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Short-term visits and Tongan livelihoods: Transnational exchange and enterprise

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ABSTRACT A culture of migration and return is now part of everyday life in the Kingdom of Tonga and transnational exchange relationships are crucial to the country's economy. Despite research on the impacts of remittances and other transnational exchange activities on livelihoods in Tonga and in migrant host countries, there has been little research on the interwoven dependencies and relationships amongst home, host, local and diasporan nodes, or the impact of short-term visits in both directions. This paper explores dynamic processes within the agency of family-linked economic and social practices of migrants and their descendants in host countries as well as their homelands. These activities are theorised within transnational contexts 'from below' (micro), 'above' (macro), 'middling' (meso) and 'from above' (macro) levels. The methodology, grounded in Pacific and Western ontologies, co-creatively analyses the exchange and enterprise activities of families on a remote island of Tonga with high out-migration, compared with their relatives in Auckland, New Zealand. Key findings are that short-term visiting ensures the survival of a range of economic, social and cultural activities that are critically important for "being Tongan" in the different diasporan contexts. The originality of the research lies in retheorising enterprise alternatives for transnational Tongans, development of a Pacific-framed view of transnational enterprise and method that captures exchange complexities. The analysis fills a gap in knowledge regarding the impact of short visits on diasporan livelihoods, with implications for labour policy in home and diasporan locations to encourage youth to stay longer and older people to return sooner.

Key words: Short-term visits, return migrants, family livelihoods, enterprise, transnational exchange

Word count (250)

INTRODUCTION

A 'culture of migration' within circuits of return, created by strong family ties as legitimate ways to achieve economic and social well-being (Cohen, 2004), is central to everyday village life in Polynesia (Connell, 2010); to the extent that short-term visits could be counted as part of the 'village' economy (Bedford *et al.*, 2006). Short-term visits encompass travel for periods of up to six months to and from home, host and local (within a country) places within diasporan families and counter-intuitively includes return migrants, who are habitual travellers. While outmigration has facilitated the process of adjustment of small island states to global conditions, contemporary Pacific peoples nonetheless continue to operate at the interface of household subsistence and market-driven Western economies (Gibson and Nero, 2008) within a range of mobility strategies.

Extensive movement from Polynesia did not occur until long-haul travel technologies, cheaper airfares, direct flights to metropolitan centres, electronic communication and financial transactions (Hazledine and Collins, 2011) extended, yet but did not replace, livelihood strategies in the islands (Besnier, 2011). The experience of islands such as Niue, especially in the post-colonial era, illustrates that once a diaspora becomes substantially larger than the homeland population, irrecoverable declines occur in identity and numbers of residents (Douglas, 1987; Gibson, 2004). Further, culture changes and tensions develop between migrants and their compatriots which affect economic sustainability (Connell, 2008). In 2009, the Tongan worldwide ethnic population was roughly equal to that of the home archipelago (Hayes, 2010). By 2016 the global Tongan population could be close to 240,000, evenly split between home archipelago residents, island-born emigrants and generations born overseas (Small, 2011). Thus a similar picture may be emerging for Tonga.

This paper explores the nature of Tongan-New Zealand diasporan exchange dependencies. The research is framed by the agency of everyday practices of transnational communities 'from below' (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998) focussed on home and destination countries (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001), driven by global macro processes 'from above' (Bhabha, 1990) such as border controls, labour, debt, ownership and governance. Activities are also mediated by the actions of 'middling' transnational actors who operate 'from above' and 'from below' (Smith, 2005) within 'coterminous realms of reality' that overlap and blend in daily transnational family life (Besnier, 2011). The role of short-term visits in the triangle of connections between home and destination and the globally dispersed diaspora in sustaining diasporan exchange dependencies has received little empirical attention (Lee, 2011; Janta *et al.*, 2015). Their role in maintaining (and perhaps disrupting) transnational exchange, including informal enterprise, is examined through the bi-focal lens of Tongans residents and migrants from a low-lying, low-income coral islands community in the Ha'apai Group.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The primary conceptual objectives of the paper are to interpret transnational exchange as micro, meso and macro forms of agency, within a culture of migration; identify network flow dynamics and theorise Tonga-New Zealand transnational exchange (with an enterprise focus). These concepts are used to frame an analysis of the role that short-term visits play in transnational exchange and family livelihoods in the Tongan diaspora. As Besnier (2011) points out, transnational activities are bi-focally situated in home and host locations. They are influenced by large scale dynamics and grounded in locality, at the nexus of 'coterminous realms of reality'. The notion of agency is critical to understanding engagements with modernity for 'those left behind' by migration (Besnier, 2011: p. 39). Languages and cultures survive globally through personal connectivity (Trask, 2010). Strength of national ties corresponds with frequency of migratory return visits (Small, 2011). Thus the short-term visit dimension of transnational activities is given closer attention in this study.

Al-Ali, Black and Koser (2001) identified differences in the intent and focus of transnational agency through activities respectively directed at the country of origin and host country, as well as the capacity and desire to participate in these activities (Table 1). Money transfers (remittances), visits to the country or active political participation are aimed at the homeland whereas host-nation focused activities include cultural events, say with artisans from the country of origin, meetings attended by other compatriots and support for home nation political parties. The authors are unspecific about the micro, meso or macro application of their framework but emphasise the interconnectedness between economic, social and cultural exchanges within refugee/migrant communities. Snel, Engbergesen and Leerkes (2006) operationalised and extended Al-Ali et al's typology by identifying professional, everyday economic, political, socio-cultural classes of activity; and transnational identity as identification with country of origin, with the diaspora and the host nation. Table 1 integrates concepts of transnational focus (activities, capabilities and identity) with context.

Table 1 Integrating transnational focus with context

TRANSNATIONAL FOCUS				TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT
Transnational activities				
Economic activities	Political activities	Social activities	Cultural activities	
Individual remittances	Direct participation in the political process	Maintain contacts with family and friends	Musical, artistic and literary events	MICRO 'from below'
Collective remittances	Political affiliations	'Social remittances'	National holidays and parties	MESO 'middling'
'Taxes'	Political mobilisation in host countries	Social activities in host countries	Language	MACRO 'from above'
Transnational capabilities				
Capacity		Desire		
Employment		Orientation towards the home government		MACRO
Economising and saving		Information		MESO
Legal status		Identification with community organisations		MESO
'Home country factors'		Social factors		MACRO
Gender				MICRO
Transnational identity				
Identify with country of origin	Identify with international diaspora		Identify with host nation	MACRO

After Al-Ali et al. (2001), Snel et al. (2006), plus Chen and Tan (2009).

