electoral voting system & the fa'aSamoa	2
Electoral Act and the fa'aSamoa	4

*Note: The total number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because multiple responses were possible.*

**Graph 7: Respondents' perceptions on reason for the low representation of women in the Parliament**





## APPENDIX 8

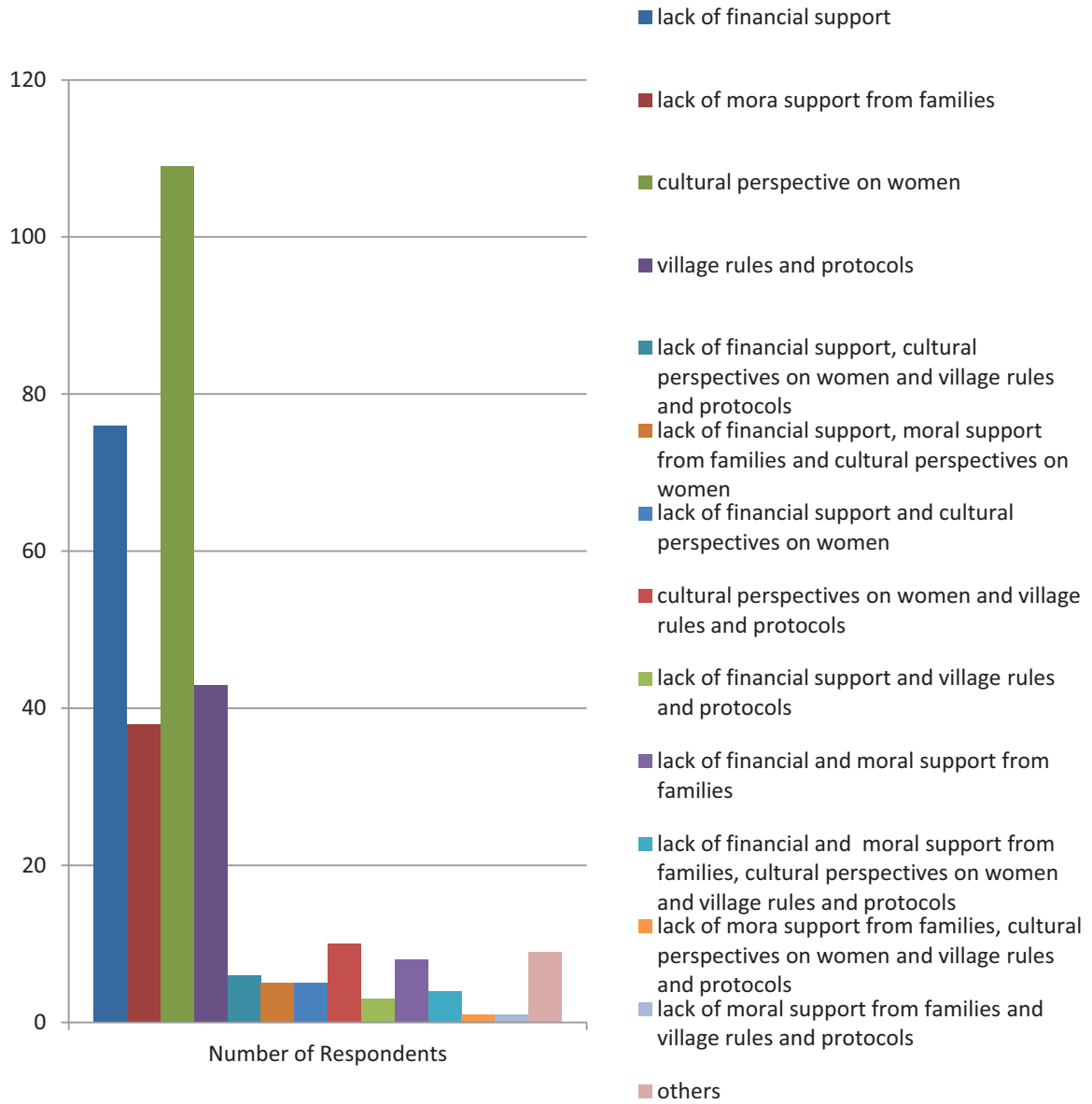
### RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES FOR THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENT

