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VAIVASE-UTA APIA SAMOA

ROOTEDNESS IN *'AIGA*: WORK AND MOVEMENT AMONG *TEINE ULI* IN SAMOA AND AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

GEOGRAPHY

NOVEMBER 2007

By

Asenati Liki

Dissertation Committee

Murray Chapman, Chairperson
Mary McDonald
Miriam Sharma
Brian Murton
Peter Pirie

We certify that we have read this dissertation and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Chairperson

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines ways of thinking in population geography, with specific reference to work and movement among *Teine uli,* the Melanesian-Samoan women in Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Dominant thinking in Pacific population research is clearly that which also prevails in the subfield of population geography. Empiricist analyses that reflect dualistic thinking on place and culture gloss over the culturally-rooted experiences of island women in particular and islanders in general. Informed by Samoan cultural thinking, I argue that alternative ways of understanding work and movement would help population geographers better comprehend the dynamics of these processes in reciprocity-based societies.

The central question in this study is: how do women from reciprocity-based societies in general conceive of their work and movement? The desire behind this question is to address meanings that are marginalized, overlooked, and ignored in population-related scholarship. Drawing parallels with humanist and feminist approaches in geography, this study examines the cultural meanings and experiences that constitute the lived experiences of *Teine uli*. Appreciating experiences as complex and flexible, a multi-method approach is used to integrate standard techniques in population enquiry (field census, life history matrix) and ethnographic insights (participant observation, indepth interviews, personal stories). Adopting a range of methods in the field, in Samoa and in Auckland, New Zealand, enhances the capacity to provide new insights in the analysis of work and movement.

In and of itself, the multimethod approach does not inevitably provide new ways of thinking about these processes. This dissertation takes *aiga* (family) as the intellectual and philosophical point of reference. Within this are embedded the concepts of *va fealoaloa'i* (social space between people) and *fa'alavelave* (family and cultural events), because they incorporate the sociocultural, spatial, and economic meanings of work and movement valued in reciprocity-based places. It argues for a more radical, deliberate, and genuine shift of scholarly thinking about the cultural world of island women as a way to broaden our search for knowledge and for a more sensitive kind of population geography.

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Glossary

'aiga	family, usually the extended family
'aiga patino	nuclear family
asiga	provision of food to acknowledge a relative who came from overseas.
au se'e papa	group of female weavers
fa'a-aiga	Families who are not connected by blood or marriage treating each other as if they were genealogically related.
*fa'aaloal*o	respect
fa'alavelave	family or cultural events
fa'alupega	honorific salutations
fa'asamoa	Samoan culture; Samoan way of thinking
fa'asinomaga	identity
fale lalaga	house where the weavers of fine mats gather for their weaving
fanua	land
fesili	question
gafa	genealogy
gagana	language
galuega	job or work
Ia teu le va	cherish/nurture the social space between people
lave	hook
lavelave	entangled strings or hair of a woman
malaga	travel/visits; traveling parties
matai	high chief
paia ma mamalu	sacred attributions of a family or village
taetafe	subsurface flows of seawater that carry trash
tamaita'i Samoa	Samoan lady or woman
tautua	service
tama uli	Samoan man of Melanesian ancestry
teine uli	Samoan woman of Melanesian ancestry
tino o le aiga	body or member of the extended family
va fealoaloa'i	social space, relationship between people
va-nimonimo	space, beyond what the eye can see

CHAPTER 1

RETHINKING WORK AND MOVEMENT IN THE PACIFIC

> Let's explore and use our indigenous references as moral and ethical lodestar to heal and shape our imaginations. Neither the Greeks, nor Aquinas, nor Blackstone – useful though they are in terms of broadening out intellectual horizons - can help us in our dialogue with that reference. Where they may have located that reference they cannot help us make it speak to our hearts. That we have to do for ourselves. This is the challenge of Pacific [theorizing].
>
> Tui Atua T.T.T. Efi, 2007, 19

This is a study of work and movement among two generations of women from Samoa in the South Pacific (Map 1) who are of both Melanesian and Polynesian ancestry. It examines meanings of, and argues for an alternative approach to understanding, these processes through the experiences of women in reciprocity-based societies. Prevailing explanations use the terms 'work' and 'migration' which are refracted through an economistic interpretation that underlies the modernization approach to development. I attempt in this dissertation to move beyond this perspective and present a case for culturally-rooted meanings of work and movement. I argue for cultural thinking as a 'way of knowing' and for its value in reassessing the importance of the processes of work and movement in the lives of women in reciprocity-based societies.

Research questions and frame

This study asks a seemingly simple question: How do women of Melanesian and Polynesian ancestry in Samoa (*Teine uli)* conceive of their work and movement? Central to this question is my desire to understand not just the day-to-day activities that the

Map 1. Samoa in the South Pacific

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/samoa

women carry out or the patterns of their mobility across time and space but the *meanings* of these processes to them. My attempt to examine meanings of work and movement requires me to travel certain paths that, for this study, are interconnected. The first is defining 'woman'. This is crucial for this study because understanding *Teine uli* in the context of their *'aiga* (extended family) has to be the starting point. Otherwise, definitions that are ahistorical and deterministic would continue to prevail. Adjacent to this path is that which defines *'aiga* as social relations. This is also crucial because *'aiga* constitutes relationships that are both rooted in place and transcendent of time and space.

Defining these points of reference for the study helps me to navigate through dominant definitions of women's work and movement as monetary-related and development-oriented activities. These definitions prevail in population geography in the Pacific which pays little attention to women's experiences and the gendered nature of work and mobility. They dwell on dualistic thinking that privileges the 'known' and 'developed' as opposed to the 'unknown' and 'undeveloped.' While acknowledging the weaknesses of previous studies, I build on some of them as a way forward to enhance our understanding of work and movement as experienced by women. In particular, I draw on humanist and feminist approaches, certain aspects of which challenge the standard dichotomies of prevailing scholarship.

Humanist and feminist approaches in Geography offer alternative perspectives that are more closely related to the social reality of reciprocity-based societies. Both recognize the 'lived experience' as complex and this, I argue, has to be the starting point to

understanding the lives of people concerned. Lived experiences constitute multiple practices underpinned by cultural thinking. In the context of Samoan society, cultural thinking constitutes diverse but integral attributes and concepts. Two such attributes – *va fealoaloa'i* (social space between people) and *fa'alavelave* (family and cultural events) - are central in this study. To appreciate the root meanings and values of these concepts and their persistence in contemporary life, one has to pay attention to Samoan narratives of the creation of *fa'asinomaga* (identity). These reveal the centrality of social relations in understanding the daily experiences and practices, including those of work and movement, among members of the Samoan '*aiga*. Thus, culturally-based meanings of work and movement, in this study, are rooted in these processes as social relations. This fits well with Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo's (2002, 381) definition of indigenous epistemology as "a cultural group's ways of thinking and creating, (re)formulating, and theorizing about knowledge via traditional discourses and media of communication, anchoring the truth of the discourse in culture."

The *Teine uli* involved in this study are first and second generation Melanesian-Samoans. All of them were born, raised, and worked in the Mulifanua estate on the northwestern end of Upolu Island, Samoa (Map 2). The majority of them are living with their families at Vaitele, near Samoa's capital of Apia, and some reside in Auckland, New Zealand. I visited their homes and carried out interviews with them. These were special discussions for many of them whose stories are filled with memories of experiences that "sit in places" (Escobar, 2001).

Map 2. Plantation Units of Mulifanua Estate.

Source: MNRE, Apia, Samoa.

The term 'reciprocity-based' is used in this study to describe Samoan society in particular and societies that are primarily culturally oriented regardless of their contemporary political and economic status. This term goes beyond dualistic thinking embedded in such labels as nonwestern/western, nonliterate/literate, and developing/developed countries. It

embraces the complexities of Samoan society and cultural thinking and, transcends the spatially bounded understanding of place and culture.

Charting alternative routes: meanings and histories

Dominant understanding of work and movement revolves around definitions, imported to Samoa since European contact, of these activities as economistic and monetary-related. New Zealand historian, Jim Davidson (1967) notes that two of the most influential factors in the socioeconomic changes in Samoan society since contact with the Europeans were: the work of the missionaries since 1830[1] and the plantation economy, introduced by the Germans in the 1860s. Missionary teachings of the 'Word' (Bible) complemented teachings on work that emphasized being industrious, educated, and service to the mission through legitimate commerce. John Williams himself was one of the strongest advocates of this view. "[I]n 1839 his own son, John Chauner Williams, became the first Christian trader to settle in Samoa," operating a trading vessel and a general store (*Ibid.* p. 38). These early influences were to witness significant outcomes in the twentieth century for from Samoan pastors' families came not only future pastors and school teachers but government clerks, secretaries, managers, and business owners.

German occupation of Samoa in the 19th century was initially and largely out of business interests, namely the plantation enterprises. Any other activity besides commercial work was considered a particular vice. Samoan emphasis on the importance of feasting, gift giving, visiting parties or *malaga*, and ceremonies was seen by European observers as

[1] John Williams of the London Missionary Society was the first missionary to arrive in Samoa in 1830, followed by the Wesleyan missionaries in 1835.

wasteful and irrational (Meleisea, 1992, 13). Samoan historian Damon Salesa's (2003) recent work on *malaga* shows that this was one event in which Samoans in the 19th century loved to engage. However, it was also one of the cultural activities that did not impress the missionaries and colonial administrators. To them, *malaga* would often leave a village of hosts impoverished or a village of travelers deserted. In their eyes, *malaga* encouraged laziness, communism, and wantonness with property. *Malaga* was an enemy of 'progress' and civilization every time visitors descended upon their hosts like 'a swarm of locusts' for food, space, and other resources (*Ibid*. p. 180). Samoa's first anti-cricket law, passed in 1888 aimed not only to stop the playing of the game but also to dampen *malaga (Ibid*. p 181). Dr. Wilhelm Solf, the German Governor in Samoa from 1900 to 1914, believed work to have a civilizing influence and remarked, "The division of labor in the colonies must be such that the white man supplies the intelligence and the native places the power of his hands in the service of this intelligence" (Solf, 1907, 32). Although Solf's long-term objective was to break down the Samoan cultural systems and 'traditional attitudes to work,' he also saw that to do so was temporarily unavoidable (Davidson, 1967).

The dislike and disapproval of cultural engagement of the Samoans continued to feature in official and scholarly writings even in post-independence times. German occupation of colonial Samoa ended in 1914, and New Zealand took over the islands as a UN mandate and later as trust territory until 1962 when Samoa gained political independence. Independence from New Zealand marked the beginning of a more enduring 'friendship' between the two countries. Under the Treaty of Friendship signed in Apia in January

1962, a migration quota was established to allow up to 1,500[2] Samoans every year to work in New Zealand. The next two decades witnessed mass movement from the islands. Today, visits and *malaga* between Samoa and the rimlands of New Zealand, Australia, and the United States define the continuity of movement and work among Samoans, in particular, and Pacific islanders in general.

Many New Zealanders expect migrants from Samoa and other Pacific islands to sever their ties to the islands and be assimilated into their adopted home. But increasing numbers continue to participate in the socioeconomic and cultural lives of their island-based '*aiga.* Scholars of economic development expect migrant remittances to enhance Samoa's economy from the level of the individual to that of the nation. Instead, remittances fed and, are continuing to feed, sociocultural and '*aiga*-related activities which now traverse the boundaries of independent Samoa. Recently, a long-standing advocate of migration as a vehicle for economic development in the islands, Australian geographer, John Connell (2007, 116) lamented the failure of "a passing parade of paradigms imported from distant places…to bring development to small islands and island states in the Pacific." He is impressed with "extraordinary cultural continuity in the face of economic transformation hence, although such models as MIRAB (Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy) emphasize external influences, islanders are not mere passive reactors but influential players" (*Ibid.* p. 130). Unlike Connell who seems puzzled, and troubled by this new cultural trend, my study starts from and, is situated

[2] The New Zealand National government reduced this number to 1,100 in the mid 1970s, and remains so today.

within, Samoan cultural thinking. From there, it traces an alternative route to a broader understanding of Samoan experiences of work and movement.

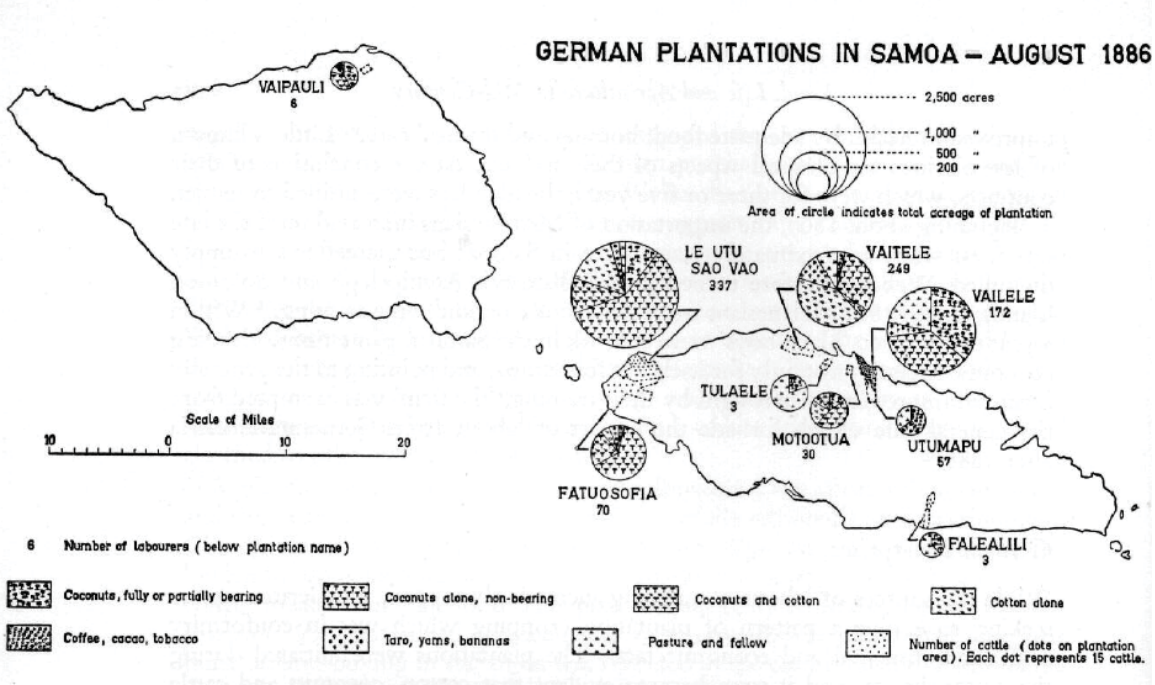
Tama uli and Teine uli: shadows in the background

The usual historical geography of Samoa that I have recapped above situates missionaries and colonial planters as the foreign arrivals and the Samoan islanders as the local population. Another important segment of island society, and the focus of this research, derives from Melanesian laborers who were brought to Samoa as plantation labor. As a consequence of colonial labor movements, Samoa today parallels many other Pacific Islands in a degree of diversity. Inasmuch as the minority Melanesian descendants have remained in the shadows in geographies and ethnographies of Samoa, it is my task to place this community as a whole on the map, specifically through a focus on its women's lives.

Although German plantation activities in Samoa date back to the mid-19th century, Samoa only officially became a colony of Germany in 1900. Under an agreement among the three powers at the time, the western islands of the Samoan group were administered by Germany, the eastern islands by the US, and Britain held either as protectorates or by annexation the greater part of the Solomon Islands in the west, Fiji and Tonga in the center, and islands north of Samoa including Tokelau and Gilbert Islands. Germany also colonized most of what is known today as Papua New Guinea and its surrounding islands (Buschmann, 1993). This area became a source of labor supply for the copra plantations in Samoa. The main ones, owned and operated by the largest German company – the

Deutsche Handels und Plantagen Gesellscaft (DHPG) - were Mulifanua (also known then as Leutu Sa o Vao), established in 1865, Vailele started in 1867, and, Vaitele established in 1878 (Lewthwaite, 1962) (Map 3).

It is estimated that around 20,000 Melanesians in total were brought in at various times to work on plantations in Samoa (Scarr, 1967). Together with the other two main plantation colonies, Fiji and Queensland in Australia, an estimated 100,000 Pacific islanders, mostly



Map 3. German Plantations in Samoa, 1886

Source: Lewthwaite, G. 1962, 144.

men, participated in the labor trade (Firth, 1973). Australian historian, Peter Corris (1973), notes the small number of Melanesian women involved in the Pacific labor trade. He estimated the total women recruits to have constituted about eight percent, leaving them hidden in the shadows of statistics, nameless and faceless, and forgotten (Jolly, 1987). In the case of Samoa, "Melanesian women were eagerly sought by the DHPG for their plantation as they were regarded as extremely efficient and industrious particularly for cutting copra…[but they] were not easy to recruit" (Meleisea, 1974, 11). Recruiting women was generally unacceptable to their clans as they were a source of bride-wealth in Melanesia and also played a major role in local agricultural work (Meleisea, 1976, 129). Female laborers recruited by the DHPG were not numerous and, those who went to Samoa before 1918 were wives of some of the male laborers. It is believed that all of the women were repatriated by 1921 (*Ibid.* p. 11), but Melanesian men stayed on.

Information on the specific islands or villages of origin for the laborers is scattered and, lamentably, incomplete. Pacific historian, Doug Munro (1990, xlv) explains, "It is known that 1,160 laborers arrived at German plantations in Samoa between 1885 and 1890 from all sources, but it is not known how many of these came from the Bismarck Archipelago and German Solomons, and how many others were enlisted in non-German areas." Samoan historian, Malama Meleisea (1976, 127) notes that between 1885 and 1913, the DHPG took laborers from German New Guinea, the New Hebrides, and the British Solomons. However, the specific villages or islands of these men are not recorded. It is known, however, that at the end of German administration in Samoa, in 1914, nearly 1000 Melanesian men were living in Samoa (Meleisea, 1980). Many were

repatriated in the following years at the beginning of the New Zealand mandatory administration and, about 145 remained. (Meleisea, 1976, 127).

Written history, generally, claims that the indentured laborers who stayed behind after the German administration did so of their own free will. However, Meleisea (1974, 9), in his interviews with six original Melanesian men in Samoa in 1974, points out that, "the most striking and interesting piece of information from the men is the discrepancy between official explanations as to why they were never repatriated, and their own. All of them are quite positive that when the New Zealanders took over and after their contracts had expired they were willing to go home." One of the men, Ti'a Likou, was quoted saying:

> The war went on and when it was over some of us were then taken [home]…They were the people in our group and those in other groups who stayed here because of the war. After some time we were told that a telegram from our government was received saying to stop the rest of us here in Samoa, so we stayed here. We continued to work, had Samoan wives, had children and established our own families.

Another man, Tui Sagila, said that when the other recruits were being sent home, he wanted to go with them but his boss told him that he had to stay. He did not protest as "one did not argue with white men in those days." (*Ibid.* p. 10). Meleisea argues that it was possible "that the acute labour shortage in post-war Samoa motivated employers to prevail upon their favourite employees to remain by discouraging them or preventing them from being repatriated" (*Ibid.* p.11).

The Melanesian men who were left in Samoa married Samoan women and became the fathers and grandfathers of the Samoan-born *Tama uli* and *Teine uli.* *Tama uli* is a

Samoan term that the original Melanesians and their male descendants use to call themselves. *Teine uli* is used by the female descendants to identify themselves. *Tama* is the Samoan word for boy; *teine* means girl; and *uli* means black. *Tama uli* and *Teine uli* therefore mean 'black boys' and 'black girls,' respectively. Although the specific islands of origin for many of the original *Tama uli* are not recorded, they refer to themselves as being from the Solomon Islands. Their descendants have also adopted that understanding and refer to the original *Tama uli* as *Tama Solomona* or 'Solomon Island Boys', and their descendants as *O Fanau a Tama Solomona* or 'Children of the Solomon Island Boys.'

Table 1 shows the three birth groups of *Tama uli* and their descendants in this study. Documented information on the ages of the original *Tama uli* and their Samoan wives could not be found, so this table is constructed from details given me by *Teine uli* themselves. While it may not fit a typical demographic definition of what constitutes a first and a second generation, it represents what Melanesian-Samoan women could remember about others around the same age or about their ancestors. In short, this table represents the social reality of the Melanesian-Samoan community with living memory.

Table 1. Generations of Melanesian-Samoans

Birth Groups	Generations
c. 1870s and 1880s	Original Melanesian men and their Samoan wives
c. late 1920s to early 1940s	First generation Melanesian-Samoans
c. early 1950s to late 1960s	Second generation Melanesian-Samoans

It is not clear in the documented history how or when exactly the unions of Samoan women and the original *Tama uli* began. Under the German administration, "the Melanesians were forbidden contact with Samoans" for two reasons (Meleisea, 1974, 4). One was to discourage them from deserting the plantation for the more pleasant life of Samoan villages and the other was to reinforce Governor Solf's 'official' concern for the preservation of the 'purity' of the Samoan race and culture (*Ibid*. p. 5). It appears that contact would have been almost impossible before 1921, when the last group of laborers was repatriated. Kenneth Cumberland (1962, 246), who in the 1950s directed the Samoan research project from the University of Auckland, notes that throughout the 1920s and 1930s one of the most urgent and persistent concerns of the New Zealand administration was the shortage of labor on plantations. This, according to Meleisea (1974), led to the employment of Samoan labor on the plantations. Included in the groups of local laborers were Samoan women who became wives of the original *Tama uli*. The stories of the *Tama uli* in Meleisea's work as well as those of their daughters in this study, confirm the presence of Samoan women, and men, on the plantations since the 1920s.

