

Tangata O Te Moana Nui

The Evolving Identities of Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand

edited by
Cluny Macpherson
Paul Spoonley
Melani Anae

*The title means people of the great sea,
which is what Maori called those who
lived elsewhere in the Pacific Ocean
and who later joined them in Aotearoa*



Dunmore Press

© 2001 Cluny Macpherson, Paul Spoonley and Melani Anae
© 2001 Dunmore Press Ltd

First Published in 2001
by

Dunmore Press Ltd
P.O. Box 5115
Palmerston North
New Zealand

<http://www.dunmore.co.nz>

Australian Supplier:
Federation Press

P.O. Box 45
Annandale 2038 NSW
Australia

Ph: (02) 9552-2200

Fax: (02) 9552-1681

ISBN 0 86469 369 9

Text:

Times New Roman 10.5/12.5

Printer:

The Dunmore Printing Company Ltd
Palmerston North

Cover art and design: Evotia Tamua

Copyright. No part of this book may be reproduced without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Introduction

First anthropologist Melani Anae looks at the experiences of a group of New Zealand-born Pacific people, most of whose parents or grandparents settled in Aotearoa early in the post-war period. These people grew up in an inner-city community which developed around the first Pacific Islands Congregational Church parish, formed in Aotearoa in 1949. Her study of this New Zealand-born generation shows how members of this group have accommodated challenges to their ethnic identity both from within the Pacific communities and beyond them. She also posits the centrality of 'ethnicity', as opposed to 'class' and 'gender', as the crucial factor in personal identity formation.

The chapter highlights the importance of seeing identity not as a state but as a journey which individuals make during their lifetime, negotiating challenges to their 'Pacific-ness' from within Pacific communities and to their 'New Zealand-ness' from local Papalagi communities. At some point in the journey, the 'travellers' acquire a distinctive 'secured identity' which differs both from that of their parents and from those of their hosts. The identity journey ends for some not with a loss of Pacific identity, but with a new form of Pacific identity based on the 'island' identities of their parents. Anae also makes the important observation that many of those within the group who have 'succeeded' have not done so at the cost of their affiliation and commitment to the Pacific communities into which they were born.

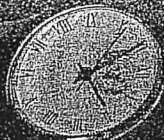
This study of the experiences of a specific group of New Zealand-born Samoans contextualises and clarifies many of the issues raised both in earlier and later chapters and shows how individuals have experienced and coped with these. It highlights the diversity in the ways people with similar backgrounds have dealt with such issues as education, racism, intermarriage, geographical dislocation and language loss in the course of their identity journeys.

In the second chapter, Peteru and Pulotu-Endemann discuss some of the

consequences of redrawing gender boundaries which occur abroad. They note that for some time, and for a variety of reasons, certain groups have been confined within social roles that serve to protect the power of those who traditionally controlled them. They note that some of the new freedoms which women enjoy in Aotearoa present challenges to those social orders which confined women to certain roles and which limited their opportunities and life chances. They note also that the possibilities for other groups, such as the formerly marginalised fa'afafine, have been transformed by the opportunities presented in a society in which the expression of alternative sexualities and gender roles, and the rights of those who occupy them, are protected by law.

In the third chapter, poet and writer Selina Tusitala Marsh offers the reader a very personal insight into some of the issues of identity which arise for the increasing number of Pacific people of 'mixed descent'. High levels of ethnic intermarriage between Pacific and non-Pacific people within Aotearoa over the past fifty years have meant that more and more people face decisions about personal identity which are complicated by their multiple ethnic affiliations (see Bedford and Didham in this volume). In a poem and commentary, Selina raises some important questions about how people in this situation handle this complexity, how they accommodate and balance competing demands from their 'sides' and how they avoid being forced into choices about identity which do not fit their lived reality.

In the fourth chapter, sociologist Tracey McIntosh explores some issues which the Pacific presence has raised for Maori. How were Maori and Pacific relations to develop? Were the Pacific migrants to be treated as kin separated temporarily by time and circumstance, or as competitors for a declining number of jobs in a contracting economy? McIntosh works through some of the ways in which these issues were framed and explained and the tensions which they produced for both individuals and groups. The later sections of the chapter outline a transition to a situation in which common residence, similar experiences as 'ethnic minorities' in a society dominated by Pakeha, intermarriage and a growing awareness of each other's histories are producing a distinctive set of relationships between 'tagata Pasefika' and 'tangata whenua'.



The New 'Vikings of the Sunrise': New Zealand-borns in the Information Age¹

Melani Anae

To the Polynesians, the sunset symbolised death and the spirit land to which they returned, but the sunrise was the symbol of hope, and new lands that awaited discovery. ... We have new problems before us, but we have a glorious heritage, for we come of the blood that conquered the Pacific with stone-age vessels that sailed ever toward the sunrise (Sir Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), 1938, reprinted 1972:x).

This excerpt, from Te Rangi Hiroa's *Vikings of the Sunrise*, sought to let the rest of the world know about 'some of the romance associated with the settlement of Polynesia' through stories and myths regarding the creation of man (*sic.*), the islands, the great seafaring ancestors and their epic voyages' (Buck, 1972:ix). It was written when for many Pacific peoples, the new 'sunrise' was the promise of a better life and a good education for their children in New Zealand. This book explores how Pacific peoples have adapted to the rigours of this journey. In this chapter I explore the meaning of the new 'sunrise' for New Zealand-born Pacific peoples in New Zealand at the threshold of the new millennium.