Chen and Tan (2009) developed an integrative framework that encompasses a macro context of transnationalism 'from above', a micro view 'from below' (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998); and a meso context of 'middling' processes, mediating between 'above' and 'below' (Smith, 2005). Macro scale processes encompass global flows of capitals (people and resources) achieved by multinational corporations, supra-national institutions and citizenship policies which encourage and discourage transnational migration, for example such as control of and demand for labour, international debt levels and investment (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998). Governments can encourage macro flows, but transnationalism arrives 'from above' when a government gives privileged access to immigrant entrepreneurs who agree to invest in or start a business in the new society (Drori *et al.*, 2009).

In the micro scale of grounded and everyday practices 'from below' (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998), transnational economic exchange is inextricably embedded in social, collective and individual activities. These flow inward to the country of origin and outward to the migration destination (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2001) as well as within the diaspora. Micro context exchange includes 'circuit forms' such as remittances, second hand goods moved by informal couriers and large firms, micro-enterprise and

informal economic exchange. Short-term visits play a major role in micro scale transnational economic exchange.

The meso scale sits conceptually between micro and macro contexts (Chen and Tan, 2009), enacted by transnational actors 'from the middle'. These include the middle class (Smith, 2005) and local entrepreneurs who initiate businesses using their own multi-cultural capacities, bridging capital, financial capital and social networks in the home or host destination (Drori *et al.*, 2009). There are also entrepreneurial migrants whose entry is facilitated by the State in the hope that they will create new businesses and jobs thus stimulating the economy. In Tonga's case, these entrepreneurial migrants who are New Zealand-born Tongans with New Zealand citizenship have been encouraged to engage with their ancestral communities by the opportunity to have dual citizenship with Tonga, something that was not possible until 2007.

The cultural and multilingual abilities of transnational family and societal networks provide a structure within which to leverage enforceable trust, regulating the informal social dynamics of transnational enterprise (Light, 2011). 'Return migrant micro-enterprises' are established by returnees to their country of origin using personal savings, based on a business concept imported from the destination country. Reasons for return can be 'failure' to integrate into the host community, 'conservatism' if the home lifestyle is still desired, returns of 'innovation' to establish a business and for 'retirement' at a later stage of life (Cerase, 1974). 'Ancestral' returns to the land of the parent and returns for 'career advancement' (Liava'a, 2007: p.42) also occur. 'Cultural enterprises' leverage the needs of immigrants to acquire cultural goods and resources from the home countries whereas 'ethnic entrepreneurs' are small firms that retail imported foods and textiles (Landolt *et al.*, 1999).

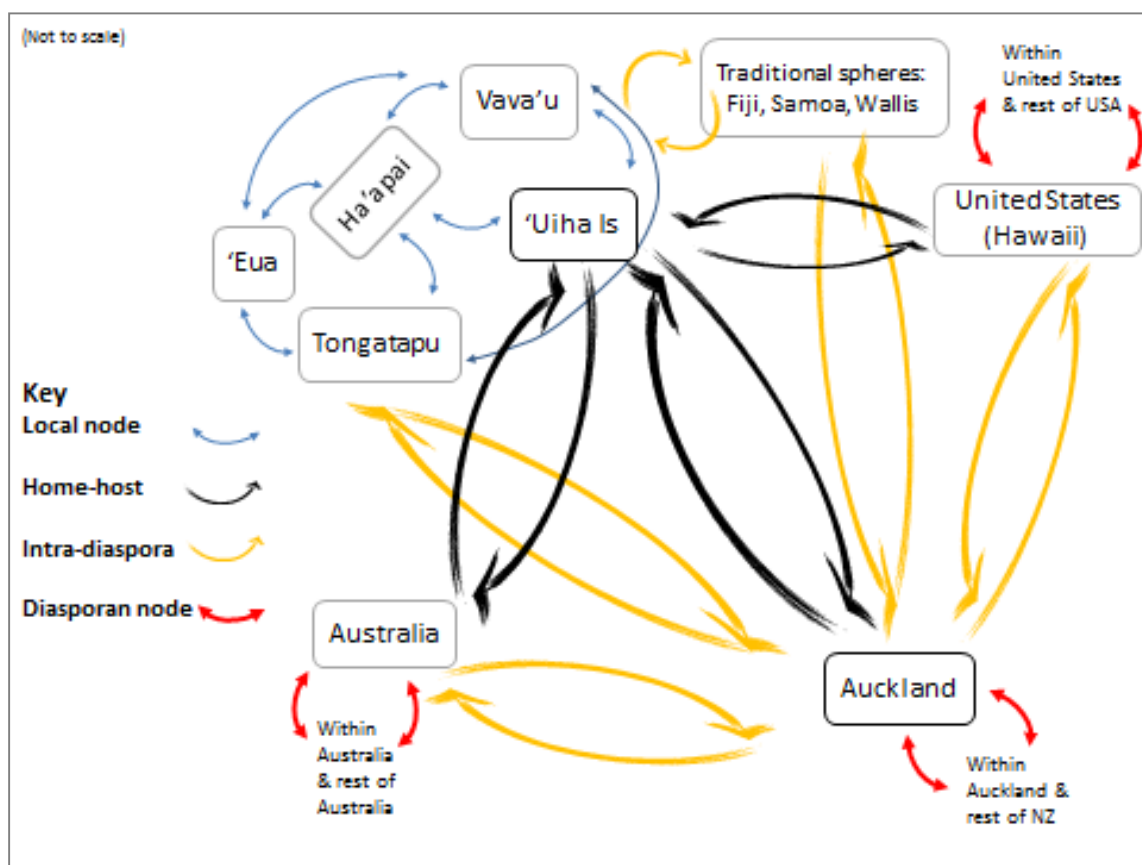
Notions of 'transnational' and 'diaspora' have undergone reinterpretation with the development of ideas about globalisation. The term 'transnational' initially referred to corporations whose economic bases are located in several countries (Martinelli, 1982). The term now signals the movements of people, ideas, politics and things within borderless social worlds (Appadurai, 1990) or movement of globally restructured forms of capital and labour across national boundaries (Glick Schiller *et al.*, 1992). The global financial crisis in 2008 however highlighted interdependencies between nations, communities and households and the critical role that mobility, including short-term visits, plays in transnational activities (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013).

'Diaspora' is now a signifier of transnationality, as well as of movements and political struggles to define distinctive communities in historical contexts of displacement (Clifford, 1994). Not all members of diaspora engage in transnational activities but for those who do, some activities are intensive and others periodic (Levitt *et al.*, 2003). Within diaspora, 'transilient' migrants (King,

1986) move to and between multiple destinations. Second generation descendants experience 'direct' transnational realities that reflect 'multi-local life-worlds' (Vertovec, 2001) which are more grounded in local connections and culturally diverse than those of their parents. 'Indirect' transnational activities are undertaken by people who have an emotional or identity connection to the homeland. Another variant, 'forced' transnationalism, includes children sent to the homeland for cultural immersion or behavioural correction (Lee, 2011), to build social connections (Scheyvens and Russell, 2009) as well as criminal and 'overstayer' deportees (Besnier, 2011).

