

## Towards a NZ-born Samoan identity: some reflections on "labels"

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### Introduction

The study of immigrant adaptation embodies a myriad of issues and challenges. The high degree of differentiation in the migrant, first/second generation socio-cultural experiences is evident in the identity journeys of NZ-born Samoans, and shows a wide range of attendant stressors, coping mechanisms, and outcomes. Identity conflict is a major socio-psychological issue<sup>1</sup>. A secured ethnic identity, is achieved through a process of crisis (exploration of alternatives during which identity confusion is experienced), followed by commitment (a secured identity). These experiential complexities – identity conflict, coping, adaptation and development of migrants and their children and grandchildren is an accessible and crucial area of study with implications for applied practice in mental health, education and allied professions as well as for planning and policy.

In a PhD dissertation<sup>2</sup> which investigated issues of ethnic identity for NZ-born Samoans, it claims that secured identities can be reached by viewing 'the identity journey as a series of rites of passage – enforced rituals which challenge one's right to be 'a New Zealander', and on the other hand, one's right to be 'a Samoan'. Part of this challenge is the way in which they feel they are stereotyped by both *papalagi*<sup>3</sup> and Samoan elders alike. These stereotypes are transmitted through overtly negative images and attitudes as well as in covert omissions of the positive aspects of NZ-borns by *papalagi* as well as elders, and island-born Samoans. And can become internalised if not countered by evidence to the contrary.

**"Pacific Islanders exist only in New Zealand: I am called a Pacific Islander when I arrive at Auckland airport. Elsewhere I am Samoan."**

Identity conflict was expressed by many in my focus group<sup>4</sup> as:

*I am – a Samoan, but not a Samoan*

*To my 'aiga<sup>5</sup> in Samoa, I am a palagi.*

*I am – A New Zealander, but not a New Zealander*

*To New Zealanders, I am a "bloody coconut" at*

*worst, a "Pacific Islander" at best.*

*I am – To my Samoan parents, their child.*

This paper explores the practice of "labelling" by examining labels of "Pacific Islander" and "NZ-born" in the New Zealand context:

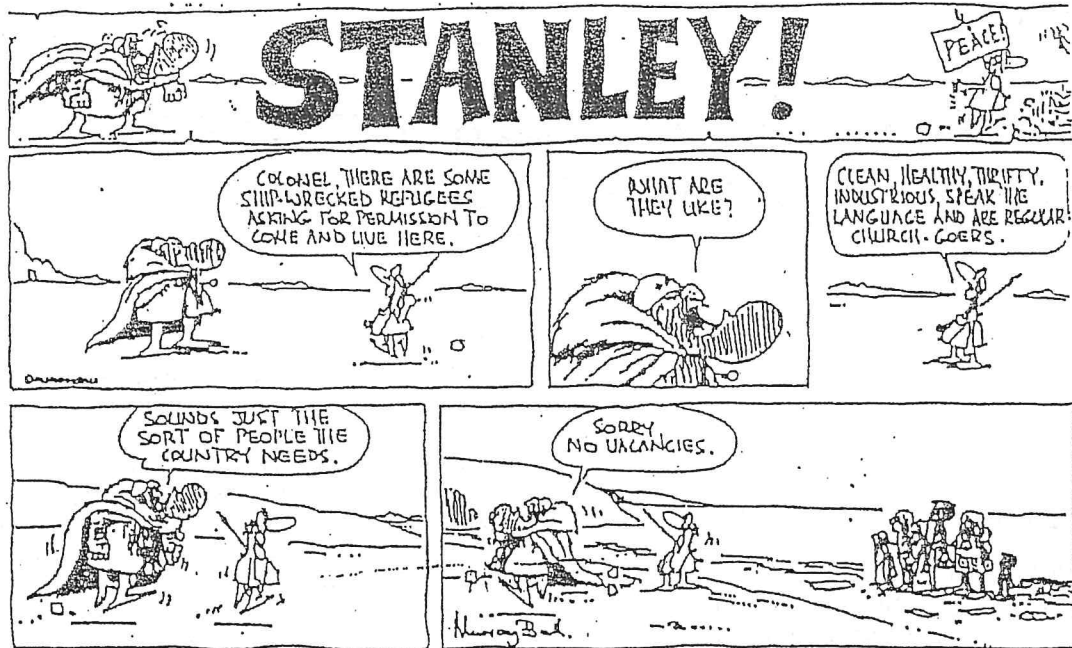
*Pacific Islanders exist only in New Zealand: I am called a Pacific Islander when I arrive at Auckland airport. Elsewhere I am Samoan.<sup>6</sup>*

Pan-ethnic identities are defined by Cornell<sup>7</sup> as "discovered" identities. By this is meant that pan-ethnic identities are frequently occasioned by the classificatory actions of others – the state, dominant groups, academics, ordinary people trying to make sense of a complex world – and combines the previously uncombined into a new category.

What is interesting is that in this process virtually anyone can become the definers of culture, cultural identity and ethnicity of 'other' groups and in doing so, become enmeshed in the practice of pan-ethnic labelling which distorts the reality of peoples caught within these identities.