Written accounts of the labor trade are also incomplete as far as the plantation experiences of the original *Tama uli* and their families are concerned. It is known from certain sources that treatment of the Melanesians by the plantation owners in Samoa was generally poor and sometimes involved whipping and jailing when the black boys misbehaved (Meleisea, 1980). The plantation was a site of labor exploitation underpinned

Figure 1: European manager and a *Tama uli* laborer inspecting beetle trap on Magia plantation

Source: Cumberland, K. 1962.

by notions of racial superiority of the European owners. Daily work relations and activities between the owners and the laborers clearly indicate this underlying idea of difference (Figure 1).

With the exception of recent revisionist studies of Melanesian descendants in Queensland, which contain personal or local histories from the 1970s onwards (Moore, 1979 and 1985; Saunders, 1982), a common pattern in historical analyses of the Melanesian laborers in the Pacific islands proper is that the spotlight shifts to colonial

policies and company strategies soon after the laborers reached their plantation destinations. The laborers' trace in archives and labor history abruptly ceases, and we are left knowing little of their and their descendants' experiences on the plantation or in the island societies to which they were taken.

In the case of Samoa, the abrupt ending of historical accounts on the plantation laborers extends into the period between the late 1920s and the 1960s. Most works written during or about that era, focus on national events involving New Zealand administration in Samoa. Many political events happened in this period and the tension between the two countries reached its height with the assassination of the Mau leader, Tupua Tamasese Meaole, in December 1929 by New Zealand police. The Mau movement that resulted in political independence from New Zealand and the disruptions brought about by WWII were some other events that obviously interest both Samoan and non-Samoan scholars. Consequently, for this study, I rely a lot on the stories of *Teine uli* and their families for an understanding of plantation life during this period.

Referring to the original groups of *Tama uli* in Samoa, Meleisea (1974, 5) points out that the DHPG monopolized and controlled the recruiting grounds in the western Pacific and that "made it difficult for those outside the DHPG to know what was going on and the conditions by which labourers were recruited and how they were treated in their employment." While I do not wish to disregard such a claim, it is one that needs to be examined more. Pacific historian, Tracey Banivanua-Mar (2007) criticizes the ways mainstream labor history inherit, reference, and perpetuate colonial knowledge, and

argues that the absence of the voices of the Melanesian laborers across the Pacific is "the engineered forgetting of their presence, service, and treatment." She points to the need to

> [map] those dimensions of Islanders' everyday world that were rarely recorded – the dimensions, that is, of emotion, belief systems both spiritual and religious, the internal (or horizontal) social stratifications of communities, and the whole autonomous world of imported and developed cosmologies. This largely unseen dimension is very effectively marginalized and rendered subaltern by discursive practices and disciplinary limitations that require us to stamp an authoritative explanation on past events. (*Ibid.*p. 155).

This call to engage the everyday world of laboring communities does not necessarily dismiss existing historical accounts, but helps to enhance the historical geography of indentured labor by valuing the stories of the laborers and their families, as history as well. Glimpses of plantation life in Samoa can be found in Meleisea's book, *O Tama Uli: Melanesians in Samoa*, published in 1980. Accounts of *Tama uli* and their experiences on the recruit ships and arrival in Samoa feature in this book. However, the nature of colonial plantations as business ventures lingers on and the book flags a discursive slippage into existing frames of reference that dominate historical analyses. Thus, the experiences of *Tama uli*, their Samoan wives, and their descendants, across time and space - within and beyond the realm of the plantation economy – are continually defined within the narrow parameters of colonial and post-colonial history. In this frame, they are shadows in the background of Samoa's history.

Damon Salesa argues that Samoa's history is situated in this narrow frame, thus making it 'pure' yet, paradoxically, partial and incomplete. By analyzing the experiences of the half-castes (European-Samoans) in the 19th century, Salesa (1997, 5) argues, " … 'pure' Samoan histories have already been told many times. Indeed, a majority of the histories

that have been written, have been written 'purely.' Such histories neglect the diversities in culture, society, gender and race that existed, and have continued to exist, in Samoa."

My study is concerned with the forgotten histories of not only the original *Tama uli* but those of the Samoan women who became their wives. For it is from these ignored histories that the experiences of their descendants today can be understood. My study attempts to provide a contrast for the current orthodoxy of scholarly and official explanations by offering perspectives that are rooted in the social reality of the descendants of the original *Tama uli* and their Samoan wives; a social reality that is firmly anchored in people's experiences of the complex injunctions of their Samoan *aiga* and the colonial world of the plantation.

The women involved in this study were born, raised, and, worked on the Mulifanua estate. This is the largest of all the plantations in Samoa, consisting of seven units: Vaipapa, Afia, Afolau, Magia, Sina, Paepaeala, and Mauga, also known as Olo (Map 2). The largest group of Melanesian descendants resided on all of these different plantations. They were housed in labor lines (Figure 2). Little is recorded about community life in this estate, in the decades prior to Samoa's independence. However, the stories of the first generation *Teine uli* indicate that although their Samoan mothers lived on the plantations with their *Tama uli* husbands, they did not desert their *aiga*, nor did their *aiga* ignore them. They resided on the estates and contacts with their families in the villages were maintained through frequent visits. Both the women and members of their *aiga* in the villages were actively involved in these visits. Over the years, their children and

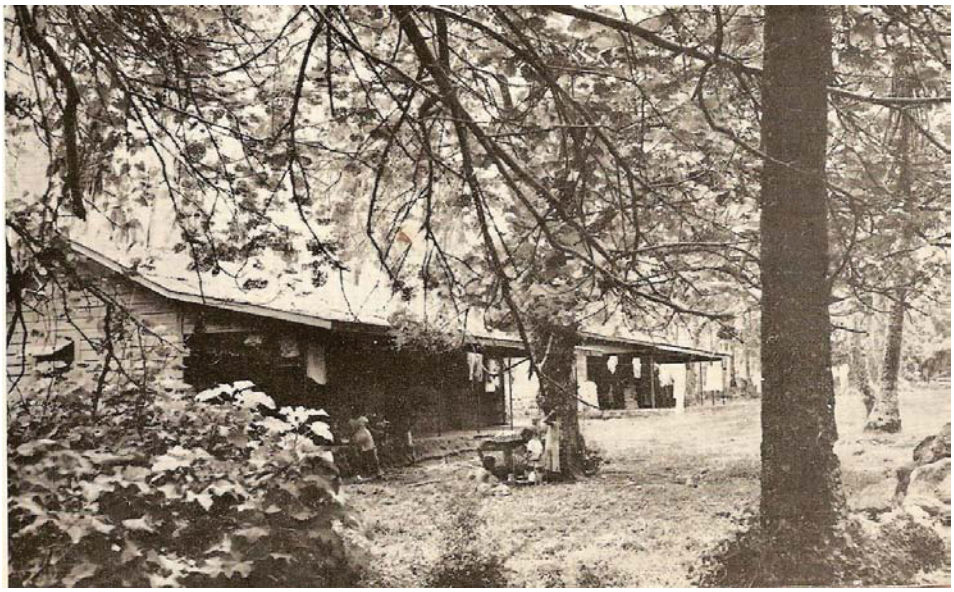


Figure 2. Labor lines on Mulifanua estate, c. 1940s.
Source: Cumberland, K. 1962

Figure 3. Houses of some of the Melanesian-Samoan families at Vaitele.
Source: Asenati Liki, 2001

grandchildren became actively involved in these flows as well. These flows were also not confined to a typical two-way traffic between the plantations and the Samoan villages of their mothers. Many first generation *Teine uli* married Samoan men who came to the plantation during this period as laborers. These unions thickened kinship links and movement expanded to other parts of Samoa and beyond, where members of their *aiga* were, and still are, residing today.

The movement of people was not mere visible flows of physical bodies. It clearly constituted the origin, the history, and the establishment of Samoan culture and '*aiga* among the plantation community. First generation *Teine uli* talk about their Samoan mothers weaving fine mats and sleeping mats, and sifting cotton balls to make mattresses, when the copra work was done. It was during this non-plantation work that *Teine uli* learned to weave and sew. However, it was not just the art of weaving that *Teine uli* learned, but the cultural significance of the fine mats and sleeping mats in upholding Samoan *aiga* relations. Mats are woven to give away, or used when hosting visitors and not to be kept. *Teine uli* remember the many *malaga* of their mothers' or Samoan husbands' *aiga* from the villages they hosted; and their own visits to the villages.

Besides the copra work, *Teine uli* and their Samoan husbands raised pigs and chickens, and planted taro and banana trees behind the labor lines. These were not only for their consumption but also to supplement their plantation wages, to sell, in order to send their children to school, and to contribute to *fa'alavelave* that took place in the plantation community and among their Samoan families in the villages.

These untold histories are central to my study. I focus specifically on the experiences of the female descendants, the first generation and second generation *Teine uli*, whose stories of work and movement within and beyond the plantation will, hopefully, fill the gaps in scholarly work not only on indentured labor, but also on contemporary experiences of work and movement within and beyond Samoa.

Tama uli and *Teine uli* of post-independence Samoa

At the beginning of his research on the original *Tama uli* in the 1970s, Meleisea (1974, 7) writes,

> I made contact with my first informant, Ti'a Likou, through a part-Melanesian Samoan girl with whom I worked in the Department of Education. When she heard of my research interests she arranged for me to meet Ti'a Likou and his family…[Ti'a] is now living in a section called Vaipapa, with his Samoan family in retirement. …Many of his neighbours in the small plantation village at Vaipapa are the descendants of Melanesian labourers and are still employed on the plantation although many members of the younger generations have had secondary education and have good jobs such as teachers and clerks in other parts of the country.

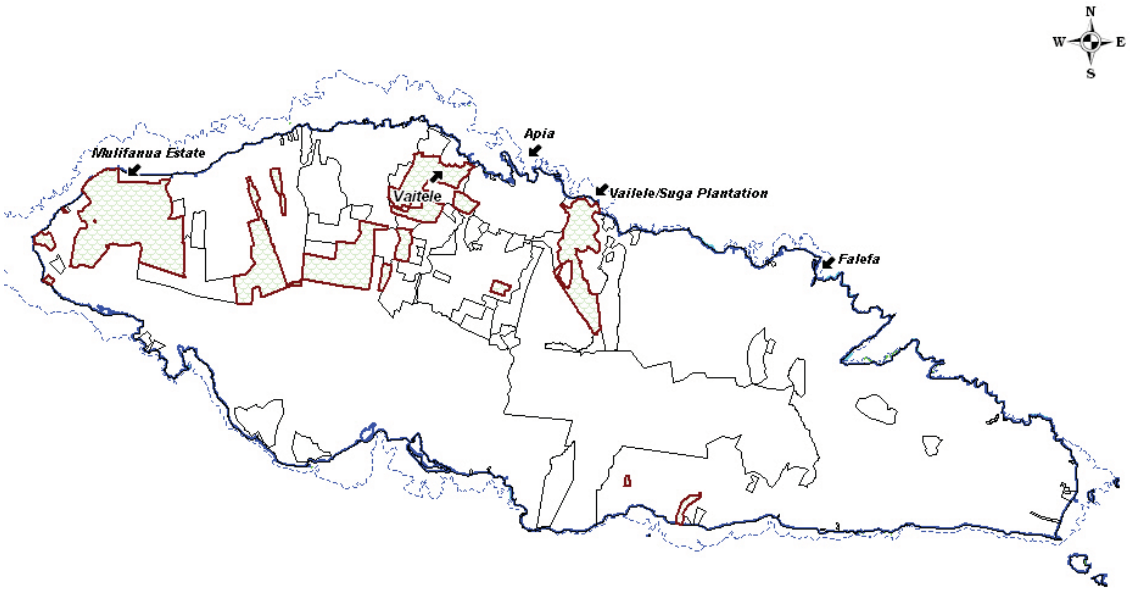
This account by Meleisea is significant evidence of the changes experienced by the descendants of the original *Tama uli* and their Samoan wives since Samoa's independence in the early 1960s. The 'younger generation' that Meleisea refers to is the 'older group of the second generation Melanesian-Samoans', born around the early to mid-1950s (Table 1). The 'part-Melanesian Samoan girl' who led him to his first informant belongs to this older group of second generation *Teine uli*, and the first from the plantation community to attend, and graduate from, Samoa's Teachers Training College (TTC) in Apia. My study confirms these changes where a significant number from the second generation not only made it to secondary schools and found jobs outside

of the plantation, but also moved to New Zealand. More women than men went overseas, taking up the opportunities under the migration quota system that New Zealand offered. Their movement, then and now, succeeds earlier flows of their laboring parents and grandparents that crossed the borders of the plantations, and it weaves into the broader transnational flows from Samoa and, the Pacific at large.

Along with the migration quota system established at independence, the New Zealand colonial government handed over ownership of the plantation enterprises to the then newly-created Samoan government. The plantations have since operated under a new name, the Western Samoa Trust Estate Corporation (WSTEC). In the 1960s and 1970s, copra production continued to dominate plantation activity and Mulifanua, being the largest estate with the highest number of employees, provided more than 50% of the national production (Government of Western Samoa, 1992). The plantation community at Mulifanua which, by that time, consisted of the elderly original *Tama uli* and their elderly Samoan wives, the first generation descendants, and the 'younger cohort of the second generation,' continued to be heavily involved in plantation work. The older folks continued to do the copra work and put their younger sons and daughters in the primary schools in the nearby villages. After school each day, and during school holidays, this younger group of the second generation also worked in the plantation to help their parents collect and cut coconuts, weed blocks of cocoa plants, extract the kernel to dry, and carry sacks of dried copra from the baking shed to trucks while also running errands for the plantation officers and managers.

This was the environment in which I grew up in the late 1960s. As a site of commercial production, the plantation, as with previous colonial administrations, was a place for the Samoan government to make money with the sweat of their laborers. However, as our birthplace, the plantation nurtured and warmly cocooned us with the strength of *fa'asamoa* (Samoan culture) – our grandmother's culture - that our parents carried with them. It was from there that our journeys beyond its boundaries began. Despite the financial struggles of our parents, many of us - the second generation Melanesian-Samoans - were sent to elementary and high schools. Indeed, where and what we are today bear witness to plantation life and living of an intricately knit community of strong socio-cultural relations that have persisted across time and space.

Thirty years after Samoa's independence, the plantations began to close down, resulting in the relocation of the majority of the Melanesian-Samoan community to the peri-urban area of Vaitele, a newly established industrial area about 5km west of Apia (Map 4). A combination of factors contributed to the closure of the estates, many of which are not officially documented. As rumored among the plantation community in the early 1980s and, speculated in newspaper reports, the plantation enterprise was increasingly becoming unprofitable, coupled with mismanagement in WSTEC (*Island Business,* 1985, 16). The official and more diplomatic view of the government linked plantation closure to its broader privatization programs that were implemented in the 1980s (Government of Western Samoa, 1992).



Map 4. Relative Location of the Vaitele Industrial Zone, Upolu Island, Samoa.

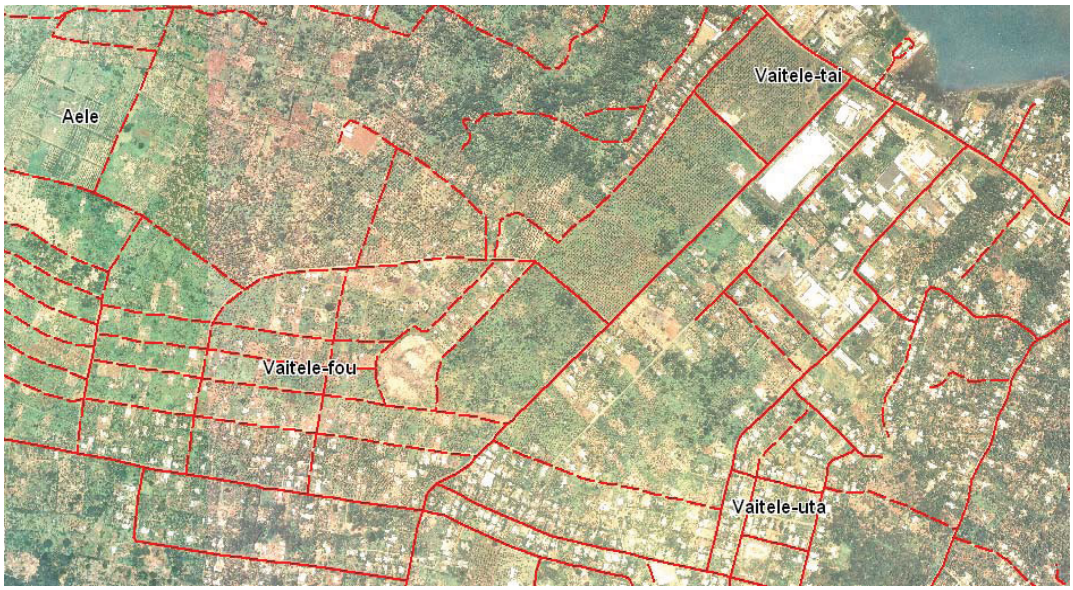
Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. Government of Samoa, Apia

News of the planned closure of the estates caused grave concern especially among the first generation Melanesian-Samoans. This led to the establishment of *O le Faalapotopotoga a Fanau a Tama Solomona*, the Association of the Descendants of the Solomon Island Boys, in August 1986. As a young second generation *Teine uli* just in my first year of university training in New Zealand at that time, I was asked by the association to be its secretary; a role that I continue to have to this day. The association was spearheaded by Feagaimaali'i Titi, a Samoan nephew of one of the original *Tama uli*, Atanoa Atanoa, who was working as a secretary in the Lands and Titles Court in Apia. He gained a Certificate in Law from the University of the South Pacific in Fiji in 1984.

The main objective of the association at the time was to ask the government for compensatory land for the descendants of the original laborers. On December 16th 1986, a contingency of about 300 Melanesian-Samoans travelled to meet with the late Malietoa Tanumafili II, Samoa's Head of State, at his residence at Faatoia in Apia. At that meeting, the association's petition for compensatory land was presented to His Highness. The official response from the Samoan government was given in June 1989. The community would be relocated to Vaitele, where each first generation *Tama uli* and *Teine uli* received a half acre land for the reduced price of ST$10,000.00 (about US$3,000.00) which had to be paid in full within a ten year period (1990 to 2000).

Although Vaitele was always known as the site of the second largest German plantation, the Samoan government earmarked it for the industrial zone. By 1990, the estate was shut down completely as clusters of private business and service enterprises emerged. It became the first of WSTEC lands to be partitioned and sold or leased to private parties (Government of Western Samoa, 1992). Geographically, Vaitele is a collection of three main settlements (Map 5). Vaitele-Tai refers to the seaward side of place; Vaitele-Fou – the newest settlement in Vaitele; and Vaitele-Uta, the interior settlements. The industrial zone extends from parts of Vaitele-Tai to the interior and west to Vaitele-Fou. The Melanesian-Samoan community occupies about 50 acres of land, at Vaitele-Uta, south of the Industrial Zone.

The relocation of the Melanesian-Samoan community from Mulifanua in the late 1980s contributed to the early influx of people from around the country to this new peri-urban



Map 5. Vaitele Industrial Zone

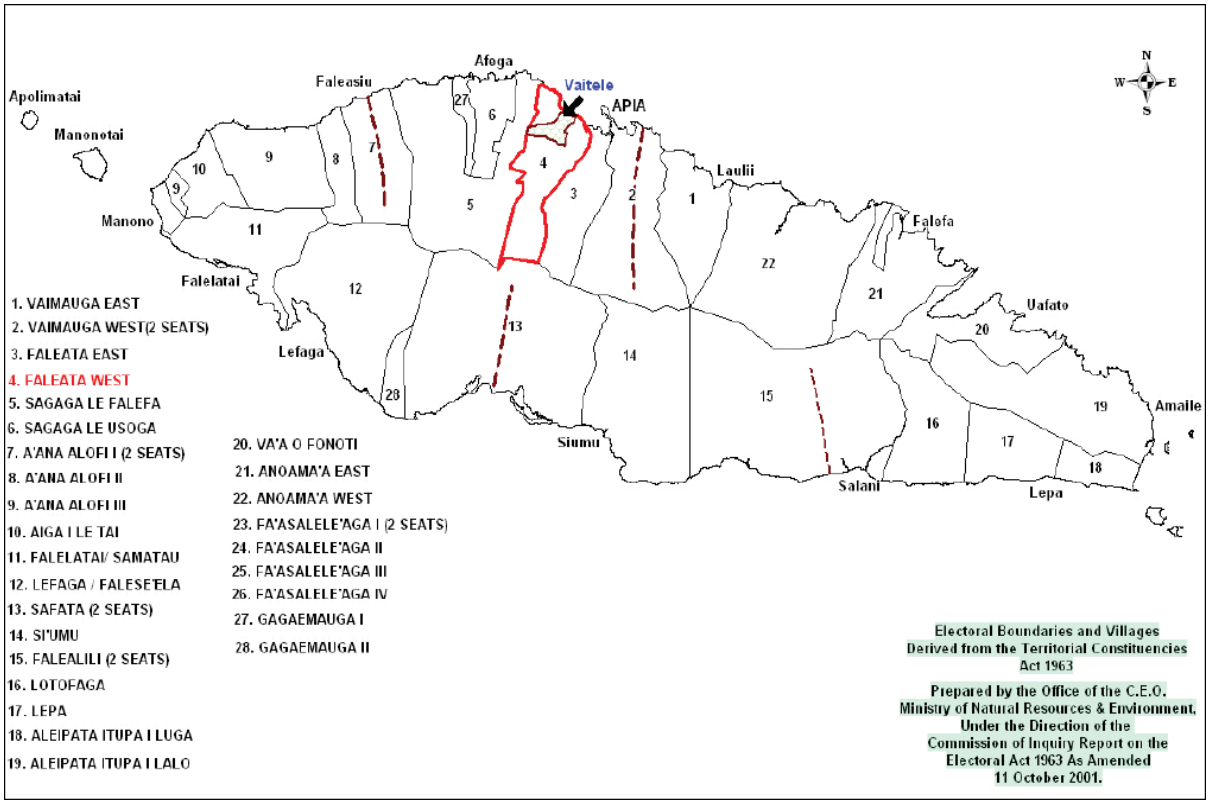
Source: Ministry of Lands and the Environment, Government of Samoa, Apia.

area. Today, Vaitele's population is estimated at 6,000 and is the fastest growing area in terms of population growth. Between the inter-censual periods of 1991 and 2001 and 2001 and 2006, its population growth increased by 60% and 10% respectively (Department of Statistics, 2006).

