




TUPOU TERTIARY INSTITUTE RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTRE

VOTERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN AS LEADERS IN TONGA

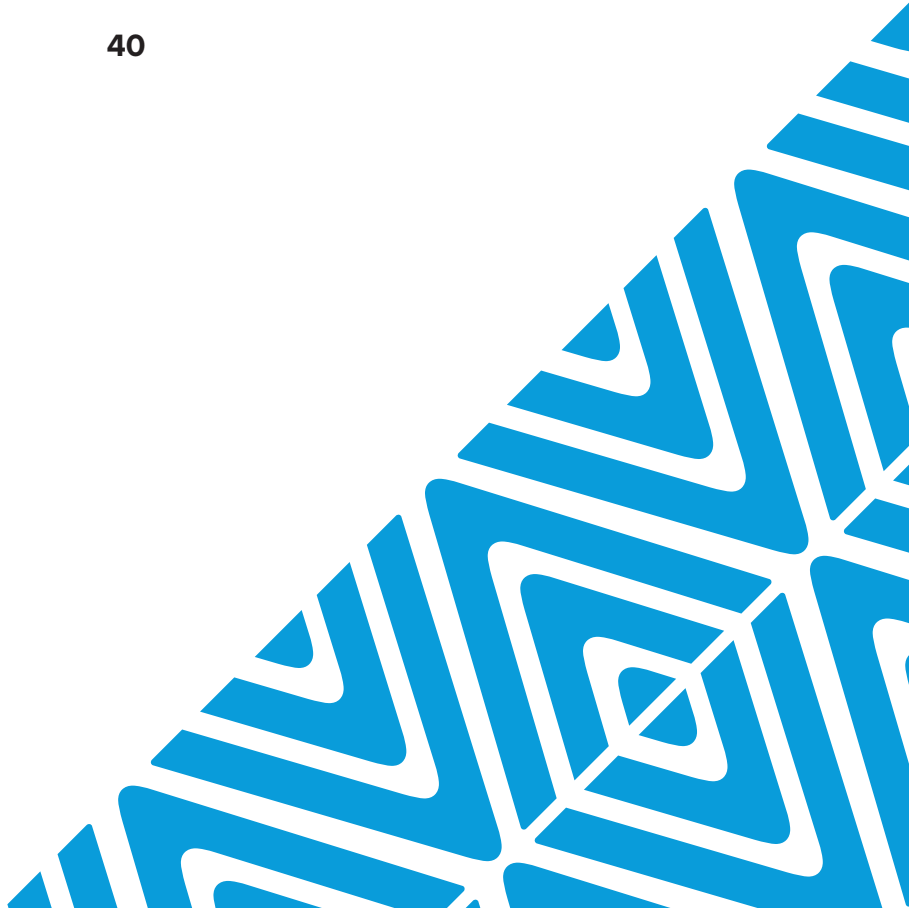


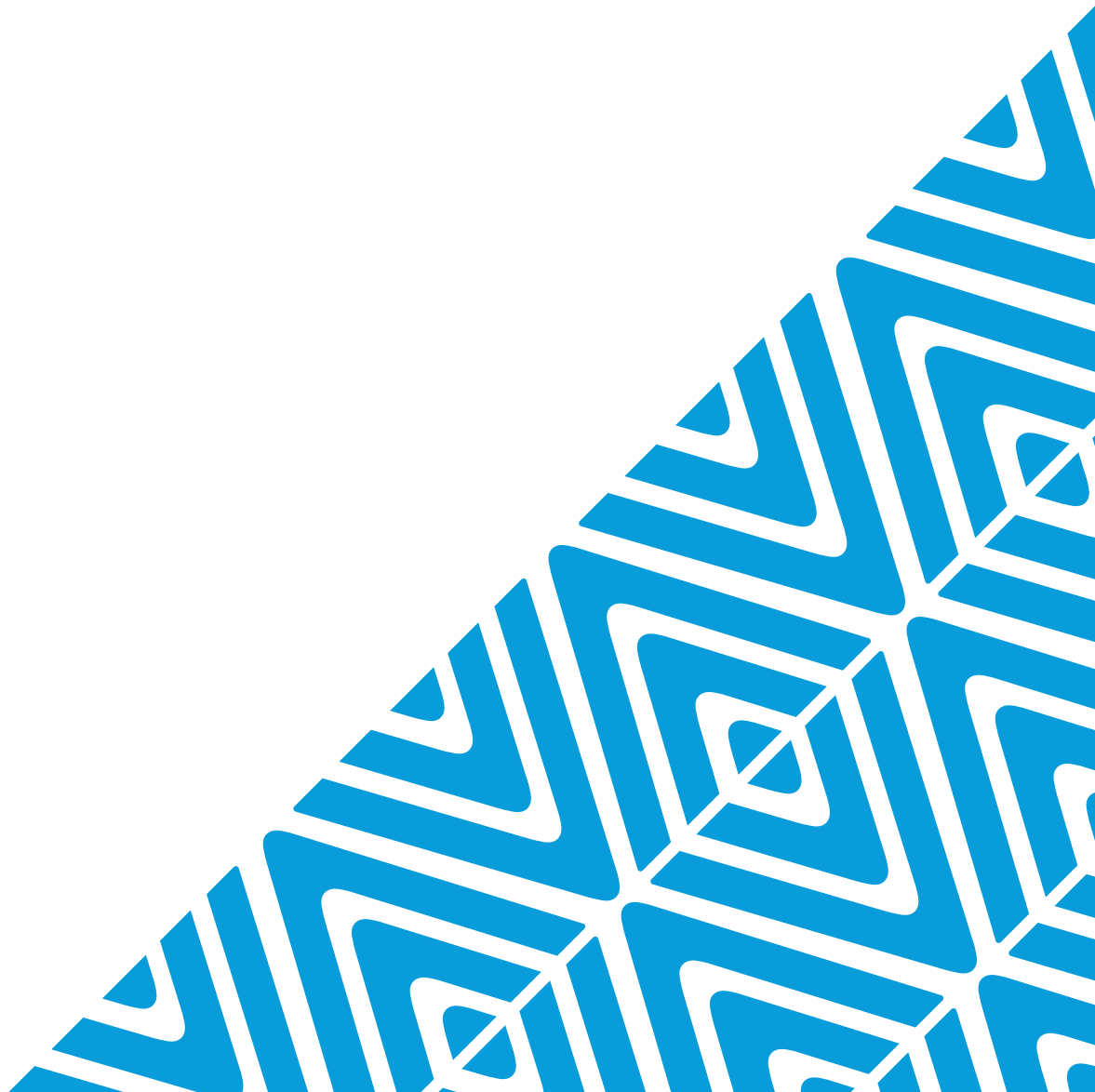


This research was funded through Balance of Power initiative in Tonga, in 2020. The research was led by Dr. 'Ungatea Fonua Kata and Vanessa Lolohea, who also wrote this report. The research team included: 'Ofa Pakalani, Tangiadra Vuniwaga, Tupetama Ve'etutu, Mosese Vakalahi, Brandon Luani, Lu'isa Afu, Asipau Potesio, 'Eseta Tuamei'uta, Pea Fatafehi, Mele Salata Veatupu, Mapa Kaufusi, 'Akanesi Fifita, 'Oloka Pasimi, Sione Huti Angianganga, Sione Lonitenisi, Soni Halahuni, Tauleva Lutolofi, Paula Fifita, Tevesi Tu'ipulotu, Uailupe Fonua, Siutaisa Movete, 'Ilaisaane Fonua, Patricia Halaifonua.

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Executive Summary

This study was funded by Balance of Power, as one of its initiatives for its Tonga programme. The aim of this study was to investigate the perception of Tongan voters in regards to women's involvement in decision making platforms with the view to better understand realistic situations which Tongan women face in the family, the community and in national political platforms, such as parliament.

The study adapted a survey questionnaire which Ms. 'Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Director of Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC), had developed in 2016, to support her Master of Law thesis. Ms Guttenbeil-Likiliki's research investigated why there continues to be a low number of women representatives in parliament, even though there were democratic changes to Tonga's constitution in 2010 and 2014.

In this study, questionnaires were given to 1000 men and women in all of the main islands of Tonga, including Tongatapu, Vava'u, Ha'apai, 'Eua and voters of the isolated islands of Niua Toputapu and Niua Fo'ou.

In line with the Guttenbeil-Likiliki's study, this research found:

- 61% of respondents considered that the Tonga family unit, "fāмили" is hierarchical, with men at the top of the hierarchy and therefore at the head of the Tongan family.
- 69% of respondents considered that mothers/women should stay at home with children while fathers/man should attend and participate in village (fono) meetings.
- 58% of respondents considered it appropriate that the father/man should go to work while the working mother/woman should stay home to look after a sick child.
- 80% of respondents felt that a woman, staying in her husband's village, could participate in village meetings if she has been involved in village activities.
- 65% of respondents considered that it was inappropriate for a mother to advise her husband to allow his daughters to inherit his land.
- 52% of respondents considered that it was appropriate for a Tongan mother to be a wage earner while the father remains at home to conduct domestic chores.
- 66% of respondents believed that fathers and mothers should have equal access to financial income.
- 80% of respondents recognized the privileged role of "mehekitanga" (father's sister) in the Tongan family.
- 57% believed that men should lead in the village while 57% believed that **both** males and females could lead in the workplace.
- 53% considered that **both** men and women could lead in parliament, but both male and female respondents were more likely to consider men as the 'best' leader in this area.
- 52% stated that they would vote for a male candidate over a female candidate with exactly the same qualifications.
- 92% considered men were more likely to have the right skills and experience for parliament.



1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the project

Tonga has recognized the importance of promoting gender equality to achieve sustainable development outcomes by launching its first National Policy on Gender and Development in 2001 with the vision that all men, women and children and the family as a whole will achieve equal access to economic, socio political and religious opportunities and benefits by 2025. The policy was revised in 2014 with emphasis on six strategic outcome areas of which one is to: **“Increase women’s leadership and equitable political representation”**.

This is an indication that the Tongan government recognizes the centrality of women’s political participation to the national goals of democracy and sustainable development. Although women have enjoyed the right to vote and stand for election since 1951 and Tonga has shown some progress in women’s leadership in other domains such as in the family, public service, private sector and academia, there is persistent resistance to the acceptability of women in roles of elected political leadership. A gap in our understanding and knowledge is why and how women’s leadership can be so readily accepted and legitimized in some sectors in Tonga, but not yet in the political sphere.

The under-representation of women in parliament is a global, regional and national challenge. A look at democratic political institutions around the world reveals that although women are half the world’s population, they are not proportionally represented, with women representing a quarter of the world’s parliamentarians (IPU 2020). Women parliamentarians are rarer still across the Pacific, comprising less than 10% of the region’s elected officials (UNDP 2020). In Tonga, only six women have been elected as members of parliament over the past 69 years, including two women elected at the last election of 2017. A third woman was appointed as Minister of Health, increasing the number of women MPs in Tonga to three in 2021. At the local level, only one woman has ever been elected to the position of District Officer in the 2014 elections. In the 2019 Local Government Elections, no woman was elected among the 23 District Officers; and of the 134 positions for Town Officers, six women (4.5%) were elected in the 2019 elections.

While there are a number of explanations for this imbalance, a key driver is in the politics of power: power is still seen as a man’s preserve, by women and men alike. A recent survey (Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2019) showed that 71% of eligible female voters and 58% of the eligible male voters believe leadership roles, particularly in parliament, are best suited to men. This is despite the fact that women can, and do, come together to discuss political issues, and issues that directly concern them including child abuse, domestic violence, family assistance, health, water and sanitation, and so on. The social norm that men are ‘natural’ decision makers and political leaders is a major hindrance to women’s representation, involvement and participation in elections and political bodies.

If we are to make a real difference in women’s lives in Tonga, there is a critical need to address the way in which women’s leadership is perceived in society. To date, research and development programs aiming to support women’s pathways to politics in Tonga have concentrated – unsuccessfully – on the provision of pre-election technical training for individual candidates (the ‘supply side’) rather than approaches which amplify the perceived value of potential women candidates among the constituents (the ‘demand side’). What has not been addressed are the attitudinal blockages that, despite increasing numbers of women running for election, result in a miniscule proportion of elected female leaders.

1.2 Research Objectives

This targeted research initiative aimed to:

- provide an updated and nuanced understanding of the attitudinal barriers, assumptions and concerns that prevent potential voters in Tonga from voting for women candidates.
- uncover specific reasons why both men and women voters are not willing to vote for women.
- identify areas of influence that would be most powerful in shifting biases against women.

1.3 Research Partners

This project was a partnership initiative between Balance of Power, Tupou Tertiary Institute and Tonga National Youth Congress. Balance of Power, an Australian Government funded regional programme, aims to contribute to a 'better balance' in women's and men's leadership roles and opportunities and support **local** actors and organisations working to achieve **inclusive leadership** across all domains. Tupou Tertiary Institute Research & Training Centre (TTI RTC) specializes in providing research platforms for tertiary students to be included in research that is locally driven and provide baseline data to local organisations. TTI RTC also strongly advocates for partnerships and partnered with Tonga National Youth Congress to engage with a youth cohort, to bring a more open mindset and perspectives and their own influencing networks. Participation in this research also strengthened the research capacity of student and youth researchers.

The research was fully funded by Balance of Power.

1.4 Contributions of the Research

Findings from this research will be used to inform community leaders as well as policy makers so that interventions can be better designed to change mindsets and people's perceptions of women leaders in Tonga. The findings can also be used by the organisations that work to strengthen advocacy for women campaigns to address these barriers and showcases women's capabilities and leadership legitimacy accordingly, using identified high-potential influence channels.

It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide evidence from which government leaders and development partners might implement effective strategies to enhance women's political participation and leadership in Tonga.

2. Methodology

This study used a mixed methods approach, using quantitative and qualitative methods: including a questionnaire survey of 1000 respondents.

2.1 Research Team

The study was coordinated and authored by two lead researchers from TTI RTC & TNYC. Each lead researcher had a small team of ten student and youth researchers, which was co-ordinated by a small group team leader. While the two small groups combined for research trainings and weekly report meetings, the questionnaire surveys were conducted by each of their small groups. The “team” method assisted co-ordination in and amongst the researchers, especially in terms of logistical survey arrangements.

2.2 Study Areas

The study included respondents from the major island groups of Tonga: the main island of Tongatapu, Vava’u, Ha’apai and ‘Eua. Traveling to the most isolated outer islands of Niua Fo’ou and Niua Toputapu was a logistical challenge, so the team surveyed voters who had moved from the two Niua islands and currently reside in Tongatapu. These Tongatapu-based voters have continued to vote for representatives of the two Niua constituencies. The percentage of respondents selected from each island group was used according to the percentage per population per island in the latest 2016 census.

2.3 Research Methods

2.3.1 Questionnaire

The study adapted the survey questionnaire conducted by Ms. ‘Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki for her Master of Law Thesis (2019), in which, for the first time, a gender and leadership questionnaire was used to gauge Tongan voters’ perceptions on women as leaders.

In discussion, and with the agreement of Ms. Guttenbeil-Likiliki, lead researchers decided to include the survey questionnaire which she used, firstly for comparability reasons but more importantly, because the story-telling methodology was felt to be the most appropriate for interacting with Tongans. The views of respondents were not directly requested, instead they were asked for their views, in regards to the stories. This “deflected” view, was considered culturally appropriate for Tongan respondents, who can be quite uncomfortable if asked directly for their personal views, especially on issues that can be perceived as ‘political. Ten stories from Ms. Guttenbeil-Likiliki were used and an additional ten stories were added by researchers to gauge respondents views of traditional and cultural areas of influence for Tongan women.

The survey questionnaire had five main sections. Section 1 asked for respondents’ views on the Tongan family hierarchical status. Section 2 used an indigenous story-telling methodology to show respondents’ beliefs in regards to roles and positions at different levels of Tongan social fabric.

These stories focused on:

- traditional hierarchies within the Tongan families,
- role of men and women in the traditional Tongan home,
- reversal of the ‘traditional roles’ of Tongan men and women,
- responsibilities in living within a close-knit community,
- roles of influence within the Tongan family/kāinga (i.e. mehekitanga/paternal aunt)
- women inheriting land,
- participation of women in local decision-making meetings,
- women in decision making positions in the churches, and
- preference for male or female parliamentary representatives.

The new stories were drafted and reviewed with the research team and tested amongst colleagues for clarification. The survey was expected to be around 45 minutes and therefore some of the stories were shortened to improve respondents' interest in the survey were maintained.

In Section 3, the questionnaire asked respondents to state their preference for men or women's leadership in these areas. Section 4 presented respondents with two profiles (one of a man and the other of a woman) which were exactly the same and to indicate which candidate they would vote for and why. The last section, Section 5, presented reasons why there might be less women representatives in parliament despite the 2010 and 2014 political changes. Respondents were asked to select their top three reasons.

The structure and content of the questionnaire was developed in consultation with Balance of Power national and international staff as well as with the Chief Statistician, Ministry of Statistics.

2.4 Research Training

A week-long training workshop was conducted by lead researchers with the TTI and TNYC team leaders and students and youth researchers. Two pilots were conducted near the end of the training workshop. Feedback from the pilot experience, reconfirmed and strengthened student and youth researchers' understanding of research protocols in the Tongan context.

2.5 Study Duration

The study took place from November 2020 to April, 2021; fieldwork and data collection during November and December 2020, data entry in January and February and data analysis in March 2021. Report writing was conducted in April 2021.

2.6 Data Collection, Entry and Analysis

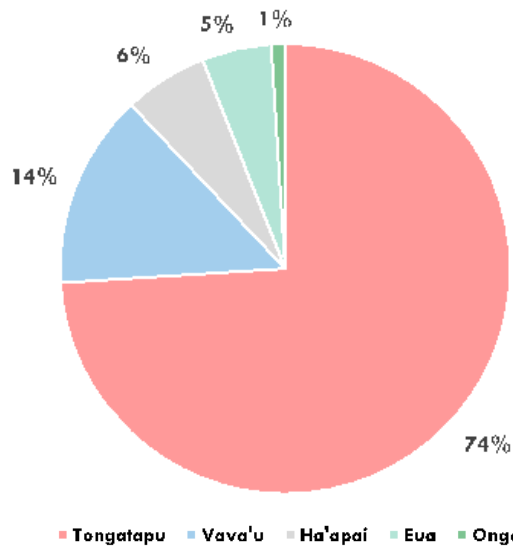
The quantitative data was numerically counted using Microsoft Excel. The quantitative items were straightforward. The qualitative data was analysed in a series of data analysis workshops by a team consisting of the lead researchers and team leaders. Each team member was given a cohort of data from the collated overall data. Each team member coded the responses according to key words and main ideas which were then categorised into main themes. At each analysis workshop, the team visited their codings, categories and themes as a group and checked to ensure that their categorizing process was consistent with each other. This process was repeated until all the qualitative data analysis, was completed.

This cyclic and reiterative data analysis of the qualitative data allowed the data analysis team to also double check and confirm the quantitative data.

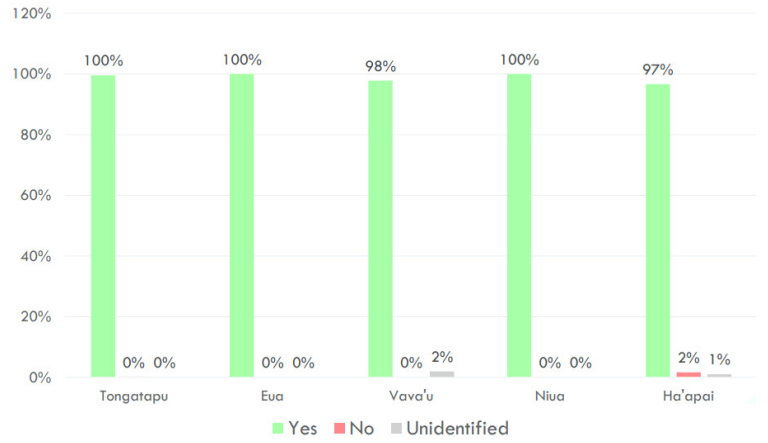
Lead researchers and team leaders worked closely with town officers to identify persons within the villages that had voted or would be of voting age.

2.7 Respondent Demographics

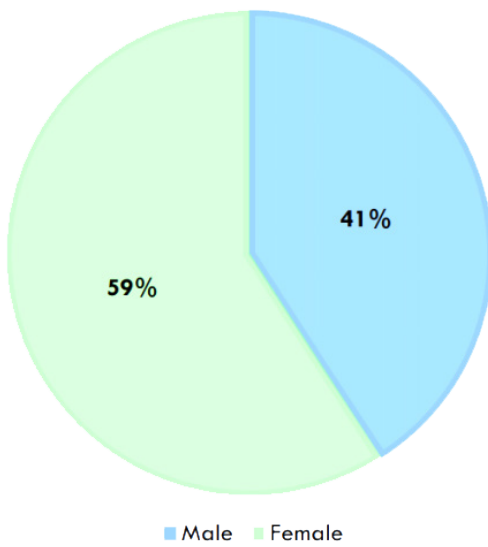
Location (Main Island & Outer Islands)



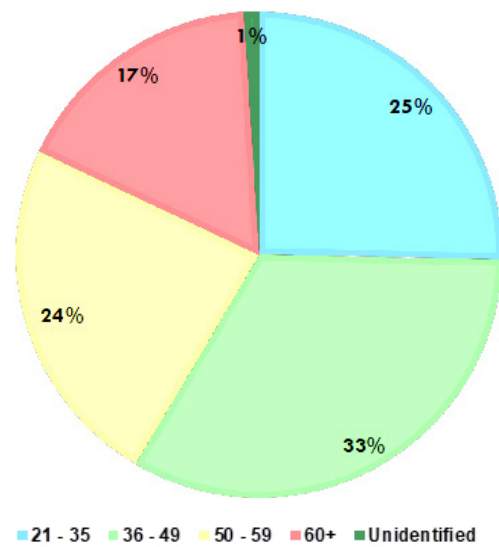
Voter Status



Sex



Age



2.7.1 Location

The study used the latest 2016 Census for the proportional number of respondents to be selected from each island group, as in Table 1 below.

Island Group	Total Population/per election	%	Number
Tongatapu	74679	74	740
Vava'u	15740	14	140
Ha'apai	6144	6	60
Eua	4950	5	50
Ongo Niua	1282	1	10
Total	102795	100	1000

Table 1: Survey sample number by main island

For the number of respondents in each island group, further proportional breakdown of numbers was done according to the census population numbers of each major district within each island group, such as that of the main island of Tongatapu as in Table 2:

Tongatapu District	Total Population	Proportion	Number (out of 740)
Hihifo (Eastern District)	12268	12	121
Hahake District	14160	14	141
Central District	12999	13	127
City District	35184	35	351

Table 2: Breakdown of survey sample number Tongatapu

2.7.2 Sex

There were more female respondents than male. The imbalance was due to the nature of Tongan community mobility; researchers, having consulted with town officers and having been provided with a list of proposed names, would arrive at the designated addresses only to find that these persons had moved to other parts of the island. The survey participants on the list then had to be replaced by other members of the same family, who were eligible to vote.