Conceptually speaking, the 'culture of migration' experienced by transnational Pacific Island nations produces complex interdependencies amongst family, social and governance hierarchies, cross-cut by educational, labour, ecumenical and other networks. Figure 1 describes the flow dynamics of the diaspora explored in this study.

Figure 1 Diasporan network flows: 'Uiha Island, Tonga



In the case of 'Uiha Island in Tonga, the dynamics of diasporan networks include traditional spheres of exchange which extend several thousand years into the past as well as contemporary forms. Contemporary network flows still occur in the traditional sphere, defined to some extent by the reach of ocean going canoes as well as 'locally' within the island archipelago. Technology, time

and opportunity have enabled Pacific Islanders to spread spatially to migrant destinations ('host') where strongly affiliated social networks are maintained at diasporan nodes.

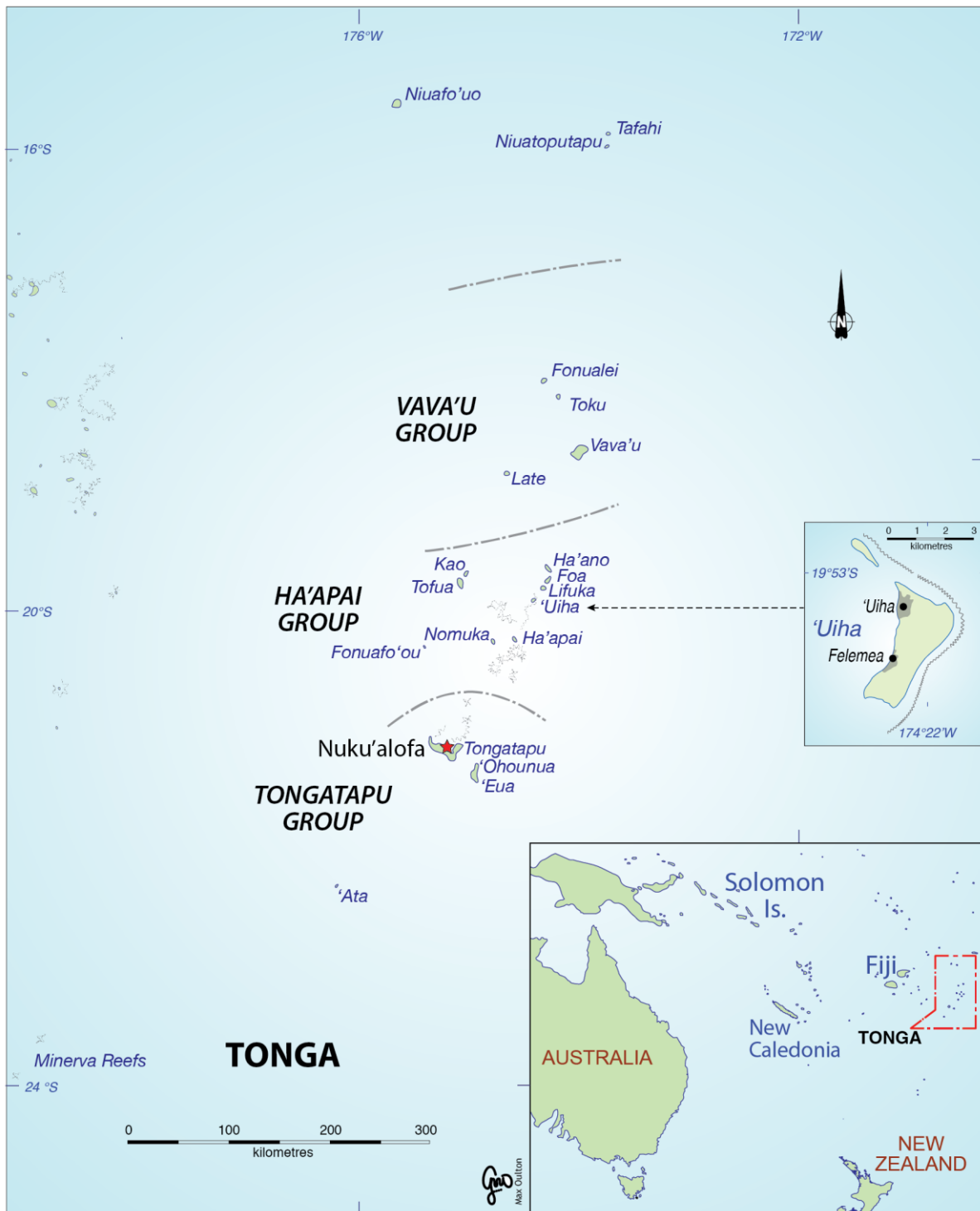
The striking level of interconnectedness shown in Figure 1 does not immediately translate into the framework proposed in Table 1 (above) which assumes translocal linkages, but demonstrates neither the dynamism embedded in a culture of migration nor the multifocal agency of Pacific peoples actively maintaining transnational networks at multiple levels. Actual relationships and emphases are described in Figures 2 and 3, Tables 2 and 3 and in the findings section of this paper. In the Pacific, the economic and the social are closely interwoven by fluid linkages between networks, social obligations and hierarchies that cross the informal and formal economy (Besnier, 2011; Small, 2011). Thus it is possible for Pacific people to be engaged in activities at more than one scale, across more than one category and in more than one country. Typologies tend to imply mutual exclusivity but at the level of individuals and families it is often very difficult to put them into a single category/criterion. It is important to note that a category is an artificial distinction and that categories are not mutually exclusive but fluid and interconnected, especially in the Pacific Island context.

Chen's typology of transnational relationships is used as a set of propositions within each 'cell' to suggest types of agency that might apply to Al-Ali et al.'s framework. This reconceptualisation is used to compare and contrast the perspectives of people living in two locations, 'Uiha Island, Tonga and their relatives in Auckland, New Zealand. The model has the potential to be tested in other empirical contexts.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The Kingdom of Tonga, a tropical archipelago of 172 scattered islands (36 permanently inhabited) in northwest Polynesia, sits on the edge of the seismically active Tonga Trench (Figure 1). Despite a trade deficit of 30-40% GDP the country has a positive balance of payments because of remittances (40% GDP) and international aid (Asian Development Bank, 2013). Since 2006, government downsizing and privatisation has reduced civil service employment but released beneficial funds and skills into the economy (Addo and Besnier, 2008).

Figure 2 Map of Tonga and 'Uiha Island, Ha'apai Group



Map drawn by Max Oulton, Cartographer, University of Waikato, 2014.