Vaitele has now become a new urban village where the intermingling and mixture of cultural, commercial, religious, social, and political affairs of modern Samoa predominate. Quite distinct from its business and commercial landscape are the

landscapes of church buildings and pastors' houses associated with such denominations as the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS), the Methodist Church, the Catholic Church, the Assemblies of God, The Pentecostal Church of Samoa, Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist, Samoa Independent Seventh Day Adventist Church (SISDAC), and Jehovah's Witnesses (Fieldwork Notes, 1999). This range of churches reflects the diversity of denominations to which Vaitele's population belongs. It is also telling of the uniqueness of this place in terms of religious flexibility and tolerance compared to many 'traditional' villages or *nu'u mavae* where village councils do not tolerate this diversity of religious faiths and values.

Politically, Vaitele is a very significant part of the Faleata West District that has a parliamentary representative (Map 6). Under modern political systems in Samoa, all adult residents of Vaitele including the Melanesian-Samoan community, are eligible to vote in the general elections. Because of its numbers, Vaitele was highly influential in the 2006 national elections where a candidate from the area won the district seat, for the first time, by a large margin



Map 6. Vaitele within the Current Electoral Constituencies in Samoa

Source: MNRE, Government of Samoa, Apia

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Until the village was disbanded and cleared for the plantation, Vaitele was once known as a 'traditional' village and had held an important place in local histories, especially in the context of the district of Tuamasaga. It became part of a much smaller district, Faleata, after parliamentary arrangements in contemporary Samoa. Until political independence in 1962, it was part of a much larger district, the Tuamasaga, under the jurisdiction of one *tama'aiga* Tamasese (one of the four highest ranking chiefs of Samoa). Under a deal in the 1860s between him and his supporting chiefs and the manager of the Goddefroy and

Sohns Company, Weber, in the 1860s, the latter "purchased Vaitele as a single property of five hundred acres of choicest land, including the very site of the village itself." (Gilson, 1970, 280). The angry reaction among the Vaitele villagers about this sale forced Tamasese to try unsuccessfully to induce Weber to return their land. In the end, and "for many years [the original people of Vaitele village] were dispersed, living among friends and on the former margins of their village, kept at bay by the force of indentured labourers employed on what had become the Vaitele plantation." *(Ibid*. 287).

The fate of the original villagers of Vaitele reflects that experienced by many Samoan families whose lands were taken by Europeans through some 'mysterious' land purchases in the 19th century. Today, the original inhabitants of Mulifanua village, for example, have a court caseto win back their original land that DHPG had for its plantation. Like the Vaitele villagers, the Mulifanua villagers had been forced to move westward where land is more steep and rugged (Lameta, pers.comm.; 2004 Masterman (1934, 71) suggests that "the methods whereby the Germans obtained their land are for the most part wrapped up mystery." Many Samoan chiefs are said to have been eager to own guns and other European goods and consequently sold lands to different buyers. Since "the Germans were more thorough and methodical" in their land purchases, the Samoans were left as the losing party (Lewthwaite, 1962, 142).

Some of the families of the original Vaitele villagers still reside along the coastal front of contemporary Vaitele. Many, however, are living elsewhere in Samoa but continue to look to Vaitele as their village of origin. Recently, Senira Su'a, a woman who works as a

secretary at the USP campus in Samoa, explained, during a conversation, that her family originated from Vaitele and, how her *'aiga* is refusing a government order to remove the remains of her ancestors from their family's burial site in what is currently the compound of the Samoa Breweries Company. No doubt there are many stories like that of Senira's family, worthy of a separate dissertation research.

The current study: journeys beyond the plantation

Three different but closely linked factors are at the root of this work. First is my interest in the analyses of movement of Pacific islanders in general, and that involving people from Samoa, in particular. More specifically, my intellectual dissatisfaction with dominant scholarly interpretations of movement as applied to the realities of Samoan society draws me to this research. The second factor is a more obvious one: my own experiences as a second generation *Teine uli*, born, raised and having worked on the plantation, with familial links that are rooted in Samoa and beyond. The third factor is my passionate scholarly interest in feminist theorizing particularly of place and work.

I was introduced to dominant approaches to Pacific island movement at the beginning of my university studies in the Department of Geography at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. The year was 1986. Having gone through elementary education in the 1970s, at Mulifanua Village Primary School, located about one and a half miles west of our plantation homes, I managed to pass the entrance examination for Samoa College in Apia. Samoa College was established by the New Zealand colonial government in 1953, and holds, up to this day, the reputation of being the most

prestigious school in the country. In its earlier years, most of the teachers were Europeans mainly from New Zealand and, speaking Samoan in the school compounds was strictly prohibited. It was populated primarily by the sons and daughters of European colonials and half-castes (European-Samoans) whose first language was English. Today, the student population is largely Samoans and their parents work in the public service or own private businesses in town. I survived my four years at Samoa College, and passed the University Entrance examinations that were then set from, and graded in, New Zealand. I won a government scholarship to study for a Bachelor of Arts degree in New Zealand.

In January 1986, I arrived in Christchurch. Like many new foreign students arriving in the middle of a chilly Christchurch summer, I was more excited about, and marvelled at, the very different landscape of this country. The settlement patterns are structured in such a way that the houses (which all looked like squared boxes to me) are lined up to parallel the smooth tar sealed roads and streets. The traffic lights at almost every intersection stand like committed traffic officers to ensure the smooth flow of vehicles and pedestrians. Dairies, fish-and-chips shops, and supermarkets are located within walking distance to provide shopping convenience to students and the wider community. There are cars, motorcycles, and bicycles everywhere, parked along the streets, in garages, and on pathways. People dress up neatly and appropriately according to the occasion. Sports shoes, socks, a pair of shorts or track pants are worn on the sports field; a suit and a tie for men, and a suit and high heel shoes for women are worn to work. Even bus and taxi drivers wear ties. Everything and everybody appeared so structured and ‘in place’ that,

for a foreign student like myself, it was almost forbidden to move around for fear of ruining their orderliness.

But this feeling of marvel was nothing compared to the experience that awaited me on the day of student registration. I was alone and confused in the process of selecting courses of my 'own interest.' This confusion was largely the result of a very dependent mindset I have had about formal education as a 'given' entity. Having gone through primary and secondary education in Samoa in which the syllabi and assessment of all subjects were modelled after, and, to a large extent, controlled by the New Zealand education system, the 'liberty' to choose a course of my own interest was something completely new. I came to realize that I, like many Pacific island students, had acquired the spoon-feeding mentality in our previous education experiences. Classroom education in Samoa has been more a matter of dictating colonial ways of seeing and understanding our world and the Pacific. It has not been a process in which we, island students, could actively participate with our Oceanic viewpoints. These were not encouraged, and indeed our thinking might have actually been completely ignored.

It was the presence of the only population geographer and Pacific migration specialist in the department, Dr. Richard Bedford, that removed the scary image I had of Geography as a typically *palagi* (European)-oriented and scientific discipline. Dr. Bedford was down-to-earth and lenient towards the few island students in the department and could correctly pronounce our names. I found myself taking his Pacific and third world population courses, mainly because these had a focus that resonated with my own

experiences. At the same time, I was introduced to the study of population through the lens of statistical analysis; this involved gathering substantial amounts of numerical data from volumes of official records. Writing reports from such data was apparently the way to make sense of the international movement of Pacific islanders. Supplementing these were media reports and scholarly analyses of New Zealand's immigration problems. As far as I could tell, there was no space in this part of my intellectual journey to engage with my experience - my inner gut feelings and knowledge of Pacific islanders' realities that were quite different from approaches I was learning.

I remained 'silent' as my journey continued into the honors program in Geography at Waikato University in Hamilton on New Zealand's north island where, earlier, Dr. Bedford moved to take up the chair of professorship. There, graduate courses on migration, development, and geographic thought continued to bombard my thinking. There also, I was introduced to feminism as a relatively new theory of society. Although feminist analysis of gender relations had an immediate appeal to many of my classmates, I was silent during most class discussions on related topics. I appeared to have made little or no verbal input in class debates on the role of women or women's perspective(s). Yet, for me, being silent was the most sensible approach in that particular context. Silences, as emphasized in my upbringing in the *fa'asamoa* (Samoan culture) reflect humility and respect for others and communicate a different way of thinking. Indeed, this approach parallels that noted by Cook Islander scholar and feminist geographer, Yvonne Underhill-Sem (2000, 188) among the Melanesian women of Wanigela, Papua New Guinea and convinced her "the unsaid is not the unknown, but the differently known". My thinking had been occupied with questions about the dominant treatment of 'woman' as the

individual self and the seemingly conflicting understanding through the Samoan perspective which my classmates did not know about and may never be able to understand. In this frame of thinking, woman 'carries' her '*aiga* and, *aiga* 'carries' woman. Woman is relational.

I had 'quietly' carried this way of thinking and analysing through my scholarly journey over the years. In fact, given the dominance of economistic interpretations in academia, Pacific indigenous knowledge and nature of understanding have been ignored and dismissed (Huffer and Qalo, 2004). This initially seemed to have been the case with the Development Studies program at the University of the South Pacific (USP) where I did my Masters degree in the early 1990s. However, my academic learning during this period became more meaningful as I worked under the guidance of the Oceanic thinker Epeli Hauo'fa; the francophone geographer, Eric Waddell, and the Tongan educationalist Konai Helu Thaman. It was more exciting for me because I could relate to their indigenous approaches. Hau'ofa's well known essay 'Our sea of islands', published in 1993, stirred much of the conventional thinking that has long influenced studies at USP, particularly within the then School of Social and Economic Development (SSED) that housed the social sciences disciplines. In this environment, where both dialogue and critical thinking in the context of Pacific realities were encouraged, my island-based experiences and knowledge generated therein began to find a niche for growth.

Intellectually, this nurturing environment at USP marked the beginning of a new scholarship for me. Questions and concerns about mainstream scholarship were

narrowed, heightened, and gained more clarity, though not completely abandoned. Thinking about representations of migration and work involved also thinking more about myself – my own journey, roots, identity, and sense of place. Memories of my spatial and intellectual movement took me back to the plantation estates in Samoa where I was born and raised. My grandparents lived and worked there. My mother, a second generation *Teine uli*, was born and raised there. My Samoan father became a laborer there. Plantations are familiar places to us – the Melanesian descendants – and are rich with metaphorical stories of families moving around, working and engaging with the world, and yet socially rooted in culture.

The opportunity for me to undertake the doctoral program in Geography at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (UHM) provides the privilege to 'speak' and write about my experiences of movement and place – the plantation and beyond. I wondered why historical writings on Samoa by both Samoans and non-Samoans do not make reference to the plantations and experiences of locals working and living in these settlements. I have been aware however, that written history is partial, selective, and biased. It is dictated by the events involving political and influential figures, and that in the Pacific, laborers are not such figures. Laborers are shadows in Samoa's national development. Plantations are 'other' places with 'other' meanings and 'other' people. They are 'special' cases, physically and socially placed at the margin of Samoan society and history. They are colonial spaces occupied by the colonised. Yet, as Samoan scholar and writer Selina March (1997, 102) points out,

> The land is more than a colonial piece of real-estate. It holds the sweat of exploited migrant labour, which used to work the land. It also possesses an age-old pre-colonial connection to the land of 'ancient banyans', symbolizing timeless genealogy as its sprouting branches continually root into earth to become tree trunks that, in turn, sprout new branches.

As the Geography Department at UHM provides physical space for its graduate students it, more importantly, helps create and supports the intellectual space to nurture alternative scholarship. For me, this materializes into this dissertation. More importantly, while this dissertation signifies part of my relatively recent spatial and scholarly journey, its roots are firmly grounded in island soils. It is indeed a 'new branch' sprouting from the 'ancient banyan trees.' Its focus on work and movement is indicative of my own search for more satisfactory and appropriate explanations for experiences that are rooted in cultural thinking.

As a *Teine uli* of the second generation, I have been compelled, at the outset of this study, to confront my Melanesian-ness. This concept immediately links my thinking with the external perception of *Teine uli* as minority women in a predominantly Polynesian Samoan society. Wrapped in this perception are stereotypes of being marginal: less-Samoan, poor, uneducated, laborers, and more prone to exploitation. These stereotypes are echoed in the written language of the majority of scholars which, regrettably, cast these people's social and cultural adjustments in Samoa in a deterministic way. The images confine the experiences of *Teine uli* and their community as a whole within the constraining parameters of colonial definitions. Having found no personal and intellectual satisfaction in these representations, I attempt in this dissertation to present evocative glimpses of *Teine uli*'s life within and beyond the plantation. I focus specifically on their

work experiences and the meanings they value of these activities as they move from place to place.

Outline of chapters

This introduction identifies and outlines my argument for alternative perspectives on work and movement among women from reciprocity-based societies. For my study, this requires a rethinking of these concepts through the framework of *fa'asamoa*. My approach to identifying alternative meanings is closely knit with my own personal experience as a graduate student and *Teine uli* myself. In chapter two I review the literature – a process that I have likened to weaving a fine mat. In the process I use the appropriate 'leaves' from humanist and feminist theorizing alongside Samoan cultural perspective in order to identify gaps that my study attempts to fill.

Chapter three discusses the context of *fa'asamoa* as a frame for this study. I present a deeper analysis of Samoan culture and way of thinking that merits use as an alternative approach to understanding experiences of work and movement. The cultural meaning of key concepts such as *'aiga*, *va fealoaloaloa'i* and *fa'alavelave* are discussed so as to pave the way for understanding the experiences of *Teine uli* as presented in chapters five, six and seven.

Chapter four describes how the information used in this study was gathered. I adopted the ethnographic approach, but also collected demographic data through a field census and a survey of households. In addition, my own experience and personal journey is woven in as an important research tool. Despite the debates about insider/outsider influence on

research, there is no doubt that participants and their stories constitute each other (Moss, 2003). Therein lies the completeness of perspective and approach.

Chapter five discusses in more detail the worlds of the plantation and the urban settings as experienced by *Teine uli.* I argue that the women's sociocultural world defines the complexity and interrelatedness of their lived experience, which by extension defines the places that are central in their narratives. I draw on Cresswell's concept of 'landscape of practice' and Doreen Massey's 'progressive sense of place' to illustrate *Teine uli*'s reality as rooted in their *'aiga* in Mulifanua, Vaitele and Auckland.

Chapter six focuses on the work experiences of *Teine uli* at Vaitele. Here, the concept of *va fealoaloa'i* is discussed as the context for the women's performance of 'aiga/community work' and participation in paid employment. Personal stories of *Teine uli* of both generations at Vaitele and in Auckland, New Zealand are woven into the text to elaborate the strength of their locally-based conceptions.

In Chapter seven, *Teine uli*'s experiences of their movement in Samoa and visits to/from New Zealand are discussed. The concept of *fa'alavelave* is central in this discussion as evident in the stories of these women. On-going visits and the coordination of travel between Samoa and New Zealand speak of the strengthen of women's rootedness and orientation towards their 'aiga. This work is summed up in Chapter eight where I emphasize the value of cultural thinking as an alternative to understanding experiences of

women from reciprocity-based societies. *Fa'asamoa* provides just that for this study of *Teine uli.*

CHAPTER 2

WEAVING PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S WORK AND MOVEMENT

> It is important for us to question the history of geography, and to ask about the stories we have neglected or the perspectives we have ignored
>
> Mary Gilmartin, 2002, 31

In the previous chapter, I indicated my attempt to provide a culturally-based understanding of work and movement. This chapter sets the scene by examining perspectives on women, migration and work. In doing so, I am figuratively in the process of weaving a fine mat. I imagine myself as one of the *'au se'e papa* (a group of weavers) who busies herself pulling, tearing, and placing bands of dried pandanus leaves in their appropriate placings so as to eventually produce a fine mat. This weaving process involves tasks both inside the *fale lalaga* (weaving house) and outside of it, where the necessary preparations of cutting, boiling, drying, and sorting pandanus leaves take place. This is my metaphorical task in this chapter – to 'tear and pull apart' prevailing explanations, identify the missing links in these, and thread in the usable 'leaves' through the framework of *fa'asamoa* so as to create a well-patterned 'fine mat.'

My 'weaving' begins with a personal story that is linked to contradictions and uncertainties in population research. Being aware of such 'on-the-ground' contradictions confirms the existence of alternative perspectives and forms of knowledge. I then move on to identify the parallels that exist in humanist and feminist geographies. These are usable 'leaves' that constitute part of my 'weaving' pattern which addresses issues of marginalization, dualistic thinking, and appropriate methodologies in population

geography. This chapter ends with a brief mention of critical thinking in the contemporary Pacific that also contributes to my analysis through their intellectual approach and framework.

Beginning the 'weaving' process: working with missing links

The intellectual dissatisfaction experienced in my scholarly journey reflects a contradiction between conventional approaches and local conceptions of work and movement. I begin this section by discussing a specific case that clearly indicates this contradiction. Before I began the doctoral program at UHM, I worked for six months in Samoa's Department of Statistics. I was recruited in December 1994 – the time when a survey on problems of youth in the Apia Urban Area (AUA) was already underway. My task as head of the Census and Survey Section was to coordinate the analysis of the completed survey. This involved much tabulation and attempts to make sense of mountains of statistical information. As it turned out, the allotted time for data analysis was extended to a much longer period than planned because there was considerable data reconciliation to be done.

One of the main difficulties my colleagues and I faced was the way people responded to the questions on 'work' and 'place of residence'. The survey questionnaire was simply a direct translation of an English version which was previously used for similar South Pacific Commission-sponsored surveys in Vanuatu and Fiji. The term 'work' was assumed to mean paid employment or formal occupation. It was directly translated to the commonly used Samoan term, *galuega*. Thus for the question 'What is your

occupation?' a number of respondents replied 'staying home'. This particular response became a problem for the survey analysis, which was interested in quantifying people's *paid* employment. It was particularly difficult for the analysts because 'staying home' was, conventionally, equated with 'not employed' and people in such a category would thus be labelled as 'non-income earners'. On the other hand, while they could also be slotted under the 'informal sector', many respondents in the 'staying home' group did not fit there either. This is because many were operating small family shops or flea market shops which meant they have had to buy a business license and pay taxes to the Department of Inland Revenue.

Similarly, the question 'Where is your permanent place of residence?' was also problematic. The survey showed that a significant number of people did not see themselves as 'urban dwellers' despite their long stay for employment in town. The village was consistently referred to as place of origin and belonging, and therefore people's permanent place of residence. Neither 'rural' nor 'urban' could appropriately capture people's definition of place and moving around. Their sense of social belonging did not seem to be defined by geographical dualisms assumed in the survey.

Although a document titled *Report of the Apia Urban Youth Survey* was eventually produced, I, for one, was not convinced it fully captured the many facets of the issues being investigated. Experiences and cultural meanings remained unexamined despite and because, of the narrow empirically-driven approach used. That particular experience, however, challenged my thinking even more not only about methods but also about

epistemological issues embedded in research. Empirical analyses dominate the official milieu of national economic development and thus dictate a particular way of thinking about a people or society. The narrow focus of such approaches, however, obviates the need to probe what are people's actual lived experiences.

Identifying my 'weaving' pattern: humanist and feminist parallels

I begin this section with the research implications of the term 'lived experiences'. Humanist geographer, Anne Buttimer (1976) uses this term to focus on the lifeworld experiences of the individual which keep the everyday understanding of existence as a complete immersion in an experienced totality. This lifeworld experience is complex as it contains personal behaviours that are locally and globally constituted (Chapman, 1995).