Polynesian or Pacific Islander as a term is a pan-ethnic construct of outsiders – explorers, European colonisers, later anthropologists and archaeologists, and now Western bureaucrats, policy-makers, and Pacific elites. Today it is as widely used as ever: it functions as a useful term for researchers as it helps in understanding historical matters based on an identity with a particular group; and for politicians, bureaucrats and administrators it functions as a useful term in dealing with an ethnic minority. Also it has now acquired a forced ethnic salience in that Samoans and other people from the Pacific

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Stanley (Murray Ball), from Mary Ellen O'Connor, *An Immigrant Nation*, 1990:110. Reprinted with permission.

Islands use these labels to refer to themselves in some contexts. Macpherson points out:

*Much has been said and written of the Pacific islands community in New Zealand. Implicit and...explicit in this discourse is the image of a continuous, co-operating entity, based on some cultural substrate...this image was a creation which has never really existed in practice...Pacific Islands 'community' is...a collection of distinctive groupings which have occasionally formed coalitions to pursue interests in common...a unified community was, and is, unlikely to emerge<sup>8</sup>.*

### Creation of the myths

The reifying of terms or concepts like - Polynesia, Polynesian, Pacific Islander and more recently the 'Pacific Way' serve to create a myth of Pacific Island 'unity' or 'community'<sup>9</sup>. In the contemporary scene, this view has highlighted the total lack of regard for the distinctiveness and diversity of each Pacific Island nation encompassed within this culture area. This homogenising tendency has led in turn to the practice of generalising and stereotyping Polynesian migrants. While these inventions prove useful when making global comparisons in a very general sense, they become futile when applied to actual people and groups of people who consider themselves not Pacific nor Polynesians, but Samoans, Tongans, Fijians, Cook Islanders, etc.

To many New Zealanders the generic concept of Pacific Islanders is considered to be a homogeneous ethnic group<sup>10</sup>. However there is much diversity in how peoples from the Pacific organise themselves. For example, Samoan social

groups are said to be differentiated in extended or 'aiga lines or transnational corporations of kin'<sup>11</sup>, Cook Islanders on island lines and Niue on village lines<sup>12</sup>.

It is increasingly becoming anathema to the older generation of people from the Pacific living in New Zealand to be labelled as Polynesians or Pacific Islanders for the following reasons: they are not indigenous terms but *papalagi* constructions and ones which arose out of the colonial context; they blur the different experiences of the people to whom they refer; they imply homogeneity throughout the Pacific. As a pan-ethnic label, "Pacific Islander" officially incorporates people living throughout the whole of Oceania - Melanesians, Micronesians and Polynesians, and ignores the uniqueness of these different culture areas and individual nations, and the existence of differences in culture, language, philosophies and respective histories.

Perhaps the most salient reason for people objecting to this label is the negative, distorted, stereotypic image of Pacific Islanders as "overstayers", portrayed by the media during the overstayer debacle. In the early 1970s, Pacific Islanders, especially Samoans and Tongans, were used as scapegoats by the New Zealand National Government. The issue of overstayers was used to deflect attention away from the economic problems and Government policies which caused or contributed to the recession<sup>13</sup>. While many Samoans and Tongans were guilty of overstaying, it was the Government's handling of the matter, and their focus on these two ethnic groups in particular which became unacceptable to many Samoans, Tongans and ensuing generations of Samoans and Tongans. Since the 1973-74 dawn-raids by police on

potential overstayers many new migrants, for economic reasons and family reunification, have shifted their destinations to Australia or the USA<sup>14</sup>. For Pacific-parents, grandparents and 'aiga, the traumatic, emotional dawn-raids are still very vivid memories, indeed bitter memories. The emergence of "The Polynesian Panthers" in the early 1970s saw the articulation of the idea that racism was the basic social cleavage in New Zealand society. Fuelled by the outrage caused by this openly racist attack on people from Samoa and Tonga, they sought to overcome this injustice:

*The revolution we openly rap about is one of total change. The revolution is one to liberate us from racism, oppression and capitalism. We see many of our problems of oppression and racism are tools of this society's outlook based on capitalism; hence for total change one must change society altogether*<sup>15</sup>.