2.7.3 Voters Status

Almost all respondents were eligible to vote meaning that they responded in the questionnaire that they had already registered at the Voters Department. Lead researchers had consulted closely with Manager of the Electoral Commission, for the electoral voters register, as well as town officers who were key to confirming the presence of voters in their communities.

2.7.4 Age

Respondents were grouped into four age cohorts, 21-35, 36-49, 50-59, over 60 years. Twenty-one is the legal age in Tonga for registration to vote. Lead researchers and team leaders worked closely with town officers to get lists of respondents which had voters with relatively balanced age-groups.

3. Results

Section 1 Representation of Tongan social hierarchy in family setting

In this first section, respondents were given three diagrams, as shown below, and were asked, “Which of the following diagrams represent your belief about the hierarchy within the Tongan family?”. Diagram 1 was a vertical hierarchy, with the father at the top and children at the bottom. Diagram 2 had mother and father on equal status with the children below them. Diagram 3 was a horizontal relationship, with father, mother and children having equal status.

(Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2019, p. 87)

Diagram 1



Diagram 2

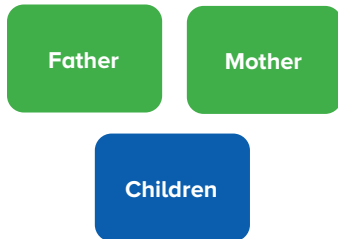
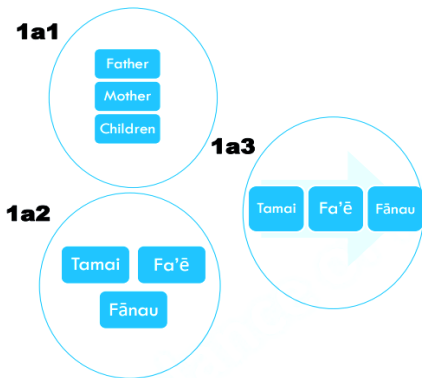
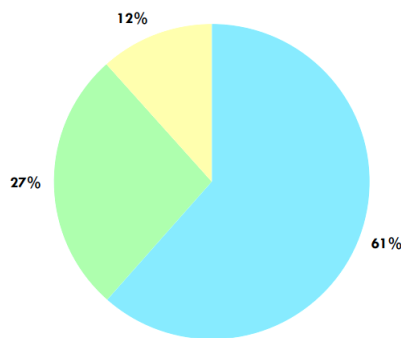


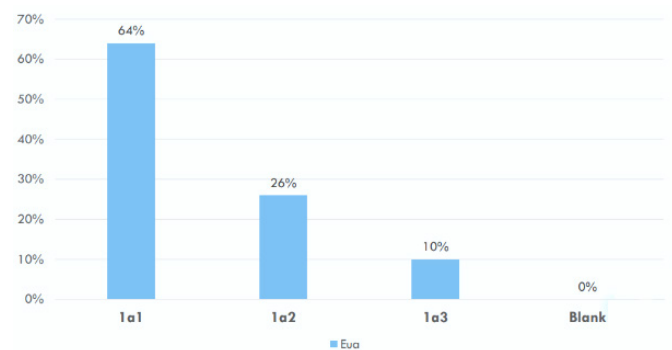
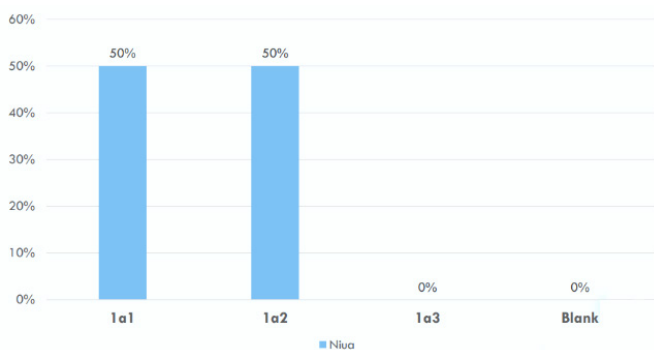
Diagram 3

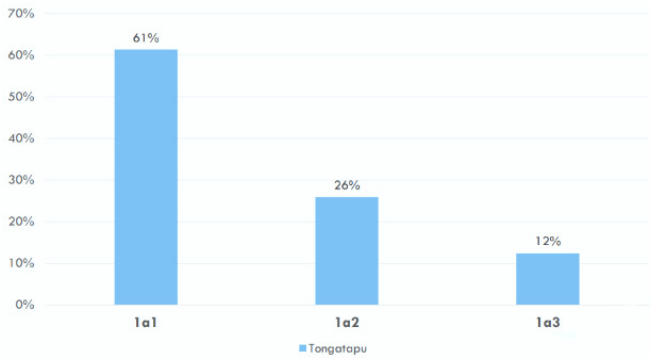
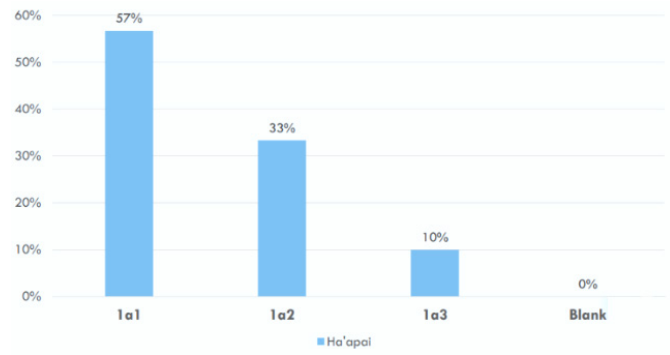
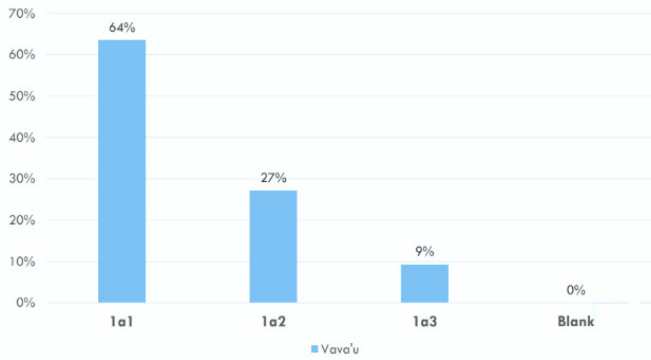


65% of the respondents believed that the first diagram represented the Tonga family hierarchy. Respondents expressed that this was how it should be, with the father at the top, then the mother, then the children (Ko hono tonū pē ia, ke taki e tamai, hoko hake 'a e fa'ē). They felt that the mother's role is to support the father, and the children to follow them (poupou pē 'a e fa'ē, pea toki muimui atu fānau), that it was the role of mother and children to listen to the father (fakaongoongo 'a e fa'ē & fāmili ki he tamai), and that this hierarchy in Diagram 1, was biblical (FakaFolofola pē ia).

27% believed that mother and father had equal status and children at a lower level. They stated that father and mother discussed in partnership and with goodwill what will happen to the family (Alea'i fakataha 'e tamai mo e fa'ēe 'a e me'a he fāmili), they felt that both father and mother made the decisions collaboratively (na fakatou fai 'a e tu'utu'uni, tu'u fakataha, feongoongoi, uoungataha, felotoi, fepoupouaki, fefalala'aki, faka'uto'uta, 'a e Tamai mo e fa'ē).

12% believed that all members of the family, father, mother and children have equal status, stating that all should have a voice in the family (Totonu ke 'i ai pē honau le'o takitaha) and that it is now different era (kuonga kehe 'eni ia) most likely comparing the current era to the past. All the outer islands had the same trends as the overall trend, except for the respondents voting for the outer islands of Niua who had an equal number of respondents for both Diagram 1 and Diagram 2.

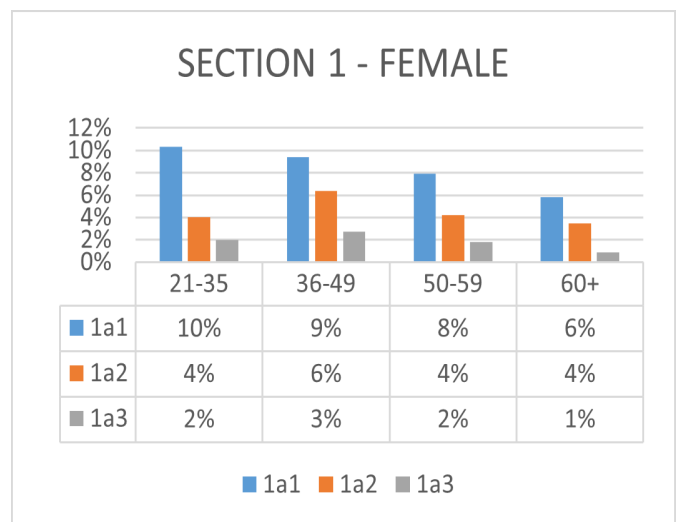
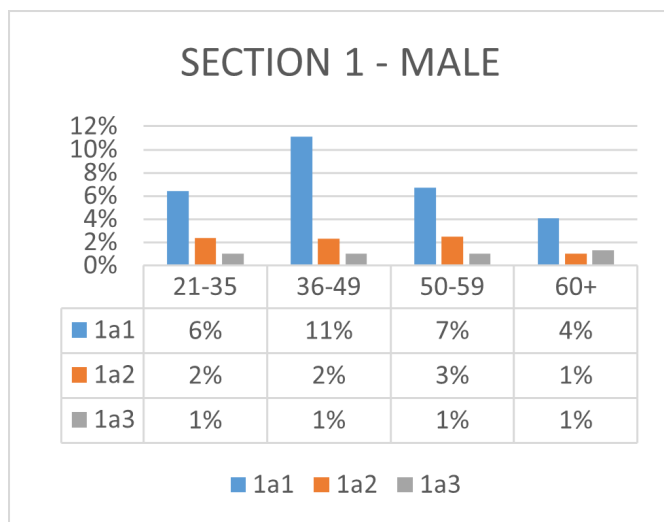




The survey conducted in 2016 by Ms. Guttenbeil-Likiliki, she found that 68% felt that Diagram 1 reflected the hierarchy in Tongan families, 30% chose the second diagram and only 2% chose Diagram 3. In comparing the results with the 2020 survey, the trend for Diagram 1 and Diagram 2 remains quite similar, the only significant trend is the increase of percentage who chose Diagram 3, from 2% in 2012 to 12% in 2020.

These responses show that, throughout Tonga people continue to strongly believe in the traditional hierarchy of the Tongan family, with the father on top of the hierarchy, then the mother and the children at the bottom of that hierarchy. This positioning of women as mothers, with their perceived role to 'support' or be secondary to the father, has to be recognized as a real hinderance to women's greater participation in the political arena.

Section 1 - 1a1, 1a2, 1a3. Representation of Social Hierarchy in Family Setting



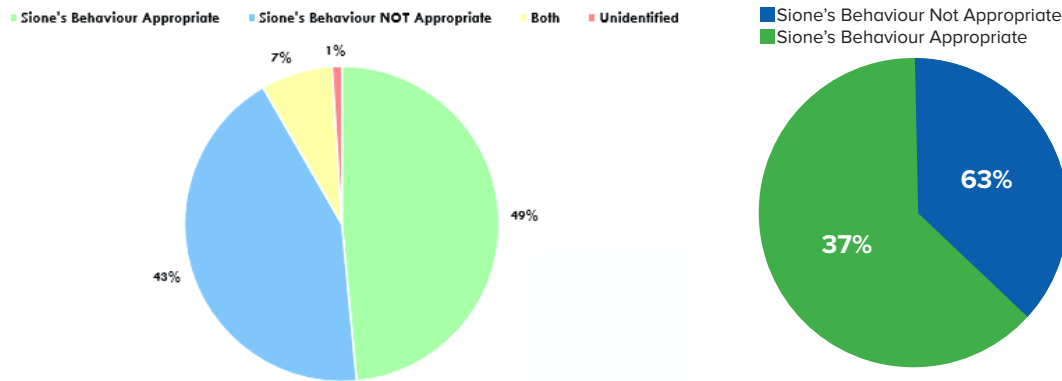
Section 2

In this section respondents were given twenty stories, which were mostly real-life events that have happened in Tonga and were asked to give their opinion on issues concerning the role of men and women in these incidents.

Story 1 - Sharing of earned income with relatives

In this story, Sione, husband to Mele and father of their seven children, had traveled overseas via the fruit picking scheme to obtain funds to renovate their current 2-bedroom house. Sione and Mele felt that they needed to enlarge their house for their growing children. On his return, Sione was approached by his mother, brother and niece to fund certain items, including church donation, school fees and wedding. Sione agreed to his relatives' requests and gave his money to help them. He then asked his wife, Mele, to consider taking a loan from the bank to make up for the money given to his other family members. Respondents were asked whether they believed it was appropriate for Sione to give his money to his family members.

Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2016



49% of respondents agreed that Sione giving out his money to his “fāmilī” (mother, brother, niece) was appropriate behavior. The main themes which respondents gave for their belief that Sione’s behavior was appropriate were mainly because Sione has responsibilities to his family and that Sione and Mele can still get some funding for their house through a loan, but that family responsibilities came first (*mahu’inga ‘a e fiema’u ‘a e fāmilī, ko e fale ‘e toe lava pē ‘o langa*) and that even though these requests were not part of their plans, sharing with family is very important (*‘aonga neongo ne ‘ikai ko ‘ena taumu’a ia ka ‘oku ‘aonga ki hono fāmilī he ‘oku ‘i ai e ‘aho ‘e hala, ‘i ai e ‘aho ‘e ma’u, mahu’inga ma’u pe mo’ui vahevahe*) and that it is much better to share and live in harmony with family, as not sharing with family is quite selfish (*‘Oku laka ange ‘a e fetokoni’aki mo fe’ofa’ofani ‘ae nofo ‘a e fāmilī ‘i ha’ate ma’u koloa mo siokita ki hoto fāmilī*). Respondents felt that Sione has a specific responsibility to look after his mother (*ko e fa’ēe ‘oku taha pē, ‘ave hono ‘inasi mo hoto fāmilī, kae toki nō pē ki he fale*) and that one day his mother will not be there to ask him for any other things (*ko e fa’ēe na’e kole ‘oku ‘ikai ko ha toe taha kehe, ‘i ai pē ‘a e ‘aho ‘e ‘ikai toe kole ‘a e fa’ēe*).

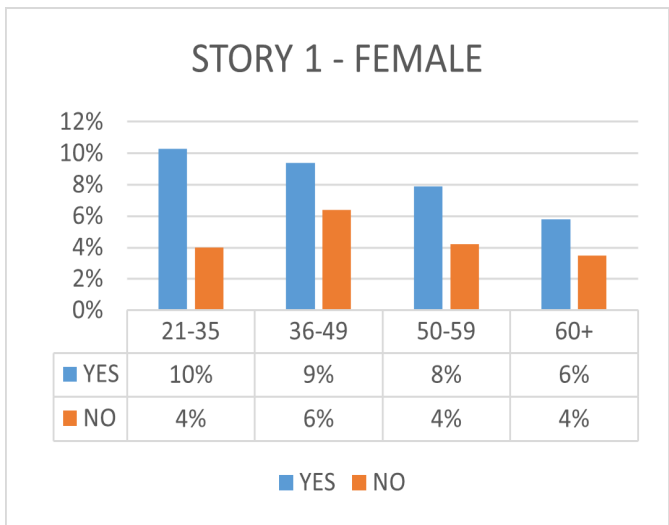
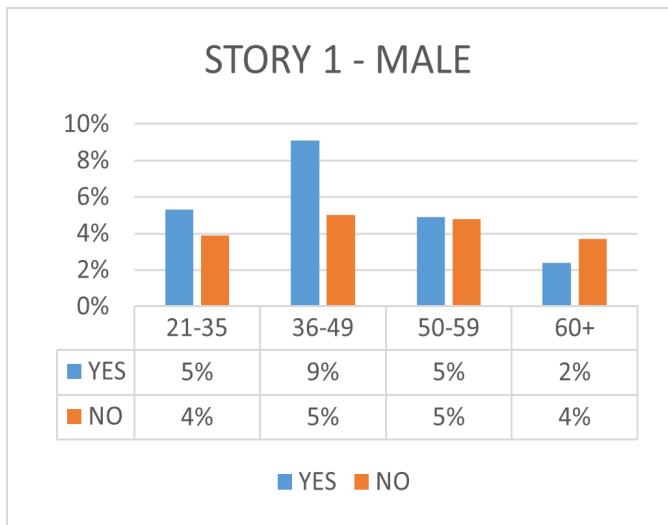
A slightly lower 43% of respondents felt strongly that Sione’s behavior was inappropriate and their reasons included that Sione and his wife had a plan and a vision, which he has now broken (*na ‘osi palani pē ki ai, toe veuki ‘ena palani hono fāmilī/ fokotu’u e me’a kehe, ha’u ia ‘o tufa silini*). This group of respondents also believed that Sione should have also consulted with his wife first and he should not have made a solo decision because his money is also his wife’s money and that his wife is now first priority, not his (extended) family (*‘aho ‘o e mali ‘oku tonu ke mu’omu’a pē ‘a Mele kia Sione pea mo hona fāmilī ‘e toki ki mui mai e kāinga ‘o Sione mo ‘enau ngaahi kole/totonu ke ha’u hono fāmilī ‘o kole kia Mele, he kuo mali ‘a Mele mo Sione pea kuo pule ‘a Mele ia*). In addition, they felt that Sione and Mele were not in a stable financial condition to be eligible for a loan, and that a loan will be quite detrimental to their family in the long run (*‘ikai ha ma’u’anga pa’anga, ko e toli pē/‘ikai ke ma’u ha pa’anga tu’upau ke totongi’aki ‘a e no, pea ‘e lahi ‘a e pa’anga ‘e mole he totongi fakafoki e no*). Another reason respondents gave was that Sione’s and Mele’s children were growing up, that their needs (for a more spacious house) should be priority issue for Sione (*Tokanga ia ki he fānau he kuo nau tokolahi/ Fanau ke ‘uluaki maau ia*).

Tongans continue to strongly perceive “fāmilī” as “extended family”, as is clear from the responses to Story 1. Sione’s sharing with his ‘kāinga’ or close relatives was first priority for him. However, despite the fact that some people believed that he should have consulted with his wife, Sione’s solo decision to give away their funds, was viewed agreeably by respondents. It would seem that in terms of decision making in the family, the dominant view is that the father/male has the legitimate voice and that women, as wives, to have a muted, secondary voice, ‘supportive’ to her husband.

When compared to the 2016 survey, respondents’ perceptions still followed a similar trend. However, there was a significant decrease of 14% in the perception of those who felt that Sione’s action was appropriate, from 63% in 2016 to 49% in 2020. There was an increase in the respondents who felt that Sione’s action was inappropriate, moving from 37% in 2016 to 43% in 2020.

This means that in terms of familial responsibilities, there has been an increase in the recognition that Sione giving out his seasonal fruit picking money, aimed for house extension, is inappropriate behavior. In addition, findings also showed that there was a decrease in the number of respondents who felt that Sione’s action was appropriate. The gap between those who had felt that Sione’s behavior was inappropriate, has been reduced. There is a growing recognition that perhaps Sione should focus more on his immediate family’s need.

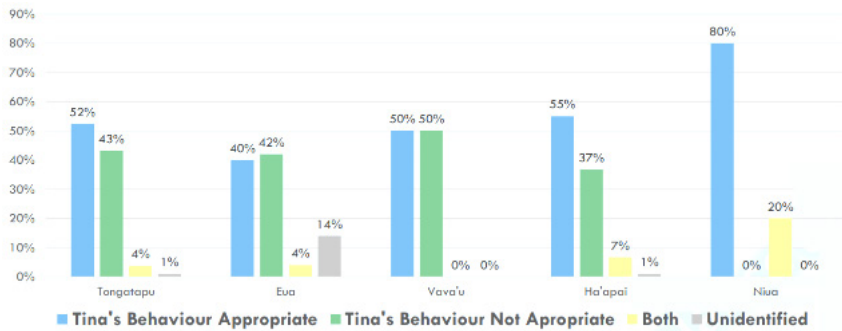
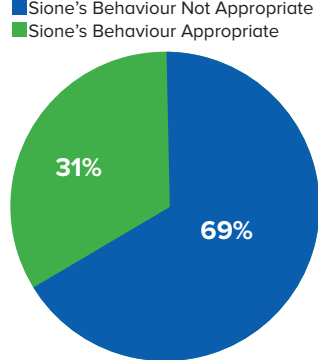
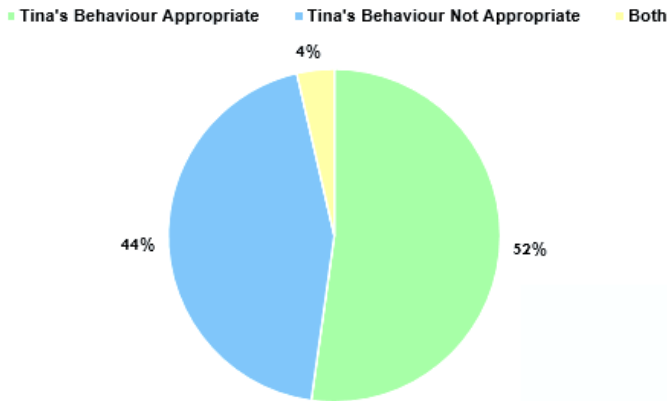
Section 2 - Story 1: Behaviour about sharing of earned income with relatives



Story 2 – Reversal of traditional roles, father as domestic homekeeper, mother as wage earner.

The second short story was about Tina and Pita, who had four children. Tina is the income earner and Pita stays with the children and does all of domestic chores. Tina sometimes stays at work and comes home late and is tired and falls asleep. Respondents were asked whether they felt Tina’s behavior was appropriate.

Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2016



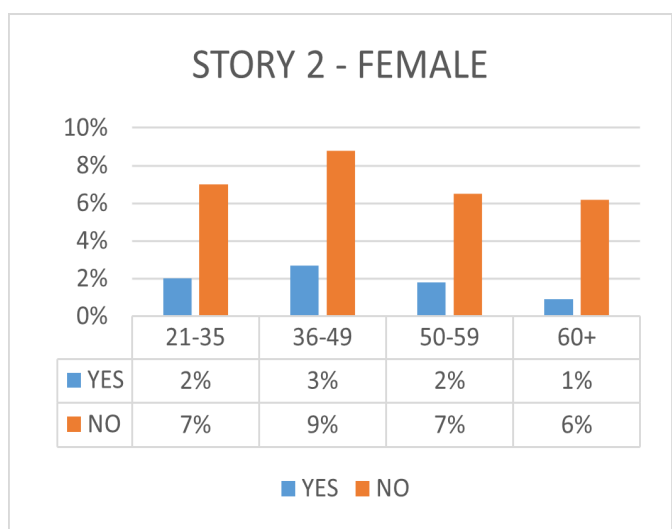
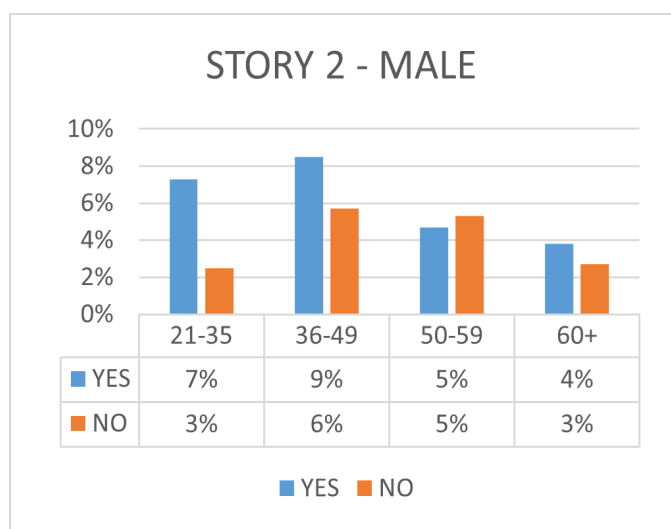
A greater number of respondents felt that Tina’s behavior was appropriate (52%) and this trend was reflected in all island groups. Respondents felt that since Pita was not working, Tina was the income earner (*Tina 'oku ne 'alu 'o fai 'a e ngāue pa'anga, nofo Pita fai ngāue 'i 'api, ngāue ma'a e fāmili 'oku 'ikai ko e ngāue ma'a e kaunga'api*), she was earning for their family to be able to conduct their responsibilities (*ke fua'aki 'a e kavenga*), that she already contributed to household duties because she had one day (Saturday) in which she helped out in family chores, that she

and her husband Pita had made a joint decision and therefore it was appropriate for Tina to behave as she did (*na'a na fuakava he 'aho mali ke na fetauhi'aki ki he 'aho 'o e mate/fetokoni'aki fakaemali*). One of the reasons given was that Tina should continue with her job, as it was rare for women to work as she is often reliant on her father or husband (*Malava ia 'o ngāue, kakai fefine tokolahi fakafalala ki he tamai mo e mali ke ngāue*) and so she should come home after a long day at work and have a rest.

44% of respondents believed that Tina's behavior was inappropriate. These respondents believed that even though she was the breadwinner, as wife and especially as mother to her children, Tina should still come home and conduct some household chores and not to leave all to Pita (*'oua pē 'e tuku kotoa 'a e ngafa 'i 'api ke fai kotoa 'e Pita he koe ngāue ia 'a'ana fa'e*) and that she needed to still spend more time at home (*si'isi'i hono taimi mo hono fāmili pea oku 'ikai 'uhinga 'ene ngāue ke ikai ke tokoni ai ki hono mali*). They considered that it was "fakavalevale" unwise and neglectful of Tina to be at work most of the time and that she should not stay overtime at work because it may cause problems to her family (*'Oku tonu pē ke toe lahi ange hono taimi 'i 'api pea 'oua 'e po'ulia mai he koe tupunga ia 'ae ngaahi palopalema/ nofo fuoloa ia he 'osi 'ae ngāue, ta 'oku fai nofo ia mo e pule ngāue, kae 'ikai ke 'ilo 'e he motu'a*). There was also the view that Tina should stay home whilst the man looks for a job (*tonu ke nofo 'a Tina 'i 'api 'o fai 'a e ngāue faka'api, kae 'alu 'a e motu'a 'o ngāue pa'anga*).

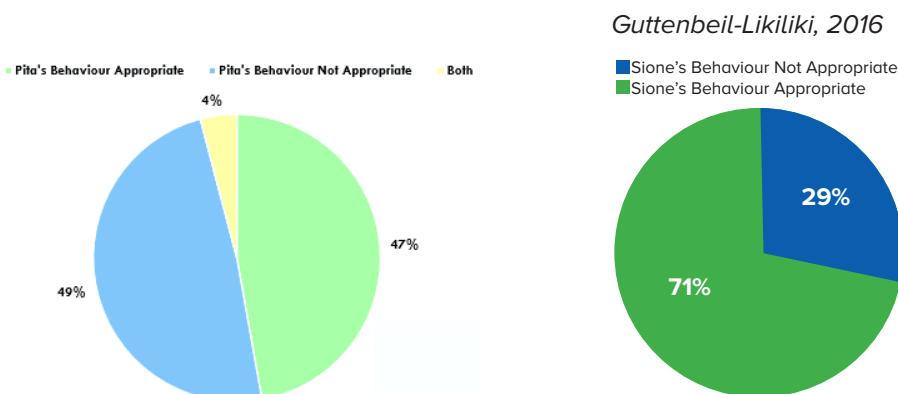
When this result was compared to the 2016 survey, the number of respondents who felt that Tina's behavior was appropriate has increased by nearly 20%. There was also a significant 25% decrease in the number of respondents who felt that Tina's behavior was inappropriate. This means that there is an increasing number of voters who recognize that when women are breadwinners, it is appropriate that they earn the income for Tongan families. This means that there has been a greater acceptance of position of mothers/women in the workplace as breadwinners and fathers/males to stay at home with the children.

Story 2: Reversal of traditional roles, father as domestic home keeper, mother as wage earner.



Story 3 – Father/male to travel as seasonal worker, mother/female to remain

The third story was about parents Pita (father) and Papa (mother), whose livelihood is fishing and weaving (Papa). Pita hears about an opportunity to visit Samoa to work for a tinfish factory for six months. Although one of his legs is injured Pita decides to go himself (but only "healthy" workers were requested) because he feels that only males can do this type of work and he sees danger in Papa, as a female going overseas, because the group who will be going will be a mixed group of males and females. Respondents were asked if they felt that Pita's behavior was appropriate.



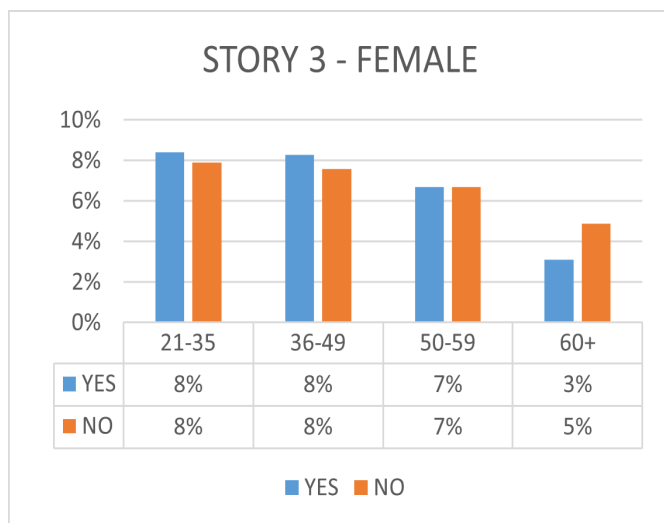
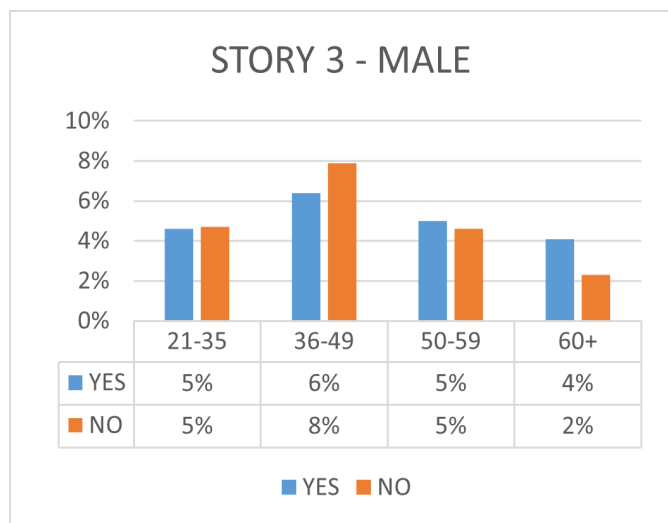
47%, felt that Pita's views were appropriate. They felt that it was appropriate for Pita to go himself because he is the leader of the family and it is his duty to look after the family (*Ko Pita ko e 'ulu/tamai he fāmili, ke feinga'i ke ma'u e seniti*). They believed that this sort of work should be done by males only (*taau/fe'unga/aonga ange pē ngāue pehē mo e folau ki muli ia mo e kakai tangata*) and that it will be problematic for Papa, as a female, to travel alone with other males in this mixed gender work group (*ke 'alu 'a Pita he ko e tangata, tō ngo'ua 'a fefine he ngaahi 'ahi'ahi*). They believed that the place for Papa, as mother, is to stay and look after the children (*nofo pē 'a fa'ēe mo e fānau tautautefito kapau 'oku 'i ai 'ena fānau fefine/nofo pē 'a fa'ēe mo e fānau fakapotopoto ange ia/nofo pē 'a fa'ēe he tafa'aki 'o e fānau/malava pē fa'ēe 'o fai 'a e ngāue fakafa'ēe mo e fakatamai ki he fānau*) and that if Pita goes with love, he will be fine (meaning not fall into a social problem, such as leaving his wife) and that perhaps the injury to his foot can be fixed at this new location (*'Alu ia na'a ko e momoko he 'alu ki tahi 'oku me'a ai hono va'e*).

49% of respondents felt that Pita's views were quite inappropriate. These respondents felt that Pita should not go because his foot was injured (*nofo 'a Pita he 'oku me'a hono va'e/ 'ikai ke mo'ui lelei 'a Pita*) and will be badly affected if he goes to this new job (*'e toe fakalalahi 'ene me'a hono va'e, 'ikai ha faito'o fakaTonga 'i Ha'amoā'e 'ikai ke malava ke ne matu'uaki hono va'e he falengāue chips*). In addition, he will be dishonest if he signs up knowing full well his foot is injured (*'Oua 'e loi ki he kautaha/Kovi e loi ki he kautaha/Fufū e me'a hono va'e toki 'ilo ki mui pea 'e fakafoki mai tōnoa e 'amanaki ia'oua 'e fufuu'i e me'a hono va'e he 'e toki 'ilo pē ia 'amu'i*) and that Papa, because she is suffering no ill health, should go herself. They felt that Pita too, may face social problems in traveling alone as a male and that he should stay home with the children (*Kapau ko e ta'efalala kia Papa, pea fēfē leva 'ene pehē 'e falala'anga ia 'e Papa, he 'e ala hoko mo ha palopalema ia*). Interestingly, there were views within this group of respondents, that both of them should stay because they already had earnings and was better for them to stay together (*na nofo lōua pē naua, palopalema e 'alu 'a e taha kae nofo 'a e taha/māvahevahe 'a e matu'a'osi 'i ai pē 'ena ki'i ma'u'anga pa'anga ko e 'alu ki tahi mo e lālanga*)

In comparison to the 2016 survey, there is a reverse in the trend of perceptions. In 2016, 71% felt that Pita's actions were appropriate, in comparison to the 47% in the 2020 survey. In 2016 survey, 29% of respondents felt that Pita's behavior was inappropriate compared to 49% in the 2020 survey.

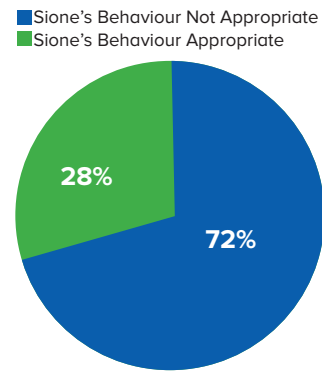
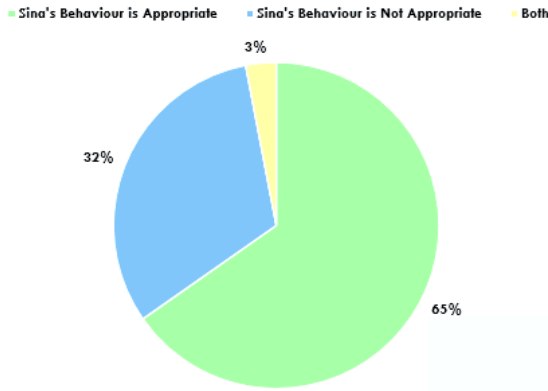
This shows that views about the role of men and women in the work place, and to be traveling to earn money for the family, have changed. Seasonal workers have both men and women traveling and problems that happen in the families are caused not just by women but also by men.

Story 3: Who should travel as seasonal employer, mother or father?



Story 4 – Male/father as child keeper in official family gathering.

Story 4 is about Sina and Polo are young parents, and have a 3-month old baby. They have gone to a family meeting of Polo's relatives. Sina felt sick during the meeting and asked Polo to feed the baby and then change the baby's diapers and to hold the baby, in front of everyone. Then Sina asked Polo's mother if she can be excused from the meeting because she felt sick. Respondents were asked if they believed that Sina's actions were appropriate.



65% of the respondents felt that Sina's actions were appropriate. They felt that marriage was about helping each other, sharing of responsibilities, especially since Sina was sick (*fetokoni'aki/fepoupouaki/femahino'aki mo hono mali he taimi faingata'a'ia/puke ai 'a Sina/na felotoi ki ai*). They felt that Sina's request to her husband was done politely (*Fai faka'apa'apa pē 'e Sina/he 'oku kole lelei pē mo poaki/poaki lelei pē ke 'alu 'o tokoto 'oku 'ikai ko 'ene 'alu 'o tokoto noa'ia/sai ange 'ene kole he'ene angi'i 'a e ki'i motu'a*) and that relatives are there to help each other and that Polo should, as husband, help with taking care of the baby (*fatongia pē 'o Polo ke tokoni ki hono 'ohake 'o e fānau*).

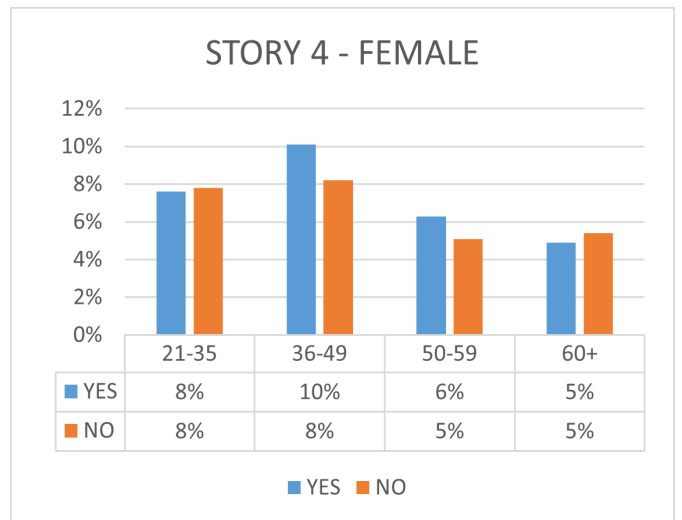
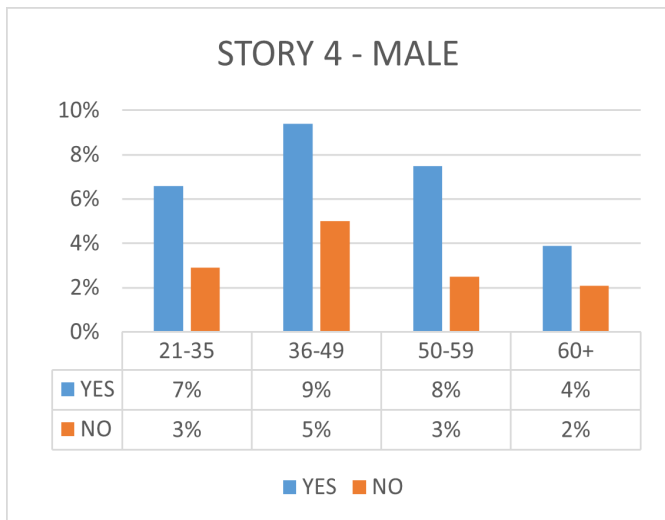
32% felt that Sina's actions were not appropriate. These respondents felt that Sina should have stayed at home, since she was feeling sick and that as mother, her role is to look after the baby (*na'e toki 'osi fā'ele tonu ke nofo pē ia 'i 'api, toe pu'i kia Polo he fakataha fakafāmilī*). They felt that it was fine for Sina to "pu'i" at Polo at their home but that it was culturally disrespectful for Sina to ask her husband in front of his family to do these duties, (*ta'efaka'apa'apa/ 'ikai ke sai he pu'i kia Polo he sio 'a e fāmilī/ngalivale ke pu'i ki hono mali he ha'oha'onga 'o e kakaī*), because Polo's family may think that she is lazy (*fakapikopiko*) and that asking him to babysit their child in front of his family lowered, his dignity (*tukuhifo hono langilangi*).

In 2016, 71% of respondents believed that Sina's actions were inappropriate in comparison to only 32% of the respondents in the 2020 survey. This shows that there has been a major change in the perspective of respondents in their view of Tongan women in their relationship with their husbands and extended family, in public gatherings.

Respondents who believed that Sina acted appropriately, responded especially to the fact that Sina felt sick and in such a situation, her closest kin, her husband, naturally, should be the one she will look to. This sympathy seemed to override their views that cultural protocols were not followed by Sina.

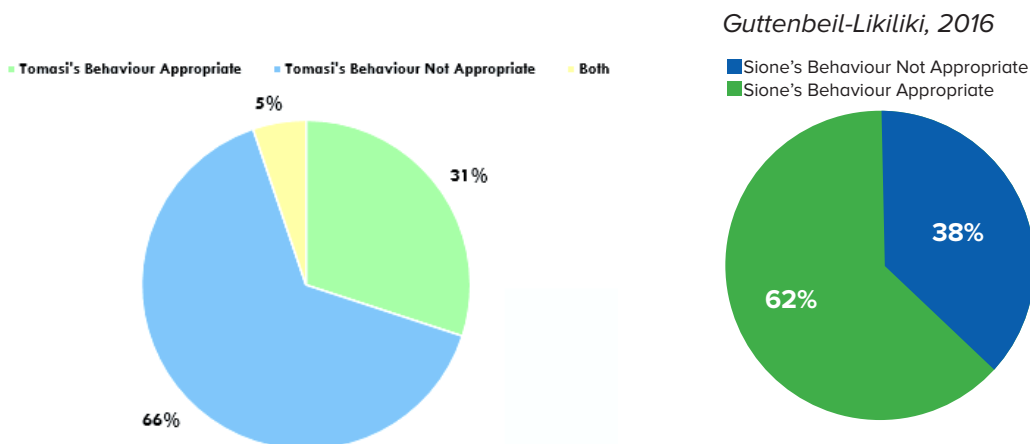
Although the group that felt that Sina acted inappropriately were a minority, they used quite strong language in denouncing Sina's actions. We can interpret that although they are in the minority, their views are quite strong and perhaps, (evident in the strong language they used), are more vocal in official circles since this view is more the 'accepted' traditional view.

Story 4: Father playing traditional role of mother in official family setting



Story 5 – Control of husband over family finances.

Story 5 is about Tomasi, who is the breadwinner for the family. His wife does not work. As Tomasi is the sole signatory to their bank account for all family needs, his wife, Sela, has to ask him for funds. Although the 2016 survey used “Lole” as the name of the father, while the 2020 survey used the name “Tomasi”, the storyline remained the same. Respondents were asked if they felt that Tomasi’s behavior was appropriate.

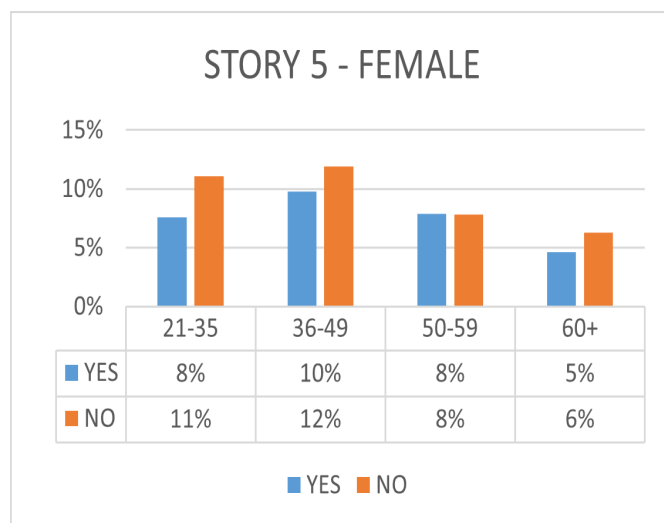
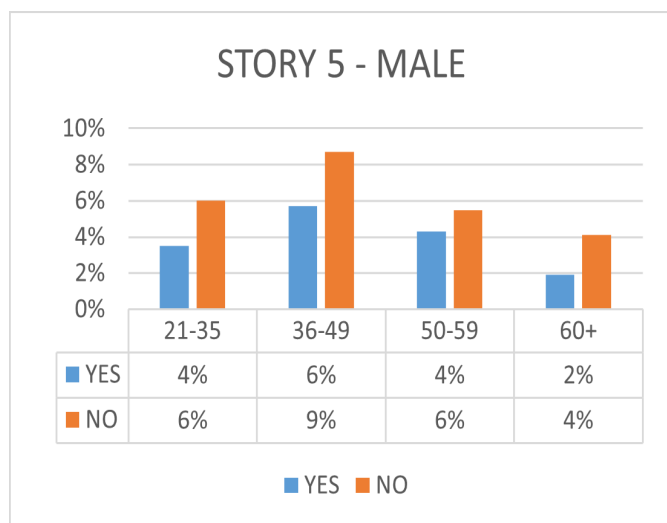


31% felt that Tomasi’s action was appropriate. These respondents felt that Tomasi was the head of the family as well as the breadwinner (*Tomasi ko e ‘ulu ia ‘o e fāmili, ke na femahino’aki he me’a kotoa/Ko e taki ia ‘o e fāmili pea ko e ha ‘ene founa ko e me’a ia ‘oku fakaongoongo pē ki ai ‘a Sela/ fakaongoongo pē ‘a e hoa ki he tamai, he ko ia ‘oku taki/’ulu e fāmili, fakaongoongo pē ‘a Sela ki ai*), and should decide and monitor the financial movements of his household. Because of his work, Tomasi was seen as more capable of managing the family money (*founa ke fakapotopoto’i e ki’i seniti ma’a e fāmili/lelei ia ki he save ‘enau ki’i seniti*) and that he should manage their account in case his wife spends the money on unnecessary things (*Na’a fakavalevale’i ‘aki ‘e hono mali ‘a e vahe*). They felt that Tomasi was not stopping any of his wife’s requests and that they had both discussed these financial needs (*‘oku ‘ikai ke ne angakovi’i ‘a e kole ‘oku fai’oange ‘a e seniti ki he hoa ka fiema’u seniti/fai pē Tomasi loto hono mali*).