A focus on the lived experiences has also been fundamental to the work of many feminist geographers (Gilmartin, 2002). Thus, while feminists focus on the gendered nature of lived experiences humanist geographers work with un-gendered experiences. The two positions share the recognition of lived experiences as complex and flexible. This challenges fixed oppositional categories. Feminists challenge the dichotomies of public/domestic, culture/nature, mind/body, and reason/emotion as emphasizing and perpetuating the inferior status assumed of women. Humanist geographers' work on population movement, for example, attempts "to go beyond the standard dichotomy of permanent or impermanent forms of movement" (Chapman,1995, 250) and to deconstruct such developmentalist dualisms as urban/rural, modern/tradition, centre/periphery, and developed/undeveloped that underpin conventional migration

studies (Young, 2000). Thus the work of both humanist and feminist geographers constitutes forms of resistance to dominant geographic knowledge, and offers alternative perspectives. Indeed, both of these have made previously hidden people/women and ideas visible again.

The complexity of lived experiences makes it highly essential to adopt a wide variety of methods for research – both quantitative and qualitative. As discussed later in this chapter, feminist and humanist geographies converge at a methodologies conjunction, which illustrates coalition building toward contesting taken-for-granted concepts in these subfields.

Working with terms

In this section, I discuss a broader set of contradictions in population research by focusing on both prevailing explanations as well as more marginalized perspectives on female movement and work. While both methodological and epistemological issues are central in these contradictions, identifying them is not easy. It is important to point out at this stage that studies in population geography predominantly employ the term 'migration'. This reflects conventional and economically driven thinking underpinning analyses of movement between geographic space (Chapman, 1991). My use of the term migration in this study is simply for the sake of reference to such studies. Otherwise, I employ the terms 'movement' or 'mobility' interchangeably as these reflect the continuity of physical movement and the extremely flexible nature of the process as embedded in its socio-cultural meaning.

Generally, work and migration are presented as two separate research issues. Migration in particular, is a central concept in the sub-discipline of population geography. In debates in the last fifteen years, population geographers have focused almost entirely on migration admittedly because of its obvious spatiality (Graham and Boyle, 2001). Incidentally, population geographers or migration scholars who focus on women's movement are notably those with interest in feminist theorizing. These scholars focus either solely on women's migration (Lawson, 1998; Boyle, 2002) or on interrogating the political meanings ascribed to women's migration and their relationships to work as formal employment (Lawson, 1995; Silvey, 2000a). Despite the different angles from which women's experiences of work and migration are examined, they contribute to my attempt in this dissertation to identify missing links and weave them together with Samoan cultural thinking in order to provide an alternative context for understanding these processes.

'Weaving' in progress: gaps and links

Missing women, migration, and population geography

Current theorizing about female migration in population geography was prompted partly by developments in the subdiscipline and partly by feminist perspectives. Since the early 1990s, mainstream thinking in population geography has become increasingly concerned about the subfield's "methodological conservatism and an inattention to theory that could prove detrimental to its future prospects" (Graham and Boyle, 2001, 389). Challenging

the subdiscipline's empiricist research focus since the 1950s, population geographers have reassessed the thrust of their work and encouraged marrying quantitative approaches with more qualitative ones, thus reflecting the diversity and complex nature of people and migrant communities they study (Findlay and Graham, 1991; White and Jackson, 1995). This has resulted in 'new' studies that employ a mixed methods approach (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Findlay and Li, 1999; McKendrick, 1999; Lawson, 2000; McHugh, 2000).

Most population geographers see the emergence of this methodological concern in migration research as a response to the challenges of contemporary social theory (Findlay and Li, 1999). Feminist migration geographer, Rachel Silvey (2004a), however, places this trend in the subdiscipline within a broader context arguing that the issues at the core of "new" migration studies are also those animating the discipline of geography as a whole. She points out that "critical, explicitly theoretical migration research in particular has flourished in feminist, cultural and urban geography, and increasingly in political geography as well" (*Ibid.*; p. 304). Thus the challenges of understanding migrant identities, the gendered nature of place and movement, the feminization and politicization of migration, for example, are basically blurring the boundaries of population geography as a subdiscipline. As Graham (2000, 267) puts it:

> Perhaps it is time to renegotiate our subdisciplinary identity, not in the sense of erecting barriers to protect our academic turf, but rather to ensure that the research agenda of population studies reflects a sound theoretical understanding of [gender, difference, power,] space and place.

Hence theoretical and methodological concerns tend to bring together geographers with various research interests. The variety of humanistic methodologies, for example, is central to contemporary migration research, although many of these scholars do not

consider themselves humanist geographers. Silvey and Lawson (1999, 122), who are feminist migration geographers, claim that the "diversity of methods employed in migration studies [is] a key element of continuity in this field." Qualitative methodologies have emphasized the 'voices of migrants' (Lawson, 2000; Silvey and Lawson, 1999). Here, more explicit discussion focuses not only on what the migrants say but how migrants' 'language' reflects the encompassing socioeconomic and cultural domain within which the individuals are situated. This is also a way to theorize 'development' from within (Lawson, 2000). As an alternative approach, 'voices of the migrants' is also related to valuing indigenous epistemologies within which *different* conceptions of mobility can be found.

For feminist geographers, one initial concern was the absence of women geographers in geography departments in Western-based universities (McDowell, 1983), and the subsequent questioning of what was considered legitimate geographical knowledge (Rose, 1993). Feminist geography struggled to make sense of women's lives through the use of prevailing geographic concepts and existing frameworks. In the 1980s, for example, Suzanne Mackenzie argued that existing geographic categories were then so useless in understanding women's lives that she saw women as 'conceptually unclad' (Mackenzie, 1989, 56).

Alongside this early concern were critiques of the migration literature in the 1980s that dealt with the absence of women in population research. These critiques were the result of feminist influence in social sciences at the time, notably feminist sociologists, who

questioned the invisibility of women in many studies including migration research (Rose, 1993). Critiques focused on the portrayal of migrant women as passive dependents and/or as subsidiary workers, the underestimation of their labor participation, and the continued association of their work life with the home sphere and reproductive roles. These works inevitably drew on earlier analyses by economist Esther Boserup (1970) that revealed women did not benefit by modernization and technological advancement in agriculture. She also noted international variations in the gender division of rural to urban migration flows.

There is now a tremendous amount of research on women and migration by population geographers, feminist geographers and others (Silvey, 2000b). A significant number of these focus on women from so-called nonwestern places and their work experiences in the receiving metropolitan countries of the developed world (Boyle, 2002; Yeoh, 2000; Pratt, 1999). Although these studies employ humanistic approaches, adding to the rich diversity of work in population geography, conceptions of movement and place among women in reciprocity-based places remain largely unknown in the scholarly world.

Missing women and migration in the Pacific

Mainstream thinking in population geography is clearly that of the dominant northern hemisphere scholarship, which ignores the contributions of population geographies from 'out-of-the-way places' (Underhill-Sem, 2000). Underhill-Sem argues that despite current attempts to engage population geography with social theory, the neglect of population geographies from 'out-of-the-way places' remains and has resulted in the

continued marginalization of particular theoretical and geographical sites of knowledge (*Ibid.*, p.28). An example of this neglect is reflected in the debate between Skeldon (1995) and Halfacree and Boyle (1993), in which the former points to the latter's ignorance of the existence of multi-method and biographical approaches in mobility studies in reciprocity-based societies, notably the Pacific. Incidentally, Findlay and Li (1999, 51) note that humanist geographers Murray Chapman (1970, 1975, 1985, 1991, 1995) and Bonnemaison (1994) have long been advocates of alternative methodologies, particularly the use of indepth ethnographic approaches in mobility studies. These earlier works in the Pacific emphasize the socio-cultural dimension of mobility and understanding the lifeworlds of islanders. However, although these studies were "energised to some extent in the 1980s [they were] not able to effectively engage with innovative scholarship, such as new social theory including feminist geography, until the mid-1990s" (Underhill-Sem, 2004, 56).

At the same time, conventional approaches dominating migration studies in the Pacific clearly have no focus on women. Population movement during the last four decades has been understood largely through the neoclassical approaches that emphasize economic disparity between regions or countries and the function of the spatial distribution of labor markets in understanding migration from rural/island countries to urban/metropolitan countries. These approaches contextualize population movement within a 'development' scheme. In many cases, migration is seen as a vehicle for Pacific Island 'development'. Migration is one pillar of the MIRAB assumption of islands' economic base.

Australian geographer and migration specialist, John Connell (1984, 964), notes that "despite much research on migration in the South Pacific, there is almost no information relating either to the migration of women (either internally or internationally) or to the impact of migration on women (either those who move or those who stay)." In his work, Connell simply added women to this analysis of migration, pointing out that not only do women constitute a significant proportion of the migrants, but they also are the 'most reliable remitters' to the islands. Connell presents this superficial description of female migrants with a word of caution; since migration contributes to marginalization and dependency among islanders, "the burdens of these changes tend to be experienced by women rather than men" *(Ibid.*, p. 978).

Voluminous works have been written on 'Samoan migration' (Vaa, 2001; Macpherson 1992; 2001). Generally, approaches in these studies also characterise those on movement in other Pacific societies. Bedford's (1997) overview of the major perspectives on international movement in the Pacific identifies these as the population-environment view, the MIRAB and island dependency perspective, the new cultural view, and the globalization approach. These studies are also seen as economistic in focus, developmentalist in frame, and empiricist in content. Thus they assume movement to be a process that is understood through "the binary categories, the dichotomous patterns of thought, and the dualistic frames of intellectual reference within which so much of western scholarship has been articulated and frozen for far too long" (Chapman, 1995, 258).

More recently geographers with poststructualist-feminist perspectives and, what I would call 'poststructuralist-humanist' perspectives, have provided different but equally important dimensions for understanding migration in the Pacific. From a poststructuralist-feminist view, Yvonne Underhill-Sem (2000, 35) argues, that "many population geographers [in the Pacific] were distanced from the lifeworlds of women because of masculinist research styles that prevail in geography." Rose (1993, 4) defines masculinist work as that which "claims to be exhaustive and therefore assumes that no-one else can add to its knowledge." Underhill-Sem (1999, 23) maintains that "most works [on Pacific migration] have been written by men about men's moves." These works, she argues, are masculinist not only because the authors are men (and white) but also that gender categories have never been problematized (*Ibid.*, p.24).

New Zealand geographer Raymond Young, however, disputes this. From a postructuralist-humanist perspective, Young argues that the problem is more than the absence of women scholars or the dominance of male scholars in the field. Rather "it is the way that migrant experiences are taken as normative and the implications this has for how scholars 'see' migration" (Young, 2000, 59). In other words, through the conventional lenses of the majority of Pacific migration scholars, migration is a spatial process that is equally experienced by all concerned. This is the norm in Pacific migration approaches.

Although the earlier humanistic framework for population mobility in the Pacific is gender-blind it has become 'fertile soil' for the growth of more contemporary critical

thinking towards movement and gender in the Pacific. As Underhill-Sem (2004, 57) argues "it has been the fertility of the concept of mobility rather than migration that has allowed for conceptualisations of population processes and issues that has moved Pacific scholarship into new terrain." Notable works in this group include the more recent humanistic works of Lilomaiava-Doktor (2004), Peter (2001), Anae (1998), and Liki (2001). These works employ local concepts and philosophical orientations to understanding islander movement. These studies also are examples of analysis that takes the home/island as the 'point of departure' (Peter, 2001).

While the cultural framework of earlier mobility studies in the Pacific has been acknowledged by feminist population geographers (Lawson, 2000; Silvey, 2004a), culture has often been interpreted as essentialist and static, and migrant identities as fixed. Thus Silvey (2004b, 498) clarifies, "…rather than seeing identities as fixed definable characteristics of migrants, feminist migration studies have increasingly emphasized the construction of identities, and the ongoing nature of this process." I sympathise with this concern among the feminists, and I do not consider 'culture' as unchanging. However, my marginalized theoretical and geographical position is a more important concern for my argument because it allows me not only to talk *about* 'culture' but talk from *within* it. From this position my framework is very similar to that of Chuukese scholar, Joakim Peter in his analysis of Chuukese travels (Peter, 2001). Like journeys that begin at home in the islands, Peter's analysis follows suit and, "considers contemporary movement from the view of local 'points of departure' and local theories and practices of space and movement." (*Ibid*., p. 255). Thus *fa'asamoa,* as constituted in

'*aiga,* is the 'culture' and worldview within which this study is situated. From this position also, I can elaborate on what constitutes *Teine uli* as women in the *fa'asamoa* context, and make sense of the multiple identities that are attached to them through conventional analyses of movement and work.

I pointed out in the previous chapter that the concept of 'Samoan migration' needs critical rethinking as it ignores the experiences of women. To date, studies on the international movement of Samoans do not differentiate between the experiences of female and male migrants (Macpherson, 1992; Ahlburg and Brown, 1997; Va'a, 2001; McGrath, 2002). These groups are lumped together under the label 'Samoan migrants' and variations in experiences along gender lines are elided. While this dominant approach is possibly due to scholarly attention to issues of ethnicity, migrant status, and remittances that seem to be more urgent for migrant groups, the danger is that the experiences of the male migrants are often assumed for everybody. Thus the experiences of minority women in the 'Samoan migration' are given a broad brush. Clearly, the poor representation of *Teine uli* in scholarly works is not identical to the under-representation of women's issues, which have now received great attention and recognition. Nevertheless, *Teine uli* is part of a growing population of marginalized women that generates issues that we, as scholars and researchers, must accommodate.

As a study rooted in a reciprocity-based community with marginalized knowledge, my work engages the humanistic approach and feminist theorizing. As noted earlier, these approaches reject dualisms assumed in the analysis of women's work and movement and

thus emphasize the complexity of the lived experiences of those concerned. For Pacific peoples lived experiences are anchored in, and defined through, their cultures and ways of living. My study looks at the experiences of a specific group of minority women – the *Teine uli* – as a way to both deconstruct the concept of 'Samoan migration' as well as to emphasize the complexity of specific experiences of movement. As much as there are critical differences between *fa'asamoa* thinking and the feminist perspectives, there are important conceptual parallels that are useful for my analysis. One is concern for missing or forgotten women in historical and current research and the other is the methodological insights. I discuss these in the next section.

Missing women and colonial history

The move to pay more attention to women in migration is part and parcel of a bigger project by feminist historians and anthropologists, in particular, to bring forth the argument that 'women', as a category and subject, have been ignored in colonial accounts and histories of labor. Feminist scholars have contested notions of work and, in particular, the non-recognition of women's contribution to labor in colonial plantations. Jamaican historians, Reddock and Jain (1998, 1) point out, "In the existing literature on plantation labour, the role of female labour has found very little space. This omission is particularly conspicuous given the large number of women labourers employed in many plantation regimes."

Their work, among others, sheds some light on the structural barriers to women's engagement in waged labor and their movement within and beyond the plantation

settings. Evidence of gender inequality and unfair treatment received by women in plantations within the control of the colonial capitalistic enterprise are also a focus of study (Shameem (1998); and Reddock (1998)). Examining African labor history, historian Carolyne Dennise (1988) argues that the contribution of women to food and cash crop production was invisible to colonial agriculture and this trend continues in the post-independence era in many African nations. She calls attention for more research on the structural workings of the capitalist economy and their role in the construction of gender and gender relations in African societies and labor markets. Other scholars on this subject use Marxist feminist approaches to critically analyze women's exclusion and exploitation in colonial plantation (Robertson, 1988). Likewise, analyses of women's involvement in plantation agriculture in Asia have largely employed Marxist feminist perspectives to attract attention to women's productive contribution to the national economy (Jain, 1998).

Postcolonial feminists adopt a more ethnographic approach to understanding the experiences of women in non-western places and point to the complex meanings surrounding work activities in the home and beyond (Jacka, 1997) and the intertwining of local practices of women's plantation labor and global with political dimensions (Chatterjee, 2001; Freidberg, 2001). By examining women's narratives, these studies make women's contributions through work in the home, colonial plantations, and contemporary workplaces significantly more visible than before.

For feminist anthropologists working in the Pacific, "Pacific women's voices were all but silent in the documented record of the past, and for any period prior to 1920 it is virtually impossible to gain oral history from women" (Ralston, 1992, 167). Studies that focus specifically on women plantation laborers point to biased historical accounts. Margaret Jolly's (1987, 121) study of colonial migrant labor in Vanuatu, for example, concludes that, "the history of colonialism in [that island] as elsewhere was a gendered history." Women laborers are simply 'forgotten' "through the primary sources and the secondary interpretative history of the labor trade [which] concentrates on men, and presents women as an anomalous afterthought" (*Ibid*., p. 124). To this effect, Australian historian, Clive Moore (1992, 70) whose work focuses on Melanesian laborers in Queensland, Australia, notes,

> Almost all of the relevant sources are written by males and concentrate on male activities. Because Melanesian women were generally small minorities, they are often ignored in what secondary writings exist and they are certainly marginalised or seen as a group apart from their male counterparts…Most sources ignore women completely or give them, at most, passing mention.

With studies that focus on the Melanesian women in Australia's plantations, discussions revolve around issues such as women's motivation for being involved in the labor trade and their relationships with home and the host society (Saunders, 1980) and their roles as wives, mothers, and servants of the European managers (Mercer, 1981).

As in the case of contemporary approaches to migration in geography, the wider literature on labor or mobility pays little attention to Pacific island women in colonial plantations. Earlier criticisms of the lack of scholarly attention given to female laborers seem to be a 'lone voice in the desert'. The first book to cover both past and present labor mobility in

the Pacific was published in 1990 (Moore, Leckie and Munro's *Labour in the South Pacific)*. Of the twenty six articles contained in this book, only two focus on women – one discussing the expansion in the nature and amount of 'work' among Samoan and Tongan women since the 19th century and the other focusing on Indian women's plantation and domestic workloads in Fiji's sugar plantations. The chapter on Samoa (Munro and Firth, 1990) provides a colonial administrative account of plantation laborers and their treatment. Laborers are defined solely as the "original Melanesians", and no scholarly attention is given to the female descendants. It seems that the general lack of scholarly interest in women's experiences during the colonial era was part and parcel the thinking that prevailed in the social sciences at the time.

Part of the problem relates to stereotypical discussions of the plantation and especially 'plantation work' as space(s) for men. The term 'labor' is used by historians to refer to waged work in colonial plantations. It was the preserve of able-bodied males. In Fiji's sugar plantations in the early 20th century, for example, the perception of Indian women as good field workers co-existed with an older colonial perspective and practice in which women were relied upon to provide domestic labor for the male laborers (Shameem, 1998, 55). Female recruits in other parts of the Pacific, although fewer in number, "are portrayed exclusively in terms of their relations to men, marital or otherwise" (Jolly,1987, 125). Their status was linked to their marriage to male workers. They were simultaneously seen as sexual beings trying to escape the constraints of island patriarchs, as escaping unwanted marriages, as wanting to elope with men of their choice, or as rebellious runaways (*Ibid*. p. 126).

Representations of women as inactive agents and non-participants in the colonial economy have indirectly created spaces to be filled with their stories. Alternative histories told and held by plantation communities provide rich information on their lives not only as daughters of plantation laborers, but as laborers themselves. In the case of Samoa, the experiences, accounts and stories of *Teine-uli* as presented and discussed in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven of this dissertation not only fill the gaps of untold histories of the plantation economy, but also stand as a critique of prevailing assumptions in written accounts of Samoan migration.

Missing 'working' women

Similar to the untold histories of female laborers in colonial plantations are concerns by feminist scholars about scholarly neglect of contemporary work participation among women. Much of the early feminist literature on this topic critiqued the idealization of feminized domesticity and its role in confining women to the home (McDowell, 1999). This led to efforts to deconstruct stereotypes about 'home work' as being non-productive and having no economic value. Feminist anthropologists like Rochelle Rosaldo (1974) and Sherry Ortner (1974), provided the platform for critiques of the dichotomies of man/woman, culture/nature, and public/domestic. For them, the persistence of the inferior and marginalized status/condition of women lies in the persistence of these dichotomies in gender\relations. Socialist feminist geographers followed suit, focusing their analyses and critique particularly on the notion and practice of 'division of labor' (Massey, 1994; McDowell, 1992).

An important point of concern among feminists has been the definition of women's work. In most analyses work is defined as waged labor in a formally structured environment. Feminists argue that this definition is based on a masculine ideal of work (McDowell, 1999). Many women 'work' for love and many others are employed in all sorts of arrangements where their financial rewards may be temporary or periodic, paid in kind or unrecorded (Glucksmann, 1995). Consideration of these aspects of women's work certainly draws in feminist theorizing about the experiences of women in reciprocity-based societies (McDowell and Pringle, 1992).

Despite the 'inclusion' of women from reciprocity-based societies and their work activities in contemporary studies, these continue to be analysed in the developmentalist frame of thinking privileging economistic views of tasks within and beyond the home that are considered 'unpaid' are linked to the persistence of women's oppression and inferiority. While the significance of waged work cannot be ignored in contemporary society this should not overshadow 'other' meanings of work as rooted within different locales. Feminist geographer Susanne Friedberg (2001) recently showed in her study of work in the urban periphery of Burkina Faso that "contemporary divisions of labor in Africa's urban hinterlands are neither remotely 'traditional' nor simple inventions of colonial labor regimes, but rather, the products of rich and complicated local histories" (*Ibid*., p. 6).