The current Tongan economy is based on the primary sector; cash earnings (squash, fishing, forestry) and informal agriculture (Asian Development Bank, 2013), manufacturing and tourism. In common with many other Pacific countries, a fifth of the labour force is unpaid family members (Asian Development Bank, 2013). Thus Tonga's strengths and potential weaknesses are high social capital and relative social stability, enduring values of cooperation and obligation plus a tightly integrated enterprise and informal exchange economy.

Tonga is at a point in its development where the balance in its human capital is relocating offshore (Hayes, 2010). By 1996, most families had at least one family member living overseas (Small and Dixon, 2004) which has slowed population growth, reduced unemployment but produced substantial remittance revenues (James, 1991). Australasian contract and seasonal worker schemes, US waivers of admission requirements and the Mormon Church have further encouraged migration. By 2010, 55% of ethnic Tongans lived abroad. The majority in New Zealand (50,000) and smaller numbers in Australia, North America, Asia and elsewhere (Small, 2011).

Internal archipelagic migration was prompted by economic disparity, natural disasters, increasing population and shortages of land. Differentials in wages, employment and education opportunities encouraged Tongans to shift from the outer to the main islands, smaller to larger towns and rural islands to the urban capital (Small and Dixon, 2004). Livelihood levels are lowest in the Ha'apai Group where 20% of households depend upon subsistence rather than cash earnings or wages. The small island of 'Uiha in the Ha'apai Group has the most consistent out-migration of the archipelago, at 16% over the last two census periods (Statistics Department Tonga, 2013). For this reason 'Uiha was chosen as the field site for this study, and for its ancient pivotal role in Tonga's history because its rulers are eventually entombed and cared for in the island's vast walled cemetery of Mala'e Lahi.

Two villages, 'Uiha (415 residents) and Felemea (137 residents) are located at opposite ends of the 5.36 km² raised coral reef island, sharing a wharf, primary school, electric generator and 6 shops (Figure 1). A third of residents are under 15 years of age and older children travel to other islands for school (Statistics Department Tonga, 2013). Livelihoods in Felemea Village align with the Fisheries Self-Managed Area, a development zone to restore marine eco-systems funded by the European Union. 'Uiha Village relies on animal husbandry, subsistence horticulture and fishing as well as farming on adjacent uninhabited islands. Pandanus harvest and processing are important cottage industries as is production of fine mats, exported within Tonga and overseas to the diaspora. Villagers voyage by small motorised launch to Lifuka, to Tongatapu by ferry and aeroplane to trade in local markets.

The population of the island increases during school holidays when families return home (Francis, 2009). The island has a well organised and island migrant association in Auckland, New Zealand and the global Makamalie Association. Collectively then, Tongan and New Zealand 'Uiha Island families embody a transnational culture of migration.

Tongans in New Zealand

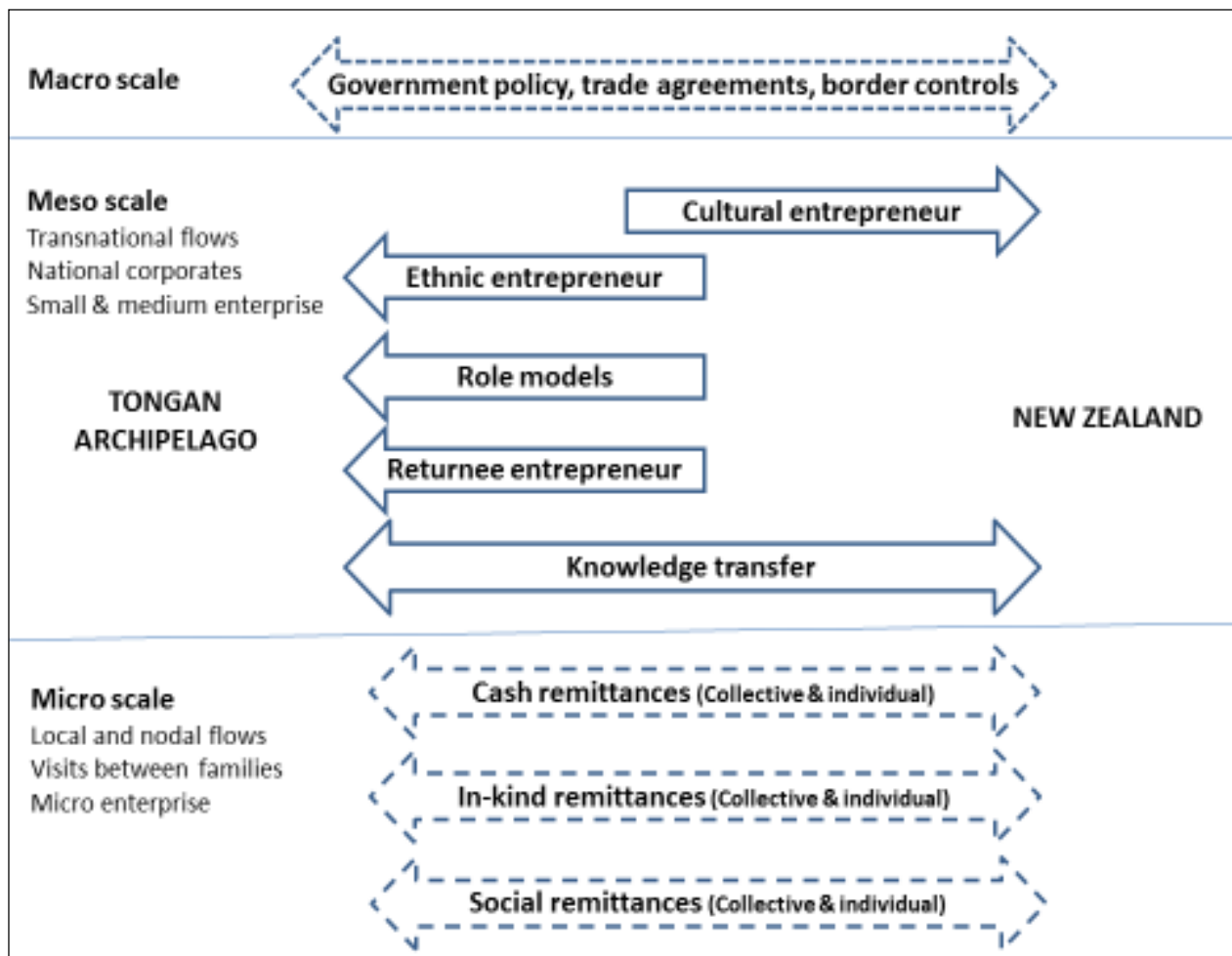
Pasifika (people of Pacific Island descent) are a fast-growing, youthful, highly urbanised and multilingual population in New Zealand (7.4% of the total in 2013). Two thirds were born locally. Samoans are the largest Pasifika ethnic group (48.0%) followed by Cook Island-Maori (20.9%), Tongans (20.4% at 60,333 people); and Niueans (8.1%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). A quarter of Tongans in the 2013 New Zealand census also named a second or third ethnicity e.g. Samoan mother and Tongan father (Tanielu and Johnson, 2014). Urban living and marriage outside cultures produce losses of language and social mores, plus social dangers such as gangs (Lee, 2004).