Nearly twice as many respondents felt that Tomasi’s action of not allowing his wife access to their bank account was inappropriate behaviour. This group felt that Sela, as Pita’s wife, should have full access to all their goods, including the bank account because they are “one” in the sense that they share everything because they are married (*anga e nofo mali ke fepoupouaki/taha, ‘ikai ke toe fakapulipuli pē fakamakehekehe, ke na fe’i longaki ki he seniti, ‘o ‘ikai ke ‘ai fakatāautaha/ka ai ha me’a ‘oku na responsible lōua ki ai/tononu ke na share/vahevahe/feongoongoi/felotoi/fetokoni’aki/femahino’aki/he kuo na ‘osi fuakava ke feongoongoi ke kau mo Sela he fakamo’oni ki he ‘akauni’osi fuakava ke feongoongoi*). They felt strongly, evident in the strong vocabulary they used, that Tomasi’s action of not having his wife as a signatory to their bank account indicated that he was selfish (*siokita*), treating his wife as inferior (*siolalo*), unkind (*ta’e’ofa*), cheating (*kākā*) and that Sela, as wife and mother who looks after the household, should have equal access to their bank account. It was mentioned that Sela may not find this financial arrangement satisfactory and a cause for her to leave their family.

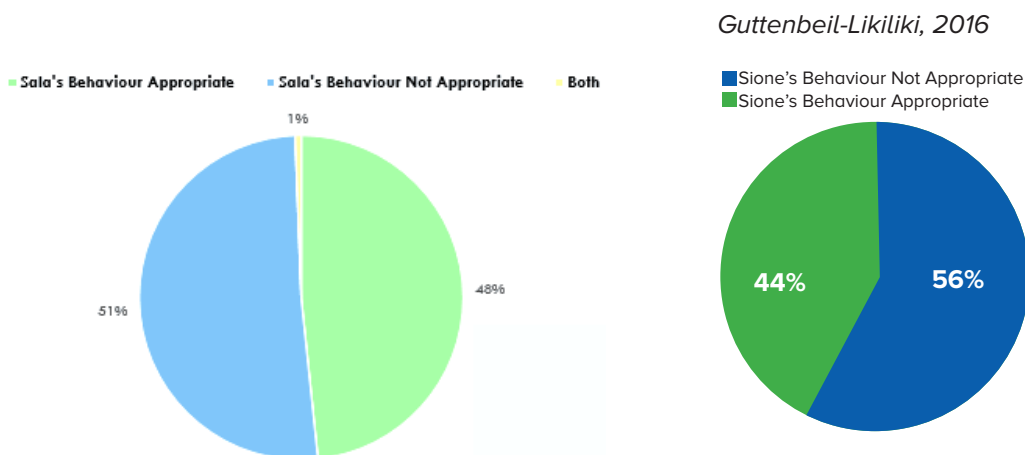
This story showed a reverse of the trends from the 2016 survey, who had more respondents, 62%, believing that Tomasi’s behavior was quite appropriate and less respondents, 38%, who felt that Tomasi’s behavior was inappropriate. This indicates that community feelings towards the female/mother’s role in managing the family funds have changed for the better for women.

Story 5: Control of husband over family finances



Story 6 – Wife’s advice to husband to lease land to their daughters

Story number six was about Sala and Simi who have no sons, only two daughters. Sala advised Simi to lease their land for 99 years to their daughters, (according to Tongan land laws, daughters can lease land but cannot inherit family land). In this case, Simi’s land will go to the next male heir, Simi’s younger brother and his heirs. Simi supported this advice from Sala and started the legal leasing process. Respondents were asked if they believed Sala’s advice was appropriate.

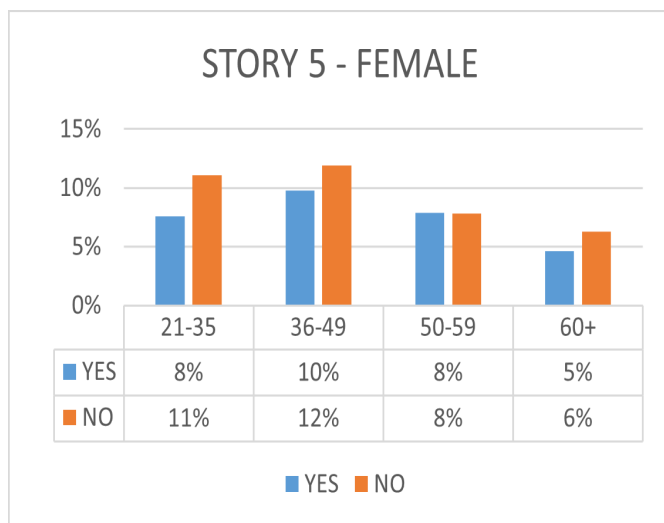
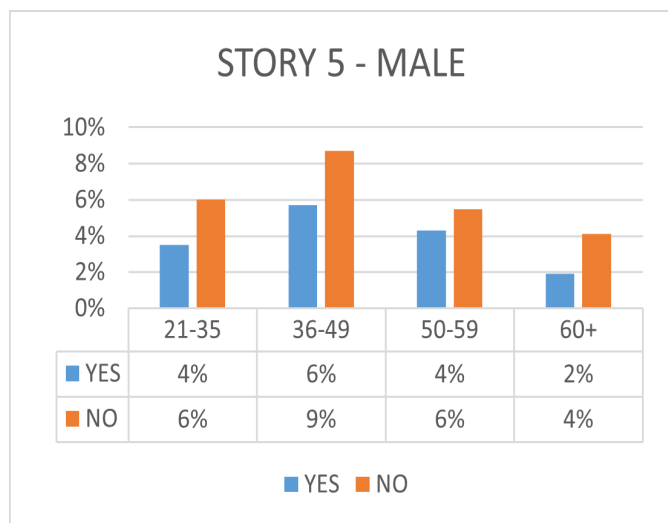


48% of the respondents believed that Sala’s advice was appropriate. They believed that Sala was long-sighted, was setting up their family for the future, for the land to be secured to their two daughters (*Sio lōloa ‘a Sala ke malu’i e kelekele na’a mole/kaha’u ‘ene fānau/ ‘Oku ‘ofa he’ena ki’i fānau he ka mate ‘a Simi faifai pea ha’u e tehina ia ‘o tuli nautolu ki hala*) because if not, it will be lost (*to legal heirs*) and that the land belonged to their two daughters as it belonged to their father. When the parents die, two daughters are well cared for in terms of land (*ke na fiemālie ha ‘aho te na mate ai/na fiemālie pē na nofo hona ‘api tonu*), as sometimes when they move to their husbands’ lands or homes, they are not treated well in these new environments. Some people felt that the mother’s advice was correct because although they will not inherit the land, the daughters are allowed to lease their father’s land, legally (*Fakalao ke lisi pea sio lōloa*). There was a mention that since they are unmarried daughters they can stay on their father’s land but will have to give up that land when they get married.

However, 51% of the respondents believe that Sala’s advice was inappropriate. They stated that Sala wrongly advised her husband, (*kaunoa, fa’ufa’u e me’a ‘e fai ai ‘a e longoa’a, tuku pē ‘a e kelekele ke ‘alu ki he kakai totonu*) and that land belongs to males only (*Ko e kelekele ‘oku ‘i ai pē hono lao ‘oku fakahokohoko ia he tangata*), as the law dictates, therefore women should not be inheriting this land. They felt that Sala should not come and give advice in regard to Simi’s traditional lands, that this was greedy (*sio ‘api ‘a Sala/manumanu*) of her and they felt that the daughters should not claim their father’s land, as it is traditional land of their ancestors, because it may be “lost” because once daughters get married (*tukuange e kelekele ia he ‘I ai ‘aho tena mali ai naua ‘o hiki mei he ‘api*), their husbands will be able to claim these lands also (*‘e ma’u ua ‘a e tangata ko ia*), therefore they should let the family land go to the legal heirs, which is their father’s brother. They felt that the daughters should let the land go to their paternal uncle so that disagreements (*longoa’a*) are avoided.

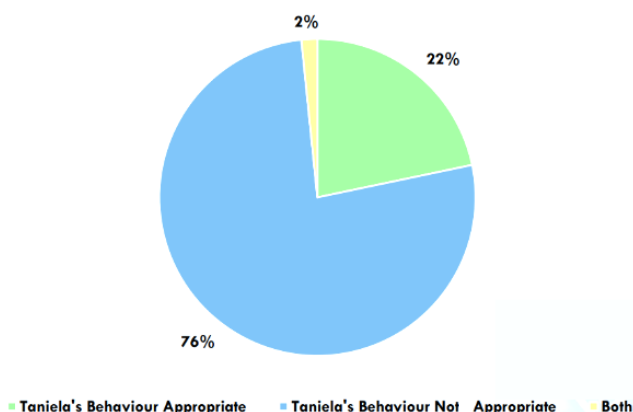
The trend from the surveys in 2016 & 2020 remain the same, with more respondents feeling that Sala advising her husband to lease his lands to their daughter, was not an appropriate action. This shows that there was still a strong feeling against women owning land and many comments show that respondents feel this way because it is what “the law” dictates.

Story 6: Wife’s advice to husband to lease land to their daughters

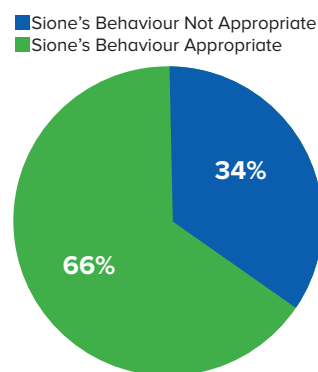


Story 7 – Husband eating at his mother’s home

Story seven was about Taniela who was married and lived with his wife at the same compound with his mother and single sister. Taniela and his wife lived in their own house but he visited his mum’s house and ate there because his wife was not a good cook. Respondents were asked whether Taniela’s actions were appropriate.



Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2016



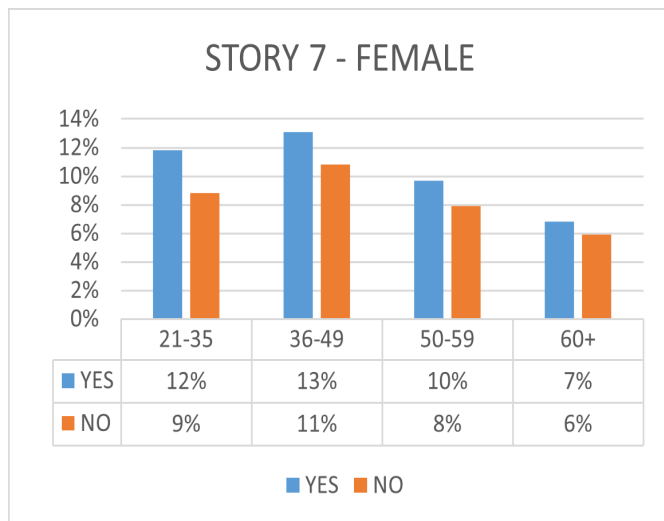
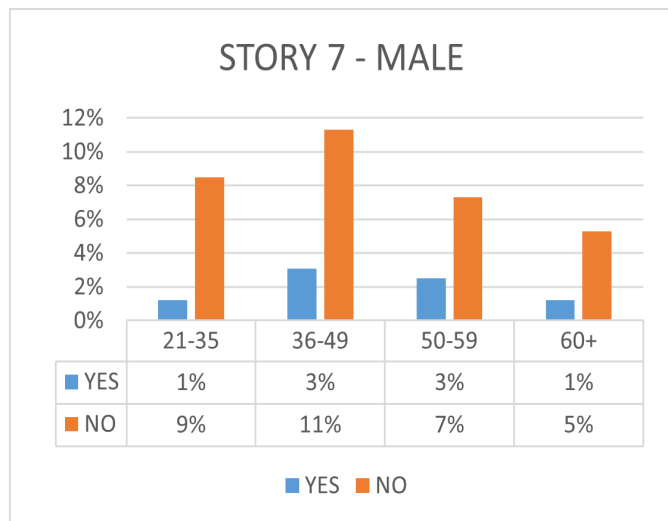
Only 22% of the respondents felt that Taniela’s action was appropriate. These respondents felt that his going to his mother’s house was fine because it was his own mother (*Sai pē he ko ‘ene kumi kai pē he ko ‘ene fa’ēe pē mo hono tuofefine, ‘ikai ha taha kehe*) and that this would draw him closer to his mother and sister. If he prefers to eat at his mother’s house, let him be, to allow him his own choice, allow his wife to have a rest and another reason given was that it was his wife’s fault for not being a good cook.

However, 76% of respondents felt that Taniela’s actions were inappropriate, that his actions were very disrespectful to his wife (*laulaunoa/angakovi/fieme’a/laupisi/ta’etopono/’ikai ke faka’atu’i*), that he knew his wife was not a good cook but married her anyway, so he should eat whatever she cooks. They felt that it was also disrespectful of him to go and eat at his mother’s house because she was an elder, as well as for his sister to cook for him (*’ikai ke totonu ke kumi kai ki he ‘api ‘o e tuofefine*). They expressed that Taniela himself should stay and cook at his house so that he can cook good food. His going away at mealtimes to his mother, means he will miss his family dinner time with his wife and children.

There was a reverse of the trend for this story from the two surveys. In 2016, more respondents, 66%, felt that Taniela's actions were appropriate while in the 2020 survey, only 22% felt that his leaving his wife's cooking to eat at his mother's home was appropriate. In 2020, more respondents felt that Taniela, not eating his wife's cooking and going to his sisters' home, was quite inappropriate.

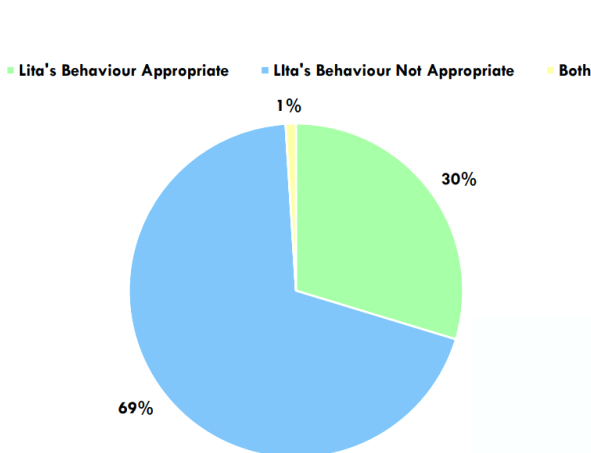
There is an indication here that although fathers/males may be decision makers in finances, as in Story 5, there is now a change in the expectations of Tongan male behaviour in terms of their relationship with extended and immediate family members. It is now expected that Taniela should stay and be with his immediate family.

Story 7: Behaviour about husband eating at his mother's home

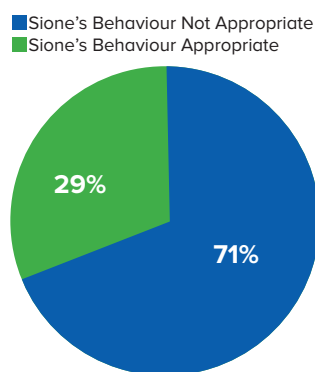


Story 8 – Who should attend village ‘fono’/meeting? Husband or wife?

The eighth story was about parents, Lita and Loni. They have three young children. The village “fono”, meeting was held to elect a village cultural spokesman and Lita tells Loni to stay with the children while she goes to the meeting. Loni was unhappy because he knows his mates will tease him that Lita was the “boss” because she attended the fono. Respondents were asked if they believed Lita's actions were appropriate.



Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2016



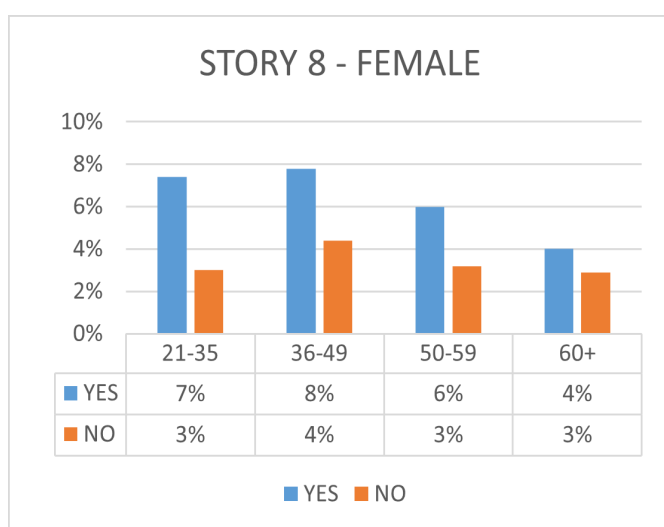
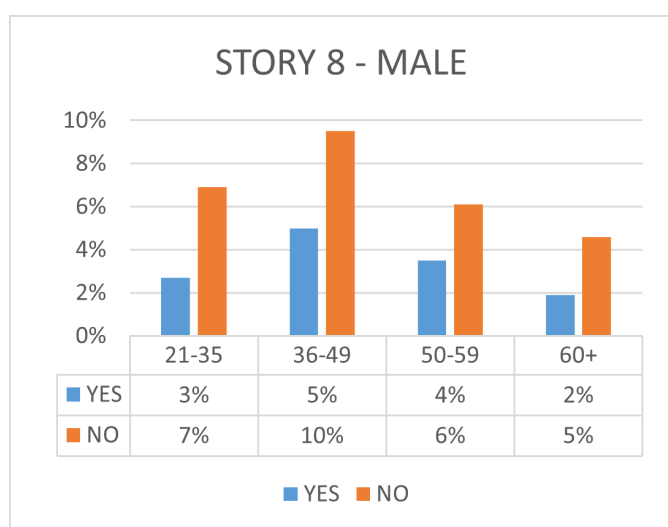
Only 30% thought that Lita's behavior of attending the fono meeting was appropriate. They felt that Lita should go as she will come and share the discussions in the meeting with Loni ('Oku 'ikai 'i ai ha palopalema he'ene 'alu he'e foki mai pē o fakahoko kia Loni e me'a na'e hoko he fonō pea 'oku 'ikai ha kovi e nofo 'a e motu'a he fānau), that Lita has discussed this issue with Loni and they have agreed that she will go, that it was good to have women's perspectives in that meeting, that women paid more attention to these meetings ('Oku tokanga kakai fefine ia ki he ngaahi fakataha'anga pehē ko e kakai tangata ia koe koloa pē 'enua a'u kiai 'o sio noa'ia/ Sai e fakakaukau 'a Lita he koe taimi 'oku uki ai e ngāue 'ae kolo ko ha'a fefine pē 'oku ngāue lahi taha 'i he kolō ki hono ngaahi e kolō mo hono fakama'a), that Lita probably bossed her husband and that Loni should not pay attend to what others say ('oku tonu ke 'oua 'e tokanga 'a Loni ia ki he lau 'ae kakai taumaia 'e mafahi ai hono kili), and that it should be a relaxing environment for Lita, to be away from the children for a little while.

Nearly 70% however felt that Lita attending the fono meeting was inappropriate behavior. They stated that Lita should stay with the children because she was the mother and that mothers look after the children better, (*Koe hā ka nofo ai e motu'a tangata ia he fānau pea ha'u ia [Lita] nofo ai koe fa'ē ia he 'oku kei iiki e fānau/ Nofo 'a Lita, tau sio mata pē 'oku lelei ange 'a e tokanga'i 'e he fa'ēe 'a e fānau*) that it was the role of father/male to attend such meetings (*Fatongia ia 'o e tamai ke 'alu ki he fakataha fakakolo*). They felt that Loni was the head, and as leader of the family should go to the fono meeting. They also responded that Lita should stay with the children, as this is her role, and Lita trying to reverse this role will cause problems (*Nofo ia 'i 'api kae 'alu e 'ulu e fāmili he koe me'a ia ku lahi ai palopalema he 'aho ni ko e fie taki 'a 'lvi ia*). Loni should go to the fono meeting because it will mostly be males attending, and that who knows, he may be the one chosen to be the village “matapule”, cultural spokesman.

There is very nearly the same percentages and same trend, from the two surveys in the respondents' responses to this story. In both surveys, respondents had quite high percentage, 71% in 2016 and 69% in 2020, in thinking that Lita acted inappropriately when she attended the fono village meeting, while her husband stayed behind and looked after their young children.

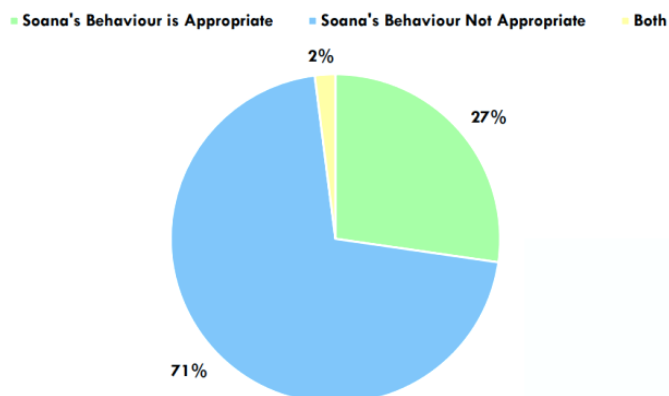
It shows that the communities still expect the woman to stay behind with the children, to play the “mother” role and that going to decision making meetings is the role for men, not for women.

Story 8: Who should attend village 'fono'/meeting? Husband or wife?

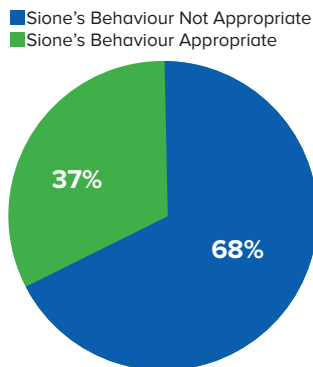


Story 9 – Relationship of women with neighbours

Story nine was about Feleti and Soana, parents who were in their fifties. Their neighbor was 65 year old Paula, who had some free roaming pigs. Feleti and Soana had asked Paula to put his pig back into the pen because it was creating a lot of damage to Soana's garden. One day, Soana was angry because of the damage of Paula's pigs and shouted abusive words at Paula. Her husband tried to get her to calm down but she said she will take this to the police. Respondents were asked whether they saw Soana's behavior as appropriate.



Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2016



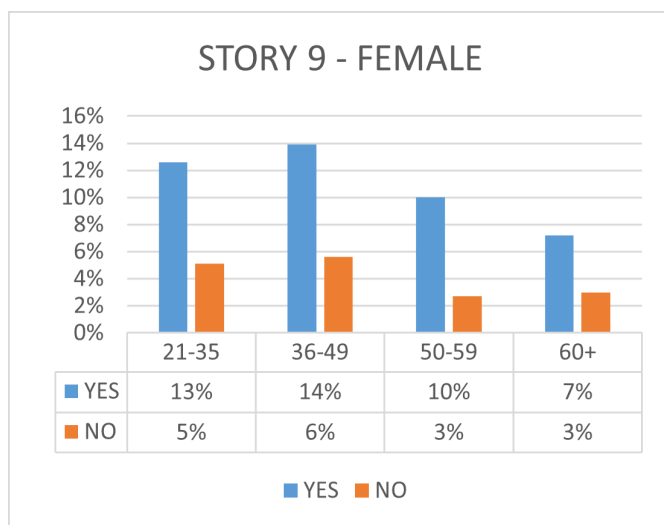
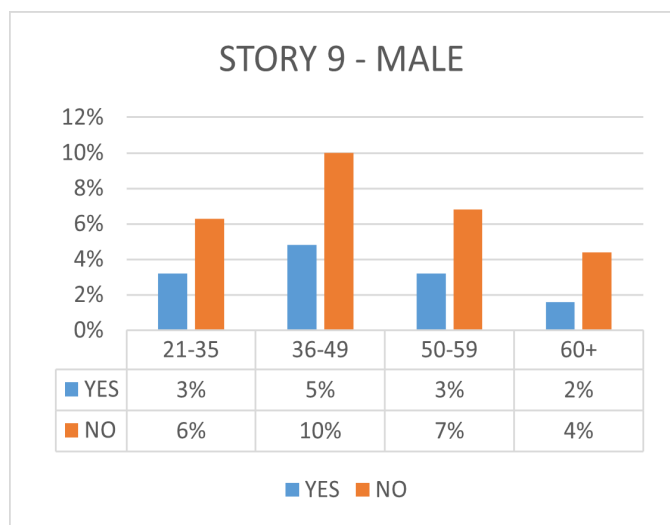
27% of the respondents said that they felt that Soana’s shouting at Paula was appropriate. They said that Paula had already been forewarned countless of times, that it really hurts when you have invested a lot of energy and money in your garden, only to be damaged by pigs. They felt that Paula should have had his pigs put into his pen, and perhaps Soana and Feleti should have helped him in that regard, that Soana has the right to say what she really feels to Paula and that (*sai ‘aupito he ‘oku fievaleloi e ki’i tangata’eiki*) one should not feel frustrated because of Paula’s letting his pigs roam (*koe fanga puaka ‘oku tonu ke tauhi mo tokanga’i ke ‘oua toe pōpula kakai kehe ia ai*).

71% of the respondents said that they felt that Soana’s shouting at Paula was inappropriate. They felt it was very disrespectful of Soana to shout at Paula because he was older than her (*talahu’i/ Na’e totonu ke ne faka’apa’apa’i ‘a Paula he ‘oku lahi*) and that this will impact on their relationship as neighbours (*‘Oku ta’efaka’apa’apa pea ‘oku uesia ai ‘ene nofo mo hono kaunga’api*) and will cause tension amongst them as neighbours, that she was not listening to the advice of her husband (*Na’e tonu ke lea atu pē hono mali ‘o ta’ota’ofi pea fakalongolongo ‘oku ‘ikai ngata pē ‘i he’ene lea kovi na’e fai ki he kaunga’api ka ‘oku ta’e fakaongoongo ki hono mali*), that she should have gone to Paula and held a civil conversation with him or have gone to the police to intervene rather than taking matters into her own hands. She should have recognized that Paula was elderly, and that she should have been patient, (*‘ai e kātaki ke lahi, fakama’uma’u*).

As with story 9, there was a very similar trend from 2016 survey to the 2020 survey in this story. In both surveys, 68% in 2016 and 71% in 2020, a majority of respondents felt that Soana acted inappropriately when she shouted abusively to her neighbor, Paula.

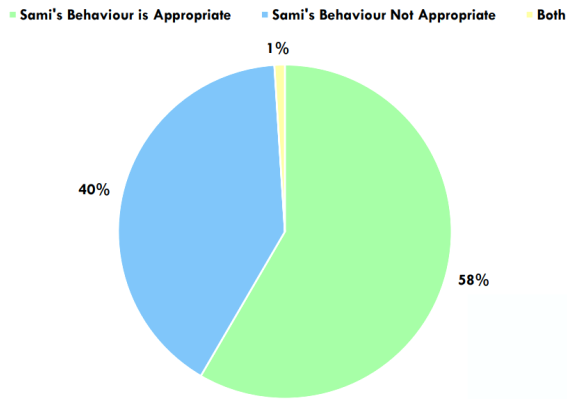
This shows that the cultural expectations toward appropriate behavior to neighbours is stronger than respondents’ beliefs that Soana had a right to protect her home. This shows that “tauhi-vā”, your ability to keep appropriate relationships with others, is very important to Tongans. Should women (and men) wish to engage in public campaigns, their relationships with others (*tauhi vā*) within the communities, will be critical.

Story 9: Relationship of women with neighbours

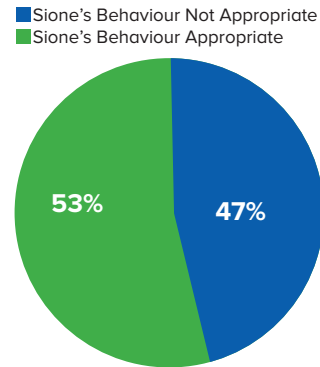


Story 10 – Professional parents, who will stay with sick child?

One morning, Seini and Sami, who both work, had a sick child, Luseane. Seini asked Sami to stay with Luseane because she had an important meeting. Sami told Seini to ring her boss and tell her that she will stay back from work and take the child to the hospital because she was the mother. Seini rang her boss, who told her that she had told her in her promotion interview last year that she had a supportive husband. Seini asked Sami and Sami told her, tell your boss that our child is first priority and that if something happens to Luseane, will she help, and Sami went to work while Seini stayed back from work and took the child to the hospital. Respondents were asked whether they felt Sami’s behavior was appropriate.



Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2016

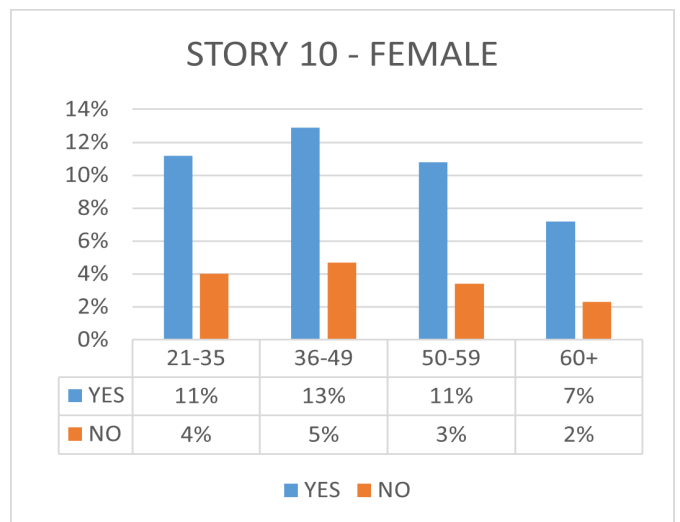
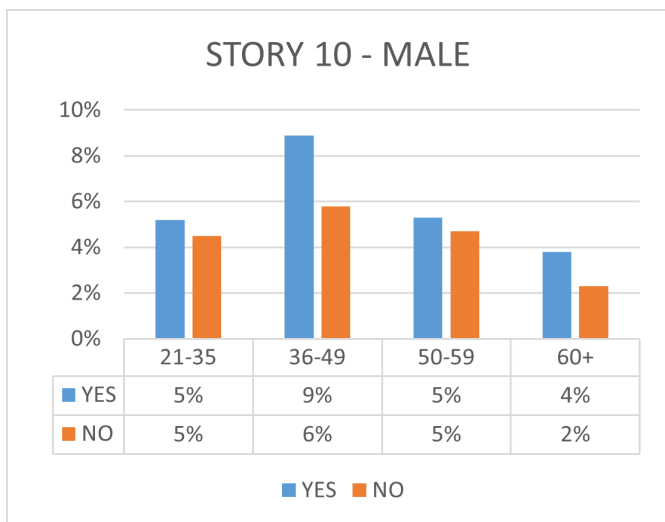


58% of the respondents believed that Sami’s behavior was appropriate. They felt that Seini should stay with their daughter because she was the mother (*fatongia fakafa’ēe mahu’inga taha ke tokanga’i e fānau/ Ko e fa’ēe pē ‘e taupotu taha kihe fānau/ fa’ē pē te ne fakamonga e fānau, ‘oku me’a pē tamai ka ‘oku nonga ange pē kita ‘i he’ete nofo mo ‘ete fa’ē he taimi ‘oku te puke ai*), that children were more important than work, that she should give more care because the child is female (*Tonu ‘aupito ke ‘alu ‘a Seini ‘o ‘ave ‘a Luseane he koe ta’ahine fefine/Ha’u ia ‘alu mo ‘ena tama he koe ki’i ta’ahine pea ko ia koe fa’ēe/ kapau ko ha tama tangata, faingofua ia kia Sami*).

40% of the respondents believed that Sami’s behavior was inappropriate. They felt that he should have allowed his wife to go to work because she had an important meeting and for him to take his daughter to the hospital because they share their responsibilities (*kapau ‘oku pehē ‘e Sami ‘oku mahu’inga ke ‘ave ‘ene tama, ha e me’a ‘oku ‘ikai ai ke ‘alu ‘o ‘ave?*); that he should understand his wife’s position in her workplace, that his daughter was more important than his work, that they both should stay home from work to make it fair to both of them, and that he was probably simply lazy to take his daughter (*‘Oku ‘ikai koe fa’ēe pē ‘oku poto he fakamatala ‘oku poto pē mo Sami ka ‘oku lahi ange ‘ene mamio ke’alu ki he ngāue*).

Both the 2016 and 2020 surveys had very similar trends, 2016, 53% and 2020, 58% for this question. Most of respondents felt that Sami telling Seini to take their daughter to the hospital, while he goes to work, was appropriate behavior. It shows that a majority of people still feel that the female’s role as a “mother” is the priority role. A majority of people continue to feel that looking after children, is the first role for women.

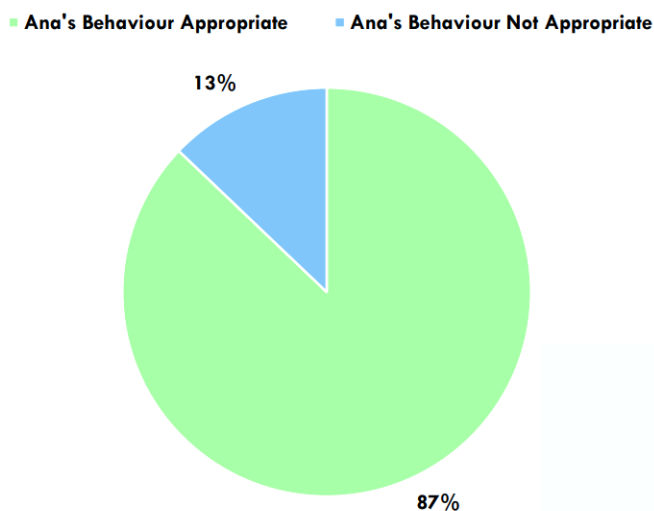
Story 10: Professional parents, who will stay with sick child?



Story 11 to Story 20 were additional stories (from those used in the Guttenbeil-Likiliki study), which aimed at gauging respondents' views on Tongan women's area of influence in Tongan culture.

Story 11 – Peni's mehekitanga (paternal aunt) as mediator

Peni is married to Talita. Peni's paternal aunty, 'Ana, lives next door to the couple. When Peni gets drunk he has fights with his wife and Talita often runs to 'Ana and 'Ana comes around and tells Peni off and forbids him not to hit Talita. Respondents were asked whether 'Ana's behavior was appropriate.

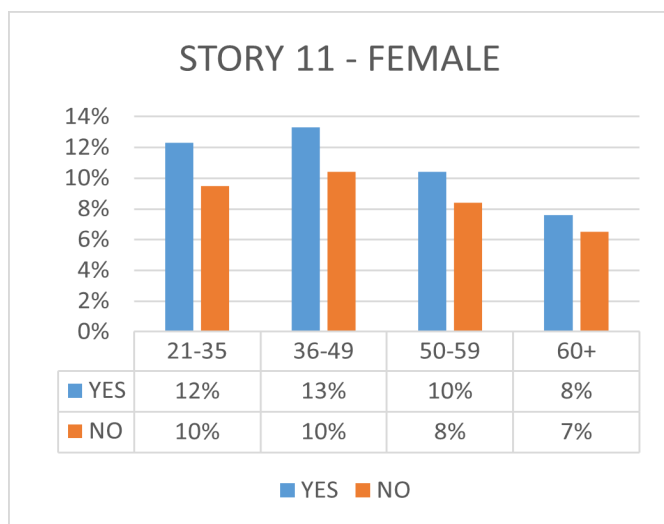
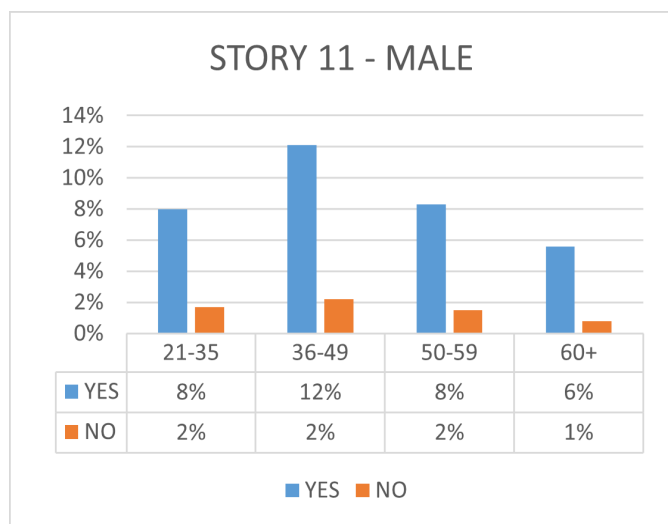


87% felt that 'Ana's behavior was appropriate. That it was appropriate for 'Ana to tell Peni off because she was giving very good advice to Peni as drinking alcohol and domestic violence is not good behavior (*Ke ta'ofi e tō'onga palakū 'a Peni he 'e 'i ai pē 'aho 'e fo'i hono mali 'o li'aki, tuku 'a e konā moe fakamamahi*), that Talita had asked her for help, that as a family elder, she should give advice to Peni so that he can rethink his life (stop drinking and not hit his wife), that is how we live as a Tongan family we support each other and this is how she shows that she cares for Peni, that as Peni's "mehekitanga" (paternal aunty) that she has the right to speak to Peni (*ko hono 'ilamutu/ko hono mehikitanga/eikimaama/Oku 'iai pē 'ene totonu ke fakamaama atu kia Peni he koe koe foha hono tuonga'ane/ he koe tokotaha totonu pē ia ke ne lea'i 'a Peni 'ikai ngata pē he'ene fahu ka koia pē 'oku ofi taha atu/ko hono lea'anga/ 'i ai 'ene totonu ke tafulu'i 'a Peni*).

13% felt that 'Ana speaking to her niece, Peni was not appropriate behavior. These respondents felt that she should leave Peni and Talita's life alone and not interfere.

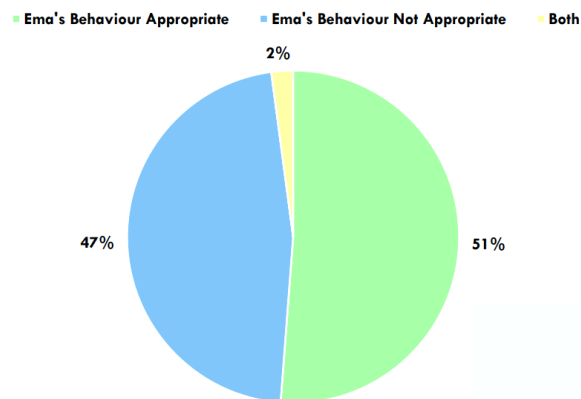
It is clear from respondents' responses that the role of 'Ana as a "mehekitanga" (paternal aunt), a cultural important position for women in Tonga, a mediator for family violence, was seen as very appropriate.

Story 11: Peni's "mehekitanga" (paternal aunt) as mediator



Story 12 – The role of “fa’ētangata” (maternal uncle) & wife, to niece.

‘Asena’s maternal uncle (fa’ētangata) is Siale. After work, ‘Asena always comes around and eats at her uncle’s home. When Siale’s wife, ‘Ema, comes after work, their dinner is gone because of ‘Asena. One day ‘Ema tells ‘Asena to stay at her home and have her dinner there. Respondents were asked if they felt that ‘Ema’s actions were appropriate.



51% of respondents felt that ‘Ema’s behavior was appropriate in telling ‘Asena that she should stay at her own home and have her dinner there. They felt that ‘Asena should stay at her home and cook her own dinner, that she should show “faka’atu’i”, that she should have eaten only part of the dinner, not all of it, that she should know that she is related to Siale but know that she must know that Siale has a wife and show consideration (“*tauhi vā*”, *‘ikai ‘uhinga e fa’ētangata ke puta kai ia kae hala hoa ia ‘ene fa’ētangata*) to the wife of her uncle. They felt that ‘Asena was not wise (*‘ikai ke fakapotopoto*) and that it was better for ‘Ema to say it directly to her, (*ke ‘alu ki honau ‘api ‘o kai ki ai sai ange lea kiai hano taa’i ‘o tokoto falemahaki*), and that ‘Ema has the right to say these things to ‘Asena as it was her home.

47% of respondents felt that ‘Ema’s behavior of telling ‘Asena off for eating her dinner, was not appropriate behavior. They felt that ‘Ema should have had patience, (*kataki*) because it was food and there should be no disagreements when food is involved (*me’akai ‘oku ‘ikai totonu ke fai ha longoa’a ai/ na’e tonu pē ke ki’l fakama’uma’u pē ‘a ‘Ema he koe meakai ko hono tesi’l’anga ia ‘o kita/talanoa lelei pē kia ‘Asena he ko e me’akai*) and that ‘Asena should not be “kei’ingo” and “*‘Ema, kovi he me’akai*” (not share food). They felt that ‘Asena has the right to come and eat at Siale’s house because it was her “fa’ētangata” (*Tonu pē ia he ko ‘ene fa’ētangata/ ‘l ai ‘ene totonu ke ha’u ‘o kai he ‘api ‘ene fa’ētangata/ mo’ui fēvahevaheaki pea kātekina pē he ko si’ene fakalaulaupisi pē he’ene ‘ilo ko ‘ene fa’ētangata*), where else will she go if she is hungry?

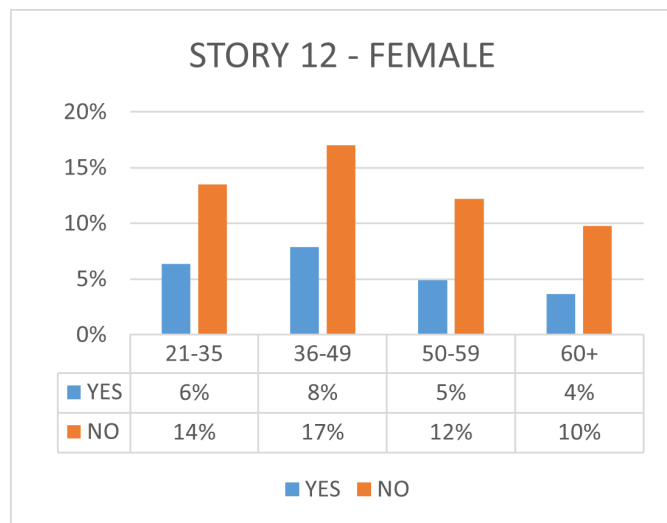
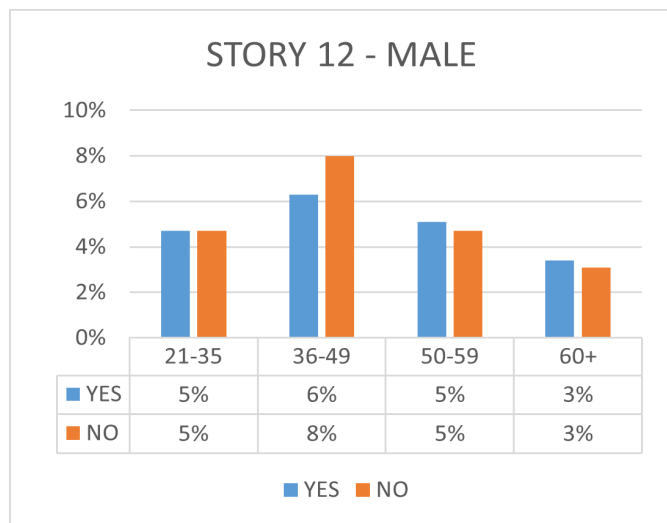
A mother’s brother, “fa’ētangata” (literal meaning: male mothers) is what we call in Tonga, “fa’iteliha’anga”, doing whatever one wishes to this “male mother”. This story of ‘Asena always eating at her uncle’s home was chosen as an “extreme” form of “fa’iteliha” according to the views of respondents. Other examples of “usual” fa’ētangata roles, such as literally being a seat at weddings (*fa’ēhuki* - seating mother) was not given because they were standard roles.

It was not Siale who had spoken harshly to ‘Asena, it was his wife, ‘Ema. Traditionally, your role as a wife is secondary to your role as a sister and daughter. Therefore, traditionally, it can be seen as Siale’s home belonging to him first, and so ‘Ema speaking to ‘Asena, could be seen as rude. It is interesting that the majority of respondents thought it appropriate that ‘Ema speak to ‘Asena. As daughter of Siale’s sister, ‘Asena is “fahu” or “higher-ranked” than her uncle and so is allowed certain privileges over her maternal uncle (and his possessions).

From the responses of respondents, it is clear that this view of male mothers as “fa’iteliha’anga” has its boundaries and that to overuse this privilege (going to her uncle’s house all the time and eating their food and not leaving some for his wife) was considered by respondents as abusing her rights.

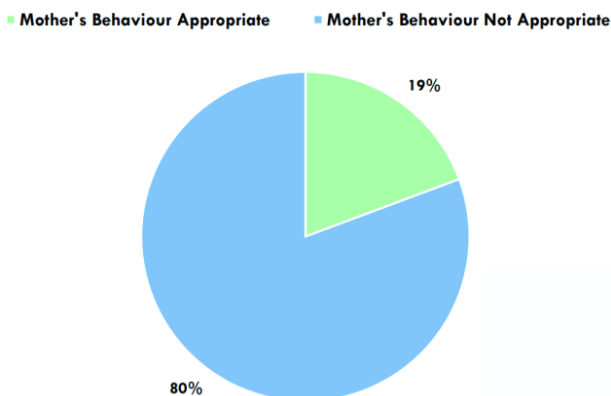
It is, therefore, important to understand the importance of having to negotiate the different “vā” (relationships) between members of Tongan families and understand the boundaries of these gendered roles. An understanding of these boundaries, can enable women to engage in more meaningful ways within their communities to better effect influence and change.