I wish also to consider a more recent usage of 'sunrise'. In a paper entitled, 'Pacific Communities in the Information Age' (Bedford, Macpherson and Spoonley, 1999), the authors talk about the decline of 'sunset industries' (mass manufacturing, retail products) and the expansion of 'sunrise industries' (biotechnology, computer hardware/software, telecommunications and entertainment – including tourism, fashion, music, sport, theatre, films) in New Zealand. They note the increasing participation of Pacific peoples in the entertainment sector of the sunrise industries, but question full participation due to 'inter-generational poverty and work-poor

households' (Bedford *et al.*, 1999:8). Does this kind of 'sunrise' age encapsulate Buck's symbol of life, hope and new lands? If so, why are Pacific peoples not expected to participate fully in it? The implication is that success for Pacific peoples may be confined to the entertainment sector and measured only by whether one is a Pasifika fashion designer, a fab musician, a professional athlete, or an 'ethnic' actor on *Shortland Street*. But what about success in other sectors, such as business, education and telecommunications? To answer these questions we must examine what 'success' means for Pacific peoples and question the premise that Pacific peoples will forever remain an impoverished, jobless under-class in New Zealand:

I joined the National Party because people used to say Labour was for labourers and I'm no labourer, thank you very much. My parents didn't sweat it out on factory floors for me to be a labourer. Sure, I'm one of the few Polynesians who came into National but I hope that what I've done with my life shows there's a future – you can be successful (Anae Arthur Anae, quoted in *North & South*, August 1999:30; see also Pardon, 1995).

Stuck in Sunset Mode

The Social and Economic Status of Pacific Peoples in New Zealand (1999) was the first of a series of reports written by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) to provide a snapshot of the socio-economic situation of Pacific peoples at the end of the twentieth century. The reports were designed as the first phase of the Pacific Vision Strategy and to provide the starting point from which Pacific community representatives, business leaders, the government and senior officials could start building a shared vision for the future of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. This shared vision was developed at the Pacific Vision Conference held in Auckland in July 1999 and provided a basis for 'developing a blueprint for the future, a plan that will ensure Pacific peoples can meet the challenges of the new millennium' (MPIA, 1999:2).

The report, like many other publications documenting the plight of Pacific peoples in New Zealand (Krishnan, 1994; Bathgate *et al.*, 1994), paints a depressing picture of their status as at the bottom of the heap on all socio-demographic indices (MPIA, 1999:8). This positioning has been attributed to economic restructuring which has resulted in massive job losses in the sunset industries, the 'traditional' niche of Pacific workers in New Zealand. For Pacific peoples this has meant vastly increased unemployment, and a

shift towards (re)training options.

The first two chapters in this book (Bedford and Didham; Cook, Didham and Khawaja) have highlighted some of the limitations which available data impose on researchers and policy-makers who use the data to define and delineate sub-groups within the national population and Pacific sub-populations. The problem that I have with statistical data, and one correctly noted by the Ministry, is that:

Some government agencies have only recently begun to collect information on Pacific peoples; others do not collect any at all. Data from some agencies that gather information about Pacific clients are unreliable due to incorrect data recording procedures (MPIA, 1999:4).

I contend that much statistical data is misleading and can lead to the mystification of the 'problems'. For example, although the above Pacific statistical reports and publications are limited by the fact that they are 'pan-Pacific' depictions, and that sub-populations are not defined and data for them disaggregated, little is being done about it. The promotion of the wellbeing of Pacific peoples is made to appear so complex that to sit down and work out solutions for all Pacific peoples' problems is often a 'no go' for our Pacific politicians, academics, administrators and community leaders. We are lacking analyses of social cohesion, culture, language, social institutions and structures, and more importantly, cultural ideas about life in New Zealand for Samoans, Cook Islanders, Tongans, Niueans, Tokelauans and other ethnicities caught in this pan-Pacific web. Also obscured is the acknowledgement of emerging groups of upwardly mobile, 'successful' Pacific peoples who are participating in a range of sunrise industries beyond the entertainment sector.

Thus, although there is recognition that New Zealand-born/raised Pacific people make up 58 per cent of Pacific peoples resident in New Zealand, and that this proportion will increase in the future, the generic Pacific population remains the basis for statistical depictions and analyses of socio-economic 'problems' and 'solutions'.

Meanwhile, Pacific people are filling the prisons, hospitals and dole queues at an increasing pace. At the same time, they are going to church in large numbers, participating in the MIRAB² economy by sending remittances to the homelands, graduating in increasing numbers from New Zealand universities, becoming upwardly mobile, featuring among the country's top sports people, and participating increasingly in not only the entertainment sectors of New Zealand's 'sunrise industries' (Bedford *et al.*, 1999:7), but

also in the sectors of education and business. So what exactly is happening?

To unravel this dilemma, we must do two things. First, we must stop focusing on the overarching negativity of questionable media representation and aggregated statistical information and take a moment to think about the many positive things that Pacific peoples are doing and experiencing, and what success for Pacific peoples actually means. Second, we must put to rest the notion that success comes at the price of losing one's island culture. The matter is much more complex than this. Rapid changes are occurring both in Zealand and in the Pacific Islands.

We must not only critically assess what the media and social scientists are saying about structural changes impacting on societies and communities, where adherence to culture or tradition is a hindrance to development, but we must also reconsider ideas about movement, modernisation and identity. In the former scenario, Pacific peoples are passive pawns, at the mercy of external factors and decidedly not in control of their destinies. In the latter, Pacific peoples are active agents, and their world-views and experiences reflect their own articulations of Christianity, money, movement and their changing cultures and identities.

Given that sub-populations within the Pacific population are not typically distinguished in depictions of the current socio-economic status of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, we can usefully begin by disaggregating the population and focusing on groups such as the New Zealand-borns, whose current situation will be a more accurate indication of future trends. We can ask ourselves how these groups identify themselves and how this influences the persistence of their homeland cultures and traditions with each New Zealand-born generation? How does adherence to island cultures and links to homelands relate to the wellbeing of Pacific peoples in New Zealand? Will adherence to culture and traditions, and links with their homelands, prevent Pacific peoples from participating in the information age?