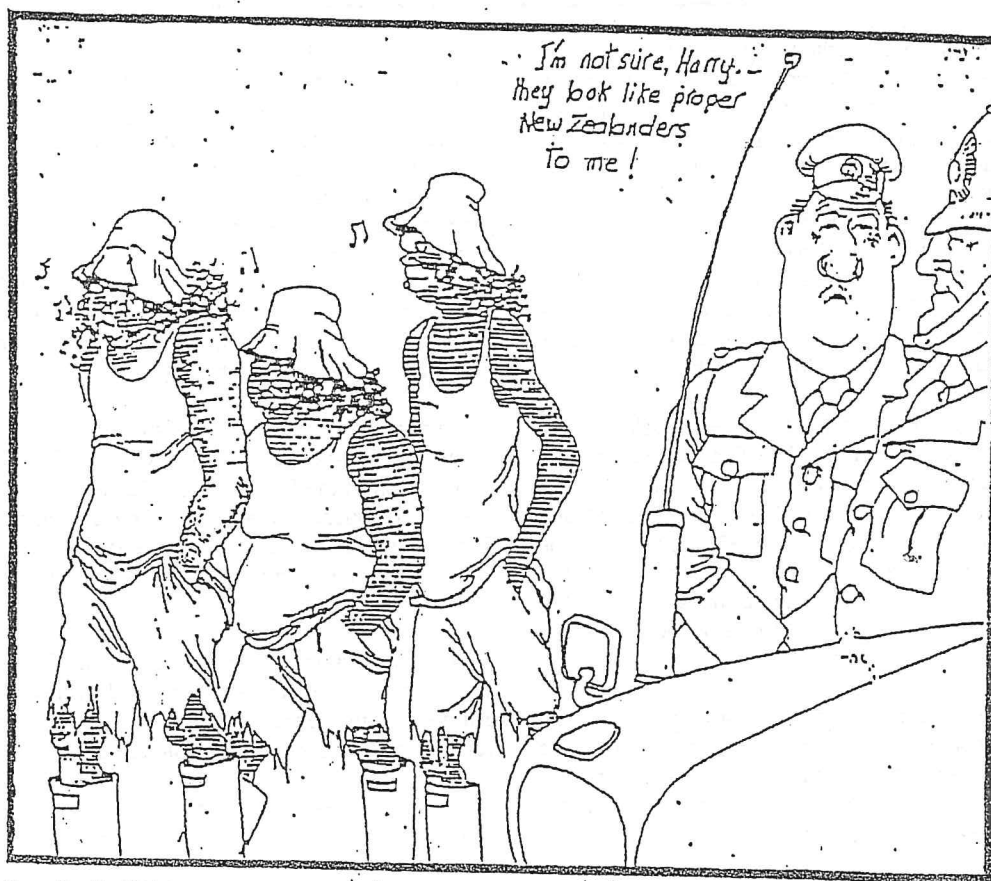
Pan-ethnic identities such as the "Pacific Islander" category has become an active component of the dominant group's worldview. It has organised *their* action, and consequently *our* experience. Cornell states that "The result is a revelation: we discover that, in their eyes, we are something we have never been in our own"<sup>16</sup>.

Those who created and use the label have a story to tell which led to the inception of the category. The story may be meaningless, and the identity a convenience, a way of simplifying complex social life, but the story says little more than "they all came from there" or "they look the same to us" or "they speak the same variety of language" (*ibid.*).

All groups construct narratives that give sense and meaning to their lives, their situations and reasons for living, and many do so in opposition to these pan-ethnic identities. For the pan-ethnic group, Cornell<sup>7</sup> identifies three parts to the reclaiming of ethnic identity:

- i) discovering the identity as a self-referential category or label,
- ii) discovering the already-existing narrative – good or bad – to which the label refers, and
- iii) "discovering" the story, or counter narrative, the newly self-conscious group itself wishes to tell.

The caveat to Cornell's new discovery story is that the 'new' ethnic identity is not a fictitious one – it is not simply made up – it is based on the persistent identity symbols embedded in the history, memory, current experiences and emotions of a people. There is still the question of which story will gain dominance as the primary representation of the group.



Tom Scott, *NZ Listener*, Nov. 13, 1976:12. Reprinted with permission

## Rhetoric of culture

It is well known that the concept of culture is fraught with difficulties in its explication. Is culture primordial – ‘in the blood’ – as many people will insist, or is it shaped by external influences? Are cultural traditions invented, as some scholars claim, and used to validate a traditional past? Is culture a whole way of struggle, or does the anthropological notion of culture as a ‘whole way of life’ reign supreme?

Regardless of one’s inclinations towards one definition or another, more salient today is how the rhetoric of culture has become a “buzz” word and concept in New Zealand society, as elsewhere in the world. In the 90s’ climate of political correctness and cultural appropriateness, one finds “culture” in newspapers, magazines, coffee-shop conversations, educational policies and programmes, on television, on doors, letterheads and in the greetings of Government Departments, part of everybody’s shiny corporate plan, and in the rhetoric of public occasions. But perhaps more sinister is the appropriation of aspects of a minority’s culture by the dominant group to maintain the former’s subordinate position. Here in New Zealand Webster stresses this point in his discussion of the expert definition of Maori culture in which the resurgence of Maori culture at the ideological level is being allowed to flourish while the machinery of state is slowly widening the gap between *tangata whenua* and mainstream New Zealanders<sup>17</sup>. It is clear that the actual situation of *tangata whenua* relative to other ethnic groups in New Zealand is in a state of crisis in terms of employment, income, health, education and justice statistics. And this situation has been exacerbated by the recession, stringent restructuring, free-market New Right ideologies and policies of the Government<sup>18</sup>.