Story 12: The role of “fa’ētangata” (maternal uncle) & wife, to niece.



Story 13 - The role of “fahu”, “mehekitanga” (paternal aunt) or “tuofefine” (sister)?

Save had his twenty first birthday. His sister, Lata, was there, as well as both Save and Lata’s “mehekitanga” or paternal aunty. At this twenty first celebration, the “koloa” or traditional gift of honour is usually given to the “fahu” (father’s sister - or her descendents - and highest ranked person in that family), which is Save and Lata’s father’s eldest sister. This traditional honouring gift instead was given by Save and Lata’s mum to Lata. Respondents were asked if they felt the mother’s behavior was appropriate.



Only 19% of the respondents felt that Save and Lata’s mother had behaved appropriately. These respondents felt that the family probably had agreed to having this traditional gift given to Lata and that the mother was free to give this traditional gift to whoever she wishes.

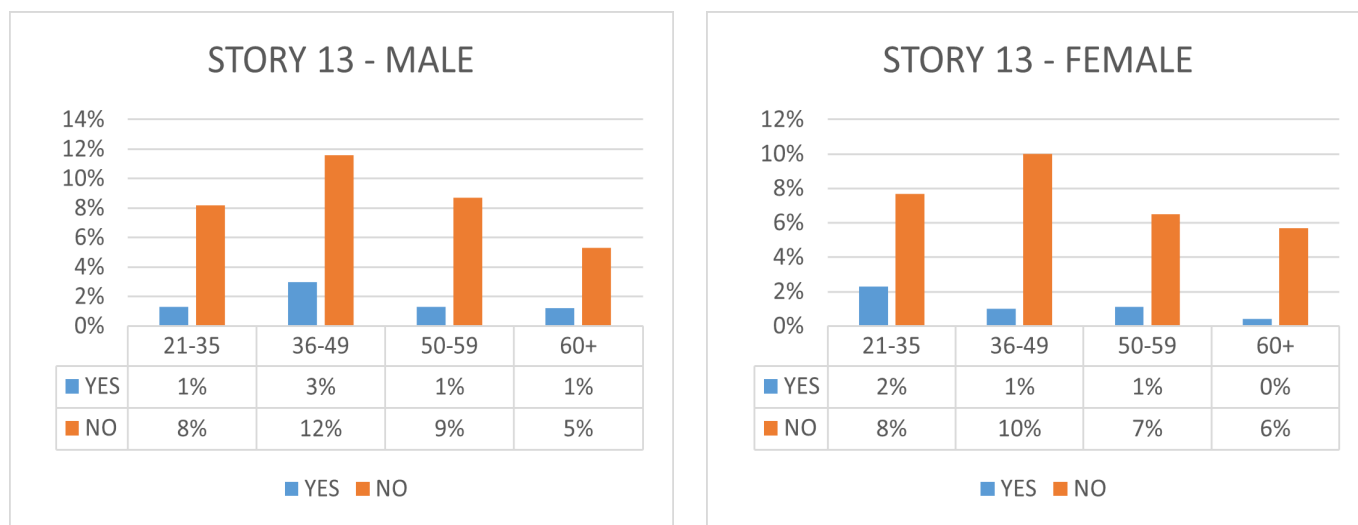
A significant 80% of the respondents felt that Save and Lata’s mother had behaved inappropriately. They felt that the mother should have given this traditional gift to Save’s and Lata’s “mehekitanga” (paternal aunty) because she is their “fahu” (esteemed aunty). They felt that Save’s and Lata’s mum was wrong, greedy, an embarrassment (*Ne ki’i manumanu pea sio koloa fa’ē ‘a Save tupunga’anga ia ne ‘ikai ke ‘ave ai ki he mehekitanga ‘o Save/ Fiematapoto e fa’ē ‘a Save pea ‘oku ne ta’etoka’i e mehekitanga*) and that the “mehekitanga” should be considered first at all times (*Koe katoanga ia ‘a e Tonga ‘oku mu’omu’a ma’u pē ‘ ae fahu pē koe mehekitanga/ Koe fahu ko ia ‘a e ma’olunga taha he anga ‘etau nofo faka-Tonga pea ko ia ‘oku tonu ke fkalangilangi’i pea na’e tonu pē ke ui ai e koloa he fahu ‘o Save*) as disagreements and conflicts can happen because of these wrong behaviours.

Story 13 emphasises, as in Story 11, the importance of the role of Tongan women as “mehekitanga”, or as sisters to brothers and paternal aunts. A significant number of respondents believed that Save’s “fahu” or privileged high-ranking position belonged to his father’s sister, and used very strong vocabulary to condemn Save’s mother for inappropriately giving the gifts, which should have been gifted to Save and Lata’s “mehekitanga”, to her own daughter, Lata. There is a Tongan saying, “Oku te fa’ēle ka ‘oku pule ‘a e kakai kehe”, “Mothers are to give birth (to children), the authority (over those children) belongs to another” and this saying refers to the “authority” over the children as belonging to the “mehekitanga”. In this view, a mother’s role is to rear her children but she does not have “authority” over them, especially in formal family functions, such as Save’s twenty-first birthday, as in this story. For the mother to

not recognize her children’s fahu or their “mehekitanga”’s role, was seen quite negatively, which is shown in the strong vocabulary used by respondents about Save’s mother, as “manumanu” (greedy), “fievaleloi”, and so on.

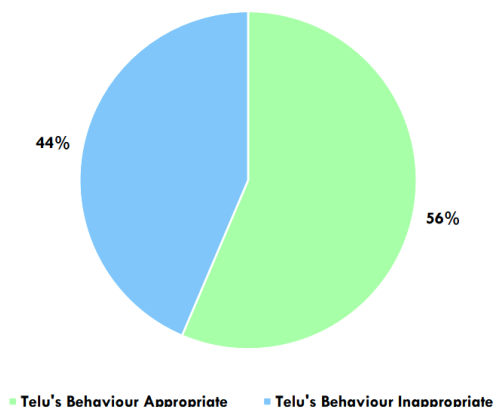
The “mehekitanga” role, is clearly an influential role for Tongan women. How then can this important role be used to increase the influence or participation of Tongan women in the political arena?

Story 13: The role of “fahu”, “mehekitanga” (paternal aunt) or “tuofefine” (sister)?



Story 14 - Who should look after aged mother? Daughter, Telu, or son, Samiu?

Lupe is 85 years old and a widow. Her daughter, Telu, is married to a church minister and they move every three years according to their Church’s stationing. Lupe lives with her son, Samiu, and his family and her son is primary carer. Telu visits her mother, Lupe, during weekends. Respondents were asked, if they believed Telu’s action was appropriate.



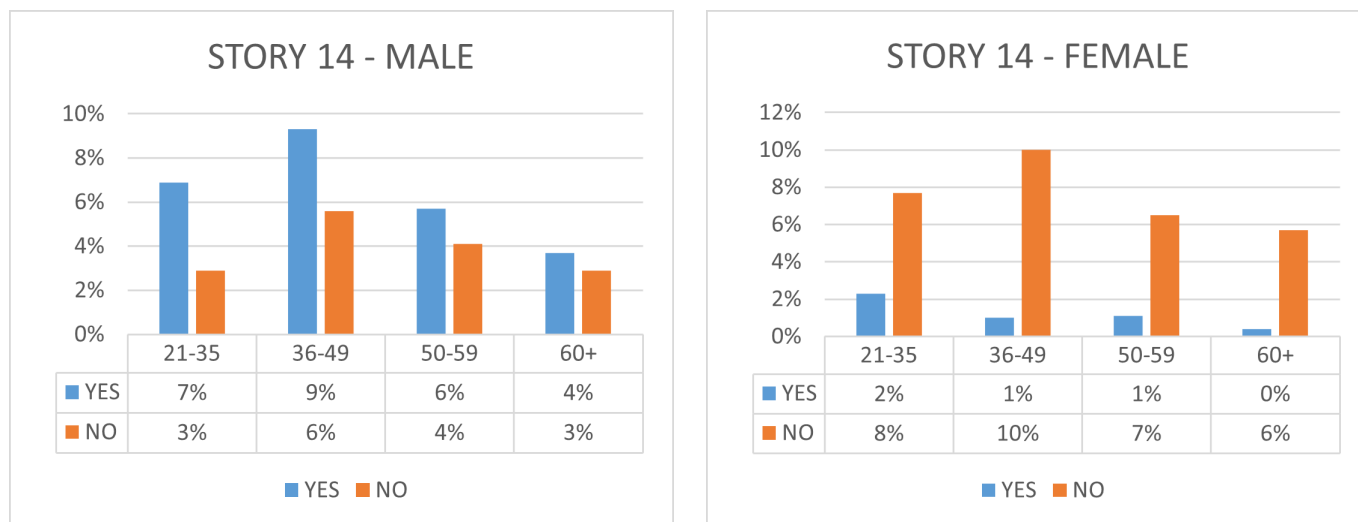
46% of the respondents felt that Telu’s behaviour, of visiting her mother once a week, during the weekend, was appropriate. They felt that as the wife of a church minister, she and her husband were committed to their work in congregations and the fact that she comes during the weekend to see her mother was a positive thing (*‘oku na fai fatongia he siasi pea lahi e mo’ua mo e ngāue he ngaahi me’a ‘a e siasi he ‘oku na hikihiki holo nua he ngaahi kolo/‘Oku lelei pē ia he koe mo’ua ‘a Telū he me’a ‘ae lotu pea ‘oku pule mali ia ‘o Telū ki he taimi ‘o Telū ke fakakakato ngaahi fatongai e siasi/ Kuo māhino pē ki he fāmili ‘o Telū ‘oku ai hono fatongia he lotu*). They felt that Samiu can look after his mother quite well and that it was better for her to stay at one place, as she was elderly, than to move around with her daughter, as she will have to move once every three years due to church stationing process.

44% of the respondents believed that Telu’s behavior of visiting her mother once a week, during the weekend, was inappropriate behavior. They thought that Telu’s mother should stay with Telu as that is her duty as the daughter. Their mother should not stay with Samiu as he is a male (*ko e ‘ofefine pea ‘oku totonu ke ‘alu ma’u pē ki ai he oku ‘ikai ko ha fatongia ia ‘o Samiu he ‘oku ‘ikai ‘uhinga ‘ete ‘alu he lotu kae ngalo ‘ete fa’ē ‘a kita*), Telu should stay with her mother, as she is the eldest or take her mother with her as she moves around amongst various church congregations. A few respondents stated that Telu should go and see her mother once a day.

The Tongan traditional view that daughters should stay or look after their elderly parents, is still quite strong but in this story, respondents strongly approved for Telu and her family to follow their calling of working for the Church. This was a reason mentioned by many respondents who felt that Telu's behaviour, of visiting her mother only once a week, was appropriate. The traditional role of Tongan daughters/women as carers is secondary, to respondents' perception of women's role within churches. This view continues to highlight the importance of religion or faith to Tongans.

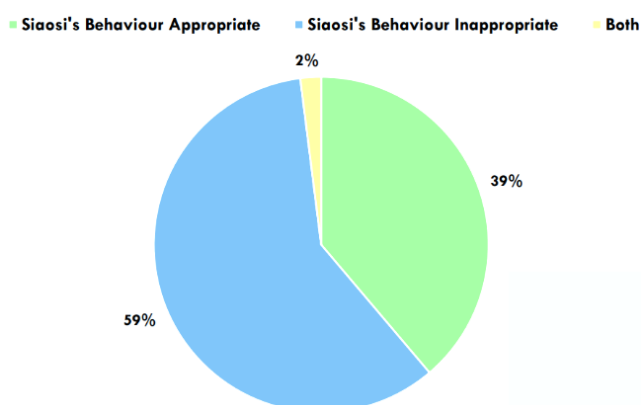
Advocacy for increased participation in decision making platforms must seriously consider the inclusion of churches or faith organisations, in their consultations.

Story 14: Who should look after aged mother? Daughter or son?



Story 15 - Daughters or uncle to inherit father's land?

Ane and Line are Pita's daughters and they have no brothers. The eldest, Ane, is an adopted daughter but while their parents were alive, the family had discussed and agreed that their land should go to Ane, because she, and her children, were the ones who had taken care of their parents. Lina was fully supportive of this because this was the agreement whilst their parents were alive. Their mother first passed away, then their father. After five months of the death of her father, a close relative rang Lina to ask her whether she knew that her father's land was being claimed by her father's younger brother, Siaosi, who was the legal heir to the land. The two daughters had no idea that he had done this. It is clear that their father's younger brother is heir to the land and that he will inherit this land. Respondents were asked if they felt Siaosi's behavior was appropriate.



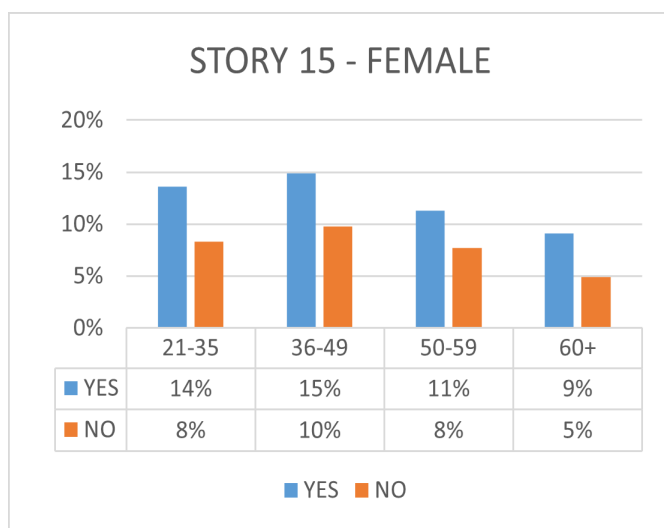
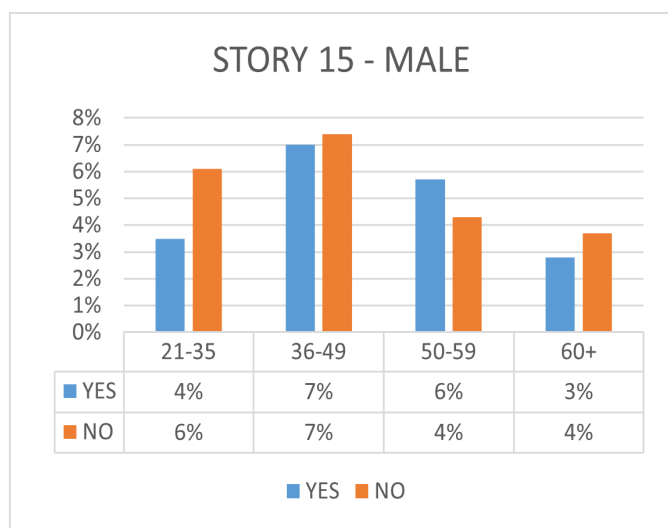
39% of the respondents believed that Siaosi's behavior was appropriate. They felt that the land belonged to Siaosi and he should claim it as the legal heir. They felt it was fine for him to claim this land otherwise the land will be lost from the family. They felt that Ane should have done something earlier about the land to secure it under her name. They felt that because Ane was an adopted daughter, family land should go to Siaosi anyway. (*Sai pē he ko ia pē 'oku totonu ke 'alu kiai e 'api he ko Ane ia ko e pusiaki/ He ko ia pē 'oku totonu ke 'I ai e 'api/ sai pē ia he ko Ane ia ko e pusiaki 'e pule ongo matu'a totonu ia 'a Ane ki he kelekele*), *'Oku tonu pē fakakaukau 'a Siaosi he 'oku 'ikai pē ke 'i ai ha foha hono ta'okete pea 'e 'alu hifo leva kiai ko ia 'oku hoko hake*).

59% of the respondents believed that Siaosi going and registering his brother's land, without the knowledge of the two daughters, was inappropriate. They felt that this showed Siaosi was selfish, uncaring towards his own cousins and felt that they should have discussed this work together (*'Ikai sai he 'oku siokita 'a Siaosi ki he fānau hono ta'okete/ ta'eofa pea 'ikai ke ne toka'i e alea 'a hono ta'okete mo hono ongo 'ofefine he'ene kei moui na'e totonu pē kene ma'u pē ha anga 'ofa kihe ongo ki'i tamaiki hono ta'okete he 'oku 'ikai ke 'iai ha 'api kene nofo ai*), that Siaosi was greedy as his brother just passed away (*Tonu pē ke tali 'a Siaosi ke lava ta'u taha ke fakalao mo ki'i lava atu ha ta'u e mate hono ta'okete kae'oua 'e manumanu pehē*) and should have waited for one year, and that he should have considered that Ane had taken care of his brother (*'Oku ta'e'ofa 'a Siaosi pea siokita 'ikai 'ofa hono ta'okete moe mata si'i fānau paea*) and that he should have come and discussed things with the two daughters as he is their "tamai" - father (*Ko e tamai ia tonu pē ke 'alu talanoa moe fānau he'oku hange pē ha'ane fānau*) and should have consulted with his two nieces. There were views also that he should let the lands go to the daughters as this was his older brother's wishes as they were females (where will they go?).

In Story 6, a great number of respondents felt that Sala, a mother advising her husband to lease their land to her two daughters, had acted inappropriately because the land belonged to the male heir, Sala's husband's younger brother. In this story, although a number of respondents still felt that Siaosi (the heir and younger brother) had acted appropriately because he was the legal heir to his brother's land, a lot more respondents felt that he had acted inappropriately and they used strongly negative language towards Siaosi's behavior, unkind, (*ta'e'ofa*)/ selfish (*siokita*), greedy (*manumanu*). There is an emotional aspect to this story, the fact that Siaosi did not approach the two daughters and consulted with them, that he acted in secrecy, which was mentioned by respondents who felt that he had acted inappropriately. Respondents responded more to this aspect of the story rather than their believing that the two daughters had a right to their father's land.

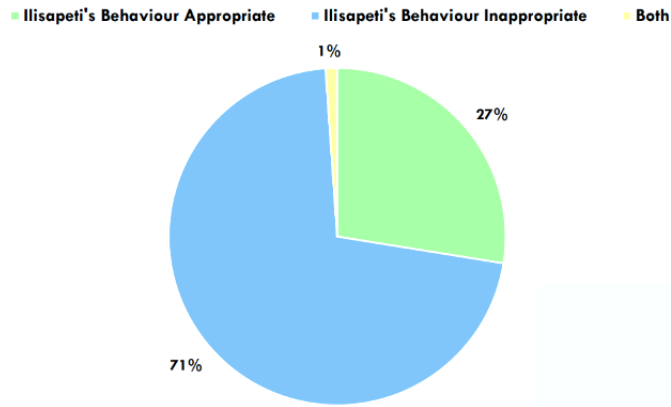
The influence of emotions in the way Tongans think must be seriously considered. Although they will have some perceived belief/attitude about an issue (such as males only to inherit land) their views changed when the story was emotional. If enough human/emotional stories are presented to show the impact of the injustices of the suppression of women's voices or the injustices/negativity of dominance of men, there is a possibility of a greater reception of such new ideas, (such as greater number of women for political participation).

Story 15: Daughters or uncle to inherit father's land?



Story 16 – Daughter registering her father's land on her husband's name

'Ilisapeta married 'Apolosi and they lived on 'Ilisapeta's father's land, which her father gifted to 'Ilisapeta. 'Ilisapeta decides then to register this land on her husband's name. After a few years, 'Apolosi left 'Ilisapeta and 'Ilisapeta returned to her father's home while 'Apolosi continued to stay at 'Ilisapeta's land. 'Apolosi later remarried and continued to live with his second wife on this land which had belonged to 'Ilisapeta, his first wife. The question to respondents: Was it appropriate for 'Ilisapeta to lease her land, gifted to her by her father, to her husband?



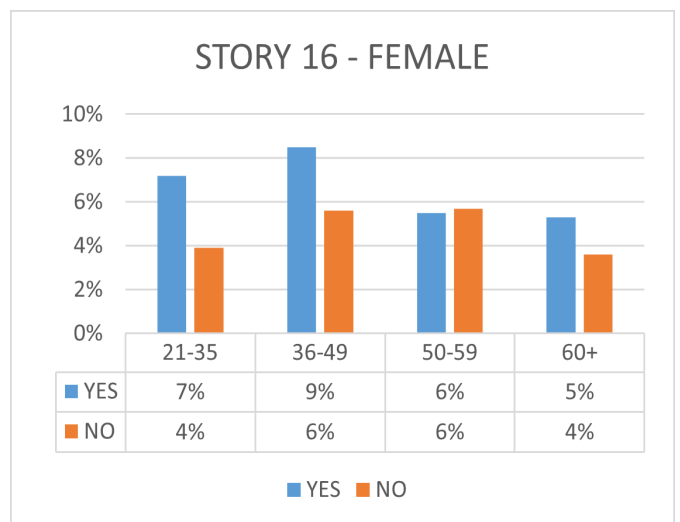
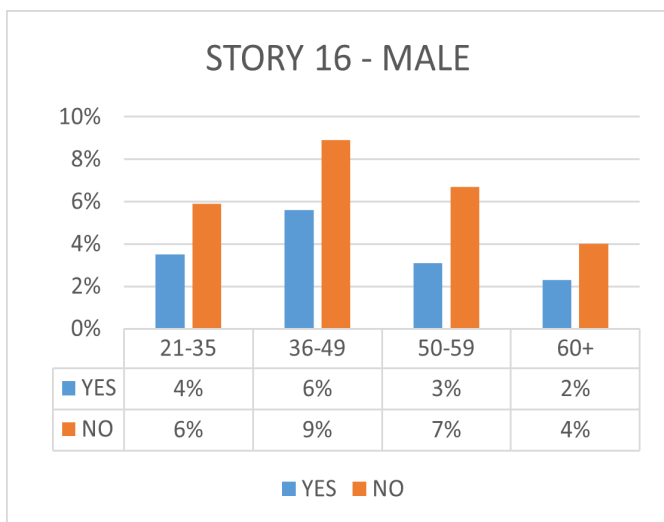
27% of the respondents believed that ‘Ilisapeta’s actions were appropriate because she had loved her husband and had made vows to stay together, and did not expect these problems (*‘Oku totonu pē hanga ‘e Ilisapeta ‘o ‘ai ki he’ene mali ha koe’ene mali pea tena fetokoni’aki pē ‘i he me’akotoa pē pea na’e ‘ikai ke ‘amanaki ‘a ‘Ilisapeta ia ‘e ‘iai he me’a ‘e hoko*) and they must have agreed to this decision.