It is within the context of complex localities that my analysis of *Teine uli*'s work activities and movement is situated. As work activities are constituted by local meanings

and interpretations, the 'point of departure' for analysis is the 'local', as place and concept. Furthermore, 'work' has predominantly been understood in paid/unpaid terms, so that activities that fall in the space-in-between are ruled out as unimportant. For this study, Soja's idea of 'thirdspace' helps me to rethink the concept of 'work' as constituted by, and constituting, the experiences of movement among women. Soja (1999) tries to encourage a 'different way of thinking' about space and other familiar notions in geography. To 'think differently' is to question familiar or conventional ways of thinking in new ways that aim at opening up and expanding the scope of the already established geographical imaginations (*Ibid.* p. 260). Compared to the directly experienced world of the measurable and mappable phenomena (Firstspace); and the subjectively imagined world that is more concerned with images and representations (Secondspace); Thirdspace is *Lived Space* that is transdisciplinary, multi-sided and contradictory, knowable and unknowable. It is space that can be mapped but never captured in conventional cartographies, and obtains meaning only when practised and fully *lived* (*Ibid.*, p. 276).

'Work' as defined through women's travels is what is being contested here. I argue that it is a concept that is flexible and multi-layered and that its meaning is fully lived in, and through, the experiences of the movers themselves. As has been proven in many of the reciprocity-based societies, multiple rhythms of family and community life continue to coexist even in the face of the seemingly overwhelming forces of modernization/globalization. Activities within and beyond women's locale and which are oriented towards the family and not merely for personal fulfilment, are 'work'.

In addition, the concept of 'work' is also redefined in this dissertation according to the ages of the women involved in movement. Women of the 'non-working' age, as in the case of first generation Melanesian-Samoan women who are now grandmothers and great grandmothers, are ignored in migration studies. Despite not being involved in paid employment anymore, first generation *Teine uli* are still involved in tasks oriented primarily towards their *'aiga*. Their movement provides insights into alternative understandings of 'home' as based on a wider and more encompassing definition of travel.

Methodological conjunctions of feminist and humanist approaches

Although there has been debate about whether a single feminist method is possible, there has been "a general agreement that collaborative methods must be part of a feminist research strategy" (McDowell, 1999, 235). The most common strategy identified has been some variant of a qualitative methodology based on in-depth interviews, participant observation, and ethnographies (Moss, 1995; 1993; Lawson, 1995). Feminist geographers in the early 1990s in particular, saw a mixed method as sympathetic to understanding gender issues and specifically women's lives that would ultimately lead to achieving the feminist political goal of liberating knowledge about women (Rose, 1993; Dyke, 1993).

Implicit in this 'new' research approach is a critique of science and its empiricist dimension and attention to ontological matters. Feminist research builds on experience and acknowledges subjective experiences as a valid form of existence (Moss, 1993; Harding and Norberg, 2005). It argues, that which is experienced can be known and that

which can be known can be changed. Furthermore, a feminist approach challenges the notions of objectivity and attempts to redefine who can be knower and what can be known (Harding, 1987). It also acknowledges that certain types of knowledge have been marginalized "by dominant epistemologies derived from masculine ways of defining knowledge and doing science." (Moss, 1993, 49). Elaborating on this position, Cope (2002, 43) begins her discussion of feminist methods by discussing epistemology:

> In order to understand what epistemology is and how it influences research, we first need to recognize that knowledge is humanly constructed or "produced."…and if knowledge is indeed produced by human actors, there must be multiple and even contradictory perspectives, interpretations, and uses of knowledge.

Feminist concern for marginalized knowledge and the acknowledgement of multiple and contradictory ways of knowing is vitally important for my work with *Teine uli.* As mentioned earlier, my argument is situated in *fa'asamoa* thinking which is at the margin of the intellectual and philosophical realm. For the feminists, one effective way to close the gap between marginalized and dominant knowledge systems is life stories and autobiography of researchers (Gilmartin, 2002; Buttimer, 2001; Moss, 2001). These methods emphasize the impossibility of separating the researcher from the researched, as well as the significance of positionality and reflexivity of the research process.

Positionality is an important consideration for feminist and postcolonial/post-structuralist scholars. The earlier call by feminist geographers for multi-method approaches to generate a 'woman-centred' knowledge has prompted concern about recongnizing differences among women (McDowell, 1999). This certainly raises question about "the

meaning …of being a 'woman' in historically-, culturally-, and place-specific situations" (Dyck, 1993, 56). Underhill-Sem (1999, 27-28) points out:

> Questions such as 'what about the women?' and Which women?' need to be raised as intellectual rather than methodological issues. This would encourage recognition of situatedness of these studies which then open up space for other perspectives.

While loudly voiced by feminist scholars, these questions and the methodologies associated with answering them are not new as far as humanist geographers are concerned. In the Pacific, humanist approaches to understanding population movement in particular, not only rub shoulders with feminist studies in terms of the methodological concerns, but are also the closest to the indigenous thinking of Pacific islanders.

In contrast to mainstream approaches to migration studies, humanistic studies do not regard 'migrants' or potential migrants as individuals, with the power to make decisions about moving or staying. Rather, the focus on the life world experiences of the individual as a complete immersed in an experienced totality (Buttimer, 1976). The world of a migrant is not limited to its micro-level scale. Rather it contains an array of interactions that mark individuals as movers and reproducers of a plethora of characteristics rather than by one or two determinant variables (Chapman and Dowdle, 1991). Some of these characteristics include their cultural values and practices, ethnicity, and the socioeconomic world.

To understand this complex life-world experience of the movers, humanists use intensive qualitative methodologies, such as in-depth interviews, oral history, biography, family

life stories, personal testimonies as well as a constant re-examination of available survey data and census information (Chapman, 1995). Chapman and Dowdle's work acknowledges "the importance of producing humanist accounts of migration to complement the plethora of quantitative work into patterns and generalities of migration" (Boyle, 2002, 71).

Central to the humanist approach has been the community-focused, in-depth analysis of mobility. Spearheaded by Pacific population geographer, Murray Chapman (1995), who argues persuasively for 'alternative ways of knowing' about mobility in the Pacific and reciprocity-based societies in general, this approach to understanding the process of moving requires not only the words but the 'worlds' of the movers themselves. As Cathy Small (1997, 47) notes in the case of Tongan movement to the United States, "going to America, the ultimate act of Westernization, was Tongan". This has been an important point to stress especially where movement is intermingled with the ever-increasing globalization process.

Such an approach, however, is not new to studies of population movement in reciprocity-based societies. In fact, in the 1980s, while much research attention in geography was being paid to the emerging feminist tradition, humanistic approaches in population geography in reciprocity-based societies were providing some fascinating insights (Chapman and Morrison, 1985; Chapman and Prothero, 1985). Emphasis was placed on the holistic nature of communities and the dynamic wholeness of the life-world experience of the individual (Buttimer, 1985). It was argued that such an experienced

totality encompassed movement which, in turn, carries cultural significance and identity. The cultural metaphors of the tree and the canoe in the Tanna community in Vanuatu, as articulated in the works of cultural geographer Joel Bonnemaison (1994), explain that Melanesian movement is anchored in the context of people's own social reality. The act of movement is not simply an 'outside' influence interfering with people, rather it is a reality embedded within the community itself. This process speaks not of dispersed, fragmented, or disintegrated community, but of a geographical distribution of kin who are still firmly rooted in their identity and community of origin, but also able to move around (Chapman and Morrison, 1985).

Although there has been no explicit humanist view on the activity and notion of 'work' and its connectedness to mobility among Pacific peoples, humanistic work is implicit in discussions of movement *per se*. Because of the value humanist scholars place on the totality of experience, they make clear that islanders' mobility in the past and present have been oriented towards kin and community. Lilomaiava-Doktor's (2004) study of *malaga* (movement) among people of her village, Salelologa, in Samoa, Peter's (2001) cultural analysis of the travels of his people, the Chuukese, Bonnemaison's (1994) study on ni-Vanuatu mobility, Underhill's work on Manihiki islanders (1987), and Konai Helu Thaman's (1985) 'autobiography of movement', are all examples of a growing number of mobility studies within which one can also locate 'work' activities oriented towards the corporate unit of kin.

Complementing these mobility-focused studies are a range of literary works by Pacific scholars, many of whom are descendants of Island migrants based in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia and the United States (Anae, 2001; Figiel, 1996; Wendt, 1995; Pule, 1992). Their stories not only reflect those of their migrant parents but communicate a continued engagement with, and commitment to, their Island heritage. In particular, the works by women writers and scholars indicate a successful synthesis of humanist and feminist theorizing that is anchored in Oceanic thinking. Implicit in many of these writings is the contextual understanding and appreciation of island women through cultural thinking and way of life (Teaiwa, 1995; Figiel, 1999; Sua'alii, 2001; Marsh, 2004). For example, Selina Tusitala Marsh (2001), details the meanings of her name as a metaphor for theorizing Pacific literature. She points out,

> …my experience of needing to analyse critically the writing of Pacific Islands women but finding few suitable theoretical literary frameworks within which to do so, presented me with a challenge. I had to theorise from the 'inside out', that is, beginning with myself, within Oceania in order to examine Oceanic literature (*Ibid*., p. 139)

Generally this also reflects a broader humanistic and feminist approach of engaging the self as part of the research (Besio, 2006; 2007; Sharp, 2005; Chacko, 2004; Moss, 2001). Acknowledging the self not only blurs the boundary between the researched and researcher, but also empowers those concerned and situates the researcher as learner. Contemporary theorizing in the Pacific also reflects this approach as local scholars insist on the value of 'starting with ourselves' as a way to effectively engage with the world. I attempt in this study to rethink movement and work among *Teine uli* as part and parcel of a broader effort among Pacific scholars not only to critique dominant explanations of Pacific people's lives, but to offer alternative perspectives. Critical perspectives

articulated in the Pacific have 'reached back' to indigenous thinking for interpretations of various aspects of island life (Huffer and Qalo, 2005; Gegeo, 2001; Hau'ofa, 2000). The essay by Tongan anthropologist, Epeli Hau'ofa (1993) marked the beginning of increasing inputs from island scholars in these intellectual debates.

Critical thinking in Pacific migration has come from the works of scholars who side with the humanist tradition and those with an explicit feminist perspective. In both of these approaches 'developmentalist' thinking as embedded in the concept of movement, is being turned on its head. More specifically, wholesale notions of the 'migrant' and 'migrant communities' as used in conventional migration studies have been challenged and here undergone rethinking 'from within'. I draw from these critical analyses by weaving them into my work on rethinking women's work and movement.

Conclusion

I have likened this chapter to weaving a fine mat because tasks of identifying, tearing, and placing 'usable leaves' have been done here. My focus on *Teine uli*'s lived experiences means attempting to weave a 'fine mat' that constitutes experiences of different places and times. Identifying and drawing patterns of continuity with colonial and contemporary experiences proved to be a painful scholarly challenge. In much of the social sciences, marrying humanistic and feminist approaches is unheard of. I see this situation as similar to my own dissatisfaction with prevailing explanations of women's work and movement. All along, my personal experience and knowledge as a woman from a non-western place 'speak' otherwise. Hence, my attempt as a 'weaver' in this chapter

identifies parallels that are useful to an alternative understanding of women who conceive of their experiences through the lenses of culture and *aiga* (family).

The dominance of conventional explanations on work and movement has created possibilities for 'other' ways of knowing. I have emphasized that my study is situated at a geographically and philosophically marginalized position. From this position, I am able to write not only about the cultural context of women's experiences but from within it. This chapter sets the scene for the next, which discusses in detail Samoan cultural thinking as a frame for my study.

CHAPTER 3

'AIGA AS CONTEXT: AN ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR WORK AND MOVEMENT

'I' does not exist.
I am not.
My self belongs not to me because 'I' does not exist.
'I' is always 'we',
is a part of the *'aiga*,
a part of the Au a teine…
…a part of Samoa

Sia Figiel, 1996, 135

I pointed out in Chapter One that cultural meanings of work activities and movement are constituted in relationships within '*aiga*. These relationships constitute the complex lived experience that underpins humanistic and feminist approaches to work and movement. In this chapter I imagine myself undertaking the task of an islander ocean diver. My first goal is to get to the belly of the ocean, beneath the angry waves that would engulf me like a driftwood; beyond the layers of the *taetafe* (sub-surface flows of sea water that carry logs and other ocean rubbish), and into the seemingly cold, dark and silent underwater world where the majority of sea-lovers dare not to go. My second goal is to bring the 'wealth' that I find in the ocean belly and share it with my Oceanic '*aiga* so that they too would not be afraid to dive into the deep ocean.

My 'diving' begins with an explanation of the concept of *tino o le 'aiga* (body of the family) that underpins the double-sidedness of the Samoan being and defines the persistence of the connectivity of Samoans and their '*aiga*. I delve deeper into this concept to examine the roots of Samoan identity or *fa'asinomaga* and my journey

continues into Samoan narratives of creation and the *fa'asamoa* as a knowledge system. At the center of *fa'asamoa* is located the concept of *va fealoaloa'i* (social space between people) which guides and directs all relationships including the researcher-researched one. The concept of *fa'alavelave,* which is fundamental to Samoan movement, both in the past and present also lies there. Of course, I cannot ignore the *taetafe* around me. On my way to resurface I engage with the changes and misconceptions of work and movement. These tend to hinder our view of the 'wealth' in the ocean belly where an alternative understanding of work and movement among the women in this study is anchored.

'Tino o le 'aiga': defining the Samoan self

In discrete terms, '*aiga* is family or a group of related family members. Conceptually, '*aiga* is genealogy. For Samoans, genealogy is a conditioner of living, not merely a pedigree or line of descent. It is perceived as a network of relations rather than as a personal history. A well-known Samoan legend of two brothers, Saveasi'uleo and Ulufanuasese'e, tells of the meaning and value of *gafa* (genealogy). When the two brothers parted they said these words as farewell, *"Ta te feiloa'i i'u o gafa*" (We will meet again in our descendants). Thus, Samoans conceive of their lineages as blood and social connections that are also connected to deities and other worlds, to the creation of the earth and sky, and to the future. Through genealogy one belongs to '*aiga*. It is through '*aiga* that one belongs to a village, and acquire rights to use family land. Samoan genealogies can be through both mother's and father's sides. Tellingly, genealogy has it that if a father's family is not known, children are brought up and receive their status,

land rights and support from their mother's *'aiga.* An individual's identity then is always plural, for that is the nature of Samoan genealogy – multiple, historical, and responsive to context (Salesa, 2003).

'Aiga constitutes ancestral links that are like blood veins in the biological body and whose function and very existence intricately require the coexistence of all other veins. In effect, *'aiga* is a banded collection of biological as well as social relations. Every *'aiga* has its own *paia* and *mamalu* (sacred attribution), and *faalupega* (honorific salutations), which distinguish it from other *'aiga.* Samoans understand that embedded in each member of the *'aiga* is that *paia* and *mamalu* that defines the sociality of the individual. Thus the individual is perceived to be 'carrying' the *'aiga*, and vice versa. When meeting for the first time, Samoans ask the question: "Where about is your *'aiga* or village?", *not* "What is your name?" The latter question, when asked in an inappropriate context, may be offensive to Samoans because of its directness to the individual and away from *'aiga*. Enquiring about one's *'aiga* emphasizes the centrality of an individual's communal or collective identity rather than that individual *per se.* Ones identity then is rooted not within the self but within the *'aiga*, giving rise to the double reflection of the individual in *'aiga* and *'aiga* in the individual. This remains true whether or not this identity of belonging is lived or practiced by the individual.

The double reflection of the individual and *'aiga* is constituted in the concept of *tino o le 'aiga* which, literally and conceptually, refers to ones physical and social body or being as that of *'aiga*. *Tino o le 'aiga* contextualizes the self as not a mere body matter existing

on its own but that which is born into and **of** ***'aiga.*** As explained by Samoan novelist, Sia Figiel (1996, 135),

> 'I' does not exist.
> I am not.
> My self belongs not to me because 'I' does not exist.
> 'I' is always 'we',
> is a part of the *'aiga*,
> a part of the Au a teine…
> …a part of Samoa

Thus the Samoan self and identity is multi-sided or aspected (Anae, 1998, 78). In other words, the "Samoan self is a relational person" (Tamasese *et al,* 1997), primarily because of the complex yet clearly defined intermingling of one and *'aiga.* Tamasese *et al* (1997, 16) explain,

> Samoa's traditions and protocols explain the nature of the Samoan being as that of a relational being; that is, the Samoan self does not exist as an individual. There is myself and yourself. Through you, my being is contextually meaningful and whole. Through myself, you are given primacy in light of our collective identity and places of belonging, our genealogical lineage, and our roles, responsibilities and heritage.

The double reflection of the individual and '*aiga* is underpinned by social relationships. These relationships not only maintain the kinship, but their very existence draws from the corporate unit of '*aiga.* The strength of these relations to bind and enhance kinship can never be underestimated primarily because relations are rooted and they remain within the self. A person is not a mere body but is constituted of socio-cultural connections. Likewise, the strength of relations to tear down and disrupt the corporate functioning of '*aiga* or sets of '*aiga* and villages is equally effective and dangerous, hence the need to constantly nurture them regardless of the spatial locations of *'aiga* members.

This conception of the self is not unique to Samoan thinking. According to Samoan scholar and *matai* (high chief) Le Tagaloa (1997), the self as inseparable from genealogies and kinship is a perception that is common in Pacific societies particularly among Polynesians. Maori philosopher Roy Perret (2003, 258) notes, "[a]s in other Polynesian cultures, the Maori model for the origin and development of the universe is genealogical: all things have a lineage and a continuity, a family relation and resemblance." The nonindividualistic conception of selfhood is the historical and social identity provided by tribal traditions that define the context with which an individual pursues the communal good.

Fa'asamoa and Fa'asinomaga (identity)

At one level, *fa'asamoa* is understood to be a culture and a way of life. At a deeper level, *fa'asamoa* is a way of thinking, seeing, and conceiving of the world. As such *fa'asamoa* is a knowledge system. Central in the Samoan knowledge system is one's *fa'asinomaga* (identity). Professor of Samoan Language and Culture at Samoa's Indigenous University, Le Amosa o Savavau: Iunivesite Samoa in Apia, Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa (1997) writes, "*E taua le iloa e le tagata lona Faasinomaga; e taua le iloa e ia lava ia; o le mea na sau ai; o le mea e alu atu iai*." (It is important for a person to know his/her identity; it is important that s/he knows him/her self; where s/he came from; where s/he is going).

Samoan identity is anchored in three main pillars: *matai* or chiefly title to which one's lineage belongs (or genealogy); *fanua* (land); and *gagana* (language). Genealogy defines one's '*aiga* or blood and social connections. *Fanua* means *eleele* (blood) and refers as

well to the placenta. On these concepts the phrase *tama a le eleele* (true heir of a *matai* title or land) is based (*Ibid.*; p. 4-5). Le Tagaloa argues that language is more than speaking Samoan. Instead *"o le gagana, o le puna loloto lea e faalanu ai le tagata ola ma mafaufau i uiga loloto o le muagagaa ma le upu tuu: "E fafaga tama a manu i fuga o laau ma ia, ae fafaga le tama a le tagati i upu ma tala"* (language is like a deep spring in which a person bathes and meditates on the depth of this saying: 'Birds feed their offspring with plants and fish; people feed their offspring with words and stories'). These three pillars complete the social being of a Samoan person, and are central in the understanding of life and living in Samoan society.

Knowing oneself therefore has much to do with knowing one's *fa'asinomaga* beginning with the honorific salutations of one's '*aiga* and village or genealogies and villages in which one's lineages are rooted. Obviously *fa'asinomaga* is not a discrete path of 'knowing oneself' but rather a multiple and complex web of interconnected paths. The Samoan saying; *E tele a'a o le tagata i a'a o laau* (People have more roots than the plants) points to the core of this reality. It means, therefore, that there are many categories of honorific salutations in each village that Samoans and others should appreciate. Indeed, the Samoan identity is always plural. Socially it is impossible for an individual to be separated from that identity. One may decide not to acknowledge or live that identity, but for the '*aiga* s/he remains part of '*aiga* or village.

All social relations and interactions are guided by the individuals' or groups' knowledge of their own *fa'asinomaga.* This is why, according to Aiono-Le Tagaloa (*Ibid.* p. 7), it is

appropriate for heirs of '*aiga* to study and understand their own genealogies. Samoans scorn situations in which non-'*aiga* members attempt to research others' and not their own lineages as these are known to be the invaluable treasures of '*aiga*. One's *fa'asinomaga* therefore defines social relations and guides daily interactions.

Va fealoaloa'i: centrality of relationships

The word *va* encompasses the Samoan world-view. It defines two types of relationships that are important in Samoan society. *Va* is first of all, the relationship between the Creator/God and the created. This refers to the spiritual connection between the created and the Creator through the act of worship. The epic narrative of Samoan creation has it that Tagaloa-a-Lagi was the Creator/God who dwelled in the Tenth Heaven, in the *Va-nimonimo* (space) where the human eye cannot see. This is the first *Va* that is defined through the worship and governed by deep respect. Samoan historian and daughter of Professor Le Tagaloa, Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagaloa (2003, 21) explains,

> The physical *Va*, the spatial relationship cannot be measured, for God, Tagaloa, dwelled in the Tenth Heaven, and the Ten Heavens cannot be seen. It was supposed to "roll" freely in the *Va-nimonimo* of space beyond human eyesight. Tagaloa created the Ten Heavens. The Creator spoke and the heavens were wrought.