Pasifika peoples work mainly in manufacturing and services (SNZ and MPIA, 2010). Formal enterprise rates are low amongst the Tongan community. In 2006, only 2% of Tongan adults were employers and 4% self-employed, yet 89% undertook unpaid or voluntary work. Tongan migrants in New Zealand are enterprise-ready and well-equipped with human capital but constrained by the same social values as in Tonga. Pivotal factors for Tongans are their identity, whether identifying with the homeland or New Zealand, and the strength of connectedness to ethnic community or mainstream markets for products.

The most important factor for business viability is enterprise intent, which at the informal economy end of the scale produced treasures that are 'not for market' and cultural exchange and at the other, products designed specifically for sale in commercial settings (Cave, 2009). Tongan entrepreneurs prefer to work in the informal sector but also play a key role in providing employment for ethnic communities, sharing wealth translocally and transnationally by donations and gifts (Mataira and Prescott, 2010). It is difficult therefore to separate economic and social transactions in this Pacific context.

Figure 3 visualises the foci of Tongan- New Zealand transnational enterprise activities indicating macro, meso and micro scale contexts. The arrows indicate directionality. Some forms of transnational enterprise cross boundaries in both directions (to origin and destinations) but others are largely unidirectional.

Figure 3 Visualising Tonga-New Zealand transnational exchange



Conceptually, Tongan micro-context economic exchange is culturally and socially embedded and thus skewed toward the informal economy. Meso context activities such as remittances and small and medium enterprise depend upon three-way relationships between the place of origin, the destination and local nodes in the archipelago and the diaspora. More importantly they rely upon social fields and traditional Tongan hierarchies whose integrity for the long-term will depend upon the macro context exogenous factors. At the micro-level, modern ideologies, such as 'business' seek to disembody the self from exchange structures, obligation and expectations yet require engagement with them (Besnier, 2011). However in Tonga, social entrepreneurship could be a way to bridge the two (Crocker and Shepherd, 2012).

Islands such as Niue have tried without success, to offset or reverse the balance in its human capital shifting offshore, by developing strategies such as return migration and immigration (Connell, 2008), niche agricultural products, manufacturing as well as tourism. First generation migrants focus on ethnic and cultural enterprise (Nijkamp *et al.*, 2010) within a connected informal economy (Williams and Nadin, 2010). The second generation adds work in services and

manufacturing (SNZ and MPIA, 2010). Some second and third generation Tongans become more 'Tongan than Tonga' renewing and (re)creating idealised versions of tradition, culture and identity (Lee, 2007) and maintaining lifestyle through informal exchange, micro and small enterprise. Facilitating all these, plus a sense of identity and belonging (Lee, 2004), are short-term visits between Tonga and New Zealand.

In terms of short visits, most Tongan migrants make frequent, short return journeys to maintain close connections to homeland villages, families and associates. In this way they remain involved in the daily life of Tonga (Department of Labour, 2006), also keeping in touch through social media, telephone, church and social organisations (Cave, 2012). Visits by 'friends and relatives' to Tonga were 43% of the annual 50,000 arrivals (2011) (Statistics Department Tonga, 2013). Student returnees make visits during their holidays of around 30 days in a given visit during holiday breaks as leisure-purposed tourism consumers (Gibson and McKenzie, 2010).

Yet movements are hard to estimate with accuracy since many arrive on tourist visas in New Zealand say, but leave before expiry, often moving to other diasporan nodes rather than returning home (Morton Lee, 2003). Many of the children of migrants living overseas may not require visas when they return for short visits since they travel on passports from the country where they were born and their entry identified as 'foreign'. Further, New Zealand, Australian and United States citizens all have visa-waiver privileges as short-term visitors in Tonga. This paper focuses on this significant sector, asking if short-term visits sector plays a role in maintaining transnational exchange activities, and if so, at what scale(s).

METHOD

The Mutuality Approach (Cave *et al.*, 2012), developed collaboratively with Pasifika migrants (including Tonga) for cross-cultural research was used to frame the research. This flexible and innovative multi-sited ethnographic approach is based in Pacific methodologies such as the Tongan Extended 'Kakala' (garland or wreath) which constructs a coherent whole (Johansson-Fua *et al.*, 2008). It's Anglo-European antecedent is co-creation of meaning as a product of social interaction (Bryman, 2004). Cultural protocols were monitored throughout the research by community elders and the implementation guided by the European-New Zealand and Tongan authors. Focus group and in-depth interviews were led by representatives of the Tongan villages in both 'Uiha Island and Auckland. Following Tongan custom, food and small gifts were made given to respondents' to acknowledge their knowledge and time. Tongan and English languages were used interchangeably for interviews and the focus groups, which were recorded, after informed consent.

In the Mutuality process, a common set of questions is agreed and verified with elders. The researchers immerse themselves in the data, transcribing, translating and interpreting each question, separately at first to intuitively identify themes within the content. Then non-adversarial challenge and co-creative agreement of common meaning and cross-cultural interpretations occurs. Equipped with new understanding, the transcripts are reanalysed. The readers meet again to agree common and distinct themes for the subsamples and finally the content of the integrated dataset, in this case, was interpreted within economic (Table 2) and socio-cultural activities (Table 3).

For internal data consistency, as far as practicable, purposeful samples of ten extended families from two villages, 'Uiha and Felemea on 'Uiha Island in the Ha'apai Group (see Figure 1) were structured to compare the experiences of families on the island of 'Uiha with those of their immediate and extended families in Auckland, New Zealand. Matched comparisons (Greschke, 2010) will be the subject of a later paper. The team used snowball sampling within family networks of the Tongan researchers.

Local field conditions required different recruitment methods. Respondents were enlisted on 'Uiha by personal visits because of sporadic communication and weather-dependent transport. Auckland recruitment took place by mobile phone and email. Two focus groups, one in 'Uiha Village and the other in Auckland were conducted in the home of a research team member in the respective locations. The focus groups lasted two to two and a half hours respectively. They were preceded by and ended with prayer, followed by a shared meal. The face-to-face interviews were undertaken in the homes of the respondents, lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. All of the data collection occurred in Tongan on 'Uiha Island and in bilingual Tongan and English in Auckland. Tongan transcripts were translated into English for analysis.