71% of the respondents felt that ‘Ilisapeta’s registering of the land to her husband, which her father gifted to her, was inappropriate. They felt it was simply wrong of her to register the land to her husband because it was her land, that you never know what will happen (*ki’i tomotomo pē ‘a ‘Elisapeta he ta koeee ‘e ‘ikai kena fuoloa kane lēsisita ‘e ia ‘e ‘api ‘i hono mali/ Vale ngangau ta koee ‘ikai ke fuoloa ‘ena nofo mali ka ne lēsisita e ‘api hono mali*) and so she should have waited until they had some children, so she could register that land under their names and she should have leased the land under her name because it was her father’s land. Some felt that she should not have registered her father’s land to her husband, that she was weak to her husband (*Vaivai tangata ‘a Ilisapeta hono lisi e ‘api kia ‘Apolosi ko hono mali ta koee ‘e ‘ikai kena sapate kae lisi e ‘api ia ai*) because it was family land and should have gone to her father’s brothers, as the law dictates.

The majority of respondents felt that women should not lease gifted land to their husband. It seems that respondents feel strongly for family land to be inherited by family members, who are related by blood, and perceive outsiders, even those who marry into the families, as ineligible to inherit family land. Land which had belonged to her father, is now “mole” (lost) when she leased it to her husband. Respondents felt that the land should have gone either to her father’s brothers or his daughter’s children. Their views on this story seems slightly contradictory to their views in Story 6, which they felt that land belonged to males, as the law dictates. In addition, respondents responded to the “emotional” aspect of this story, feeling sympathetic towards the daughter for being unfairly treated by her husband.

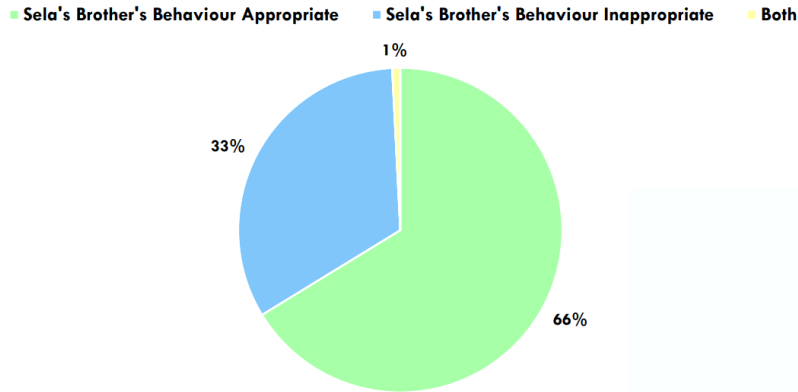
If Tongans feel strongly about land being inherited by blood relatives, (in most cases, by male heirs), how can this view be negotiated for Tongans to see daughters also as blood relatives of fathers and be able to inherit land as well? In addition, stories that highlight the injustices to women because of inability to own land, should be continuously heard to strengthen the cause for women to inherit family land.

Story 16: Daughter registering her father’s land on her husband’s name



Story 17 – Rights to be buried at in-laws cemetery plot.

Sela has two brothers who live in the same village. Sela’s husband, Lisiate, dies and Sela asked her two brothers if her husband can be buried in their family allotment in the village graveyard, where her parents and other siblings are already buried. Her brothers said yes. Soon after, Lisiate’s younger brother passes away and his children came to ask Sela, to request her brothers, if he can be buried together with Lisiate at Sela’s brothers plot. The brothers said no. Respondents were asked, was Sela’s brothers’ decision to say no, an appropriate answer?

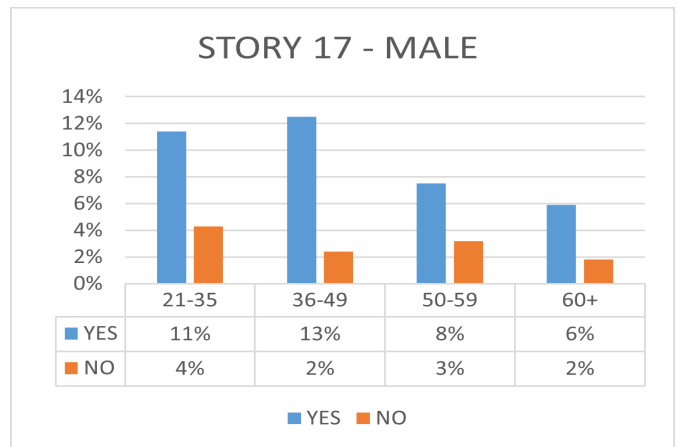
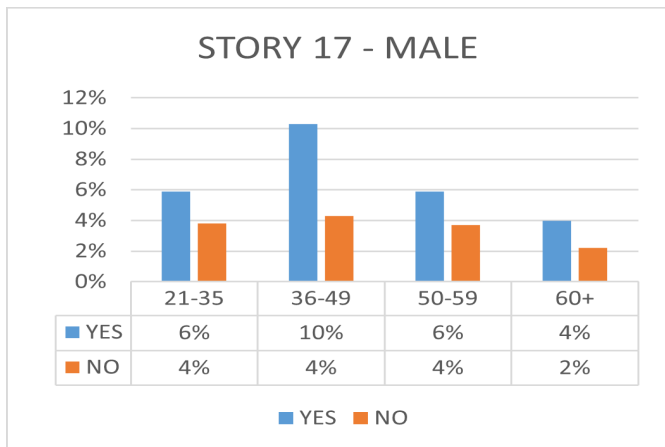


66% of the respondents believed that Sela’s brothers’ decision was appropriate. They felt that only Sela’s husband should be buried at Sela’s family’s family plot (*Ko e tanu pē mali hona tuofefine ko ia pē ‘oku totonu ke tanu he mala’e ‘ikai ke toe kau mai mo e tokoua*). They believed that her husband’s brother needs to look for another plot for him to be buried or ask to be buried at the town burial grounds (*‘ave pē ‘o tanu ki he mala’e fakakolo*). They felt that Sela’s in-laws should have realized that this burial ground is Sela’s family’s burial ground and therefore should not be expected to have more of her husband’s siblings buried there, as Sela’s husband is already buried there (*he ko e mala’e fakafamjij ia na’a mate mai ha taha ia honau fāmili kuo fonu e kongā mala’e ia/na’a fonu ‘enau mala’e fakafāmili*). They felt that it was quite appropriate for Sela’s brothers to refuse for Sela’s brother-in-law’s burial at their family burial ground, because if they say yes to this request, then that family may continue to request and the burial ground may be filled, so it is best they end it here by saying “no” (*sai pē hono ta’ofi na’a ‘osi kotoa mai pē fāmili ia ‘o Lisiate hono kole ke tanu ai*).

30% of the respondents felt that it was not appropriate for Sela’s brothers to refuse the burial of Sela’s brother-in-law in their family plot. They felt that Sela’s brother should have accepted because they have accepted Sela’s husband to be buried at the family burial plot, and so they should add his brother also. They also expressed sympathy with the family of this son, in saying what if there were nowhere else to go for their funerals, that they should have respected Sela’s request, as she is their sister. (*‘Oku na angakovi’i ‘e naua hona tuofefine ‘ikai ke na ‘ofa pē ‘o tali si’ene kole / ‘ikai fie tali pē kole hona tuofefine ke tanu ai pē ‘e faifunga pē ‘ia Lisiate*).

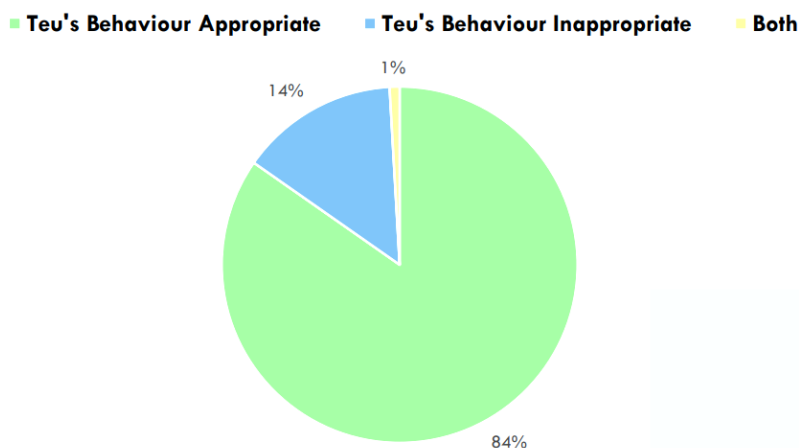
Although Sela is their sister and is “fahu” to these brother’s children, it appears that there are certain areas which respondents feel that are “male” dominions, such as rights to lands, in this case, burial plots. Respondents felt that Sela’s brothers’ decision to accept her request for her own husband to be buried in their family burial plot but refuse her husband’s brother, means that there is a very strong opinion that males should make decisions over “family lands”.

Story 17: Rights to be buried at in-laws cemetery plot.



Story 18 – Who should speak at the village meeting “fono”?

Teu is from the village of Vaotu’u and married Vave from the village of Fāhefa, and they live in Fāhefa. Teu is well-educated and often attends the village “fono” meetings because she often participates in the discussion of the local issues. She noticed that only a few of the women participate actively in the discussions. After the meeting Teu asked other women why they remained silent. One woman told her that they do not speak up because they are not originally from Fāhefa, they have just married into the village. The other women who speak up are originally from this village, Fāhefa. Respondents were asked, “Do you think that Teu’s active participation in discussion of Fāhefa’s issues is appropriate?”



84% of the respondents felt that Teu’s active participation in discussions of Fāhefa’s issues in the village Fono was appropriate. They stated that she was now living in Fāhefa bearing responsibilities as a citizen of Fāhefa (*sai pē he oku nofo 'i Fāhefa pea 'oku fua kavenga totongi vai mo totongi uhila ai*) was working for the good of the village, (*'Oku nofo 'i Fāhefa pea ngāue 'i 'a Fāhefa lea pē 'a e ngāue/ kuo mali ki ai, nofo ai, totongi vai ai, kuo fefine 'i fonua ai*), has “paid her water and electricity bills” as a statement for “fua kavenga”, these two responsibilities seen as the “basic” responsibilities of a villager to the village as a whole, that she is now a ‘registered’ (as in census records) member of Fāhefa (*tohi kakai 'i Fāhefa/ lesisita 'i Fāhefa*) and a mention that since she was well-educated she should participate in the discussions.

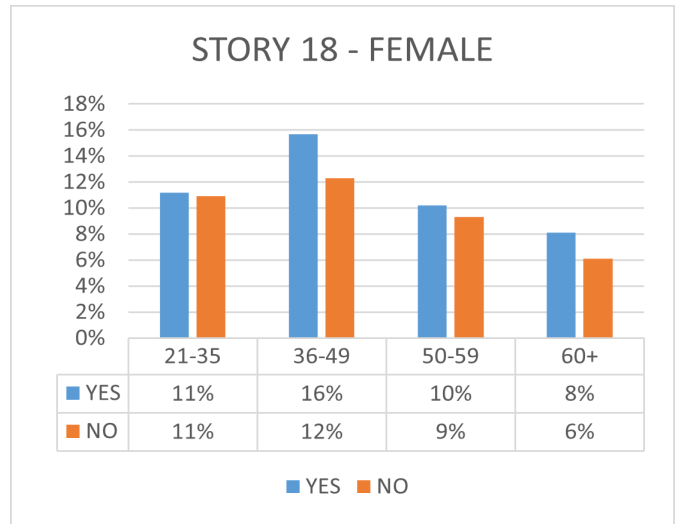
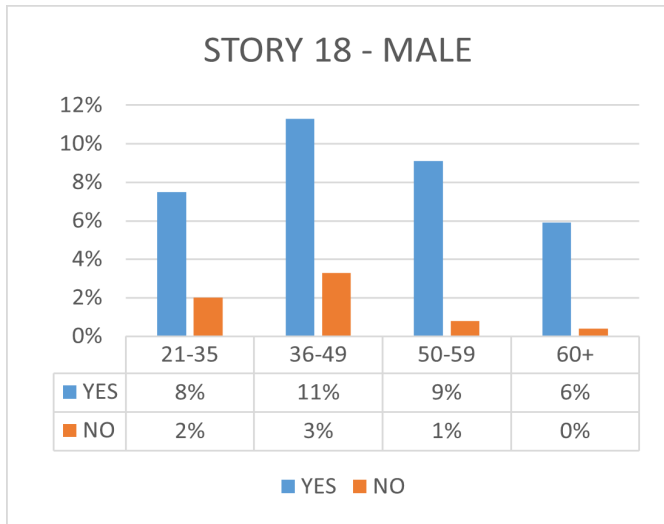
14% of the respondents believed that Teu participating in the village Fono was inappropriate behavior. They felt that she shouldn’t participate because it is Tongan culture for her not to speak because others in the village will question where she belonged, that she would be seen as “fiepotou” [wanting to appear smart] (*Ko hotau anga faka-Tonga ia ka lea ha finemtu'a ia 'e 'eke 'i ia pē ko 'ene ha'u mei fē/ totonu ke 'oua 'e lea ia na'a lea mai ha taha ki ai pehē 'oku fiepotou*), that in speaking at the village ‘fono’ she was asking for trouble and for people to insult her and her family (*te ne fakatupunga 'e ia e kē 'i ai pea e lea atu leva e kakai ia ki ai mo hono ki 'i fāmili*).

It is clear that a woman who marries and move to her husband’s village is firstly seen as not really belonging, evident in the cautions for Teu not to participate in case she is questioned whether she belongs in her husband’s village or not (*'eke 'i pē ko 'ene ha'u mei fe?*). She has to be perceived by her villagers as participating in village activities, and “fua kavenga”, which is to contribute financially or otherwise into family, church and village activities and it is at this stage, that she is accepted and is able to participate in discussions of issues in her husband’s village. This term, which was often cited by respondents, that she has ‘paid her electricity and water bill’ is a way of saying that she has paid her dues to belong to her husband or new village.

It will be safe to say then, that women who want to have some say in discussions of issues in their husbands’ electorates, must be perceived to actively participate in their communities.

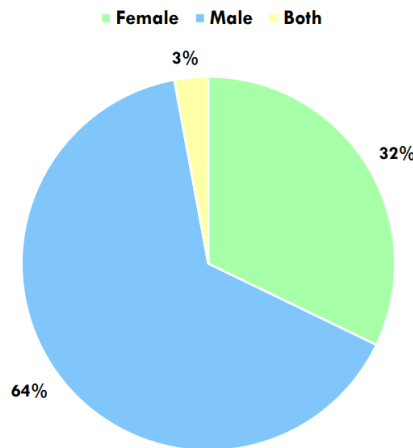
There were views from respondents who felt it was inappropriate for Teu to speak because they felt she may be seen as “fiepotou” by others. Therefore, women who are well-educated have to be careful not to appear “fiepotou” in the eyes of her community. This “fiepotou” concept also appears as reasons given in other stories in this questionnaire, indicating that the Tongan culture values those that are perceived as showing humility in their interaction with others, especially in public forums. Women therefore who are well-educated and may hold strong opinions and are vocal in expressing these opinions, (attributes which are needed in parliamentary discussions), may have these very attributes counted against them in their interactions with villagers or their communities. Women who may want to be village or political leaders must be able to identify occasions when they are to show humility and when to show aggressive behavior.

Story 18: Who should speak at the village meeting “fono”?



Story 19 – Who should run for the district superintendent church minister role, females/males/both?

Respondents were asked to choose whether they wanted a female or male candidate to be district superintendent in a church. The male and female candidates had exactly the same qualifications, they were 52 years old, had divinity degrees, were married with four children, both were teachers and were healthy. Who then, did respondents feel should be a district superintendent in this church?



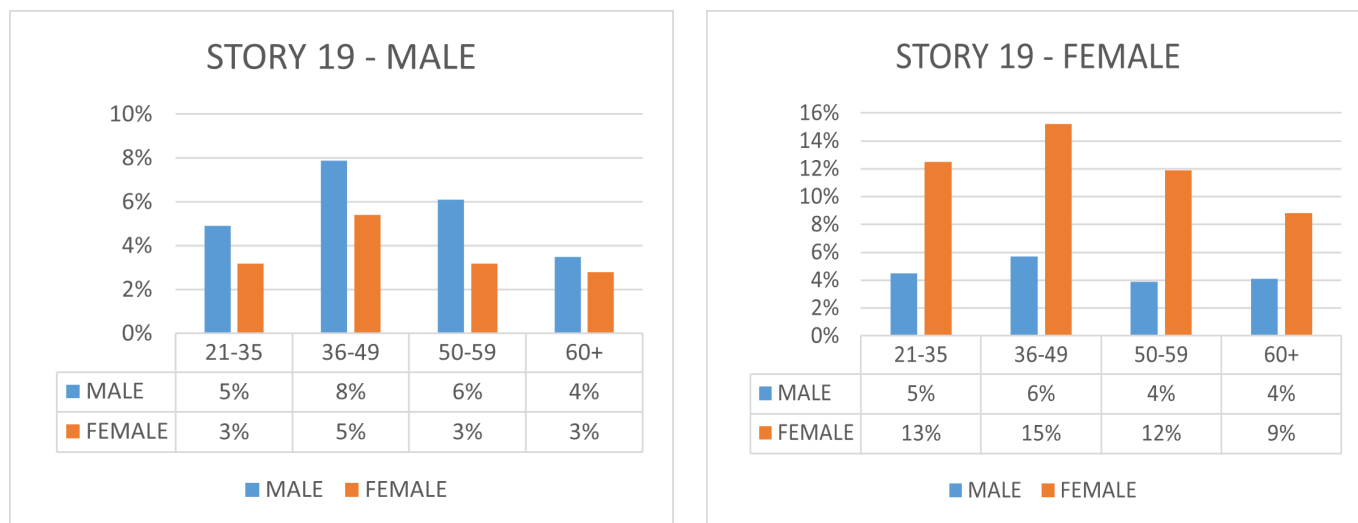
64% of the respondents felt that the male candidate should be the district superintendent. They believed that leadership position more appropriate for males (*ko hono fatongia ngāue a e pule, fe’unga pē ia mo e tangata/ fatoniga ke fai ehe tangata he ko kinautolu pē nau fai e mea koia pea taha ‘oku nau kei taki lelei ange pē kinautolu*), that males will best do this leadership work (*‘oku taau ange pē mo e kakai tangata ke nau faifekau pule ke nau pule’i lelei e vahe pē koe kolo koia oku tuku atu kiai*), that even though the male and female candidate have same ‘qualifications’, men will be better in doing this job, as district superintendent (*Neongo ‘oku na tatau he ngaahi me’a ‘oku ha ‘i ‘olunga ka ‘oku kei lava ange he kakai tangata ia ‘o faka’uto’uta lelei ‘i he me’a ko e faifekau pule*), that they have not seen any women district superintendents in their churches, (*talū ‘eku tupu ‘a’aku ‘oku teeki keu fanogno au ‘oku faifekau pule ha fefine koe ‘uhiga ia ‘eku fili he tangata*), that males more suited for it (leading) as they were created first by God (*feunga pē moe kakai tangata he koe ‘uluaki fa’u ia ‘ae ‘Otua*).

32% of the respondents felt that the female candidate should be the district superintendent because women should have a voice too (*‘ai pē mo ‘i ai ha le’o e kakai fefine ‘ikai koe kakai tangata pē*), they can do the same job as they are the same [have same qualifications] (*tena fai tatau pē ‘a e fatongia he ‘oku na tatau lōua pē*), that it will be easier for parishioners to relate to a woman (*faingofua ange ke feohi mo e faifekau fefine ha ngaahi fiema’u*) and that women have the same position in the Church as Heaven is available to all (*‘Oku ‘i ai e totonu ‘a fefine ki he alea’i e Siasi ‘oku ‘atā pē ‘a Hēvani ki he taha kotoa*).

Males were seen as the most appropriate to hold positions of leadership in churches. Comments such as “I have never seen a woman district superintendant in my church” highlight the importance of having women in leadership positions.

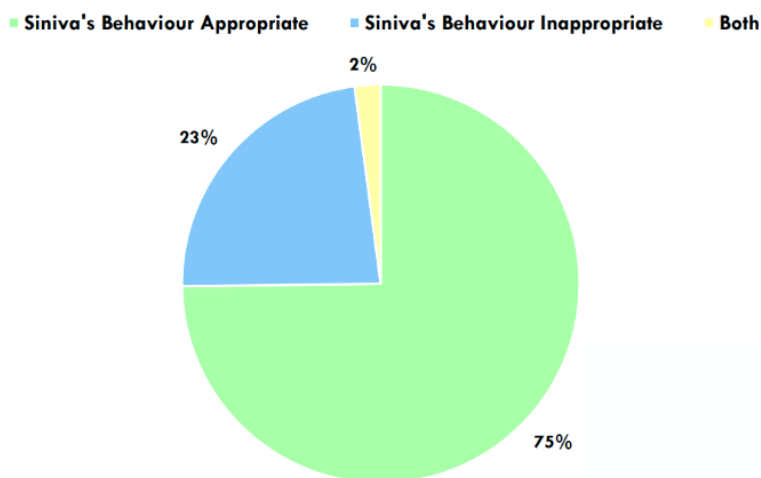
Churches are influential amongst their members. Individuals and organisations who work for empowering women, to raise their voices and discuss their issues, must seriously and strategically engage different churches, so we can influence the agenda at local, regional and international levels.

Story 19: Who should run for the district superintendent church minister role, females/males/both?



Story 20 – Single, female church minister stationed to work at outer islands

Siniva is a single, 35-year-old, female, church minister. She has been called to a new post to be stationed as the church minister in the village of Tefisi, in the outer island of Vava'u. Respondents were asked, Is Siniva's going to her new posting, as church minister in the outer island, appropriate behavior?