**Table 7: Respondents' perceptions on the challenges facing women who wish to enter the Parliament**

Responses	
Lack of financial support	76
Lack of moral support from families	38
Cultural perspective that a woman's place is in the house	109
Villages rules and protocols	43
Lack of financial support, cultural perspective and village rules and protocols	6
Lack of financial and moral support and cultural perspective	5
Lack of financial support and cultural perspective	5
Cultural perspective and village rules and protocols	10
Lack of financial support & villages rules & protocols	3
Lack of financial and moral support from families	8
Lack of financial and moral support from families, cultural perspective and village rules and protocols	4
Lack of moral support from families, cultural perspective and villages rules and protocols	1
Lack of moral support from families and villages rules and protocols	1

*Note: The total number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because multiple responses were possible.*

**Graph 8: Respondents perceptions on challenges facing women who wish to enter the Parliament**



**APPENDIX 9**

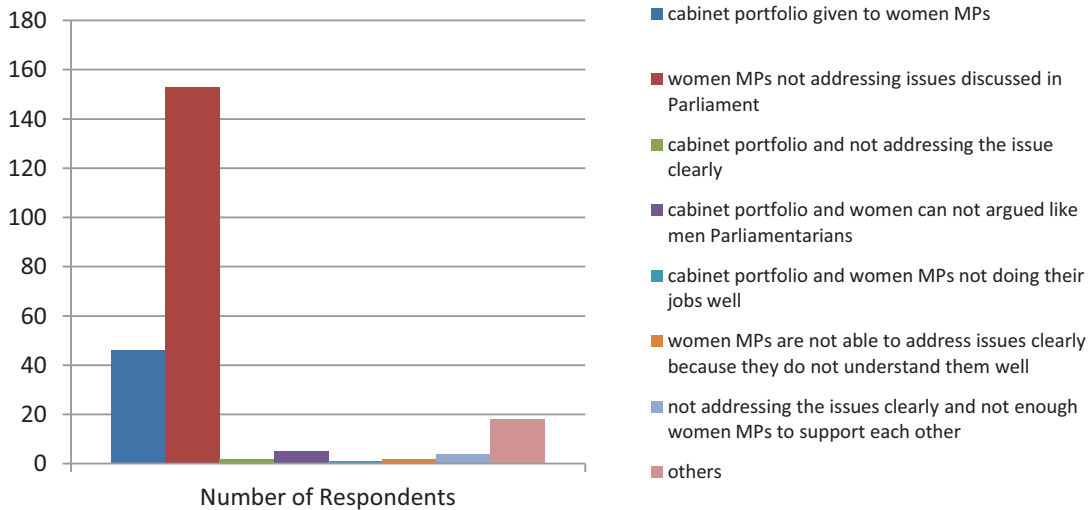
**RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS ON THE ISSUES FACING FORMER AND CURRENT WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENT**

**Table 8: Respondents’ perceptions on the issues facing former and current women in the Parliament**

Responses	
Cabinet portfolios given to women	46
Not addressing issues discussed in Parliament	153
Cabinet portfolios and not addressing the issues	2
Cabinet portfolios and women can not fight like men in Parliament	3
Cabinet portfolio and not faithful in performing their duties	1
Not addressing the issues because they are not aware of them	2
Not addressing the issues and there are not many women in Parliament for support	4
Cabinet Portfolio and cannot fight like men in Parliament	2

*Note: The total number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because multiple responses were possible.*