This chapter attempts to unravel these issues by providing a finely nuanced analysis of the characteristics of a group of New Zealand-born³ Samoans in Auckland, to show how this group's experiences can answer some of these questions. At the crux of the matter are the processes of ethnic identity development for New Zealand-born Samoans. Their experiences provide a window through which we can trace the identity journeys of a group of successful, inner-city, New Zealand-born Samoans, who despite the pressures of a formal education, changing personal social networks, ethnic intermarriage and upward mobility, remain committed to their Samoan identities. Their experiences mirror my own. This group is the English-Speaking Group, or ESG,⁴ of the Newton PIC church.⁵

Children of the Sunset: New Zealand-borns

In their paper, 'Pacific Communities in the Information Age' (Bedford *et al.*, 1999:9), the authors state that:

For the generation born here change is tempered by influence of their parents and their parents' commitment to a worldview and lifestyle forged in the islands. ... In the second generation born here this influence will be less pronounced because it will be associated with their grandparents. The third generation ... may grow up without contacts with people who were born and raised in the islands who were committed to and familiar with the island worldview and lifestyle ... Following this line of argument, it is clear that what it means to be an islander ... will continue to change in the next millennium. The sorts of things that they will want and expect may shift in some important respects. This shift is neither good nor bad but rather is inevitable. Cultures have always changed and always will. All that is happening is that the process may accelerate as a consequence of living in a cosmopolitan society in which change occurs rapidly.

The authors then go on to delineate how this change is being accelerated by such factors as the pervasiveness of Western education, the influence of more cosmopolitan personal networks, the diluting effects of ethnic intermarriage, language loss leading to ineptness in their island cultures, upward social mobility at the expense their island culture, and discontinuation of familial links resulting from geographical dispersal (Bedford *et al.*, 1999).

The inherent assumptions in the Bedford *et al.* analysis are that, as a result of these trends:

- island identities may become lost by the fourth generation;
- what is actually being lost is a static, traditional culture embodied in grandparents who were born in the islands;
- a formal education may supersede island values and beliefs;
- New Zealand-borns may take on the values and beliefs of their non-Samoan cosmopolitan counterparts;
- New Zealand-borns may marry outside of their own ethnic group;
- New Zealand-borns may be totally incompetent in their island tongue and thus opt out of island rituals;
- New Zealand-borns may have become upwardly mobile at the expense of their island cultures;
- international movements erode the centredness of an island identity;

- geographical dispersal may break the bonds of a central geographic locality associated with belonging.

My doctoral thesis, 'Fofoaivaese: Identity Journeys of New Zealand-born Samoans'⁶ (Anae, 1998), provides some interesting counter themes to these assumptions. These will be interwoven in the following highly simplified, condensed and specifically contextualised description of a typical ESG identity journey.

New Zealand-born Identity Journeys

Identity Confusion

I am a Samoan – but not a Samoan
 To my aiga in Samoa, I am a Palagi⁷
 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,
 To my Samoan parents, I am their child.

(Anae, 1998).

This verse encapsulates the paradox of a New Zealand-born identity. It represents perspectives, experiences and recurring ideas which emerged from English-Speaking Group narratives of self-identity, and embodies ideas which are shared by the group. Expressed in this verse, which represents the identity journey and the core shared experience of the group, is the idea that a New Zealand-born Samoan identity experience is encountered as a series of emotional challenges to one's identity as a Samoan and as a New Zealander throughout life. The challenges consist of being made aware that one is not 'Samoan enough', or is 'fia palagi' (wanting to be like a European) in Samoan spaces, and that one is 'not a New Zealander' or a 'coconut' or 'FOB' (fresh off the boat) in racist taunts and actions of Papalagi people in the wider community. The journey represents the movement from challenge to challenge over time, and between Papalagi spaces and Samoan spaces. Thus there are no stages or phases to the identity journey – only a beginning, followed by a 'roller-coaster ride' which for some ends in a secured self-identity, and for others in a perpetual state of identity confusion.

The journey begins when one's Samoan identity is challenged by island-born members of one's aiga (family; extended family) or church community, and when one's identity as a New Zealander is challenged by Papalagi. Some ESG members experienced these challenges concurrently, others separately,

and some not at all. For most, the 'roller-coaster ride' represented a period of identity confusion, emotional insecurity and lack of control, where not being perceived as Samoan (the first two lines of the verse), or New Zealander (the third to fifth lines) triggered social and cultural attitudes and behaviour which opposed prior behavioural and socio-cultural norms.

A Formal Education

[My daughter] was fortunate. She obeyed our wish [that she] go to university. Although she didn't study what I hoped she would do, she studied a BA in English. I said, 'That's not enough, you can never get a job with that'. And then she went and got an MA in English again because she wanted to be a journalist. ... She's teaching now. I said, 'Why don't you get a diploma in teaching?' ... Perhaps she didn't like to teach kids (participant quote in Anae, 1998).

For Samoan parents, a 'good' education for their children, especially females, means going to university. Parents generally prefer males, who have more choice as to their career paths, to leave school, get a job and assist the aiga, or become church ministers. Whether their children actually graduate is less important. The pinnacle for parents is that their children have 'made it' to university, regardless of whether a degree is conferred or not. Parents are generally very supportive of their children's education but educational considerations (time/space for school work) are often relegated in importance when the family participates in aiga and/or church fa'alavelave (ceremonial events involving the exchange of gifts; day-to-day practice and ritual occasions of fa'asamoa).

For children, educational success is a significant priority in their lives despite racial, gender and class barriers. Another priority for parents is that their children should usita'i (obey) them at all times, and children show an overriding concern with pleasing their parents. That is why most New Zealand-borns in the group passed School Certificate, University Entrance and Bursary, and about a third went on to university. For those who went to university, degree majors were chosen by parents (usually law, medicine, or science, rather than arts) and some did double majors and/or conjoint degrees to please both their parents and themselves. Moreover, they found ways to balance and maximise both priorities without compromising the cultural va fealoaloa'i (relationships of mutual respect in socio-political and spiritual arrangements) and va tapuia (sacred relationships in the socio-political and spiritual arrangements) aspects inherent in the parent-child relationship in

parental fa'asamoa.⁸ Thus, Samoan socialisation processes placed greater pressure on young females to obey their parents, and explained why females became more educationally qualified than their male counterparts.