The total sample of 29 respondents included 15 on 'Uiha (late 2012) and 14 in Auckland (early 2013); a feasible number given limited research funds and the fact that this was a pilot study for a larger research programme. Notwithstanding the small number of respondents, opinions were obtained across an age range from 16 to 74 and genders from both populations. Responses reached saturation on the range of activities in both locations. 'Insider' perspectives ensured openness regarding sensitive issues and access to social hierarchies. While this can lead to bias, that was countered by drawing from across the age range and by the time-consuming linkage of interviewees in 2 countries. The rich outcomes of this study would not have been possible however without a high level of trust.

FINDINGS

This section summarises the key findings from the field research with reference to micro, meso and macro scale transnational exchange activities, specifically oriented to home and destination countries, noted in Tables 2 and 3. The complex reality of exchange in multileveled transnational nodes is expanded in this section by verbatim quotes and respondent profiles to illustrate examples of activities linked to short term travel from 'Uiha Island and Auckland. However, the categories often overlap because of the closely knit spheres of exchange that are crucial to Tongan identity and able to be captured by the analytical lens of this research.

Economic exchange

Table 2 primarily illustrates grounded and everyday economic practices 'from below' which occupied much of the 'Uiha Island narratives. These were home and destination country focused but locally embedded, indicating few income alternatives on the island but a low incidence of poverty and seasonally fluctuating incomes and in some cases successful enterprise livelihoods. A strong thread emerged in the interviews about local cooperation, remediation of equipment or homes with the help of visiting relatives and keeping the island's two villages clean and tidy. Remittances maintained the fabric of daily lives for many but some people were self-reliant and did not look for external help, although it was frequently offered by migrant relatives.

Micro economic exchange 'from below'

When interviewed in late 2012, a 74 year old subsistence farmer had travelled to New Zealand 3 times in the 5 years earlier. His wife, however, visited New Zealand every year, staying for 1-3 months (the term of a tourist visa) to attend funerals, weddings and for the births of grandchildren and a diasporan conference. She planned to go next to the USA where another child lives. He said:

My source of financial income is working with the animals...sold all my horses ...I feed puaka toho (ceremonial pig)... I sometimes go to Tonga(tapu) with 15 pigs and yams for selling. I have a bank account... \$xxxx in there now... (Our children) ask us what we want, they bring. They...stop me from going to the plantation, but I tell them...I don't...rely on what you provide.

The speaker had a level of household savings from informal enterprise which was rare. Neither he nor his wife looked for external support but knew they could ask for equipment to help with crop production, for example, when the adult children came to visit from Tongatapu and overseas. The children wanted to provide for their parents and discourage the subsistence way of life but the parents actively resisted dependency.

Transnational Activities		Transnational Tongans - 'Uiha		Trans-national context	Transna
		Home country focus	Destination country focus		
Economic activities	Individual level	Use remittances from overseas for daily expenses, exceptional costs (family events), and help with church costs.	Take food, raw materials for crafts and finished materials to NZ and elsewhere. Sell weaving and materials. Pass on traditional knowledge. Maintain language for children born overseas. Support new migrants.	MICRO 'from below'	Provide money to help famil Tonga. Finance education (s uniforms, stationery) and tra islands to New Zealand and for siblings and parents. Tak even old clothes, boxes of fo model for island children.
	Collective level	Women move to other islands look after older children at school. Work together to do repairs, remediate damaged equipment, clear roads, keep island clean and tidy, build fences, etc. Share equipment and tools.	Travel to New Zealand for barter and exchange of goods. Organise 'piece work' weaving and tapa making amongst the women.	MESO 'middling'	Maintenance, repairs (after Help family members do cho reunion. Improve living conc islands - water, electric stove houses. Help to provide food island residents to clear tree Fundraise for equipment, a t reunion on 'Uiha raised \$400 wharf, flush toilets, fences (p dogs, horses). Donate to bui equipment and stationery fo students at school on other islands.
	Aid			MACRO 'from above'	International development f (fisheries management, wat
	Income level	Take crops, fish and pigs to market. Island store. Baking for sale. Interest on savings or bank account. Employed by Church. Some elderly rely on children, others independent.	Sell weaving overseas as business. Some women paid to weave, share profits. Work overseas on seasonal employment scheme.	MESO	Money earned from entrepr activity used to return, start (tourism example). Help to f for Tongan produce in New Z

Table 2 Transnational Activities – Economic exchange

Table 3 Transnational Activities – Social and cultural exchange

Transnational activities		Transnational Tongans 'Uiha		Trans-national context	Transnational context
		Home country focus	Destination country focus		
Social activities	Maintain contacts with family and friends	Attend family events, take part in work parties, ceremonial occasions.	Landline, some mobile telephone. In person visits from family, friends.	MICRO 'from below'	Social media, mobile phone, landline/calling card. In person visits. Go to see everyone (family, neighbours).
	Social remittance level	Active in community associations and church. Local focus on the island. Neighbourhood Block Groups for men, youth and women. Church and Island Association. Rugby clubs. Youth leader.	Births, deaths, graduation.	MESO 'middling'	Take youth back to islands for cultural immersion, family events, funerals, weddings, birthdays. Go to the islands to take part in cultural events and community activities. Travel overseas with student parties from New Zealand to 'Uiha in both directions.
	Social activity level	All activities.	'Uiha Island Association. Class reunions. Family loss and celebrations. Sports finals.	MESO	Recharge 'batteries'. Re-immersion in language, culture. Keep the culture alive in self and younger generations not born in the islands. Wear costumes made from local materials that show they are from Felemea Village and 'Uiha Village.
Cultural activities	Musical, artistic events	All activities.	Island Association. Bring expatriate elders back to the island to teach culture (weaving and compose songs, dances).	MESO	Rock concerts to show youth role models and other ways of living. Bring expert craftspeople, musicians, Church and community association members to New Zealand.
	National holidays	All activities.	Unknown.	MACRO & MESO	Celebrate national days.
	Language	All bilingual, but older people less bilingual.	All bilingual.		Send or take youth back to islands for cultural immersion.

But for others, micro-level reciprocal flows of remittances are essential. The highest levels of poverty are experienced by those who cannot send family overseas and must depend on the Tongan nation state (Marcus, 1993). A 54 year old fisherman and his wife had travelled recently to New Zealand for the global Makamilie conference which promotes cultural wellbeing for the 'Uiha Island diaspora. They planned travel to Australia to attend the birth of their daughter's child. Prior short visits to Australia, USA and Tonga were for family care and work. He said:

My spouse does not know how to weave...income for my family is fishing... it paid for everything...6 children's education... our daughter studying in Hawaii... two in Australia, and three here in Tonga. One in Tongatapu, the youngest is here with me...another daughter stayed with my parents. They (all) help...for family needs, like food...when there's a hurricane. There's a shopping also, like flour etc.....money transfer and withdraw at Pangai.