Secondly, *Va* also defines the relationships among all of creation. It governs all things and holds all things together. The *Va* did not cease with the arrival of Christianity. It continues to pervade Samoan life and living even today among all Samoans in Samoa or those residing elsewhere (*Ibid.* p.8). This second dimension of *va* is commonly used in contemporary research on Samoan culture and thinking to mean social space between individuals or groups. Samoan writer, Albert Wendt (1996, 21) elaborates ,

> Important to the Samoan view of reality is the concept of the *va* or the *wa* in Maori and Japanese (ma). *Va* is the space between, the between-ness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the unity-in-all, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. A well known Samoan expression is '*Ia teu le va'*, cherish/nurse/care for the *va,* the relationships. This is crucial in communal cultures that value group, unity, more than the individual person/creature/thing in terms of group, in terms of *va*, relationships.

The concept of *va* as alluded to in the quote by Wendt, traverses many Pacific island societies and indeed those of the rim countries and beyond. Thus its understanding and meaning is not restricted to Samoan society but encompasses a wider geographic and social realm. This is indicative of the existence of a much broader social reality and connection that exist and the need to examine parallels that link Oceanic societies and peoples. Indeed, one significant parallel is the centrality of relationships as the most influential dynamic in shaping individual identity as well as the social world.

The term *fealoaloa'i* literally refers to two or more persons or groups facing each other, as in a meeting. *Va fealoaloa'i* then describes the social space between people or families. Indeed, it is space that relates rather than separates. The significance of this concept has seen a growing body of research particularly concerned with migrant Pacific island communities This has mainly been in the field of social work and health (for example: Peteru, C. 1992. Tamasese *et al*, 1997; Autagavaia, 2001; Aumua, 2003). These works emphasize the value of understanding how Island migrants define themselves individually and corporately as this is central in framing appropriate research approach and methodologies. A Samoan social worker in New Zealand, Mary Autagavaia (2001),

places emphasis on *va fealoaloa'i* as a sacred space that is not to be desecrated and imposed upon by the researcher by showing bad behavior.

Bad behavior in research work implies breaching of the *Va.* For Samoans, questioning is not merely between the researcher and the researched. Rather it constitutes the *Va* between the researcher and the Samoan subject and the different *Va* the Samoan subject has been reared in, immersed in, and has knowledge of. The giving and receiving of information is closely dictated by observance of the *Va*. If the researcher breaches the *Va,* information will not be given. The breach of the *Va* is expressed in the sensitivity that surrounds the *fesili* or the question in Samoan culture. The researcher is judged

> ..by the way one poses questions. The situation will be considered, the questioner will be scrutinized, especially in the words they issue, their tone and the subject matter they are questioning about. …At the base of the issue of questioning or posing the *fesili*, is the right of the Samoan to speak. The right is as basic to the Samoan as the right to breathe and live. Therefore Samoan philosophy commands that one select one's words and the appropriate situations every time one opens one's mouth whether to declare, inform or interrogate (Aiono-Le Tagaloa, 2003, 15)

The researcher-participant relationship is among the many *Va* that Samoans nurture and care for. These relationships continue to persist across time and space. In her doctoral dissertation, Melani Anae (1998, 13), locates herself and her journeys in the context of *'aiga* and *faasamoa*.

> From birth and while growing up, I was warmly embraced in the cocoon of *'aiga* and Church. My parents had come to New Zealand in the early 1950s under the rhetoric of "wanting a better life", or "a better education for their children"…The only world I knew was the *fa'aSamoa* that my parents brought with them, and that was further moulded by our Pacific islanders' Church (PIC).

Anae correctly notes the incredible intermingling of *fa'asamoa, 'aiga* and the Church. It cannot be ignored that the Church has had an important role in molding *fa'asamoa*, as have other forces like colonialism, modernization, and global political economy. Given the persistence of these influences, the practices of *fa'asamoa* cannot be considered pure or static in this day and age. This is true for both Samoans in the islands and abroad ((Anae, 2001; Macpherson, 2002; Meleisea, 1992). In the midst of these changes, that contribute to *fa'asamoa* being problematic and vulnerable to various interpretations, it is important to note that changes are superficial and have not removed an iota of the multi-sidedness of the Samoan being.

My study uses the concept *Va fealoaloa'i* in order to provide an alternative view and understanding of *Teine uli*'s world of work. As mentioned earlier, central to this framework is the appreciation of social relationships as the most influential dynamic force underpinning lived experience. Thus engaging in such work as collecting copra in the plantation, local market vendor activities, small home-based businesses, or a packaging job in an Auckland factory, no longer become taken-for-granted experiences that are understood through the lenses of economic interpretations only, but experiences that are tightly woven into the cultural and social fabric of *Teine uli*. Specific and daily happenings in the lives of *Teine uli*, for example, are indicative not only of the persistence of cultural realities/meanings but the changes and continuities which are also contextualized within broader societal and global processes. The women's stories of their particular lives and places also highlight the wider realities within which they situate themselves.

Misconceptions of '*aiga* relations in migration analyses

It is often argued by scholars of Samoan society and economy that Samoans feel 'obliged' or are 'obligated' to give to their '*aiga.* In the migration and remittance literature, for example, sending money and other material goods by migrants to their kin in the islands is commonly interpreted as an example of this obligation. For example, an economist and a geographer at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, Geoff Bertram and Ray Watters (1985), coined the phrase 'transnational corporation of kin' to describe the role and operation of Pacific Island families in migration in the 1970s and 1980s. In the case of Samoa, this model was applied to describe *matai* (chiefs) as leaders of '*aiga,* who had always controlled decisions and sought to determine how the resources of their kin groups might be most advantageously employed. With the global distribution of '*aiga* members Bertram and Watters observed the extension of this principle to a new set of political and economic circumstances. Like a profitable transnational corporation, '*aiga* was to monitor the changing markets and make necessary adjustments for the relocation of its members as market conditions change. In this perspective, '*aiga* members are 'obligated' to fulfill the paramount interest of the 'corporation,' and not themselves.

At the same time, there have been doubts about the continuity of remittances over time. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, questions were raised by Pacific migration analysts like John Connell (1987) of the University of Sydney, Australia, and Cluny Macpherson (1994) of the University of Auckland, New Zealand, about whether remittances would persist with the children of the original migrants. Because of these concerns, the

'obligation' of overseas-based '*aiga* members to island-based kin was seen as contradictory and problematic due to changing circumstances of migrant relatives in the metropolitan cities (Macpherson, 1996). This, in turn, would have affected the 'expected' financial obligations of members who might possibly remit less or less frequently. If, and when this happens, not giving to '*aiga* would be perceived by relatives as against its wishes.

In the Collins *Dictionary and Thesaurus* 'obligation' is defined as burden, charge, compulsion, duty, liability or must. These terms imply a relationship governed by forceful acts that are produced and reproduced by those in power. This type of relationship is implied in the 'transnational corporation of kin' where the powerful are interpreted as the *matai* (chiefs), and the powerless are the rest of the '*aiga* members. While 'obligation' seems to be the closest English word to describe members' commitment and orientation to '*aiga*, the contexts within which the term is often used imply negative connotations that downplay the cultural significance of the very act of giving to relatives. When used frequently and unchallenged, the term tends to perpetuate a negative image of '*aiga* relationships. '*Aiga* would be seen as an institution, demanding money and resources from its members. Embedded in the concept of 'obligation' is the assumption that orientation towards '*aiga* is dominated by giving money, forced and burdensome, leaving the individual member with little or no choice. Given these stereotypes, it is vital to understand the link between the individual and '*aiga* as being rooted in genealogical lineages defined by relatives' roles, responsibilities and heritage.

Samoan novelist Albert Wendt (1996, 27), gives a powerful description of this relationship as *va* (space between) that relates rather than separates. He writes, "Our *va* with others define us; our '*aiga*. We can only be ourselves linked to everyone and everything else in the *va*, the Unity-that-is-All and now. It is in this *va* that the individual 'carries' her '*aiga* and *vice versa*. Orientations toward '*aiga* then constitute not only giving to, but also receiving from, other members. It is much more than giving money and resources. It is about relationships, out of which 'giving and taking' spring and, upon which exchanges are built. Anthropologist Serge Tcherkézoff (2002, 3) sees this practice to be quite common in Oceania where, "by constantly giving one certainly does accumulate but it is not objects that are accumulated, but relationships." Evidence from a study on remittances conducted in Mauke and Manihiki islands in the Cook Islands, strongly indicates that "[Islanders] gave by remitting – sometimes strategically but sometimes altruistically, sometimes to distribute but sometimes to secure relations, yet in all cases the act of gifting was constitutive, defining and culturally expressive or beyond-self." (Marsters *et al*., 2006, 40). Such a practice of 'giving and taking' involves the continuing circulation of people and resources – the very process that enhances kinship relations.

Given the intensity of global mobility among Samoans '*aiga* is not geographically confined. In fact, the process of movement has become a means through which '*aiga* expands and transcends spatial and social boundaries. As Samoan geographer, Saili Lilomaiava-Doktor (2004, 218) argues about members of Samoan '*aiga*,

> Distance does not separate them, but only provides further interconnecting social pathways. Nor does greater distance translate into diminishing commitment to the

> '*aiga*, because social connections constitute a significant part of their identity and self-esteem. It is therefore social connections rather than geographic boundaries that are central to Samoan conceptions of movement.

A Samoan anthropologist at the University of Auckland, Melanie Anae (1998, 10) captures part of the reality of '*aiga* life among overseas Samoans where Samoan culture

> finds expression in *tautua* (service) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect*)*, in taking care of grandparents and aunties, uncles and younger children, in discipline and respecting elders… in accommodating visiting *'aiga*, in endless cooking and cups of tea, and in the many *fa'alavelave.*

These various aspects of '*aiga* life in Auckland constitute a pattern of continuities in Sydney as Samoan anthropologist, Leulu Felise Va'a (2001) finds out in his study. Indeed, similar characteristics have been identified by David Pitt and Cluny Macpherson (1974) in many migrant communities throughout New Zealand. These patterns, however, are characterized by changes that have, to a certain extent, impacted the way migrant communities and their island-based relatives are perceived and described by conventional migration scholars.

Change and continuities

As a unitary core '*aiga* is never conflict-free because members go through differing and changing experiences over time and space. Conflicts within or between '*aiga* are real and are the 'necessary evils' in Samoan society. In the village context, many of these conflicts can be ironed out through dialogue among leaders of '*aiga* involved. Others become so serious that a court case eventuates. Samoan historians, Malama Meleisea (2000) and Morgan Tuimalealiifano (2000), analyze contemporary changes that have disguised the potential for the abuse of leadership in '*aiga* and villages. Both scholars use examples

from their respective villages linking internal conflicts to "the tensions between tribal and modern principles of accountability" (*Ibid*. p.171). Samoan novelist and writer, Albert Wendt (1995), laments these changes and their undesired outcomes in his poems, while linking them to wider socioeconomic transformations that are inevitable in Samoan society.

Changes also are inevitable especially given the increasing global mobility of Samoans in the last fifty years. Scholars like Cluny Macpherson express doubts about the continuity and long-term maintenance of familial connections of Samoan migrants to their island homelands due mainly to changing commitments in their new homes overseas. Examining patterns of remittances at a given time, Macpherson (1990, 17) points out that migrants' orientations to their island homelands change in various ways, and "this is reflected in a decline in the proportions of their income remitted to people in [the island] communities".

In another work, however, Macpherson (2001) acknowledged the 'extension' of Samoan culture from the islands into New Zealand giving rise to various forms of being Samoan. Comparing the generations of original migrants and their New Zealand-born children, Macpherson (2001, 165) points out that "while the young people consider themselves Samoans, and identify publicly as Samoan, the content and style of their 'Samoanness' varies within the group and differs in quite significant ways from their parents' 'Samoanness." For him, the differing experiences among the migrants and their children no longer implies the existence of Samoan culture in one place or the other but in a space

between them where all the different ways of being Samoan are contested and mediated *(Ibid.*,p. , 166).

Similar experiences among the Samoan community in Seattle, are identified by American anthropologist, Barbara McGrath (2002). She highlights the enduring importance of '*aiga* and the church as significant institutions among the migrants. These institutions, however, "are experienced differently and have changed meanings for individuals in Seattle as compared to Samoa" (*Ibid.*, p. 331). McGrath's analysis goes so far in that broader societal influences, such as economic, political, and social biases that may be experienced by the Samoans in Seattle are not examined alongside the institutions of '*aiga* and the church. A consideration of all these factors would possibly shed some light on reasons behind a continued orientation of Samoans toward their '*aiga*. Melanie Anae's study of New Zealand-born Samoans in Auckland was both holistic and contextual. She identifies racism in New Zealand as a significant factor shaping the way young Samoans in that country assertively identify themselves as Samoans rather than as New Zealanders.

Contrary to concerns over the decline in remittances, changing orientations of migrants toward the island homelands, and questions about who the "real" Samoan is, the philosophical premise of studies like Anae's sets these apart from mainstream work. Anae's (1998) earlier work on identity journeys among Samoan youth in Auckland reveals a continuing commitment to Samoan culture, *aiga,* and the church – the three main facets of Samoan communities in the islands and abroad. Recently, she questions,

> Why is it…that some upwardly mobile New Zealand-born Samoans still assertively identify themselves as Samoan or New-Zealand-born Samoan rather than New Zealander (in all contexts) and why do they still participate in the *fa'aSamoa* when they do not need to and/or when their 'Samoan-ness' is constantly challenged by there island-born '*aiga* and elders? (Anae, 2002, 3).

Anae's questions allude to possible contradictions experienced by New Zealand-born Samoans in New Zealand and the question of what being Samoan is as raised by Macpherson. Although Macpherson tends to link changing Samoan identity to macro/structural economic changes in the host country, the experienced reality speaks otherwise. People have continued, and are continuing, to remit to their '*aiga* in the islands. Migrants continue to uphold Samoan culture through gatherings and activities connected with it. Counter flows of island-made goods and island foodstuffs remain a strong feature of the links between migrants and their island homes (Hau'ofa, 2000). Moreover, the continuity of movement particularly through *malaga* (short-term group or family visits) has become an established characteristic of Samoan movement (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004). Anae argues,

> I maintain that it is preferable to consider Samoans in New Zealand as "enduring peoples"…and the *faaSamoa* in the New Zealand context as a persistent identity system…We know that the genetic constitution, 'homeland', language, customs and beliefs change through time, but so long as the common understandings of what has been experienced in relations with other peoples are known and felt, the *faaSamoa* will persist for those not born in Samoa but beyond… The opting in and out of the persistent identity system is a result of fluctuating circumstances and experiences not only of the *faaSamoa* but also of racism in New Zealand experienced during the identity journeys of a group of New Zealand-borns. The thing that survives is the system itself, and this system must maintain minimal membership (Anae, 2002, 16-17)

Referring to the Samoan community in Sydney, Va'a's (2001, 240) analysis shows that,

> Samoans find the *fa'a-Samoa* provides a means of survival in a foreign land and a sense of security. Many Samoans who are comparatively wealthy and do not need the *fa'a-Samoa* to survive in economic terms are strong supporters and

> practitioners of the *fa'a-Samoa* life-style…In short, the data do not support the notion that wealth encourages individuation, if this means withdrawal from family and community support activities.

Central in the persistence of Samoan culture and identity is the strength and continuity of '*aiga* relationships. American anthropologist Robert Franco (1990) marvels at the persistence of kinship relations among the Samoans in Hawaii regardless of the socio-economic status of the migrants. Through writing, overseas Samoans express their sense of connectedness to '*aiga.* Many of Albert Wendt's novels and poems, such as *Sons for the Return Home*, *Ola,* and "Shaman vision", articulate the dynamics of '*aiga*. Similar sentiments are evident in various popular Samoan songs in which the '*aiga* and village of origin are portrayed as the 'center' of Samoan world. Meleisea (2000), who currently resides in Thailand and works in Bangladesh reflects on the historical development of modern Samoa so as to raise awareness among contemporary leaders of the danger to the Samoan family and protocols of being absorbed blindly into the mission of development and modernization.

Placing movement in aiga

The context of '*aiga* and *fa'asamoa* as discussed above guides the way this study deals with the concepts of 'work' and movement of *Teine uli.* Once again, the rootedness of these concepts in local understanding is placed in the foreground although changes over time and space are not discarded. This relates to the overall attempt in this study to deconstruct taken-for-granted scholarly interpretations applied to the life activities of women from reciprocity-based societies and to provide hidden alternatives that lie deep within the women's lives and living.

***Fa'alavelave*: the hub of movement and its continuity**

Fa'alavelave is among the commonly used terms among Samoans today because it refers to cultural events such as funerals, weddings, and chiefly title bestowal that bring relatives together usually to a family home or village. Samoans overseas and in the islands participate in *fa'alavelave* and see such events as inevitable in Samoan life. One's participation in a fa'alavelave is a way of acknowledging one's *faasinomaga* and lineage to a chiefly title, family land or village.

This understanding of *fa'alavelave* however is commonly cast in negative connotations of the events. There is no denial that some Samoans complain about *fa'alavelave* primarily because of its seeming characteristic of 'sucking' money from the purses of *aiga* members. Obviously this thinking is dictated by the view that money is everything and that it should either be saved, invested, or spent on 'productive' purposes. This line of thinking underpins much of the literature on Samoan migration and life of the migrant communities. Three prevailing approaches are briefly discussed here partly to provide an intellectual-historical context to the framework of my study, partly to pinpoint areas associated with existing debates.

The earliest school of thought was the population-environment perspective that predominated studies in the 1960s and 1970s (Bedford, 1997; Connell, 1999). This view emphasizes the relationship between the growing populations of the Pacific islands and their relatively limited carrying capacities for large populations and for many of these countries international migration provided the 'safety valve'. Thus movement is seen

partly as an outcome of, and partly as some kind of solution to, problems of unemployment and population pressure. More recent concerns about the impact of climate change, particularly on smaller islands, continue to express the relevance of this perspective. However, the real issue has to do with the complicated situation where a number of island countries have relationships with Pacific rim countries that allow for some form of jobs or residence overseas. Whether the rim countries are prepared to continue to take islanders is an important concern at this stage.

The second perspective is the MIRAB model of the New Zealand-based scholars, Bertram and Watters (1985). An acronym for Migration, Remittances, Aid, and Bureaucracy, the MIRAB model describes the economies of those Pacific societies whose populations have been heavily involved in international movement. The perpetuation of MIRAB economies is dependent upon sustained flows of remittances, or at least on continued investment by migrants in their island homes. Alongside this is the assumed inflow and maintenance of foreign aid to drive productive investments.

Like the first school of thought, the MIRAB model presents a structural analysis of island economies and a macroeconomic interpretation of Pacific movement. It pivots on an interpretation of migrants as individuals who move to sell their skills, brawn, and brains in an overseas labor market. What they earn, or a portion of it, is remitted to the original homelands as investment. A condition of unavoidable dependency is assumed in this model, and the complexity of the specific (McDowell, 1999) and the microeconomic underpinnings of island economies are ignored.

A recent critique by three geographers at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, (Marsters, Lewis and Friesen, 2006) of the workings of remittance systems in the MIRAB analysis confirms that remittances encompass complex social and cultural meanings besides economic ones. Drawing on MA research conducted by Evelyn Marsters on the islands of Mauke and Manihiki in the Cook Islands, the authors show that while remittances from abroad remain significant for Mauke island, the reverse is true for Manihiki. The latter is not a MIRAB economy as it has a productive, export-led economy based on the cultivation of black pearls (*Ibid.*, p. 39). Although remittances are a significant aspect of Manihiki's economy, they flow predominantly in the opposite direction – off the island to relatives overseas.

In their analysis, Marsters, Lewis and Friesen raise important questions about two research components. First, they question the oversimplified use of 'household' as a unit of analysis and its contradictory application for kinship in the islands. They argue:

> Although the research on which we draw began by working with similar conceptions of households 'on the ground' as analytical rationalising units, it came quickly to question the value of this starting point. These households are far from immutably constituted as distinctive, independent units or as the core units of larger TNCs of kin. The flows of migrants, goods and ideas that constitute remittance systems do not occur with in such neatly bounded units. They occur between people who are 'more or less' related, commonly but not always justified by the kinship basis of these relations…there are also a multiplicity of individual and household motives for giving (and receiving) remittances, many of which go well beyond 'the economic' (Marsters *et al.*, 2006, 40).

Related to this point is a second one that remittance practices are complex and basically linked to people's sense of identity. As the three Auckland-based geographers argue, "[r]emittances are an expression of what it is to be a Cook Islander – their future flow

depends as much on the strength of identity that underlies the gift as it does on assessments of relative welfare by household heads" (*Ibid*, p. 41). This perspective contrasts with the earlier pessimistic assessment by John Connell (1987, 1991) of the role of migrant remittances in the 'development' of island economies. He was particularly critical of the way in which remittances were being used for consumption purposes (*fa'alavelave*) rather than productive economic investment. Despite his call for greater self-reliance, the reality in island societies indicates continued commitment to cultural events (consumption). This trend should at least imply a message to conventional analysts of migration – that the persistent use of remittances for economically non-productive events is indicative of Islanders' insistence on, and valuing of, families and socio-cultural relations.