Those who did not 'make it' were considered not 'brainy enough', or were forced to get a job to 'support the family'. Others tried university but 'bombed out'. Those members of the group who had no formal educational qualifications – seven per cent for females, 36 per cent for males – managed to find other employment. Those New Zealand-borns who dropped out of school recalled that this was because of 'mucking around', 'not being interested', being 'entrepreneurial at a very early age', or to 'help the family financially'.

Changing Personal Social Networks

... they asked me, 'Have you ever been arrested?' ... I [said], 'Yes, I got arrested during the Springbok tour and at Waitangi'. ... I believe indigenous people in South Africa have been treated badly, and as a PI of New Zealand, I felt motivated as a Christian to participate. ... As a Samoan I felt it was important to acknowledge tangata whenua (Maori), because if I could make those sacrifices for someone in South Africa, it then also put the responsibility onto me back here in New Zealand (participant quote in Anae, 1998).

Changing personal social networks that included more Papalagi and Maori, and language loss, contributed markedly to identity confusion. On the other hand, the eventual resolution of this confusion became a necessary step towards a secured identity.⁹

Those who grew up in cosmopolitan inner-city Auckland and attended multicultural primary schools and monocultural secondary schools had diverse experiences with Papalagi, Maori, other Pacific groups, and others. Although their school experiences with Papalagi (especially for males), were mostly negative, their relationships with tangata whenua were significantly different. For some, the onset of identity confusion caused by not being considered a 'New Zealander' by mainstream society meant more affinity to Maori, whom they perceived as another subordinated group. Anger at being racially targeted was fuelled by the overstayer debacle and dawn raids in the 1970s (Ross, 1992). This New Zealand-born group became acutely socially and politically conscious.

Relationships with Papalagi were strained in secondary schools, especially for males who bore the brunt of racist attacks. Some males retaliated physically and some were expelled from schools. For girls, racism was more

subtle, and their reaction was to remain silent and as 'invisible' as they could. At this point, the identity journey began in earnest. More males than females experimented with different lifestyles. Some left their church. A few joined gangs and some became affiliated to groups such as the Polynesian Panther Movement (Polynesian Panther Party, 1975; Te Ahu Poata-Smith, 1996) to give vent to feelings of anger, disillusionment and inadequacy, and of lack of control over their lives:

I learnt a lot of things during that time. I was challenged by them [a Maori women's group]. I remember just standing there telling them all to get [lost]. From there we started up the Pacific Island network, and got involved in that. We got out of there. We decided that we couldn't stay with them any more, it was a Maori movement. It wasn't what we were on about. I was thinking the best way we can help PIs and Samoans is ... we help our own people (participant quote in Anae, 1998).

At school, Maori and Pacific Islanders were labelled 'Polynesians', treated as a homogeneous group and consigned to spaces like 'Polynesian' culture or sports clubs. New Zealand-borns gravitated towards these spaces because they offered familiarity in the alien milieu of schooling in New Zealand, which was and is dominated by Papalagi children and teachers, and the Papalagi-orientated curriculum.

ESG members' empathy and support for Maori political initiatives began here. As some members found themselves caught between a dominant group of mainstream New Zealanders and the smaller group of tangata whenua who were demanding their sovereign rights under the Treaty of Waitangi, they could not help but become enmeshed in this political action. Members who joined Maori groups often acquired skills in political lobbying which they used to assert Samoan identity, and to raise the profile of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. For ESG members, this strategy became a coping mechanism. This was evident in the tendency for male or female, young or old, matai (a political representative who holds a title bestowed by aiga) or non-matai, to become involved with occupations, professions, and activities which focused on the educational, philosophical, secular and spiritual alleviation and elevation of Pacific peoples from their subordinate position in New Zealand society.¹⁰

Language Loss?

We did everything fa'asamoa except speaking Samoan. ... We started school at five. None of us could speak a word of English, and at the time

my parents thought that ... we should learn English 'cause like that's what we had to know in order to survive the school system. But by the time we got to secondary school they were telling us that we should start speaking Samoan, and a lot of that was quite hard, because like we'd be at the table, and no one was allowed to speak unless they spoke in Samoan ... and I couldn't do it. And every time we got it wrong ... my father would just yell and shout at us. Like there was this expectation that we KNOW Samoan ... that is ... BE Samoan (participant quote in Anae, 1998).

Inability to speak Samoan, or *tautala fa'asamoa*, became the prime source of Samoan identity confusion. Samoan language competence is, for island-born Samoans, the primary identifier of who is and is not Samoan. Visits to Samoa exacerbated the confusion for many because, despite their self-identification as Samoan, they were labelled *fia palagi* and regarded as *Papalagi* by their own *aiga* members. Coping mechanisms of *ita* (angry; in this context, attitude of distancing oneself from Samoan identity), *fa'amauualuga* (to be proud; in this context, superior attitude, asserting 'Papalagi' identity), and *fa'amauualalo* (to be humble; in this context, to participate in village roles and activities and not stand out as *Papalagi*) kicked in.