This same dynamic is operating between Pacific culture and people in New Zealand. The Pasifika Festival held annually in Auckland is a case in point. Begun in 1990, and developed and sponsored by SPINDA (South Pacific Island Nations Development Association) since 1992, it has become a popular forum for the celebration of Pacific culture. The Mayor of Auckland stated that “... there will be opportunities for all Aucklanders to immerse themselves in the rich cultural diversity of the Pacific Islands”<sup>19</sup>.

An organiser states: “We have second, third and even fourth-generation Pacific Island New Zealanders who have a traditional heritage combined with a New Zealand upbringing... They have a new way of design, of music and of looking at the world – and the world is starting to take notice of them in a big

way... The [fashion] show reflects what it is like being a Pacific Islander in this country today... We are moving forward in a global culture, while retaining threads back to our own cultures. The diversity of styles within the show mirrors [Pacific Island] reality...” (ibid.:3).

What is ironic is that Pasifika promotes this pan-Pacific ideology of the Pacific Way, as well as reducing culture to aesthetic, traditional elements represented in music, dance and fashion mixed with modern globalising influences producing the ‘hybrid’ model as discussed above. This celebration happens at a time when in the 1990s, national statistics show that Pacific people are the most unemployable, most uneducatable, poorest, most likely to be criminals, most state-dependant (even lower than Maori), most unwanted sector of the New Zealand population. They are at the bottom of the heap in all demographic, socio-economic indicators in New Zealand. What is there to celebrate?<sup>20</sup>

**“Is culture primordial – ‘in the blood’ – as many people will insist, or is it shaped by external influences? Are cultural traditions invented, as some scholars claim, and used to validate a traditional past?”**

The contribution of celebrating Pacific Islands cultures through the arts and at an aesthetic level is successful in making the Pacific presence felt albeit

in a positive way. But more importance should be given to the critical assessment of ‘top down’ delivery of resources to Pacific people, and their ‘bottom up’ articulation of their particular needs and service requirements. The point is that instead of trying to define culture at an academic or popularist level where foreign diplomats, including Pacific elites, business promoters, free-market entrepreneurs and media suddenly become the definers of culture, we need to critically examine and understand what culture, cultural identity and ethnicity means not for some kind of generic Pacific Islander, but for the different ethnic minority populations and people – caught within this pan-ethnic identity.

The continued use of pan-ethnic identities is problematic. While their construction points to western homogenisation of people from the Pacific for the former’s own pragmatic reasons, the question then arises: *How do people from the Pacific differentiate between themselves and others including people from other island groups, not only in the islands, but those born elsewhere?*

The answer is that they too indulge in the practice of constructing pan-ethnic identities to explain these differences. But this matter becomes even more confusing when considering NZ-born ‘Pacific Islanders’.

The emergence of a “PI identity”, “PI music” etc. is a recent phenomenon which requires some consideration. This identity

has been taken up in the main by the younger generation of NZ-born Pacific Islanders. NZ-born Samoans and other NZ-born Pacific Islanders may feel a greater commonality with one another than their island-born elders feel with those born in other islands - hence island-born elders' resentment at being considered Pacific Islander may not be shared by their children who have gone to school and work with NZ-borns with other Pacific ancestries. This self-identity by the younger generation is certainly bolstered by structurally designated "Pacific Islander" spaces rather than individual ethnic group ones within the various schools, organisations, institutions and programmes (e.g., PI programmes and tutorials etc.). This PI identity is very much a youth phenomenon, and that on reaching maturity, this self-identity for some will change into a more ethnically-defined one<sup>2</sup>.

The commonality that NZ-born Samoans share with other NZ-born Pacific Islanders is their shared socialisation experiences in terms of education and interaction with the system and wider community of New Zealanders. But that is where this commonality stops. What is not shared with the other Pacific peoples whether island-born or NZ-born are distinctively Samoan experiences of 'aiga, church, matai<sup>21</sup> and fa'alupega<sup>22</sup> systems, gagana Samoa<sup>23</sup> and associated values and expectations of tautua<sup>24</sup>, fa'aaloalo<sup>25</sup>, feagaiga<sup>26</sup> and usita'<sup>27</sup>; occasioned by the day-to-day living of the fa'aSamoa<sup>28</sup> and cemented together by the numerous occasions of fa'alavelave<sup>29</sup>. These experiences of the fa'aSamoa are shared with all other Samoans whether younger or older, born in Samoa, New Zealand or elsewhere. The differentiation in terms of culture, language, philosophies and respective histories far outweigh the one commonality of shared New Zealand experiences, and links NZ-born Samoans to their 'aiga in Samoa and their transnational corporations of kin throughout the globe.

Pan-ethnic identities, whether constructed by westerners or Pacific Islanders, are inevitable and here to stay but this does not mean that people (or ethnic groups) caught within these pan-ethnic identities are homogeneous. In the case of NZ-born Pacific Islanders the only commonality lies in the shared socialisation experiences of their place of birth. How these are expressed depends on the ethnic identity of parents, family and community, and the degree to which this ethnic identity has been instilled in their children.