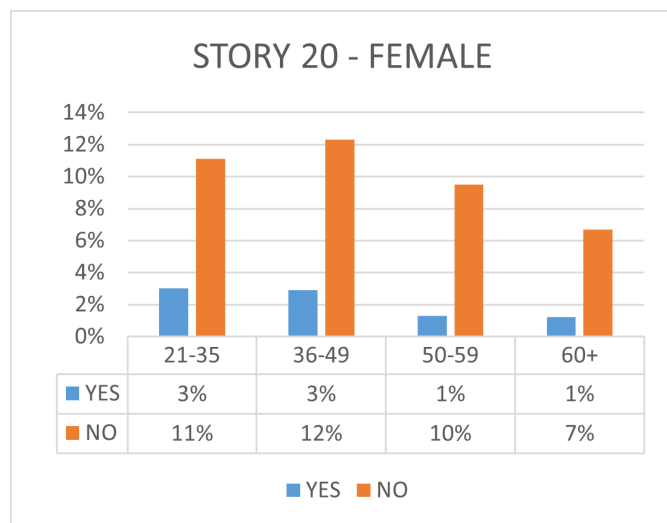
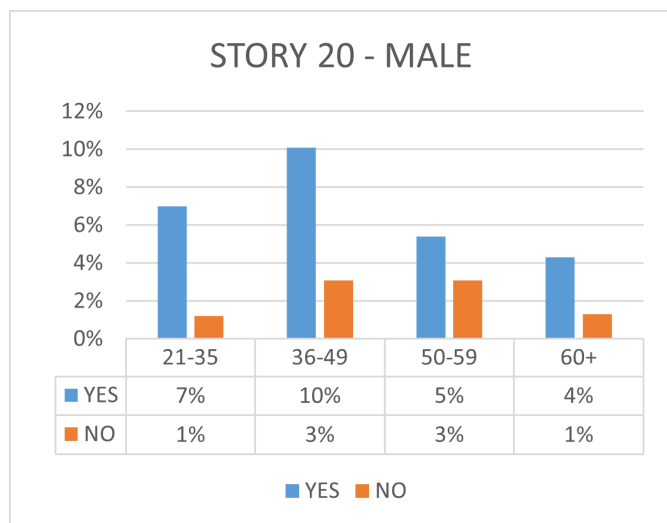


75% of respondents felt that Siniva's moving to the outer islands as a church minister, was appropriate behavior. They felt that she should go as this is the type of work that happens when you work for the churches (*ko e ngāue ia ma'a e 'Eiki koe ui pē kita ki ha fa'ahinga feitu'u pē kuo pau ke te 'alu kita ai*), that she has been called to this work (*'oku ne loto 'aki pea ko hono ui oku tukulolo 'ene mo'ui ki ai*) and that the Lord will help her with her work, even though she is unmarried (*Ko e pole pea kuo ui ki he ngāue 'a e 'Eiki neongo 'ene kei si'i mo ta'emali he 'e tokoni'i ia 'e he 'Eiki*).

25% of the respondents felt that Siniva's going to the outer islands, was inappropriate behavior. They felt that she should get married first, that she needed someone to go with her because she could not do this work by herself (*'Oku totonu ke 'uluaki kumi hano mali pea ne toki 'alu leva fakahoko e ngāue, si'isi'i ha'aku tui te ne lava fakahoko tokotaha e ngāue*), that if she is unmarried she won't be able to take care of a congregation (*te'eki ke 'i ai hano mali ke poupou lelei kiai pea koe tu'unga oku 'i ai 'oku te'eki lava 'e ia pule'i e sias*), she should get married or she will get into trouble (*tonu ke ne mali pea toki 'alu na'a 'alu ia 'o hinga*).

As in Story 14, the churches show a strong influence in how people perceive what are and what are not, appropriate attitudes and behaviours. Because she was working for the church, her "calling" to move was accepted as the appropriate behavior for a large number of respondents.

Story 20: Single, female church minister stationed to work at outer islands

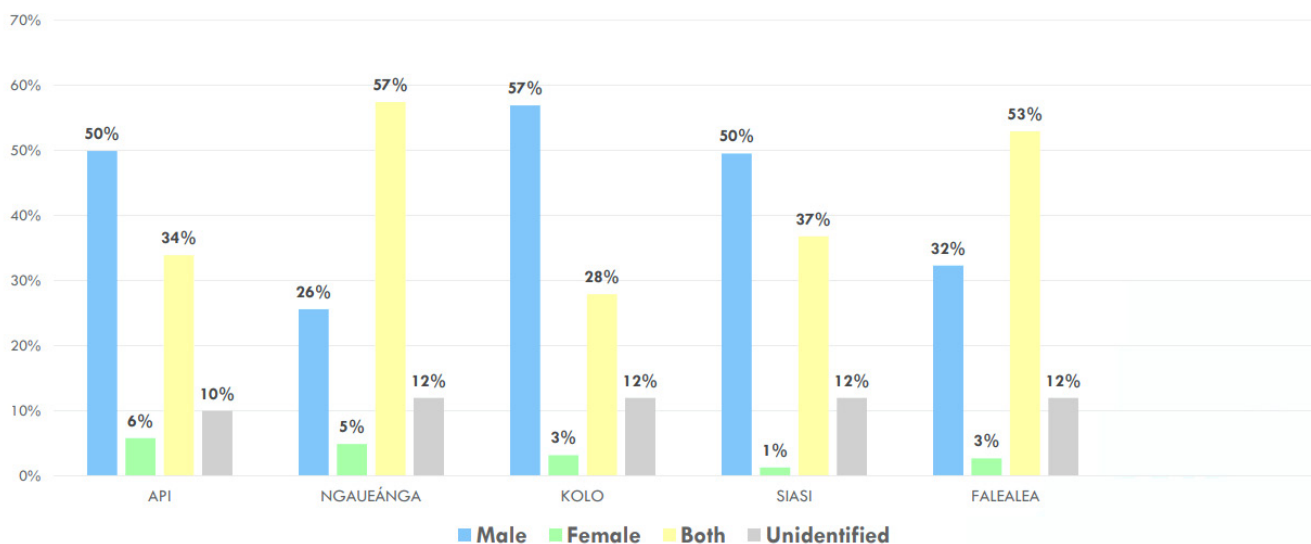


Section 3

Respondents were given five areas; (home, workplace, village, church and parliament), and asked to state whether they felt males or females would be best leaders in these areas or make the best decisions in these areas.

In the areas of the “api” (home), “kolo” (village) and “siasi” (church), approximately 50% or higher of the respondents, felt that men would lead best and less than 10% of respondents felt that women would lead best in Tonga, in those areas. However, there were significant numbers of respondents who felt that both women and men could lead in these same three areas, with higher percentages for “both” than women. The lowest percentage was for women as perceived leaders in churches.

Ko hai ‘oku taki lelei taha? – Who is the best leader?

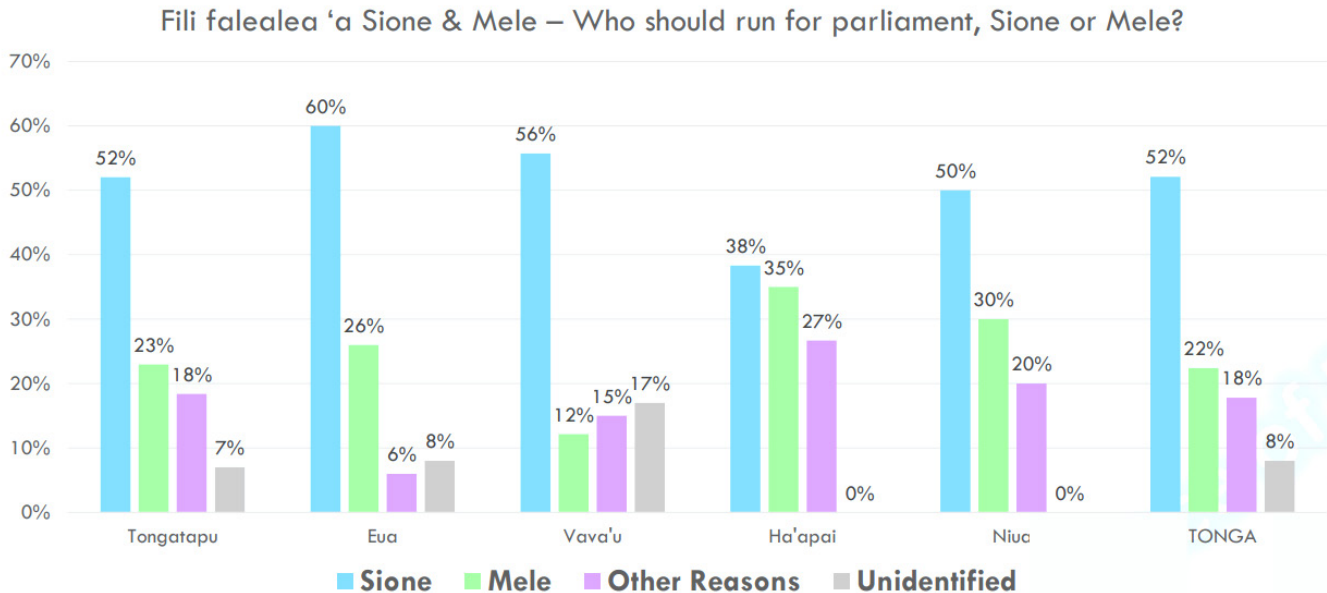


In the two other areas, the workplace and parliament, more than 50% of respondents felt that both men and women would make the best leaders. The remaining respondents were more likely to see men than women as ‘best ‘ leaders in the workplace and Parliament.

This result indicates that for workplaces and parliament, there is increasing number of people who may be starting to see that leadership in these areas is not bound to gender. There is an increasing number of visible women who are leaders in workplaces, such as women chief executive officers (CEOs) in government ministries and women leaders in the private sector. The home and villages, however, are areas with traditional gender roles and responsibilities, which are reflected in respondents’ responses to this question.

Section 4

In Section 4, respondents were given two parliamentary candidates, Sione (male), and Mele (female). Both had exactly the same background, and respondents were asked whom they would choose as their parliamentary representative. The two candidates had the same background, which included; having bachelor degrees, were civil servants for ten years, were members of village councils, had well known parents, were active members of village community groups, had been married twice, with two children from first marriage and three children from the second marriage, supported a local rugby club, drank alcohol and smoked.



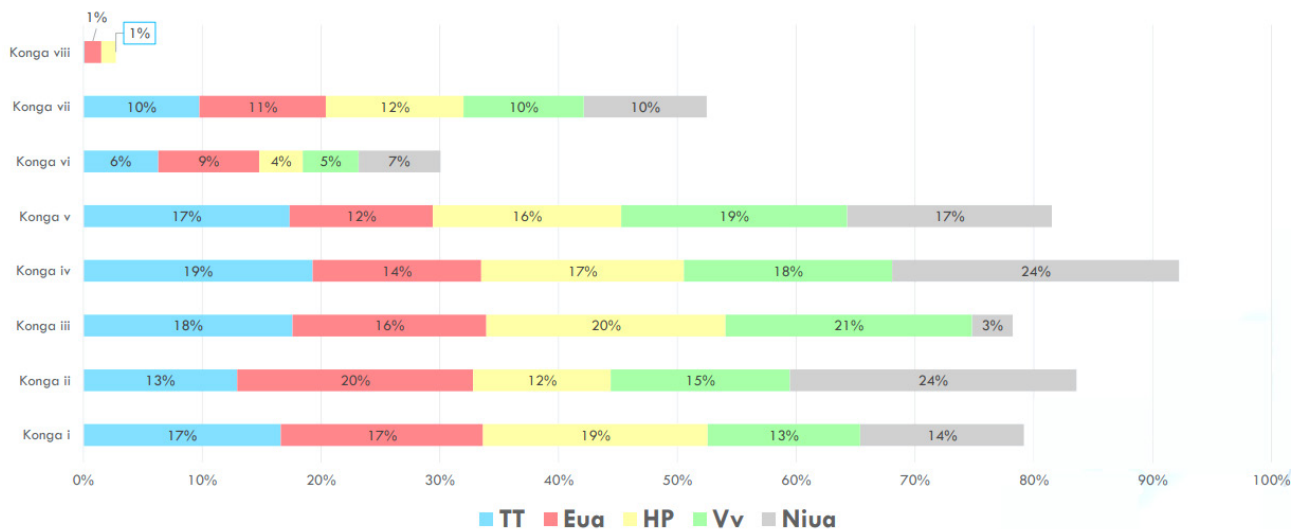
Following the trend for all island groups, 52% of respondents for Tonga stated that they would choose the male candidate while 22% of respondents felt that they would choose a female. Interestingly, 18% of the respondents felt that they would not choose either of these two candidates mainly because they disapprove of their behavior, such as drinking alcohol, smoking and having been married twice.

In the 2016 Survey, 71% had stated that they would vote for the male candidates, so there is a decrease in respondents' preference for male candidates while the percentage that preferred the female candidate decreased from 29% in 2016 to 22% in the 2020 survey. There was a significant group who felt that they would vote for neither candidate, mainly because they were divorced and because they drank alcohol and smoked. This shows that these social behaviours can be very significant in the eyes of the Tongan public and can negatively impact the chance for women to be elected into parliament.

Section 5

The last section asked respondents why they thought that women are not elected to parliament, after the 2010 democratic changes in 2010 and 2014. They were given eight statements of reasons and they were asked to choose their preferred top three reasons. The eight statements were:

- i. *Many Tongan were not ready to vote a woman into parliament.* = 80
- ii. *Women candidates are not the right ones* = 84
- iii. *Women have a lot of family responsibilities and have very little time for politics.* = 78
- iv. *Fewer women than men have the right skills and experience for parliament.* = 92
- v. *Women are not tough enough for politics.* = 81
- vi. *Women do not have enough financial means to run their campaigns* = 31
- vii. *Women voters do not vote women candidates.* = 54
- viii. *Other reasons.*



92% of respondents selected the option that, “Fewer women than men have the right skills and experience for parliament” [‘Oku ‘ikai ke ma’u ‘e fafine ‘a e fa’unga ‘o e taki lelei ‘o hangē ko e kakai tangatā], (Statement 4). The second most preferred reason, with 84%, was that “Women candidates were not the right ones” [‘ikai ke sai’ia ‘a e kau fili ia he kakai fefine koē ‘oku kaniteiti], (Statement 2). The third most preferred option, with 81%, was that “Women are not tough enough for politics” [‘Oku ‘ikai to’a fe’unga ‘a e kakai fefine ki he ngaahi me’a fakapolitikale], (Statement 5). Respondents chose (Statement 1) as their fourth most preferred reason with, 80%, namely that “Tongan voters were not ready to vote for women” [‘Oku tokolahi ‘a e kakai Tonga ‘oku ‘ikai ke nau mateuteu ke fili ha fefine ki falealea]. 78% of respondents considered that “women were less likely elected to Parliament because they have family responsibilities and very little time for politics” [‘Oku felemofafo ‘a e fatongia fakafāmili ‘o e kakai fefine pea ‘ikai ‘i ai ha’anau taimi ki he fakapolitikale], (Statement 3). Less commonly given were the reasons that “women voters do not vote for women candidates” (Statement 7) and that “women do not have the financial means to fund their campaigns”, (Statement 6).

The responses to this question shows that the majority of the respondents believe that women do not have the leadership qualities as do men and this view is supported by their third most preferred option, that women are not tough enough for politics, that women’s responsibilities at home come first and therefore politics is a secondary concern for women and that Tongan voters are not ready to vote for women. This indicates that the majority of the respondents feel that men have the leadership qualities and the courage for politics and not so women.

Their second preferred option, that women candidates who have campaigned are not the correct ones, strongly indicates that women who may decide to run for parliament will have to consider personal relationships with others, as a decisive factor which can hinder or aid their parliamentary campaigns.

The responses to these statements indicate that the views towards women as parliamentarians are still secondary to the belief that men are more suited, and the right and appropriate experience and skills to be political leaders.

4. Synthesis of Findings

There are different threads interwoven in the results of this survey. The results from this study show that there are a lot of challenges that face women in Tonga, especially if they are wanting to be political leaders in the future.

One of the main threads in this survey, is that the majority of Tongans continue to have the belief that men are the “leaders” of families in a traditional vertical hierarchy and, by extension, men should attend village meetings (Fono) and be leaders in other higher decision-making circles, such as parliament. Men were also considered by a majority as most appropriate to inherit and own land. Women are to support the men in these positions and to follow their decisions. The role of women as ‘mothers’, as carers, especially as carers towards children, continues to be viewed as the most appropriate and important role for women.

Women were still perceived by the Tongan public, as not suited to being appropriate participants in decision-making platforms, such as the village ‘Fono’ or meeting, with a strong preference for men to participate in these platforms. This view is clearly echoed in the results of Section 4 of the study, where a majority stated that they would vote for a male candidate and Section 5, in which the most preferred statement of respondents was that “fewer women than men have the right skills and experience for parliament” or, in other words, men are inherently better leaders than women. In Story 19, a majority of respondents chose a male candidate for church district superintendent over a female candidate, reiterating their belief that men are better church leaders than women. This view is consistent with that mentioned above, which is that the role mostly strongly assigned to women in this study, is that of “motherhood”. Mothers are preferred to be at home, caring for the children, while fathers make decisions at home, as in Story 1 or are expected to be the ones involved in the community decision making process, as in Story 8.

Women are also still seen as “easy preys” for social problems, more so than men. This is shown in Story 3 when the father signs himself up to be part of a group traveling to Samoa for work. Respondents strongly stated that it was better for the father to go while the mother stayed because she was vulnerable to “falling”. The same with Story 2, where the working mother should not be working late or else she will fall into trouble. Women continue to be seen as the cause of family problems, by them being perceived as weak and easily led astray, more so than men.

Results from this study shows that there continues to be a strong perception that land belongs to men and they should hand over their rights to gifted lands to male heirs. Currently, land laws in Tonga forbid women from owning any land or registering land under their own names. Women can lease land but not own land. Fathers can lease daughters some of their land and daughters can also register such gifted lands through their husbands (generally disapproved) or sons (generally approved). There is a strong view that land belongs to men and this view is heavily influenced by current land laws. Even, when, as in Story 6, there were only two daughters, there were respondents who felt strongly that the land should go where it belongs, to the male heir, because the land then remains in the family, as it is also the man who is perceived as “remaining” in the family, while the woman is seen as ‘lost’ (mole) when she marries because she moves out of the family home or family lands. In Story 17, a majority of respondents felt that the brothers’ refusal of their brother-in-law’s family to be buried in their family burial plot was very appropriate, even though it had been their sister who had requested this of them. This reaction indicates that the majority feel that males are most appropriate to make decisions in regards to land.

The importance of keeping “appropriate relationships” (tauhi vā) with others in the communities is highlighted in the findings of this study. In Story 1, Sione is expected to give to his relatives in times of need, this is “tauhi vā” or keeping appropriate relationships with his extended family. In Story 9, even though Paula’s pig had kept damaging Soana’s gardens, respondents felt that she had broken the “vā” by swearing at him. In Story 12, even though ‘Asena was “fahu” over her maternal uncle, Siale, her eating all the food, all the time at his home was seen by respondents, as inconsiderate, breaking the appropriate “vā”. In Story 15, Siaosi’s secrecy in registering of his brother’s land, was seen by respondents as breaking of “vā” to his nieces. The concept of keeping appropriate relationships (tauhi vā) with members of one’s community, must be seriously considered by women who wish to enter politics.

This study also shows that when there are emotional stories that highlight some injustices to women, these emotional stories can influence strongly held traditional views. As in the case of Story 4, when the woman asks her husband to change the baby in front of his family (although her actions may be perceived as disrespectful in Tongan culture), respondents felt sympathetic towards the woman because she was sick. This is similar to the case of Story 14 when Telu, as a daughter, with the traditional expectation that she will look after her mother, was perceived as satisfactory when she visited her mother only during the weekends because she was a church minister's wife and their work was a "calling" from God. In addition, in Story 15, when the lands of the father was to be leased to his adopted eldest daughter, even though respondents voiced that the land belonged to the daughters' uncle (younger brother of their father), a majority felt that their uncle's behaviour of secretly registering the land, was unfair to the daughters. Similarly, although males were seen as head of the family and inherently more suited for making decisions, when the male was perceived as not sharing the bank account access with his wife (Story Number 5), a majority of respondents felt this was wrong of the husband because they felt that there was an injustice to the female. Therefore, although there were strong traditional views of women in traditional roles, when there were incidents in which women were seen as victims of injustice, the emotion raised in these incidents was able to change the "traditional" expectations of respondents.

The influence of churches on perceptions of Tongans, is another important thread of this study. In Story 14, although Telu was the daughter and traditionally expected to look after her mother, respondents believed that it was appropriate for her to follow her husband, who was working for the church, and let her brother, who was staying with their mother, look after their mother. Respondents' traditional beliefs about gendered roles appears to be challenged if there is a theology that supports the change. Therefore, it is critical to involve local theologians in advocacy campaigns so that they can have new theologies that will support the changes that are advocated about women as leaders. In Story 19, a majority believed that only males should hold a leadership position and one of the reasons was that they have never seen a female as a District Superintendent position before. It can be seen that churches have a strong influence in shaping respondents' views of which gender should be in leadership positions and this is based on the visibility of women in leadership positions within the churches.

There is a new thread in the findings of this study, which is the strengthened view that women can be leaders in workplaces, as is shown in the 2016 and 2020 surveys. The result from Section 3 shows that majority of respondents felt that men and women alike can be leaders in workplaces. There is an increasing acceptance, as in Story 2, that women can be breadwinners and that the husbands can do the household chores if he is not employed. In Story 5, there was a strong negative response to the husband having solo access to the family's financial income and statements showing significant support for women to have equal access to financial income with male partners. There was a growing support for women to be able to travel to workplaces overseas (Story 3) and acknowledgement that men and women both can suffer negative consequences from this travel, that it is not just women that may suffer problems, that males too can face those social challenges as well. The workplace, or areas in which women are seen as economic providers, is an area in which women's participation is accepted. This is a significant finding. Greater visibility of women in workplaces may be a strong factor in enabling this shift of the views of women in the workplace. The use of Temporary Special Measures (TSM) may be an option to ensure that there is increased visibility of women in parliament.

Another thread of this study is that women in Tonga hold influential social roles, such as the "mehekita" and "fahu" role (Stories 7, 11, 12, 13). This is a position of privilege and influence. At the same time this position also has boundaries. How then, can these socially influential roles that Tongan women hold within their families, influence opportunities to have greater inclusivity of women in local and national decision making processes and platforms?

5. CONCLUSION

Although there has been much work in the last ten years to raise awareness on the importance for Tongan women to participate in decision making processes, this study shows that there continues to be many challenges that Tongan women face if there is a wish to have more women as active partners in decision making and to have more involvement in national politics.

There is still a very strong view that men are inherently better leaders in family and in the village and for parliament and that they should own land and not women. The perception that women's main role is that of "motherhood", which is to be supportive of husbands and caring of children, is still the strongest perception, except for scenarios when there are grave cases of injustices or unfairness held against them.

This study, nevertheless, shows that in workplaces, acceptance of women as leaders have continued to be strengthened. There is greater acceptance of women as economic earners, although this view is tempered by the view that they may be economic earners but that their role as mothers still comes first. Greater visibility of women leaders in decision making arenas, such as being leaders in workplaces, must be considered as a way of encouraging increased women participation. This study also shows that Tongans recognize that there are traditional, influential areas for Tongan women. How these areas of social influence can be linked to greater political influence is an issue which needs further investigation.

Stories which highlighted unfair treatment of women appeared to have an emotional impact on respondents and elicited a different response from their 'traditional' views. Storytelling that highlight injustices for women, should be a major tool for advocacy for women's rights.

This study provides information that indicates that the traditional Tongan values about gendered roles within the Tongan family seems to be reinforced within the village and church communities. It is only at workplaces, which are based mainly on western workplace organisational models, that this entrenched traditional hierarchy is collapsed slightly.

It is critical therefore for the policy makers and community leaders to rethink the principles of national policies and implementation strategies in order to address deeply entrenched beliefs about gender roles in the Tongan society.



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