Despite the inability to speak Samoan fluently, most could *understand* Samoan. Their attitude was that language fluency wasn't a 'big deal' because they felt they could pick it up at any time. Their ability to 'tautala New Zealand-born'¹¹ enabled them to communicate with Samoan parents and island-born *aiga*, so there was no perceived urgent need to speak Samoan. They felt that because they had been raised by *aiga* and church in a Samoan way, had adopted parental *fa'asamoa* beliefs, values, attitudes and ways of thinking about and doing things, fluency in Samoan was not the single most important marker of Samoanness. The few who spoke Samoan fluently, were either forced to speak Samoan in the home, or spoke Samoan because their parents' did not speak English. For others, it was the personal drive to learn Samoan. Some had learnt Samoan as a requirement of jobs such as teachers, lawyers, policemen and clerks, or in order to act as 'go-betweeners' or mediators for their (grand)parents in dealings with schools and government departments. Others picked up Samoan from being members of the *autalavou* (church 'youth' group although members' ages vary considerably).

'Time Outs' and a 'PI (Pacific Islander) Identity'

Many talked about having 'time out' periods when they would 'act out' this identity confusion. For many, this involved leaving the church and/or rejection

of both Papalagi and parental fa'asamoa authority structures. For some, time outs or 'getting a life' included experimentation with drugs, alcohol and marginal lifestyles. Members tended to leave the cocoon of family and church to engage in these activities. When they tired of this experimentation and were ready to return to some form of stability and a secure identity, Newton Church provided the 'rock' or 'anchor' or 'home'.

During time-out periods, many New Zealand-borns took on a 'PI' persona while experimenting with different identities and lifestyles. This has been well-documented in the literature of Pacific migrant children (Macpherson, 1997, Bedford *et al.*, 1999; Small, 1997). Children of Pacific migrants take on a 'generic 'PI identity' in a 'new social space' in which elements of their parents' culture and society are combined with elements of others found in the city to produce a new patois, new music, new fashion, new customs and practices which mark their distinction' (Bedford *et al.*, 1999).

This trend is not new. In the 1960s and 1970s, this 'new' social space was 'Polynesian' until the Maori struggle for tino rangatiratanga (Maori self-determination) led Pacific people to it. In the 1980s and 1990s, this 'Polynesian' social space was replaced by separate tangata whenua and 'PI' spaces. It therefore follows that as separate Pacific groups demand recognition, this 'PI' social space may be replaced by Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island or Niuean ones.

The 'PI identity' has been taken up mainly by the younger teenage generation of New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders. New Zealand-born Samoans, and other New Zealand-born Pacific youth, may feel a greater commonality with one another than their island-born elders feel with those born in other islands. The island-born elders' resentment at being considered and labelled 'Pacific Islanders' may not be shared by their children who have gone to school with and work with New Zealand-borns of other Pacific groups. This self-identification by the younger generation is certainly bolstered by structurally designated 'PI' spaces rather than individual ethnic group ones within the various schools, organisations, programmes and government initiatives (for example PI youth and PI health programmes, PI tutorials, PI music, 531 PI).

The appeal of identifying as 'PI' may be explained (see Morton, 1998). It offers an identification that is broader and less specific than 'Samoan' and a much larger peer group. It is also more easily adopted by those who are not fluent in the languages or fully versed in the cultures of one or both of their parents. 'Born-again Samoans' and those who have always identified as Samoan may also identify as 'Polynesians' and 'PI's in some circumstances.

There is, however, a significant difference in the way the 'PI' label is used now. In the past, such labels were imposed by outsiders, with all Pacific Islanders lumped together for reasons outlined elsewhere (Anae, 1997; Macpherson in this volume). For young people today, it is increasingly a matter of what Barbara Lal calls 'ethnicity by consent', where different ethnic groups merge and adopt a common identity in specific contexts (Lal, 1983:166). Identification as 'PI' is, to some extent, also politically instrumental (Morton, 1998).

This is where the common 'PI' identity falls short. For Samoans in New Zealand, what is *not* shared with the other 'Pacific' peoples – whether island-born or New Zealand-born – are the distinctively Samoan experiences of aiga, church, matai, fa'alavelave and fa'alupega (alluding to gafa: genealogies) systems, language and associated values and expectations of tautua (service), fa'aaloalo (respect), feagaiga (special relational covenant between sister/brother) and usita'i. Thus the differentiation in terms of culture, language, philosophies and respective histories far outweigh the one commonality of New Zealand experiences, and bonds New Zealand-born Samoans to their aiga in New Zealand, Samoa and elsewhere, rather than to their other more transient cosmopolitan acquaintances. Pan-ethnic identities, whether constructed by Papalagi or Pacific peoples, are inevitable and are 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 New Zealand-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.

My point is that 'PI' identification happens during time-out periods and is very much a 'youth phenomenon'. When these same people mature, and especially when they start having their own children, the generic 'PI' identity is replaced with the ethnic identity with which they are most satisfied. Within the English-Speaking Group, a Samoan or New Zealand-born Samoan identity was prevalent, even though some members were afakasi (half-caste) or had Chinese ancestry. My research shows that where parents were of different ethnicities, ethnic identity was perpetuated by matriarchal influences. Samoan identity was passed onto the younger generations in the stories and instructions given to them by their mothers or grandmothers who typically dominate early socialisation, or by fathers who had been influenced markedly by their own mothers. This pattern of transmission of identity has been noted by other Pacific scholars (see Wendt in Hereniko, 1993).

'Without family ... we are nothing': Centrality of Aiga Despite Geographical Dispersal

Fa'asamoa to me at the moment is the ... most basic definition is the family orientation ... the way that the family is ... the kinship and genealogy ... that's the way I understand it to be ... and that's how I learn my fa'asamoa. It's through my family ... my extended as well. ... It grows from immediate, to extended, to the village, to the nation, to the Pacific. ... Where does our heart lie? Our heart lies first of all in your immediate family, then your extended family, then your village, then your nation (participant quote in Anae, 1998).