## Where did "NZ-born" come from?

According to Cornell<sup>7</sup> (1995:5), an ethnic identity is a label, and in making an ethnic identity claim, we label ourselves or others. But it much more than just a label.

As Cornell states: "...we name ourselves and others, and in so doing assign a place in a classificatory scheme. But in the process of naming or labelling we invariably do more. The label is a referent, a symbol...a condensation of knowledge, facts, fictional accounts, assumptions, attitudes that describe what it means to be a particular type of person...it is...an entire narrative...it becomes our story." (ibid.).

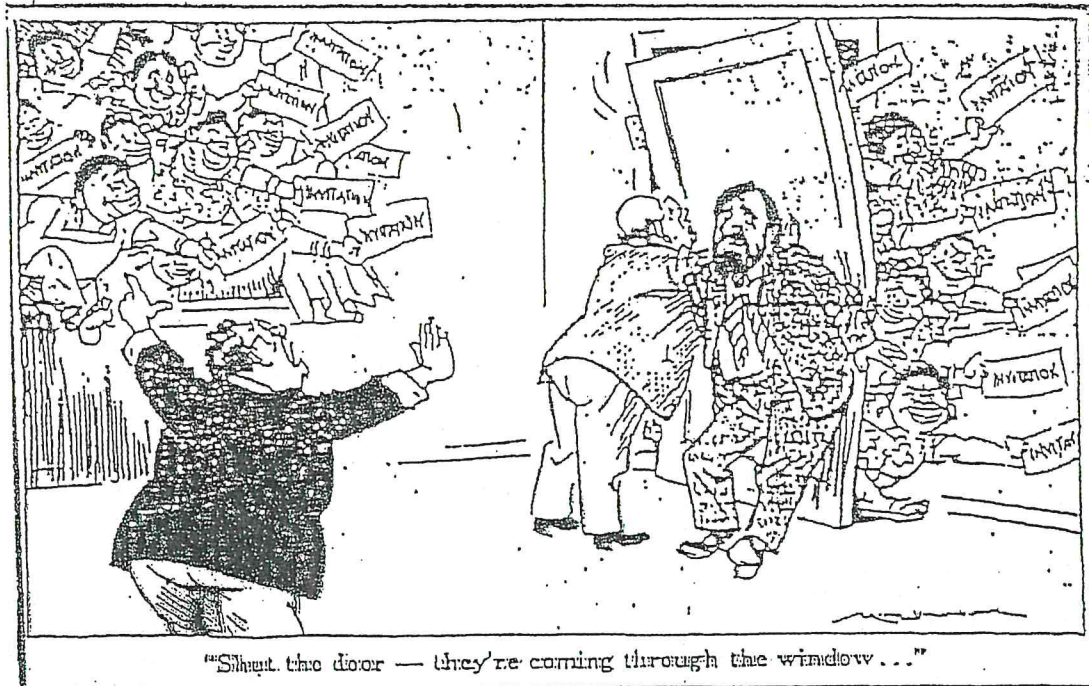
There is a scene in Albert Wendt's short film *Auckland Fa'aSamoa* (1980) which encapsulates this new phenomenon of the '90s, this new "label", this constructed ethnic identity. In this scene the possibility of a Samoan subculture in New Zealand is touted. The look on the young NZ-born woman's face in response to this suggestion is one of those "ethnographic moments". The look of utter amazement at the audacity of even the suggestion of the emergence of a Samoan subculture reveals the tenacious grip of Samoan conservatism as the cornerstone of Samoan identity, and this only some twenty years ago. Yet today, in the space of only one generation or so, on radio talkback shows, the television programme *Tagata Pasifika*, in Auckland University research essays

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and Masters theses<sup>30</sup>, and in the recent maiden speech of a Labour MP (Mark Gosche in *NZ Herald*: March 1997), the existence of a NZ-born Samoan identity is clearly emerging. This "new" identity is also clearly evident in this study<sup>1</sup>. The following is a much simplified, condensed and specifically contextualised description of this phenomenon.

## What does "NZ-born" mean?

To 'aiga, in Samoa and recent island arrivals, NZ-borns are on the one hand *papalagi*, and on the other, 'aiga members who may or may not *tautala fa'aSamoa* (speak Samoan) fluently, who have had different *papalagi* socialisation experiences and who therefore may not participate in normal Samoan activities and practices. They are also a source of amusement and ambivalence, perhaps even derision, envy and antagonism. They represent younger members of the 'aiga who therefore have to defer to parental *fa'aSamoa*, to give of their time, services and finance and to participate in *fa'alavelave* despite their shortcomings in not being Samoan enough.



Minhinick, *New Zealand Herald*, 19 Feb. 1987. Reprinted with permission.

To the Church community and elders, NZ-born means the youth element of the Church represented in the Sunday school, Bible class and ESG. They are young people who *tautala* NZ-born (understand Samoan, but are not fluent in it, and speak mainly English), and who may be losing their Samoan culture because they are so entrenched in the New Zealand way of life in terms of education, careers and values of *papalagi*. They are to be tolerated but ultimately are there for their convenience. They are not a threat to their authority and autonomy in Church administration and policies at present, however they do have some useful skills in law, accountancy, management etc. which can be called upon if the situation requires it. They are their children, nephews, nieces, grandchildren and *'aiga*. Therefore they are the source of *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo* who are taught to *usita'i* at all times and encouraged not to question the status quo. During times of Church *fa'alavelave*, they will be called upon to contribute financially and in any other ways required of them.