Outward remittances sourced from fishing paid for the overseas longer-term travel for their children's education plus daily expenses. Emigrant children prepaid their parents' grocery purchases and building materials to repair storm damage and made regular money transfers to support the couple.

The home country focus of Auckland respondents on remittances was very strong. A 50 year old male Tongan-born migrant was a security professional in Tonga but worked in Auckland for 25 years. He had become unwell. His wife and children provided their income but they nonetheless travelled annually to Tonga for short visits of several weeks or months. They helped their immediate family in many ways.

The purpose of coming (to Auckland) is...for our children's education....but also assisting siblings' children in Tonga by way of school fees and school stationaries as work in Tonga is not too good, moneywise.

In contrast a 50 year old woman, a wage-earner in the Auckland education sector whose several children live locally in New Zealand, travelled regularly to Tonga, 'Uiha and Australia said:

I see the way they rely on us. (In the past) there was a canoe...fishing nets at home ...and go work in the plantation....or go plant the garden...They just rely now on donations, remittances from here and just go to the markets to buy food. So, I see that as time passes, they no longer go to the bush.

Her comments highlighted shifting lifestyles and cultural change, but indicated frustration about the prevalence of what she felt was over- reliance on relatives abroad. In terms of destination country focus, her families' livelihood sources in urban Auckland were personal and family wages, benefits (sickness/pension), church and community donations as well as entrepreneurship and scholarships.

Meso 'middling' economic exchange

Table 2 shows that economic exchange markets exist for expert weaving and raw materials as well as 'circuit enterprises' which export fish, yams and coconuts, amongst other commodities to urban Tonga and overseas. Integrated livelihood strategies are the norm for Tongans, shifting focus from micro to meso and between economic to social as seasonality, need and opportunities arise. In the quote below, the family unit of a 71 year old woman relied primarily on fishing for cash but she herself was concurrently a weaver, shop-keeper and baker.

There is no-one we can trust to take the fish to sell, our children have finished...education and they go live overseas and I have returned back here, Ha'apai, as I was staying in Tonga(tapu) when the children went to school and selling our fish...Our weaving is for overseas, we get our work from X who places weaving orders for America....These days I make cakes ...outside (open fire).

However she talked about her sadness that there were no longer (younger) people to take their fish to the largest market for better prices, nor anyone whom they could trust to make the sale. She was a returnee migrant to the island from their second home on Tongatapu, occupied whilst the children were at school. The weaving was a collective micro-enterprise involving several women, organised by an 'agent' who obtained orders and negotiated the work schedule, received payment and apportioned funds for their work. When completed, one of the islanders travelled overseas to take the goods to the purchaser. Work did not begin until part-payment was received.

A 35 year old male was engaged in multiple livelihoods which illustrate the seasonal interconnectedness of the informal and formal economy. He was a regular short-term traveller to New Zealand to care for a sick cousin.

Family reason, to a funeral... I went as part of the seasonal work scheme to pick fruits for money...help care for a cousin who was ill... help with the making of chairs, also help my parents to cut down the pandanus...the main source of income for daily expenses

The man had made 5 trips to New Zealand under the seasonal work scheme, a macro initiative developed by the New Zealand and Tongan governments for micro-level low skilled workers with few employment alternatives (Gibson and McKenzie, 2010). He enacted agency at the micro level yet travelled internationally for short-term work (middling transnationalism). The scheme has spin-off social effects. Personal savings were spent on capital items such as vehicles, boats or an outboard motor that was used to catch fish and transport family and tourists. It is difficult in this case to separate transnational contexts or economic from socio-cultural activities.

Table 2 also includes references to meso-level 'middling' cash and in-kind collective remittances which supplemented medium-term needs. Substantial funds (\$400,000) were raised in 2004 and 2010 for the 'Uiha Island wharf, flush toilets, water systems and fences to keep animals out of the gardens and houses. Short-term visits of several months duration were made by one

person to carry the funds, ensure they were spent as intended and to organise groups travelling from New Zealand and elsewhere to do the work.

From the Auckland perspective, an example typical of 'middling' transnational activities was an individual who used his business skills learned in the host country as well as in the home country. A Tongan-born entrepreneur (35 years) who ran a family music business, took his New Zealand-born son back to Tonga every few years to teach him about Tongan lifestyle, meet family and to show him the economic and social disparities between the two countries. But the primary purpose was to share his expertise gained overseas to increase pride in Tongan identity.

We do lot of charity stuff... take a lot of music stars to Tonga...the youth, they are into music ... it helps the economy... those with goals in music....keeps them going.

The activity had multiple goals: altruistically to develop human capital but pragmatically to cover costs with the spin-off of foreign exchange to the local economy and promotion of tourism. However, the activity also contrasts wealth and access to opportunity.

Short-term visits reinforced the social commitments and cultural revitalisation of a Tongan-born (31 years) sportsman. He also mentioned returnee entrepreneurs.

For me, every time I go to the islands... help me push work harder for my grandparents and my family. A friend of mine moved back and started up....in the main island, tourist business. But that's because he's well off. He used to play professional rugby. It depends on a person who's got money behind.

To summarise, 'Uiha Island and Auckland respondents indicated high levels of meso level 'middling' transnational economic exchange and enterprise, facilitated by short-term visits which were important to their livelihoods in both locations. 'Uiha Island villagers requested and received cash and in-kind remittances from their relatives as need demands, but some preferred to be independent and resisted donated earnings. Inward remittances were cash-based and in-kind investments in equipment, tools and materials or visits of several weeks that aided subsistence gathering. Micro, small and medium enterprise that span the informal economy and formal markets and flow outward and inward were also evident.

Auckland families earned more in relative terms than their island compatriots, sent more cash and in-kind remittances to the islands than were received, and fundraised for infrastructure projects. They and their children travelled regularly to the island for social and cultural support. Ironically, within the urban context, despite higher earning capacity, some people struggled to support personal households because of multiple drains on resources such as rent payment, transportation costs across larger distances and many others.

Urban dwellers in Auckland did not have access to the range of natural resources (sea, reef, forest, grazing, tax allotments of land for food production and residence allocated to each Tongan

male over 16 years) that are available in the village or on neighbouring uninhabited islands. Although many of the crops with high cultural value, such as yams and other foodstuffs, were reported by respondents to be sent to Auckland as often as possible, usually accompanying someone travelling for a short visit such as a church conference or to care for a relative. These resources were sent in large amounts, intended for sale in the Auckland community and so even though sent for social purposes produced economic benefit.

Thus transnational cash and in-kind contributions from both directions made a positive difference to poverty and quality of life, beyond the family home to care chains for youth as well as the elderly on the island as well as in Auckland.