Those in the group with secured identities understood that the most central feature of parental and New Zealand-born fa'asamoa is aiga, and that aiga links are to be maintained in spite of the geographical dispersal of members. Bonds were maintained by circular visits, prayers, telephone calls and letters, and now e-mails, organised around fa'avelave and other social occasions. ESG members have become very aiga-oriented. They understand that all forms of societal relationships (including the matai and fa'alupega systems) are structured by aiga or kinship, and that giving and receiving of tautua, fa'aaloalo (respect) and alofa (love) are crucial in the maintenance of Samoan social relations. Thus, younger members tautua, or serve, and show fa'aaloalo, or respect, to everyone older than them, and expect in return love, protection, honour, a name to be proud of and the protection of the aiga when it is called for. Younger members still negotiating their identity may not yet be aware of the return flow of tautua, and focus instead on their seemingly inequitable position as younger aiga members.

On the one hand, the young have immense problems in accepting the obligations of tautua and fa'aaloalo and with the requirement of unquestioning obedience, and see this as the overriding negative aspect of parental fa'asamoa. On the other hand, older members, who are themselves now fathers (in-law), mothers (in-law), uncles and aunts, have a greater appreciation and understanding of these concepts because they are now recipients of tautua and fa'aaloalo from their children, children's spouses, nieces, nephews and the families of in-laws.

Ethnic Inter-marriage

I intend to bring them [my children] up in the fa'asamoa, very much so, regardless of the ethnicity of my partner. I'd give them time to spend

with my mum. It's really hit home the importance of fa'asamoa. I went home in 1992, which is the first time in ten years (participant quote in Anae, 1998).

A number of inter-ethnic marriages, with Papalagi, Maori and others had occurred within the English-Speaking Group. Moreover, there were few ESG members whose parents were 'full-blooded' Samoans. The small amount of research and literature on Samoan intermarriage patterns, (Macpherson, 1972) taken with demographic trends (see Bedford and Didham in this volume) suggest that ethnic intermarriage will increase. My concern here is the extent to which ethnic intermarriage affects the persistence of Samoan self-identities. Of the six ESG members who had non-Samoan spouses, five expressed the desire to immerse their children in the Samoan language in order to reinforce a Samoan identity. Many, including those with New Zealand-born Samoan spouses, had enrolled their children in aoga amata (Samoan language pre-schools). Those without children declared the same intention. For these New Zealand-born Samoans, it was crucial that their children were brought up as Samoan, despite the ethnicity of their spouses. They had realised that learning the Samoan language was an essential last step in reclaiming a more fulfilling Samoan identity. While Samoan language acquisition was a priority, participating in aiga and church fa'alavelave was also considered important. In short, despite the ethnicity of spouses, ESG members maintained Samoan identities and instilled them in their part-Samoan children.

Social Mobility: The Emerging Samoan 'Middle Class'?

Well I went to a seminar for Polynesian people in Social Services, and it felt that New Zealand-born people weren't discussed. They were discussing a fa'asamoa thing, and that our parents' experiences and things were discussed, which was a good starting point, but then where we go to from there was never ever discussed. What we do as a people who are living here right in the middle of the problem they were discussing. Somebody brought up, 'What about New Zealand-born?' And I heard someone say, 'All they care about is themselves!' (participant quote in Anae, 1998).

The English-Speaking Group represents a 'middle-class' Samoan group. Most members had become successful, as their education, professions and incomes indicated. However, their parents and other members of aiga were

labourers, factory workers and unemployed. Class affiliation was ambiguous as members were linked to both middle and working classes. What was interesting was that, despite this 'middle-class' status, those with secured identities were still part of their aiga and extended families and remained strongly committed to fa'asamoa. Those who were still negotiating their way tended to be younger.

Many felt that they were an 'invisible' group, to both other Samoans and wider society, or that they were perceived as Papalagi because of their success – that because they were upwardly mobile they were no longer 'Samoans'. Feelings of resentment and confusion surfaced, especially when they were continually left out of decision-making and consultative bodies. Their experiences as New Zealand-borns were not considered to be 'legitimate' experiences of the fa'asamoa. Rather, it is the island-born experience of growing up in the homeland which is reified as the 'true' island culture or 'Pacific' experience. New Zealand-borns are thus invisible and continually bypassed as Pacific representatives on advisory bodies and committees. These positions are most often reserved for island-born elders and leaders.

The invisibility can be directly related to Samoan cultural principles which delineate old-young, male-female and matai-non-matai relationships in parental fa'asamoa. Mores such as being 'seen and not heard', 'not speaking unless spoken to', and unquestioning obedience, combined with inability to speak Samoan, mean that the members of this group are less visible. The knowledge that they are better educated and typically have more skills and expertise than their island-born counterparts makes this 'invisibility' – regardless of age, gender and whether a matai or not – and lack of consultation more difficult to accept. Moreover, New Zealand-borns are in a double bind, realising that any attempt to change this situation by daring to 'speak out' or challenge traditional authority would be regarded as fia palagi.

A Secured Identity

A secured identity is marked by the persistence of a Samoan self-identity despite ethnic intermarriage, upward mobility and the influence of geographical dispersal. Commitment to the perpetuation of aiga links through participation in fa'alavelave and continuous contact with island-born aiga allows New Zealand-borns to actively 'live out' their Samoanness. In the New Zealand context, it is not enough merely to say that one is Samoan because of a blood quantum. Those with secured identities realise that 'to be Samoan' must be a political statement in which commitment to the

fa'asamoa is established by active participation in and commitment to fa'alavelave, church and aiga activities, by taking on matai titles and associated aiga responsibilities, and by full Samoan language acquisition.

The English-Speaking Groups stories illustrate the way that aiga operated as a help and support system for Samoan family members in New Zealand, Samoa and across the globe. The fa'asamoa encouraged and obliged aiga to become a cohesive though not static body, and fa'alavelave operated to ensure that aiga nodes met together often, with open lines of communication between aiga in New Zealand, the homeland and the diasporic communities. More importantly, for the mature members of the group in established careers and with stable relationships within their immediate and extended families, the importance of aiga as the cornerstone of parental fa'asamoa had been more often experienced and understood. For the younger members, who were either single, financially unstable, and still working on their career paths, or young marrieds still establishing themselves, the full realisation of this importance was still being negotiated.