Being NZ-born signifies the existence of a unique identity defined by the following attributes and experiences. Their preferred language is English although they can *tautala* NZ-born. They are being brought up through the *papalagi* education system and are aware of two different knowledge systems which sets them apart from their parents and island-born *'aiga*. They have access to two different life-styles and oscillate between the two or embrace one while denying the other. They experience identity confusion at not being accepted by Samoan *'aiga* and/or New Zealanders and adopt coping mechanisms to remain sane. They do not deny

their Samoan-ness, and their self-identification is an apology for not being able to *tautala fa'aSamoa* fluently. Their understanding of parental *fa'aSamoa* is couched in terms of NZ-born *fa'aSamoa*. Those with secured identities and an understanding of secured *fa'aSamoa*<sup>2</sup> are able to reconcile the contradictions and cope with challenges and opposition mounted by Samoans and New Zealanders to their perceived self-identities, specifically the coping strategy of securing professions, occupations and career paths which involve them in helping other Samoans.

### Is NZ-born a new 'subculture'?

The emergence of a NZ-born Samoan subculture in New Zealand, and its implications for NZ-borns, island-borns and others is a complex matter. Confusion arises in viewing a NZ-born ethnic identity and a NZ-born subculture as analogous concepts. If we are to agree with the popular definition of subculture as "a cultural group within a larger culture, often having beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture"<sup>31</sup>, then people who identify themselves as Samoan do indeed constitute a subculture of Samoan people within the whole New Zealand population, defined as a people with their own language, hierarchy of values and characteristic modes of appearance and behaviour that expresses "visible and symbolic resistance to real and perceived subordination"<sup>32</sup>, as an ethnic minority in New Zealand. But the question then arises: Do NZ-borns represent a subculture within their own "larger culture" - the Samoan culture, the *fa'aSamoa*? This particular problematic element of subcultural analysis can

best be understood by considering the following example which traces the events leading up to the construction of a NZ-born ethnic identity in the context of this study<sup>2</sup>.

In the thesis I introduced Spicer's concepts of 'opposition', 'persistent identity systems', and 'enduring peoples'<sup>33</sup> as crucial to a broader understanding of 'a people', their history, and identity. In the following section I take on Spicer's challenge in examining the phenomenon of persistent identity systems by describing, and systematically investigating a specific instance of opposition of a minority group to attempts at incorporating it into the dominant society. However the seemingly enforced incorporation is not by the dominant group itself as one would expect, but from the 'dominant' group of elders and authority systems of members from within the same ethnic group as the minority one. The minority group is the ESG of Newton Church.

The construction of a NZ-born Samoan identity central to the submission which the ESG presented to the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ)<sup>34</sup> is that NZ-borns see themselves as "bridges", "mediators", "intermediaries" and "guardians" for the world of their Samoan parents and grandparents, in relation to the wider society. Even more interesting is the political significance of the ESG making a submission in its own right to the PCANZ to contest the major PIC proposal, and this reflects a development, a political savvy, a resistance and opposition to being categorised in this way. Clearly by making this submission, the ESG is staking its claim as guardian, a bridge between their Church,

leaders and elders and 'aiga, and the *papalagi* institution of the PCANZ. These NZ-borns see themselves as possessing the skills, expertise and maturity to "make sense of" and to deal with the chaos and confusion inherent in the PCANZ asserting its dominance over PIC and undermining the PIC autonomy (enjoyed by PIC prior to merger with PCANZ) which is threatening Newton Church. There is no identity crisis here. It is not that these NZ-borns are part of two worlds and are comfortable in neither, nor do they see themselves equally as Samoans and New Zealanders as some scholars have argued, but more as Samoans in the role of guardians of their 'aiga and the *fa'a Samoa* as they know it in New Zealand. And in the same way, the ESG also provides a bridge between disaffected youth and elders or traditional element of Newton Church<sup>2</sup>.

It is also clear that the construction of a NZ-born identity by the ESG of Newton PIC counteracts stereotypic images of NZ-born Samoans as monolingual, monocultural, i.e., *papalagi*, or Samoans who are losing their culture - stereotypes created by both *papalagi* (PCANZ) and island-born Samoans who are in positions of authority within the PIC Church structure. These stereotypes serve to enhance the superior political positions of the PCANZ, the *papalagi* faction, and their insistence on a fragmented multicultural church which would compromise the identity of the unified PIC in New Zealand. The Church elite of traditional Samoan leaders and ministers also stand to gain much more status in the new proposed structure of the PIC Synod in cultural or traditional terms, and in real economic benefits from their much enhanced



Tom Scott, from *Comment, A NZ Quarterly Review*, New Series, No. 1, Oct. 1977, front page. Reprinted with permission.

status (ministers as *matai* phenomenon and Samoan-based structure of proposed Synod).