**Graph 9: Respondents’ perceptions on the challenges facing former and current women in the Parliament**



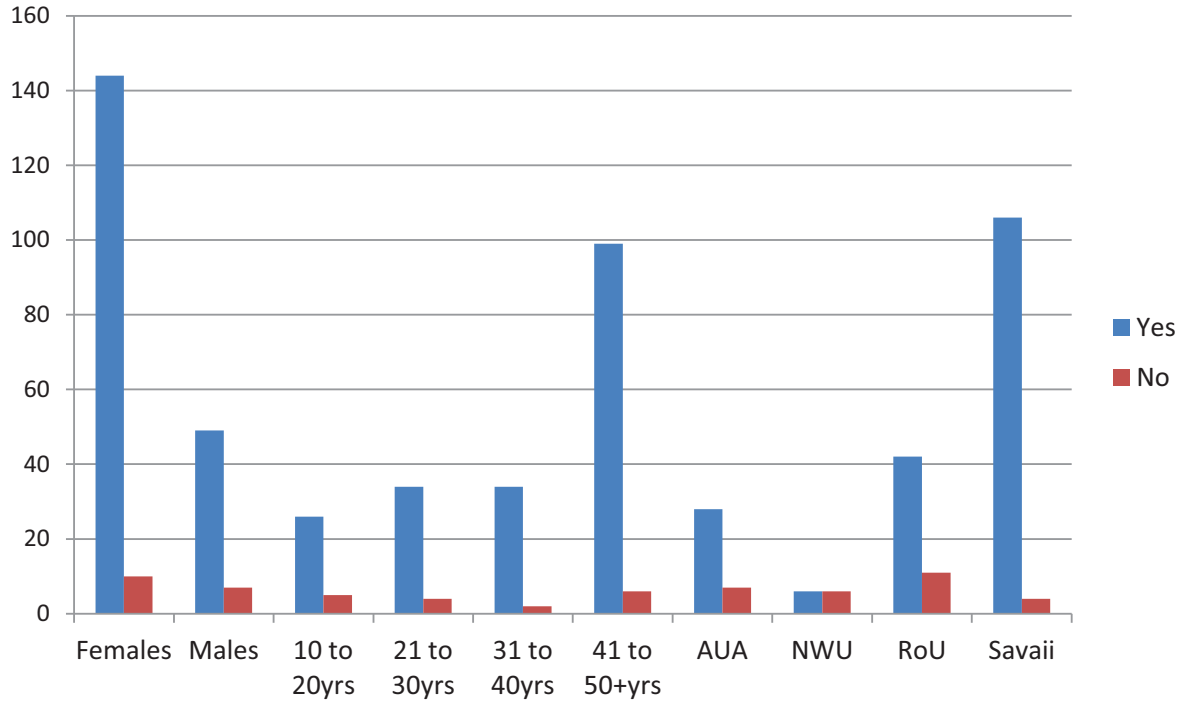
**APPENDIX 10**

**RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA'S SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUE**

**Table 9: Respondents' perceptions on the need for Government solutions to address this issue in Samoa**

	Females	Males	10 to 20yrs	21to 30yrs	31 to 40yrs	41 to 50+yrs	Apia Urban Area	North West Upolu	Rest of Upolu	Savaii
Yes	144	49	26	34	34	99	28	6	42	106
No	10	7	5	4	2	6	7	6	11	4

**Graph 10: Respondents' perceptions on Government solutions to address this issue in Samoa**



**APPENDIX 11**

**RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS ON SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN SAMOA**

**Table 10: Respondents’ perceptions on the solutions and recommendations to increase women’s representation in Parliament**

<b>Responses</b>	
To amend the electoral act	88
Change the current political system	27
Establish funding for women candidates to encourage and support them	70
Conduct voting and candidate education programs for women	69
Establish funding for women candidates to encourage and support them, and Conduct voting and candidate education programs for women	6
To amend the electoral act and change the current political system	7
To amend the electoral act, establish funding for women candidates to encourage and support them and conduct voting and candidate education programs for women	6
Change the current political system and conduct voting and candidate education programs for women	5
To amend the electoral act and conduct voting and candidate education programs for women	3
To amend the electoral act and establish funding for women candidates to encourage and support them	6
Change the current political system and establish funding for women candidates to encourage and support them	11
To amend the electoral act, change the current political system , establish funding for women candidates to encourage and support them and conduct voting and candidate education programs for women	2

*Note: The total number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because multiple responses were possible.*

**Graph 11: Respondents' perceptions on the solutions and recommendations to increase women's representation in the Parliament**