Thus the journey ends with a seeming resolution of conflict when a 'final understanding' or a 'secured identity' is reached. Only after dealing with and working through each challenge, can one reach a 'final understanding'. Only after dealing with perceptions of who you are supposed to be, and how you are perceived by others, and after reaching an understanding of how these perceptions came to be, can one finally achieve a level of consciousness which allows a secured New Zealand-born Samoan identity.

One mature member of the group believed she had reached the end of her journey. She explained how she had experienced various stages of identity confusion, identifying herself at times as a 'New Zealander', 'a Maori from up north', or as a 'multicultural' person. She now firmly identifies herself as Samoan and is confident that this self-identity will not change, regardless of context.

Each challenge is complex and interconnected with the others. At the same time, each challenge represents a gradual progression toward the end of the journey where the paradoxes of a New Zealand-born Samoan identity are seemingly resolved. The narrative data reveals some characteristic experiences associated with each challenge. It is apparent that until New Zealand-borns negotiate all these challenges, the crisis of identity confusion will persist, although not all will experience it in the same way or to the same degree.

For those who have successfully negotiated all challenges and arrived at a final understanding, a secured identity is reached from which they can 'fit in' and operate in Samoan ways within and beyond Samoan communities, and establish themselves as accepted individuals and contributing members in both their Samoan aiga and church communities and in New Zealand mainstream

society. The secured identity remains fixed, regardless of further challenges.

That is to say, having a secured identity means that when New Zealand-borns are subsequently challenged, they are able to reconcile the oppositional forces behind the challenges because coping strategies have been developed. They are able to remain firm in their conviction that they are New Zealand-born Samoan, or Samoan. Although outward appearance and social positioning would trigger accusations of 'Papalagi', 'middle class', 'colonised' and 'not Samoan', inwardly they are confident that their values, work, lifestyles and commitment to fa'asamoa – bolstered by their positioning in New Zealand society as successful, upwardly mobile New Zealanders – present a very Samoan dimension.

Most New Zealand-borns in the group who claimed or identified with this position of success were mature members (30 to 40+), indicating the length of time and the cumulative experiences needed to complete this journey. Not all the members in this age group had secured identities, but those who expressed a secured identity tended to be of this particular age. There is no specific secured identity that can be identified by age, class or gender. The limited number of New Zealand-borns in the English-Speaking Group precluded such characterisation.

Fa'asamoa is *Not* Disappearing

In this chapter I have drawn on ethnographic research and used Pacific methodologies (see Anae, 1998) to argue that the fa'asamoa is not disappearing in the New Zealand context. I have argued that it is precisely *because of* formal education, changing personal networks, upward mobility, ethnic intermarriage, language loss, changing socio-economic conditions, and geographical dispersal that, despite the 'time outs' during their identity journeys, many New Zealand-borns maintain a strong Samoan identity. Further research on other inter-generational Pacific ethnic group experiences will provide interesting comparisons.

The conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is that statistical information focusing on the socio-economic status of Pacific peoples in New Zealand as a whole provides a sketchy, one-sided view of what is really happening and obscures the realities for Pacific peoples. Statistical data should be combined with more finely grained analyses of culturally specific research to provide deeper insights into and cultural interpretations of the situation. Only then will problems be more realistically understood and appropriate solutions identified and implemented.

More specifically, my research shows that culture is not static and that it changes to accommodate external factors. For many New Zealand-born Samoans, the fa'asamoa is not disappearing, nor will it disappear in generations to come. As diluted as it may become in any one generation, the next will see it revitalised. As long as Samoan people continue the voyages of their ancestors, maintaining aiga homeland links while forging new paths and destinations, and circulating relatives, money, prayers, support, food and material goods – the cornerstones of transnational families – a Samoan persistent identity system (Spicer in Anae, 1998) will ensure the continuation of the fa'asamoa. The Samoan institutions of gafa, aiga, church, matai, tautala fa'asamoa and fa'alavelave, and the associated values of tautua, fa'aaloalo, alofa, usita'i, va fealoaloa'i and va tapuia, will remain. The associated emotions, sentiments and sense of shared history that are uniquely Samoan will make sure of that. Sahlins (1999) describes this process as the 'indigenising of modernity', in which modernising goods and influences are used to power 'traditional' life-ways. What will change are the forms, scope and extent to which these institutions and values are given expression over time and place by diverse communities and generations of people who self-identify as Samoans.

The persistent Samoan identity system will ensure the continuation of fa'asamoa despite the assimilating tendencies of life in New Zealand, precisely because of the centrality and overriding importance of aiga, on which the Samoan world-view and lifestyle continue to be based (see also Meleisea and Schoeffel, 1998). Centuries of inter-island and decades of inter-continental circular migration and contact, made so much easier in the Information Age, have ensured that all nodes will forever remain interconnected with the homeland (see Hau'ofa, 1994, 1996; Sahlins, 1999).

Colonialism may have been mediated by missionaries, administrators and traders from European nations, but global transformations ... were being mediated by overseas kin ... new economic reliance on remittances had brought about new family strategies for success. Mobility for a family required that some members must leave. But, as we have seen, migrants must also stay. ... The transnational family strategy depended on the contradictory principles of maintaining migration and at the same time maintaining ... identity and tradition (Small, 1997:195).

In this way, Samoan people are demanding their own space in the world cultural order; in the same way, New Zealand-born Samoans are demanding their own space in the cultural order of New Zealand in order to perpetuate the Samoan identity system.

From Sunset to Sunrise

If we are to devise strategies for the future wellbeing of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, we must take into consideration the following points.