The irony of this all is that the stereotypes created by wider New Zealand society that are in line with assimilationist/integrative models and notions which state that culture, in this case the *fa'aSamoa*, is static, are being perpetuated by island-born Samoans and elders. By reifying their knowledge and childhood experiences of the *fa'aSamoa*, they create ideologies in which the 'real' *fa'aSamoa* is in Samoa, or only practised by island-born Samoans and therefore that it is impossible for NZ-borns to practise or understand the *fa'aSamoa*. Moreover *fa'aSamoa* in New Zealand is said to be in a state of 'decline', thus enabling them to designate NZ-borns as '*papalagi*', or 'not Samoan'.

De Vos' perception of ethnicity as a source of considerable conflict<sup>35</sup> is evident in this situation. While NZ-borns recognise their past affiliation with their parents' lifeways and parental *fa'aSamoa*, their notions of self come into conflict with their present situation. This particular conflict has been resolved by a form of manipulation—in this instance by the ESG presenting a submission to the PCANZ which has provided a release valve from the emotional turmoil that these NZ-borns are experiencing, albeit by compromising cultural mores. But the matter is far from over.

Admittedly, the ESG's construction of a NZ-born Samoan identity is one which cannot fully represent each NZ-born Samoan's individual identity (within the ESG). It does, however, provide an opportunity for some NZ-born Samoans to give expression to their collective secured identity, in a common cause to effect changes in the structure of Newton Church, and to avoid potential conflict. What is significant about the documentation of this instance of opposition is that NZ-born awareness of their experiences through time, and their historical understanding of events such as these will form the foundation of enduring qualities, and a persistent identity system for future generations of NZ-borns.

To return to the question previously postulated: Do NZ-borns represent a subculture within their own Samoan cultural framework? The answer is equivocally yes and no. Yes, because NZ-borns in terms of language, education, experience and life-style share things among themselves which they cannot share with island-born and educated Samoans. But with regard to the institutions, attitudes, values, behaviour and emotional attachment to *fa'aSamoa* and a Samoan identity, a subculture within *fa'aSamoa* for NZ-

borns is not as clear. Although NZ-borns strive to distinguish their dual socialisation experiences as unique, this is not to say that this uniqueness is an affirmation of a NZ-born subculture per se within Samoan society. Granted that on the surface NZ-borns represent "a cultural group within a larger culture", but they do not have "beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture". It is not the beliefs or interests that are at variance but rather the *scope, range and occurrence* of the physical manifestation of these same beliefs and interests

that distinguish them – especially for those who unconsciously are caught in, or who consciously choose to participate only in NZ-born *fa'aSamoa* or not at all.

The NZ-born Samoan label (usually referred to as simply "NZ-born"), while on the surface simply the name of a category of persons, in fact carries within it, unspoken but to one degree or another understood, a story, a

narrative, an account, of what it means to be a member of this group. To be NZ-born is to have lived a particular kind of life in particular places, and gone through a particular set of experiences that led to a very particular present. It is a common narrative of opposition, conflict, resistance, confusion, which for most ends in identity understanding, reconciliation and hope for the future.

The collective self-identity constructed by NZ-borns often does not correspond to their identity as perceived by "outsiders", in this context island-born Samoans and New Zealanders. The outsider ones may still make as substantial demands on the individual: How do you live up to the expectations of those who think they know your story, or how do you defy those expectations and reject the narratives that others attach to you? Nevertheless, the NZ-born Samoan label accommodates both stories – "NZ-born" embodies the whole plethora of experiences attached to being socialised into *papalagi* life-ways – "Samoan" embodies the Samoan socialisation experiences consolidated by the *fa'aSamoa* experiences promulgated by *aiga* and Newton Church. For NZ-borns with a secured identity<sup>1</sup>, to take on a NZ-born identity therefore, is to take on both the insider and outsider versions of the identity story, and the NZ-born label represents a clear affirmation and reconciliation of both identity stories.

In summary, it seems that the practice of pan-ethnic stereotyping and labelling is here to stay. What this paper points out is that while traditionally this labelling has occurred inter-ethnically, intra-ethnic labelling also occurs. NZ-born Samoans, and other children of migrant peoples need to be

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aware that without doubt this will be encountered in their own individual identity journeys. This kind of identity confusion can be reconciled and overcome by exposing the structure of this insidious practice by locating the socio-cultural, political, economic and historical context in which it is embedded in order to identify coping mechanisms and pathways to deal with it. My research shows that some NZ-born Samoans can attain secured identities and can make informed decisions about the construction of 'self', thus becoming much 'healthier' members of wider New Zealand society, and their own 'aiga, church and community groups - as Samoans who are not born in Samoa but in New Zealand.