Macro economic exchange 'from above'

Few references to economic exchange 'from above' were made by interviewees in 'Uiha or Auckland. International aid was invested in the Felemea Self-Managed Area which supports subsistence and cash-earnings from fishing, reducing the need for remittances and generating spin-off benefits for agricultural and marine micro-enterprise. Another aid scheme was the seasonal work scheme noted above. Large infrastructure projects on the island, such as water and electrical supply, are also partly funded by Tongan government grants and international aid.

Overall, a range of micro, meso ('middling') and macro scale economic exchanges were demonstrated, facilitated by short-term visits home and to diasporan nodes. These generate alternative livelihoods in the informal economy that may, in time, become formal businesses (Williams and Nadin, 2010).

Social and cultural exchange

Table 3 speaks to social and cultural activities that correspond with visiting friends and relatives directed towards the place of origin ('Uiha Island) and the destination (Auckland). Short-term visits for social and cultural purposes have impacts beyond the immediate environs of 'Uiha to other Tongan islands with 'knock on' effects at the micro-level for local populations.

On 'Uiha and in Auckland, collective remittances as gifts of time helped to maintain cultural integrity, faith and the village environs. Relationships were maintained by physical visits for family care and celebrations, with travel often paid for by diasporan relatives. Group trips occurred in both directions for church and island association conferences, as well as for cultural activities. Thus 'Uiha Island families are active, not passive participants in transnational activities.

Micro social and cultural exchange

A 66 year old woman, who had always lived on the island but travelled annually to New Zealand, said:

The visit is the treasure, the koloa, when they appear is the treasure, the presence of someone. Give her stuff to take back home (to Auckland)...I went (to Auckland) because of illness. When he got better I returned to Uiha, and when he was sick again I went, he got better and I came back. He got sick again and I went.

In person visits are very important for Auckland-based Tongans. A 24 year old Tonga-born man, who had travelled widely to Pacific Rim diasporan nodes, had an extended family in New Zealand who were active participants in homeland activities. He said:

Went back to Felemea, we cut down all the trees, and made this one road, that went all the way to Muifonua... Everyone in the village came together, had their machetes and all the machines, we cut all the way to the back...so people can get there...they start off the business but then... didn't have the money to prepare the equipment...keep the road clear.

This mentioned shared experience and a sense of satisfaction in collective activity that contributes to the homeland. Motivations for home country visits were expressed as renewed personal spirit, re-immersion in culture and language as well as preservation of culture. However, cultural knowledge was repatriated back to the island from older people who had moved overseas. A 60 year old man, a church elder known for his cultural knowledge, had been to the island many times in the last five years and was a courier for donated funds. He said:

Before, I went there under our church and do entertainments, sometimes to our youth. They want me to teach them our Tongan dancing and compose songs...Went with all our donations to Felemea...take lawn mower machine, chainsaw and oil, also help out with their water supply...the people in NZ from Felemea had to donate for a water machine to be taken to our island...also...for a house to be built on our land besides the school in Pangai for all the students of Felemea who's studying.

Meso level social and cultural exchange

Within the Auckland diasporan node, activities took place to preserve culture, language and religion and model social hierarchies for the younger generations, in the home and in the street – such as wearing the *ta'ovala* (woven mat) and modest clothes, 'calling out in the Tongan Way' in the street and respecting relationships between family members. A 40 year old woman, who worked at two jobs to fit with children's school hours and travelled to Tonga recently for 2 funerals, said:

When my mother was still alive...I depended on her on all things...even when I married, I took my children to my mother... I know how to weave, and I brought that with me. When I go back to Tonga, I bought pandanus... There's a number of people here... I teach how to weave, with the knowledge..that as my mother has passed on...my children are all relying on me.

Her comments referred to the importation of authentic raw materials to be woven into mats for ritual exchange and local income. However, she passed her knowledge on to others beyond her immediate family so that they too could gain culturally and economically from the activity.

Social remittances within the destination country node also helped new migrants. The respondent also said:

I'm grateful that we came and there were already people here to welcome us. We were more like babies to them. They provided us with vehicles for free and they supplied us with many things for free, that we did not work for...to migrate and start afresh, is a very difficult thing.

Overall, both groups illustrated very similar things: that transnational activities focussed on the other location (home or destination) depending on where the respondent lives as well as within the local node, and were concerned with maintaining family relationships and retaining culture, language and identity (Table 3). However, an individual and collective concern for the second generation's cultural identity emerged. Multiple livelihood strategies and informal enterprise were the norm within families. Paradoxically the 'old ways' were now sought from emigrants but social ties may decline with successive generations who have weaker links. Yet further migration will produce new cycles of return.

Macro social and cultural exchange

Tonga's national days were celebrated in New Zealand and in Tonga, but only expatriates celebrated New Zealand national days. Macro-level investments in the maintenance of Tongan language in government, church and private schools and aid-funded programmes. The majority of Tongans are bilingual in Tongan and English with some exceptions at older ages. New Zealand youth were sent back for meso level cultural immersion and language is preserved in Tongan pre-schools, at Church and to some level in New Zealand primary schools.

Social exchange interdependently encouraged informal enterprise and cultural retention in diasporan nodes and repatriated knowledge to the host country. However tensions, contradictions and challenges arise between relatives who live in Tonga and those who live in New Zealand in terms of (mis)understandings, cultural change and differing goals for each other. It shows the agency of catalysing individuals and travellers whose positions within the respective communities, permit them to be 'middling' transnational actors at the convergence of continued traditions with modernity, new ideas and global change (Besnier, 2011).

CONCLUSION

This analysis has extended concepts of transnational exchange beyond a simple dialectic of origin versus destination to interpret transnational agency and network flow dynamics within a culture of migration. Using the lens of extended families in two locations, the research has demonstrated Tongan-New Zealand transnational economic exchange and enterprise to be multi-levelled, mutually dependent transactions that are inextricably linked to socio-cultural systems of exchange.

The originality of the research lies in retheorising enterprise alternatives for transnational Tongans, development of a Pacific-framed view of transnational exchange and use of a method that can capture exchange complexities. The analysis fills a gap in knowledge regarding the role that short-term visits play in maintaining (and disrupting) transnational family livelihoods in the Tongan diaspora. Thus short-term visits ensures the survival of a range of economic, social and cultural activities that are critically important for "being Tongan" in the different diasporan contexts.

The findings have implications for labour and cultural preservation policy and practice in home and destination locations which could develop programmes to concurrently address social and livelihood dynamics at micro, meso and macro levels in the diasporan as well as homeland locations. Intergovernmental, NGO or church cooperation could design and implement social and enterprise programmes to encourage youth to stay longer in the islands and for older people to return sooner which might reduce out-migration and encourage return of Tongans to the islands - slowing if not reversing the effects of a culture of migration.

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