First, it is not difficult to know what the needs and aspirations of a vast majority of Pacific peoples are. They have not changed since the 1950s when Pacific migrants started coming here in large numbers. Quite simply, they are that their children become educated and successful. For New Zealand-borns, it is that they make their parents and *aiga* proud of them. What Pacific peoples are demanding is *equality* of access to *quality* education, health, housing and employment. A major re-examination of the exact nature of the problems and solutions, based on a sound mix of quantitative and qualitative research with Pacific epistemologies and methodologies, will be the starting point. The current practice of throwing money at Pacific communities is merely a short-term bribe, with sometimes disastrous consequences.

Second, Pacific statistical data and research needs to be disaggregated into ethnic and intra-ethnic specificities. At the very least, the New Zealand/island-born/raised segments of the population should be distinguished, given that the NZ-born proportion of the population is increasing while the immigrant one is decreasing, and will continue to do so. This strategy must then be applied to Pacific research, evaluations, policy formation and service delivery, not only for better use of existing resources, but to identify problems and appropriate solutions for the various defined sectors of Pacific peoples. These experiential ethnic-specific complexities – identity conflict, coping, adaptation and development of inter-generational migrants – are an accessible and crucial area of study with important implications for applied practice in mental health, education and allied professions as well as for planning and policy.

Third, the foresight of a few universities in encouraging Pacific students to identify and conduct research about groups within the Pacific populations, thus cultivating a body of theses on these groupings, and of the Health Research Council (HRC) and Pacific Health Research Centre (PHRC)¹², which have sponsored several ethnic-specific research projects, should be applauded. Strategies such as these are the currents of the new millennium.

Finally, New Zealand-born/raised Pacific peoples who have completed their identity journeys and have secured identities are the future navigators of our Pacific peoples in New Zealand. They have learnt to maximise their New Zealand-cosmopolitan and Pacific identities. Using the Papalagi education, knowledge and skills they have acquired to serve their Pacific

peoples – guided by the advice and knowledge of their elders and participating in their own ethnic persistent identity systems – they can work to raise the socio-economic conditions of their peoples in New Zealand. For it is this group that has the opportunities, the vision (traditional and virtual) and, the entrepreneurial and leadership skills, and that is best equipped in this information age to be the new 'Vikings of the Sunrise', the type of sunrise envisaged by both Buck (1954) and Bedford *et al.* (1999). New Zealand-borns are already on their way to full participation in the sunrise industries – and not only in the entertainment sector.



Notes:

- ¹ This chapter is based on my doctoral research thesis 'Fofoaivaese: Identity Journeys of New Zealand-born Samoans', and an article, 'Towards a New Zealand-born Samoan Identity: Some Reflections on 'Labels'', in *Pacific Health Dialog* 1997, Vol. 4, No. 2:128–137. Any shortcomings are my own.
- ² The MIRAB (migration, remittances, aid, bureaucracy) economy of some South Pacific Island states is a successful, although fragile phenomenon which depends on maintained links between families in the islands and abroad (see Bertram & Watters, 1985). Although its demise was predicted last decade, Bertram (1999) maintains that it remains a viable strategy for Pacific peoples.
- ³ See Anae (1997) for a discussion of the origins, implications and significance of the 'Pacific Islander' and 'New Zealand-born' labels for Pacific peoples born in New Zealand.
- ⁴ Most of the group's members are New Zealand-born Samoans whose Samoan-born parents and grandparents settled in inner-city Auckland in the early 1950s. The group was established in the 1970s and the 25 members interviewed, whose ages ranged from 18 to over 60, have remained Newton church members in spite of time-out periods. Although they share similar as well as diverse experiences of growing up in urban Auckland, their experiences are highly contextualised, and do not represent all New Zealand-borns'.
- ⁵ Newton Presbyterian Church, which was formerly PICC (Pacific Islanders Congregational Church) then PIPC (Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church) after union with the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, has a 50-year history in New Zealand and is the mother-church to some 30 PIC branches nationally. Its ekalesia (congregation) consists of Samoans, Niueans and, Cook Islanders. It is the only PIC which has an English-speaking session for its young New Zealand-born members (see Anae, 1998 for a history).
- ⁶ Fofoaivaese, the name of Salamasina's first child – a girl – means literally

- conceived-in-the-foreign-forest'. In the context of my thesis, it is used to refer to Samoans born out of Samoa who provide sustenance for their aiga in Samoa through their remittances, letters, telephone calls, visits and prayers.
- ⁷ (Also 'Papalagi'): sky-breaker (lit.); white man; European(s); foreigner; Samoan born outside Samoa (in this context).
- ⁸ Parental fa'asamoa: institutions – tautala fa'asamoa, aiga, matai, faalupega, gafa, church, fa'alavelave – and associated values of alofa, tautua, fa'aaloalo, usita'i and feagaiga as embodied by va fealoaloai and va tapuia.
- ⁹ Secured identity: self-satisfying identity as a Samoan not born in Samoa but in New Zealand, and which enables one to be a 'successful' New Zealander and to successfully participate in and be committed to the fa'asamoa; a result of cumulative challenges to perceived self-identity and their reconciliation over time (see Anae, 1998).
- ¹⁰ Professions included lawyer, businessman, dentist, managers, teachers, public servants, university students, administrators, bank clerks and ministers, as well as housewives and some unemployed at the time of the interviews.
- ¹¹ Tautala New Zealand-born' – a linguistic condition amongst New Zealand-born Samoans – the ability to *understand* Samoan language while being unable to *converse* in Samoan fluently.
- ¹² Pacific Health Research Centre, University of Auckland. One of its recent major projects was the NZHRC-sponsored 'Tiute ma Matafaioi a nisi Tane Samoa i le Faiga o Aiga: The Roles and Responsibilities of some Samoan Men in Reproduction' by M. Anae, N. Fuamatu, I. Lima, K. Mariner, J. Park, T. Sua'ali'i (forthcoming).