The link to identity as discussed by Marsters *et al* (2006) is significant because flows of people and resources seem to be no longer confined to the bipolar of the island homelands and the rim countries but also to operate through multiple localities where relatives geographically place themselves. Although the critique by Marsters, Lewis and Friesen ends by drawing useful parallels of multi-locality with postcolonial thinking on complex identities and power, the lived experiences of Pacific peoples by and large, continue to be rooted in the island homes. This is possible, as I argue in this study, partly because of the geographic centrality of island homes to the rimlands, and partly because of the continuity of movement between these places especially through visits or *malaga.*

The issue of identity as related to movement and remittances has recently been the focus of interesting scholarly work. Bedford (1997) calls this third approach to migration a 'New Cultural Perspective.' He refers to multiple linkages and complex networks of communications, trade and movement of people and ideas as having the effect of constantly changing Pacific cultures resulting in the emergence of a number of sub-cultures or multiple levels of identity among migrant communities (*Ibid.* p.55; Macpherson, 2002). At the conceptual level, Bedford links the birth of this 'new' cultural perspective to a postmodernist interpretation of migration – one that is also adopted by Connell (1997, 217) - as "journeys [that] have many meanings, many endings and much inbetweenness."

A postmodernist understanding of islander migration may, on the one hand, imply a move among migration specialists to engage with the scholarly fashion of today. On the other, it speaks of dissatisfaction with analyses driven by the empirical logic of the last three decades as representing accurate and appropriate frameworks for Pacific Islander movement. As Cluny and Laavasa Macpherson (2006, 68) recently pointed out,

> Arguments which use models derived from statistical correlations, rather than ethnographic evidence to propose linkages must always remain suspect…The best studies of the political economy of labour migration are more theoretically sophisticated and make serious attempts to understand migrants' sociocultural values, and the ways in which these are incorporated in the individuals' decisions.

Whatever the reason, it is clear that analyses that do not begin with Pacific people's ways of thinking about and understanding movement (and everything else in their life) would have critical limitations. This is a goal of my study – to present an understanding of movement from within. Drawing on the experiences and knowledge of the women with

whom I work, my focus is on *fa'alavelave* as not merely an event but also as a valuable concept whose meaning and practicality are realized and appreciated by '*aiga* members.

This leads me back to the definition of *fa'alavelave* in the beginning of this section. I have been dissatisfied with the negative connotation of the term prevailing in the remittance literature and I wanted to understand the root meaning or origin of the term. My conversations with prominent chiefs and orators of Samoan culture like Aumua Mataitusi of the Samoan Culture and Language Studies at the Unversity of Hawai'i and, Professor Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa provided explanations of the term that are profoundly cultural. According to these two scholars and chiefs, the term indicates the complex web of social relations that make up an individual Samoan and *'aiga. Lavelave* refers to the entanglement of a woman's long hair, strings or fiber. In the cultural milieu of *fa'asamoa*, this entanglement portrays the complexity, the plural identity of a Samoan person and his/her many roots. *Fa'alavelave* therefore could describe an understanding of events in the context of the Samoan cultural world that is made up of a multitude of relations and connections.

In my own attempt to understand the meaning of *fa'alavelave* I further dissected the word. The word '*lave'* literally means hook, as in fishing hook. In the task of *faiva* or fishing in old Samoa people used tools such as wooden spears, baskets or loops of dried stringers made from the bark of the wild hibiscus. *Lave* or iron hooks were among the items that the early Europeans traded with Samoans for water, coconuts, and even land (Le Tagaloa, pers. comm. 2007). Socially, *lave* means to snatch away a barrier or

something in your way. To me, the double mention of *lave* in *fa'alavelave* emphasizes the strength of a barrier to one's progress, and thus must be removed.

Much of the secondary information in published works on Samoa seems to fall in two categories. One is the older literature written mostly by foreigners, including missionaries and colonials. While there is no specific mention of the term *fa'alavelave* let alone its definition, this literature contains stories and accounts where the negative stereotypes of Samoan cultural activities, such as funerals, fishing activity, sporting events like cricket, and social gatherings are implicit.

Samoan historian, Damon Salesa's (2003) recent work on Samoan *malaga* (traveling party) shows that this was one event in which Samoans in the 19th century loved to engage. However, it was also one of the cultural activities that the missionaries and colonial administrators did not like. To them, *malaga* would often leave a village of hosts impoverished or a village of travelers deserted. In their eyes *malaga* encouraged laziness, and communism. *Malaga* was an enemy of 'progress' and civilization every time visitors descended upon their hosts like 'a swarm of locusts' for food, space, and other resources (*Ibid*.; p. 180). Samoa's first anti-cricket law, passed in 1888 aimed not only to stop the playing of the game but also to dampen *malaga (Ibid*.; p 181)

It seems that with the new colonial policies on cultural activities like *malaga* and cricket it is highly likely that similar were perceived by the foreign powers in Samoa at the time as barriers to socio-economic and political progress. Thus the concept *fa'alavelave,* and

its negative effect of slowing down 'progress' clearly related to regulations and disciplinary measures of the colonial governments. Indeed this would require a separate research on its own.

The second set of literature consists of more contemporary writings by both Samoans and non-Samoans. As I was interested in the use of the term in migration studies where it is commonly used, I found these to have adopted a taken-for-granted approach to the term, using it to mean obligations or cultural events. As mentioned earlier, the mention of the word *fa'alavelave* seems to attract a sense of dislike, even among many Samoans. And this is to do with the view that for these events to be carried out, '*aiga* members are obligated to give time and money; and money given for *fa'alavelave* is perceived as a waste, 'unproductive' and prohibiting 'development.'

Despite the prevalence of negative perceptions about *fa'alavelave* the events remain significant for through these genealogies are acknowledged and appreciated. Placing *fa'alavelave* is an approach to analyze movement as a practice that is deeply grounded in '*aiga*. I argue that movement is a spatial manifestation of culture as evident in '*aiga* members' active and continued participation in *fa'alavelave*. The term literally means problem or happening. Culturally, *fa'alavelave* is associated with any event affecting members of *'aiga*. It is through *fa'alavelave* that one's commitment to kin and ties to the land of origin or village are openly acknowledged. It is a way of acknowledging genealogies and connections. More importantly, *fa'alavelave* is a common means

whereby family members congregate, share and "carry together" a problematic event, thus making it a lighter rather than a burdensome activity.

My framework then maintains that *'aiga* as constituted in *fa'alavelave* initiates, drives, maintains, and ultimately defines mobility and its continuity. *Teine uli*'s trips between Samoa and New Zealand to attend to family *fa'alavelave* reflect only a part of the mobility process. Such a part refers to actual air travel between the nodal points of Auckland and Faleolo international airports. This is mobility as mere spatial flows of bodies between two geographic points, and such flows reflect a quantitative measure of movement. In that sense, the practice of movement tends to emphasize the physical separateness of places rather than their cultural connectedness. What is central in my dissertation is the goings-on around actual air travels. It is argued that such on-goings or fringe happenings are also the unseen components of mobility that need to be acknowledged.

The cultural connectedness of places is inevitably clear today because of the continuity of *fa'alavelave* that revolves around, and characterizes the life of *'aiga*. Thus, movement encompasses sociocultural and economic lifetime events of *'aiga*. Understanding the entirety of movement as cultural therefore can be obtained through the conception of Samoan *fa'alavelave* that is central to, and underlies flows of people, goods and ideas. In the context of *'aiga* movement is more than a spatial process in that it is profoundly a cultural activity. What drives physical movement between places is the occurrence of *fa'alavelave*. Flows of material and non-material *fa'asamoa* within and beyond the

islands are clear manifestations of the nature of the geographical expansion of the Samoan *'aiga*. *Fa'alavelave* constitute exchanges of goods and money, delivering of formal speeches, and public acknowledgement of genealogies. These various practices all contribute to defining *fa'alavelave* and, by extension, Samoan movement as well.

Conclusion

A goal of this chapter has been to identify and discuss the cultural context in which an'other' understanding of experiences of work and movement can be situated. My task was similar to that of an ocean diver in the ocean belly where the rare treasures of cultural knowledge are located. In the context of Samoan '*aiga* I focus on *va fealoaloa'i* and *fa'alavelave* as significant cultural concepts through which to rethink our interpretation of work and movement. The two concepts are closely linked through their anchorage on social relations that define and constitute '*aiga.* Both are living concepts that manifest across geographic space and generations of '*aiga*. Both also underlie the lived experience of Samoan '*aiga*.

Economistic understanding of people's socioeconomic world very often tends to not only overshadow alternative/cultural meanings but also to assume these processes to have been of recent origin. For example, the notion of 'work' is normally associated with the performance of paid activities. In Samoa, as in many reciprocity-based societies, paid work and the capitalist ideas associated with it came with the arrivals of the Europeans – from early traders to established colonial companies. Today, Samoans participate in national, regional and global economies. As migrants, many are employed in various

sectors of the economies of the rim countries. Yet, despite engaging in paid work or formal employment, Samoans in general do not see themselves as being associated with only a single occupation. Rather they continue to conceive of their life as important members of their '*aiga* and villages and are responsible for a number of different tasks.

The different tasks for which '*aiga* members are responsible are kin-based. Having a well-paid job in urban Apia or Auckland city, for example, would not necessarily result in withdrawal from '*aiga*-related tasks. The persistence of the latter may even encourage participation in formal employment and absence of paid work does not necessarily stop participation in family activities. This indicates that the existence of cultural activities and corporate tasks is not entirely dependent on the existence of a formal occupation. It also implies the rootedness of '*aiga*-related tasks in cultures that existed before the introduction of new forms of work and economy with the arrival of the *papalagi* (Europeans), and how '*aiga* activities continue to be dependent on social relations.

There is no doubt that changing meanings of work due to the prevalence of wage labor and rise of new occupations have had profound effects on Samoan society. Although the money-oriented aspects of formal employment have been incorporated into Samoan life, Samoans do not conceive of them in the same way as do *papalagi.* In a similar manner, movement continues to be identified and defined within the cultural milieu of Samoan society and '*aiga*. This will be elaborated upon in the next chapter which details my field research.

CHAPTER 4

EXPERIENCING THE 'FIELD': WANDERING A SLIPPERY PATH TO KNOWLEDGE

> There are no closures, no permanent structures of knowledge, no intrinsically privileged epistemologies. One must always be moving on, nomadically searching for new sources of practical knowledge, better approximations, carrying along only what was most usefully learned from earlier voyages.
>
> Edward Soja, 1999, 269.

The process of collecting and analyzing information for my study was a constellation of experiences of both expected and unexpected circumstances. These circumstances partly defined the extremely flexible nature of the daily realities of *Teine uli* and their families, and partly reflected a gap in my experience of the day-to-day life of the majority of Melanesian-Samoans at home. Although I am a *Teine uli* and belong to the community, my experiences particularly in my adult life have been quite different from those at Vaitele in Samoa - the current physical location of the Melanesian-Samoan community. My return home in 1998 turned out to be more than for my doctoral fieldwork. It was an experience marked by 'wanderings' that constantly involved critical reflection on my part as a scholar and member of the study group.

The term 'wandering' I use here appropriately describes my spatial and socio-cultural experiences during my fieldwork. Its conventional definition portrays movement with no definite destination, aim, or meaning. I choose to focus on 'wandering' as a metaphor for my spatial moves as well as for the different kinds of knowledge

embedded in my field experience. The concept best describes my 'nomadic' search for knowledge information and more appropriate explanations for *Teine uli*'s lived experiences. As alluded to by Edward Soja (1999), useful tools and knowledge "learned from earlier voyages" were to be carried along in this search. Thus I was armed with a range of research methods to collect the information used in this study: an archival search, a field census of 62 households, in-depth semi-structured interviews of 80 *Teine uli*, life histories and biographies of 10 women, and participant observation. My research approach entailed an ethnographic perspective of an insider researcher. This position enabled my personal knowledge of *Teine uli* to be useful in understanding the broader contexts of their stories and experiences and guided my daily meetings and conversations with them.

This chapter presents my research 'wanderings' which took me to the homes of *Teine uli* at Vaitele and their relatives at Mulifanua in Samoa, and Auckland, New Zealand, as well as to the depths of meanings they hold and uphold of their life as women of *aiga.* In the first part, I situate myself as a researcher and *Teine uli* in the field. This provides the context for my field work experiences. I discuss the different approaches that I utilized to gather as much information as possible for this study. While these approaches seem to be highly structured, woven within and between them are experiences that define my inseparable engagement with *Teine uli* not only during my research but both before and after my field enquiry. Embedded in the discussion in this chapter is an important reality in this research – that it is part of a much longer journey;

a path that I have found slippery as I 'nomadically' search for alternative sources of knowledge.

Situating myself

My arrival at Vaitele for the beginning of my field work marked another return home after being overseas for three years. My time away was long enough for me to be unaware of the existing, on-the-ground activities, and current happenings in the community. Returning to do field work at home was the beginning of a process in which I constantly had to deal with the validity of my status as a member of the Melanesian-Samoan community at Vaitele. On the one hand, my being *Teine uli* could not be denied by anyone. The fact that these were the people I grew up with in the plantation and that I understood what it was to be a female laborer in those days gave me a firm conviction that this was my community from whom I would receive support for my research.

On the other hand, I and the rest of the community knew that for much of my adult life, I had been overseas and socialized into a different world. I was away for a long time and some of the older and younger people could not remember me right away when we first met. I had been to places that many Melanesian-Samoans have never visited. I speak and understand English more fluently than most women at Vaitele. They speak and understand formal Samoan more thoroughly than I do. They could weave sleeping mats and fine mats much faster than I could. I was now returning home not just a *Teine*

uli but also one armed with a *Papalagi* (European) education which many locals regard as better than the little formal schooling they have had.

Because it was difficult at first for some community members to recognize me, I was identified through my parents. Introductory phrases such as "She's the daughter of Liki and Losi who used to work at Sagafili Plantation" were used to remind the fading memories of the older folks. People knew my parents as relatives, friends and co-workers in the plantation decades before my family moved to urban Apia in 1984. People also particularly remembered my Samoan father as a laborer with an 'entrepreneurial' attitude, who managed to send all his children to school. At the time when many families in the plantation were busy sending their sons and daughters to work in New Zealand, my parents worked hard and ensured the seven of us were sent to school in Samoa.

With this background I was in a privileged position while I was in the field. People knew that I had a university education, had lived in other countries, and was able to earn some money. This privileged position provided a more attentive audience. I felt that I had the support of the community and older *Teine uli* especially were quite willing to converse with me.

One issue I had to deal with while in the field was the confidentiality of information and the identities of the women in this study. This was an ethical issue that can be hard to monitor when working with a small community like the Melanesian-Samoans at

Vaitele. It is hard to present specific information that is not attributable to certain individuals. For example, stories of elopement can be embarrassing for the women involved. The children born to eloped couples are known in Samoan society as *tama a le po* (children of the night) – a concept that carries negative connotations that can be hurtful to the children. Also, I intended to take a copy of my dissertation back to the women and their families, especially the second-generation women in Auckland who read English and expressed a desire to read it.

My concern, as a researcher, for the confidentiality of information and identities of the informants became a secondary issue especially because in the context of the Melanesian-Samoan community, everybody knows everybody else. The women were part of each other's life stories and experiences of the plantation and other places were largely shared. This was true in our verbal exchanges and should remain so in the written language. This was also the reason why I do not use pseudonyms – *Teine uli* did not mind me using their real names.

My concern as a researcher to take my dissertation and results back to *Teine uli* for their further comments or criticism was not an issue to them. The women at Vaitele expressed their concern and hope for me to get on with my work and complete my "school report" with the information they had given me. While this may indicate a sense of trust in me as a *Teine uli* to write about their lives, I believe this illustrated more a sense of unquestioned support for my "school work" than anything else. For many, to have a person (myself) from within the community to study its life and living

was a sign of recognition and, hopefully, a door to educational opportunities for the younger ones. I managed to discuss my results at informal group or individual meetings with the women and received valuable feed back. This was the same reaction from the first-generation *Teine uli* in Auckland.

At Vaitele, my active participation and contribution to community and family events was generally considered by the people as a satisfactory way to reciprocate their support for my research. The many requests for assistance that I received during my field work came from individual families as well as the community as a whole. To the best of my ability I made sure these requests were met because of one important reason. I was seen to be a resource person in terms of mediating with others outside the community – a role I did not mind playing partly because of my being part of the community and partly because I knew I was able to do it.

I could not reciprocate the women in Auckland the same way I had done at Vaitele due to certain factors. First, the community there was scattered and the type of daily interactions I had with the women at Vaitele could not occur there. The fact that I did not drive in New Zealand further constrained frequent contacts with them. Secondly, because of the set-up of the living environment in that country, the longer distances between the homes of *Teine uli*, and my unfamiliarity with their location, I felt I was more an outsider among the community in Auckland than in Samoa. Although I interviewed individual women either at their homes or at my sister's place where I stayed I did not get to know their families as at Vaitele. It was therefore appropriate

that copies of my analysis and results from the meetings I had with the women in Auckland were given back to them for inspection and further comments. A copy of this dissertation will also be given to them when it is completed.

At one stage of the field work at Vaitele I had to hire a research assistant. The in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 80 adult women of both the first and second generations between January and March 2000. Given this large number of individual women to interview, I had to hire an assistant to help conduct the interviews. Disguising the identity of my research assistant does not make sense since everyone at Vaitele knows who it was. Detailed information, such as the wages I paid her and the reasons why I selected her to be my assistant might cause some discomfort to some people. However, I provide these details in this dissertation

While at Vaitele, I lived with a cousin and his wife who were looking after my mother's half-acre land there.[1] During the year I was formally undertaking this research there was a constant flow of relatives between our homes at Vaitele and other places as well as overseas. My mother, who was visiting my older sister in Auckland arrived home in early June as she escaped the New Zealand winter. She stayed at our family home at Vaivase and often visited us at Vaitele. My aunt and uncle (my cousin's mother) moved in with us as their house down the road was being renovated. My cousin's wife's younger sister from Savaii stayed with us during the school term and went to the village during the holidays. Two cousins from New Zealand stayed with us during part of their

youth group visit to participate in the Teuila Festival.[2] An aunt stayed at our place when she came from New Zealand for another uncle's funeral. As a member of the family I was part of these flows. Some of my movements were directly related to my research. Others were indirectly related, such as when my mother had to undergo an operation in Melbourne, Australia, while others were totally unrelated.[3]

The regular domestic chores took up part of my time while living with relatives. This involved cooking, washing dishes and clothes, serving cocoa for visitors, weeding, and fetching water when the tap supply stopped. Although I could have left all these to my relatives living with me and spent my entire time working on my research, I was a member of the family and could not work just as a researcher in that setting. This is a common experience among women undertaking research in any situation for, in our multiple roles, it is unusual to have the opportunity to concentrate full-time on one task. My involvement in the daily activities of my family and community constituted an important part of the participant observation for my research. During these times, I had gained more insights on the women's day-to-day life and experiences, which my other field methods alone could not obtain.

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[1] As with other children of the original Melanesian laborers, my mother was entitled to a ½ acre-land approved by the Samoan government in 1986 to be sold to the descendants at the reduced price of WST$10,000.00 (about US$3,000.00) per 1/2 acre.

[2] Every year, the Samoan government runs this program involving a lot of entertainment and activities which aim at attracting tourists to the country. It takes place in the first week of September.

[3] For example, when I got married at the end of the year, I moved to live with my husband in a flat down the road from the community.

Archival 'wanderings': attempting to trace roots

I collected archival material on missionary activities in Samoa (Archive of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, Apia) and on German and New Zealand colonial administrations (Nelson Memorial Library; Samoa National Museum, both in Apia) during preliminary fieldvisits in July 1996 and 1997. I also established contacts with the library of the University of Papua New Guinea which held recorded tapes of Malama Meleisea's interviews in the 1970s with the original Melanesian laborers. I completed preliminary analysis and collection of source material by the time I started field enquiries.

Archival sources were used to provide a historical basis for understanding the contemporary socioeconomic situation of the Melanesian-Samoans. Two main themes guided the kinds of contextual material I was looking for: the missionary activities in Samoa, particularly among the plantation communities, and the colonial activities of the German and New Zealand administrations in Samoa. It was important to get information about the role and work of the London Missionary Society- LMS (which later became the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa – CCCS) on the plantation estates because it was the only other institution besides the plantation industry to have had a major influence on the lives of the laborers and their families. Records from the Archive of the CCCS in Apia were scattered, as much had been lost during Cyclones Ofa and Val in 1990 and 1991 respectively. However, it was obvious that the Christianizing missions of the white missionaries concentrated on the traditional Samoan villages. Church parishes

were set up in plantation estates through the CCCS when the church came under local administration in 1961 (Ta'ase, 1995).

I sought information on the specifics of the labor trade from the Samoa National Archives currently held at the Nelson Memorial Library in Apia. Details such as the terms of labor contracts, the wages paid to laborers, source islands of the laborers and their names were sought from available material. The DHPG *Registers of Workers* contain information of origin places of the laborers, who were mostly men. They came from countries known today as Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. Sorting out names of various islands, villages, or clans of origin for the original laborers was tedious work. Many of the place names on the old maps were English and colonial. Names that the first generation Melanesian-Samoans told me were Samoanized versions of places. For example, Litia and her sister Numera mentioned that their father, Ti'a Likou came from Niupelekini. This was a Samoanized name for New Britain. Faanunu and Tasi said their fathers came from the islands of 'Big Buka' and 'Small Buka', which presumably refer to Bougainville and Buka islands, respectively. Although scattered, this information was important for the reconstruction of the women's genealogies as well as their biographies. For complementary and comparative purposes, women's knowledge of their Melanesian connection was analyzed alongside this documented information.