### Fa'afetai

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3. *papalagi*: (also *palagi*) sky-breaker (lit.); white man; European(s); foreigner; Samoan not born in Samoa in this context.
4. The English-speaking group (ESG) of Newton Pacific Islanders' Church (PIC), Auckland is my focus group. Most of its members are NZ-born Samoans.
5. 'aiga: family; extended family; descent group or kinship in all its dimensions.
6. Albert Wendt: personal communication.
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9. For critiques of this refer C. Macpherson 1996; E. Hau'ofa, Our Sea of Islands. In *A New Oceania: Rediscovering our Sea of Islands*. E. Waddell, V. Naidu, E. Hau'ofa (editors) 1993:2-19. School of social and economic development, The University of the South Pacific, Suva: Star Printery Ltd.
10. Krishnan V, et al. *The Challenge of Change: Pacific Island Communities in New Zealand, 1986-1993*, 1994:1. Wellington, Social Research and Development Institute.
11. The MIRAB (migration, remittances, aid, bureaucracy) economy of some South Pacific states. This economic strategy is a successful, though fragile phenomena which depends on maintained links between 'aiga in Samoa and abroad. See I.G. Bertram and R.F. Watters, "The MIRAB economy in South Pacific Microstates" in *Pacific Viewpoint* 26(3) 497-519, 1985.
12. Nokise UF. *A History of the P.I.C.C. in New Zealand 1943-1969*. MTh. thesis, University of Otago, 1978:2.
13. Ross T. *Getting the Treatment: The Politicisation of Pacific Island 'Overstayers' in NZ 1974-1976*. BA Honours research Essay, History Department, Victoria University of Wellington, 1992.
14. Duncan B. Christianity: Pacific island traditions. In P. Donovan (editor), *Religions of New Zealanders*. The Dunmore Press, 1990:128. Va'a L. Ethnic identity and persistence. A paper presented at *IX Pacific History Association Conference*, Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canberra, 1992.
15. Polynesian Panther Party. What we want. In S. Levine (editor), *New Zealand Politics: a Reader*. Melbourne: Cheshire, 1975.
16. Cornell (1995:17) - see 7 above.
17. Webster S. Maori Studies and the expert definition of Maori culture: A critical history, 1989. In *Sites No. 18* (Winter):35-56.

"... it seems that the practice of pan-ethnic stereotyping and labelling is here to stay. What this paper points out is that while traditionally this labelling has occurred inter-ethnically; intra-ethnic labelling also occurs."

18. Smith G. Tane-nui-a-Rangi's Legacy. Propping up the sky. (Kaupapa Maori as resistance and Intervention) in *Creating Space in Institutional settings for Maori*. Research Unit for Maori Education Monograph No 15, 1992.
19. Pasifika '93 Auckland City publication:1, *New Zealand Herald* 10/3/93.
20. See Pardon 1995 for positive prognosis of Pacific Island involvement in New Zealand's economic culture and future. Pardon D. Pacific Islanders: sitting on a gold mine. In *People and Performance*, March 1995.
21. Political representative of 'aiga who holds a title bestowed by 'aiga; custodian of 'aiga land and property. There are two orders of *matai*, *ali'i* and *tulafale*.
22. A formal expression of recognition associated with a *matai* title. Each village and district has a set of *fa'alupega* which acts as a constitution by expressing the rank and by alluding to the historical/genealogical origins of the senior titles.
23. The Samoan language.
24. (Of untitled men and other dependants, in this context of younger generation of Samoans) serve a *matai*; carry out orders of those who stand behind those in authority.
25. Courtesy; respect; honours; regard highly and treat with respect.
26. Covenant between a brother/sister and their descendants; currently used to refer to covenant between minister/congregation; a contract.
27. To obey.
28. In the manner of Samoans; the Samoan way; according to Samoan customs and traditions.
29. a ceremonial occasion (weddings, funerals, etc.) requiring the exchange of gifts; anything which interferes with 'normal' life and calls for special activity.
30. Utumapu T. *Finau i mea sili: attitudes of Samoan families in New Zealand to education*. Unpublished MA Thesis. University of Auckland, 1992; Oloi RL. *Samoan women graduates: education and identity*. Unpublished MA dissertation in Education, University of Auckland, 1994; Tiatia JS. *The church: friend or foe for our Pacific Island youth. A New Zealand born perspective*. Unpublished MA Thesis. University of Auckland, 1997.
31. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* 1990:1213.
32. Bullock, Stallybrass and Trombley (editors), *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, 1977:824.
33. Spicer E. Persistent Identity Systems in *Science* Vol.174 No. 4011:795-800, 1971. *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980d.
34. The original Synod structure designed by PIC Committee included the Samoans, Niuean, Cook Islander, Tokelauan and Tuvaluan ethnic groups only. The ESG submission proposed the inclusion of the ESG as a sixth ethnic group.
35. De Vos and L. Romanucci-Ross (editors), *Ethnic Identity: Cultural continuities and Change* (University of Chicago Press, 1982). □

The fa'a Samoa is not centred around accumulating goods and money as a means of security and expression of success, but rather it stems from a fishing and agrarian society where happiness and security are derived from the cohesiveness and strength of the family.

Lulumafuie Fiatoa and Neal Palafox  
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