Copies of the tapes of recorded interviews with the four remaining Melanesian laborers carried out by Samoan historian, Malama Meleisea, in 1973 and 1974 were also retrieved from the archival section of the University of Papua New Guinea library. Their stories focus on their experiences on the recruiting ships that brought them to Samoa, as well as

their work and family life on the various plantation estates in German Samoa. These men remembered that quite a few Melanesian women were working on the plantation cutting copra and may had been repatriated with their Melanesian husbands (Meleisea, 1980). Three of the men had big families and one had an adopted daughter. I had no access to any original Melanesians in the first category in Figure 1. Their stories, however, were important as they form part of the background for understanding the contemporary experiences of their daughters and grand-daughters who are involved in this study (Lines 2 and 3 of Figure 1). For example, Ti'a Likou's two daughters, Litia and Numera, and Saloi's seven daughters Leitu, Nunu, Osi, Peka, Suka, Tala, and Faamata are among the first generation *Teine uli* interviewed for this study. These women's daughters are of the second generation. Some of them are residing in Auckland and also involved in this work.

'Wanderings' for appropriate concepts

Being aware of certain problems implicit in census surveys in Samoa, such as the broad application of conventional categories of population, helped prepare me for what might happen when I carried out the formal questionnaires for the field census. Obtaining statistics on the size and demographic characteristics of the community was vital, but so was the use of appropriate terms that are meaningful to the community. The use of the term 'household' was problematic because there is no appropriate Samoan word for it. This was apparent when I translated my questionnaires into Samoan, the language used in the field. The closest term that I used was '*aiga.*

Questions on '*aiga* turned out to be challenging. "How many people in your '*aiga*?" was elaborated upon by the women who asked me again if I was referring to their '*aiga patino* (nuclear family) or '*aiga potopoto* (extended family). Statistically, it was easier for the study to focus on *aiga* as household. However, this was too narrow a definition because '*aiga* is conceived of as a web of social relations. That '*aiga* is immediately understood to include the residents as well as the absent relatives, reflects a definition that extends beyond dwelling units and physical boundaries. This understanding of '*aiga* aligns with my intention to use the *de jure* population as the reference group for this study.

Similarly, it was necessary to adopt a working definition of movement for the field enquiry. As a member of the community, I knew about the different types of movement that are defined by their purpose. For example, "going shopping at the Apia market" is different from "going to the village store" because the former takes more time, effort, planning, and preparation and the latter is a taken-for-granted, almost daily, activity. So movement periods range from daily (although there are, certainly, movement less than twenty four hours, or what we call "all the time" movement) to longer terms like two days to two or more years.

As this study was to critically examine how women's movement and work experiences across time and space are related to their conceptions of '*aiga,* long-term absences from their usual residence were important indicators of movement. From early observations, I could see that this period ranged from about 9 hours to years. Women who work in manufacturing industries or similar paid employment, for example, experienced an hour

of traveling to and from workplace and eight hours of work that constituted the length of absence from home. On some days, this period is longer as women take up over-time work as required by their employers. Absences involving other more flexible non-daily, activities such as group weaving, fishing, or gardening are directed by events such as 'school time' (when the children are away at school), or sun set.

I finally deemed it feasible for my study to focus on movements that are defined as long term and especially those beyond Vaitele. Since interviews were carried out later with *Teine uli* in New Zealand, whose mobility experiences are long term, it was important to get a uniform time-span for the movement of those in Samoa and overseas. I, therefore, defined movement as any flow of people that constituted absences from the home base for nine hours or more. Long term movement involved absences of much longer time periods – for example, 12 months – and involved primarily '*aiga* members overseas. An understanding of what movement and work activities constituted the period of being absent from home was also important.

Field census: counting aiga

I conducted the field census between July and September 1998. Its purpose was three-fold. First, to count the current (*de facto*) population or those who reside at Vaitele. As this study is the first detailed work on the descendants of the Melanesian laborers in Samoa, it was necessary to know the size of the on-site population. Secondly, to enumerate as much as possible the *de jure* population – the native born of the community who reside elsewhere and feel they belong to the Melanesian-Samoan group. Thirdly, to

locate the women of the first and second-generations who reside outside of Vaitele and who could be interviewed for the biographical and life history section of the study.

The household questionnaire was designed to obtain information on the size of each household, its Melanesian ancestors, income, current paid employment, formal education experience, former plantation job, church and social affiliations, mobility history, and location of absent *'aiga* members. During the survey, I spoke with an adult family member; in most cases, it was an adult woman. Although an adult male is normally designated head of the family, many of the men preferred to have me talk with their wives or sisters since, they said, my study was "about women". It was not unusual to have mothers, and their daughters, converse with me during the census that took place in their houses. This was a bonus for the study as other women helped reinforced or correct any information that the main interviewee was providing.

In the two-and-a-half-month period of the household census, I enumerated just over 1000 people at Vaitele. This was the *de jure* count that constituted the reference population for this study. Included in this population were residents at Vaitele at the time of the census as well as those who were away overseas or in other villages. It included family members who were away for various reasons such as seeking medical assistance in New Zealand or boarding schools. It also included the remaining relatives who were still living at the Mulifanua Estate and frequently visited their families at Vaitele. *'Aiga* members who reside in New Zealand but are felt to belong to the Community were also included in the census.

Census information analysis

A straight-forward count showed the *de facto* population to be 551 from the 62 households or occupied *fale* (houses) surveyed. The average number of persons per household was 8. Information from these families also showed the *de jure* population to be 1004. To give a general picture of the socioeconomic condition of the *de facto* population I was able to produce simple cross-tabulations indicating the age and sex structures, household income levels, and main sources of income. Tables 2 and 3 illustrate these. Since my study did not engage in making generalizations from a sample survey, statistical testing was not appropriate.

Age (years)	Male	Female	Total
0 – 4	19	28	47
5 – 9	32	45	77
10– 14	33	40	73
15– 19	32	38	70
20- 24	26	34	60
25- 29	20	21	41
30- 34	17	24	41
35- 39	23	13	36
40- 44	21	10	31
45- 49	17	12	29
50- 54	9	8	17
55+	10	19	29
Total	**259**	**292**	**551**

Table 2. Age and Sex distribution of the Melanesian-Samoans at Vaitele

	Activity	Estimated income per year
1	Factory employment	$4,160
2	Selling crops from own garden	Up to $3,000
3	Reef/lagoon fishing	Up to $4,680
4	Deep sea fishing	Up to $10,000
5	Security work	About $4,000
6	Carpentry work	Up to $15,000
7	Selling handicraft	Between $3,000 and $10,000
8	Casual employment	Between $3,000 and $5,000
9	Family shop	Up to $20,000
10	Office/Clerical employment	$6,000
11	Domestic employment	$4,000
12	Driving bus or taxi	$5,000
13	Self-employment (own taxi or mechanic shop)	Between $9,000 and $10,000
14	Selling newspaper	Up to $3,000
15	Selling raffle/games tickets	About $2,000
16	Hotel cleaning	$4,000
17	Government services jobs (nurse, police officer, technician)	Between $7,000 and $9,000

Table 3. Sources of income and estimated amounts for the Melanesian-Samoan families at Vaitele

It was mainly the younger generation Melanesian-Samoans who were involved in these types of employment. While these work activities could be considered the main sources of income, many workers seem to be moving from one job to another. The average length of time people stayed in the same job was 2 years. Hence the wages indicated in Table 3 are not consistent as workers move around between jobs.

Changing jobs seem to be common not only among the Melanesian-Samoan community members but residents of Vaitele as a whole. This has caused concern among policy-makers as there is an increasing unemployment rate for this particular area (Malaefono Taaloga, pers. comm., 2003). The main reason for this, I gathered from my interviews, was people are generally dissatisfied with employer attitude and their treatment in work places. When workers feel they are not being paid well, they attempt to disobey, or steal from their employers. This has been another common reason noted from the interviews.

Figure 4: Grandchildren of some of the *Teine uli* who are still living on the Mulifanua Estate. These people were included in the census count as the *de jure* population.

Source: Asenati Liki, 2000.

'Wanderings' through the unexpected

My field research plan for Vaitele was initially scheduled to take the following order: field census; in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and life history matrix and biographical approach. However, when the census was completed, and after some preliminary analysis, I felt that the in-depth interviews were going to be a repetition of the census in the sense that women would be asked again a set of questions from a questionnaire (although this would be a different set of questions). Although these interviews were supposed to be 'semi-structured', the fact remained that the process could be a little too distancing.

At the same time, and more importantly, Litia Likou, one of the first generation women had been ill for sometime, and her family was having doubts about her getting better again. I went directly to interview here October 1998. Getting her story was an immediate issue as far as the biographical approach was concerned, for one important reason. Litia was the eldest daughter of Ti'a Likou, one of the four original laborers interviewed by Samoan historian Malama Meleisea in 1974. Of her four siblings, Litia was the only one who was quite fluent in Pidgin English that was widely spoken among the Melanesians. She had quite a thorough understanding not only of her father's family in Niupelekini (New Britain, Papua New Guinea), but also of plantation life during New Zealand's colonial administration. Litia's story included her travels and work life in Samoa's colonial and post-colonial plantations; a life that was, for her, full of singing. She told me one day that she bathed herself in songs and dancing while doing the copra work each day. She got this from her Melanesian father. Her story as told in Chapter Seven is an

addendum to her father's as told to Meleisea. Her vibrant life was celebrated by *Teine uli* and her community whom she left behind in November 1998.

The passing of Litia was a deep loss for the research. The pain was almost unbearable for me as much as it was for her family and the community. It was, after all, a sensible thing to delay the in-depth interviews for the rest of the *Teine uli.* Delaying the interviews until after the biographical method did not necessarily diminish their value in the fieldwork process. It still helped provide a context for individual stories recorded in the life history and biographical approach. In retrospect, this change in the order of research approach was quite workable. After the life history and biographical interviews, I managed to identify patterns of behavior and experiences from which I could draw some interpretations. From these general interpretations, I was able to draw out the kinds of underlying relationships and their meanings, which were very often picked up or identified in the in-depth, semi- structured interviews that followed.

Another significant change to the original fieldwork schedule was dropping the planned visit to American Samoa. I gathered from the field census that movement among *Teine uli* to American Samoa was non-permanent. That is, those who travelled there, especially in the 1980s, to work in the fish cannery, did not necessarily live there permanently. Many had returned to Vaitele and some left again for New Zealand. For many, it was a lot more difficult to apply and process work visas or permanent permit for American Samoa than it was to travel to New Zealand. The main reason for this was because many did not have relatives in American Samoa who could assist with their immigration papers

and accommodation. New Zealand's policy on humanitarian grounds enabled a number of people from the Community to qualify to live and work in that country instead.

Another change affected the timing of interviews for life history and biographical approach in Auckland, New Zealand. My initial plan was to carry out these interviews between February and May 1999. However, I conducted them in two different periods: November-December 1999 and March-May 2000. During my first visit the four interviews were postponed due to the first gathering of all descendants of the Melanesian laborers held in Samoa on December 25th, 26th and 27th , 1999. Unlike gatherings that were held in previous years, this one was extended to Melanesian-Samoans living overseas especially. Each family in Samoa was responsible for bringing and hosting their own overseas-based relatives. As it turned out, it was a great opportunity to find out the experiences and listen to stories of those who reside in Samoa and those who traveled from overseas. It was also a unique time for me to meet almost all Melanesian-Samoans of the first generation many of whom are now in their sixties and seventies. It was an event not to be missed and thus I had to travel back to Samoa from New Zealand to attend this gathering.

'Wanderings' through words, stories and meanings

One of the most challenging aspects of my 'search for new sources of knowledge' was dealing with the slippery nature of words and stories that I had come across. My initial encounter with the texts of postcolonial scholarship and new social theory, for example, proved to be a struggle. The language of new theorizing that dominates the literature

requires one's consistent effort to read with a different "pair of glasses"; a different mindset. As if I was learning a foreign language, reading and re-reading such texts were necessary to grasp their meanings. Continuing debates that characterize these texts tend to bring more confusion than clarity, and I have often found myself, as a non-native English language speaker, searching for the pieces written by the appropriate authorities to clarify a subject. Then there is my own knowledge system in which my thinking is rooted and which also provide alternative perspectives and meanings.

I traveled a similarly slippery path during my field enquiries. Although the women and I conversed in Samoan – our first language – other dimensions of our interactions were also very significant. For example, some of the information that the women provided during our interviews required my continuing probing for clarification and confirmation. Part of this process required asking for confirmation from other *Teine uli*. Thus I needed to constantly be alert and critically think about the issues that the women raised, the way they were told to me, their meanings, and the body language(s) associated with story-telling. At times, the women assumed that I know or should know certain stories or historical events involving members of the communities. For example, when the women talked about the church pastors who were sent periodically by the CCCS to look after the plantation parish, they identified them as either nice, arrogant, or weird. I did not know many of these pastors or what "weird" or "nice" things they did in the community. A puzzled look on my face would normally attract *Teine uli*'s comments like, "You mean, you haven't heard this from your mother and father?" These were significant dimensions of my researcher-participant relationship with *Teine uli,* that needed to be understood

within their appropriate contexts. Also, the Samoan values of *va fealoaloa'i*, respect and humility were constantly lived because most of the women were older than me and deserved my respect.

Doing interviews

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 80 adult women of both the first and second generations at Vaitele between January and March 2000. Given this large number of individual women to interview, I had to ask for assistance from my cousin, Miriama, in conducting the interviews. Miriama works at the Japanese-owned Kitano Tusitala Hotel in Apia, where she supervises workers in the catering division for the evening shifts. As one of the few second generation *Teine uli* to complete the New Zealand School Certificate exam, Miriama was well versed in English and had a good grasp of Mathematics, which she said was her favourite subject at school. She was also the secretary for the *Komiti a Tina* (Mothers' Committee), and had a thorough understanding of the women's social activities at Vaitele. After a few training sessions where I took her along during some of my initial interviews, Miriama was quite confident to carry out the interviews. It was part of my daily responsibility to double-check her completed questionnaires for any unclear or missing response.

Miriama and I worked out an arrangement by which I had to pay her ST$10.00 (about US$3.50) for every interview she would do. Her interview times ranged from one to two-and-a-half hours, and for the 39 interviews she conducted, I paid Miriama a little over ST$400.00. Although she said this amount was too generous, I knew Miriama was

putting in tremendous effort in making sure detailed answers were recorded and clear: she was prompt and always shared her interview experiences with me after each day. This was valuable work and information, which I had to reciprocate in one way or another. I wanted to reward her for that and I knew she was quite happy with her extra cash.

In these interviews, the women were asked, first, about their historical knowledge of plantation and 'village' work[4]. This information was important because it provided patterns of work transitions within and outside the plantation setting that constitute women's perceptions of their '*aiga*. Second, I sought women's understanding of their 'perceived' and actual roles in the family and community. It was interesting to note that the women, when talking about their expected roles in the *'aiga*, were also making reference to the perceptions of their husbands and male relatives. Related explanations were also noted on the conditions surrounding second generation *Teine uli*'s commitment and desire to engage in paid employment in and around Vaitele.

Analysis of information

Identifying common points or ideas raised in the interviews was the most straight forward way of analysing questionnaire information. The NVivo (N6) software program was handy in this analysis for its ability to organize and group qualitative information and

[4] Although most of the *Teine uli* lived and worked in the plantations, some spent time living with families of their Samoan husbands in the 'traditional' Samoan village. This is particularly true among the second generation women who tended to marry outside the community than those of the first generation. In addition, the fact that the women also have one of their parents being full Samoan meant that they would know this side of the family. Thus, the women would know the differences and/or similarities there are between work life in the village and plantation.

noting patterns and meanings. I was first introduced to this program during a seminar presentation at the University of Hawaii before going on my fieldwork. Much of my current familiarity with the program has been a result of my own personal exploration and self-taught activity during and after fieldwork. Using this software, I could see words and phrases most often used by the women we interviewed. One of these was the phrase *Tausi ai 'aiga*, which was an explanation the women gave for their work activity within and beyond their home environment. The phrase literally means 'to look after families', and it represents women's orientation towards an overall goal of maintaining the family welfare. Further explanation given revealed this phrase to have a layer of meanings ranging from the daily feeding of children to contributions to church and family *fa'alavelave*. Women's involvement or decision to engage in paid employment was not only to buy food for the family, but also to be able to meet *fa'alavelave*.

My understanding of important words also developed through noting social processes over time. Daily participatory observation showed that anticipation of, and participation in, *faalavelave* does not necessarily mean women save or put aside money for such occasions. Rather, earnings are spent on daily and more immediate needs, and people would borrow money when a *fa'alavelave* arises. This is where the paid job comes in handy for it guarantees that the borrowed money would be repaid later. While this may be similar to the credit card system that is prominent in western societies, it is also obvious that *fa'alavelave* money that is reciprocated or redistributed to '*aiga* members is a guarantee in itself. Some amount eventually goes back to the contributor, thus enabling

him or her to pay the initial debt. This example was one among many common issues that are discussed further in the next chapters.

The observer in action : disentangling *fa'alavelave*

Awareness of my *'aiga* identity guided my daily interactions with community members. Along with everyone else, I was woven into the village daily and often unscheduled routine and activities: greetings and *talanoa* (conversations) on the roadside, women's weaving activity, cooking for the women's committee gathering, fetching water from the next village when the taps do not work, lagoon fishing, bingo and cricket games, and the church. My participation in these activities had, on the one hand, provided more insight into the subject of my study and, on the other, allowed the women and their families to use me to their advantage. An obvious example was the community's petition to the Samoa Lands Corporation (SLC) for the extension of their land payments. The families had to pay their ST$10,000.00 each or the remaining balance by 30 June 2000, the deadline set by the SLC. Afterwards land would be confiscated from families which did not meet the deadline. This became a big *fa'alavelave* for the community. As it turned out, it also became a *fa'alavelav*e for me.

It was towards the end of my in-depth interviews in March 2000 that three women representing the women's committee came to my house early one morning. After serving them some breakfast (it is culturally appropriate to provide a meal for unexpected visitors), we discussed what they came for. They wanted me to write a letter on behalf of

Figure 5. Roasting Samoan cocoa beans is a common domestic activity of *Teine uli* at Vaitele. It was a common activity in which I participated and listened to the stories told by the women.

Source: Asenati Liki , 2000

their families, to petition for an extension of the deadline for land payment, and to accompany a delegation to present their petition. Of the 62 households, 51 had outstanding payments due to the SLC. I helped draft a letter which was signed by 51 household representatives, and presented to the Land Board of the SLC. A series of discussions and negotiations with the Corporation followed. The SLC wanted to adhere to its previous deadline resolution, and was skeptical of the community's ability to pay on time, if an extension was given. On the other hand, rumours had it that the government wanted this land for part of the Vaitele Industrial Zone that was expanding inland. Eventually, a five-year extension was granted.

On a separate issue, I visited the SLC in December 2002 and asked the Assistant Director for an update on this case. With a big smile on his face, Mr. Taito Wulf said, "*Ua uma*" (It's finished). All 51 families had paid their remaining balances and their deeds have been issued. It was, indeed, a worthwhile effort to assist with this community problem.

Life history matrix and biographical approach

This final part of the field work follows on from previous work. Five women from the first generation group (3 in Vaitele, and 2 in New Zealand), and five from the second generation (3 in Vaitele, and 2 in New Zealand) were chosen for life history interviews. These interviews attempted to obtain thorough and detailed information on the life histories and biographies. It was important to obtain the data buried deep within each life as a means to understanding conceptions of mobility and 'work'. Following Chapman's (1987, 348) successful use of a multi-method approach, it was equally important to "test the complementary use of demographic procedures with those that are more...anthropological (participant observation, collection of individual or family history)" (Chapman, 1987, 348).

For the life history matrix, significant events in each woman's life were recorded and these related either to family or community activities and how they wove into the lives of the women since birth and/or childhood. This was a useful way of getting into further questions and detailed discussions in which women shared their life stories. This approach was essential especially with *Teine uli* of the first generation who were often

unclear on the dates or year a certain experience or event happened. Identifying a particular historical event helped them and me to locate an approximate time related to their stories or birth.

All interviews were tape-recorded in Samoan with the women's consent and then transcribed. From reading the transcribed conversations, overall themes within women's life stories were identified. Because of time constraint I decided to leave the transcribed versions in Samoan, and did my best to translate into English whatever was needed to use for the dissertation. It was quite impossible, however, to have a conversation with each woman without the other members of her family, especially her younger children or grandchildren, listening in. In a way, it was fine because it was also the first time these children heard their mothers'/grandmothers' stories.

The biographical approach brought in to the open a lot of issues, sometimes emotional, relating to individual lives, family and community as a whole. In each story, the personal as well as the contextual relations were equally significant; each woman's story was full of other people. Their lives as women, as daughters and granddaughters of the Melanesian laborers, as wives, mothers and grandmothers, as plantation laborers themselves, as church people, as travelers, as New Zealand residents, as activity doers, and as '*aiga* members all constitute their conceptions of who they are and how they engage the world around them. Indeed, my family and myself were all part and parcel of these stories. They were, after all, accounts that would be incomplete and meaningless without reference to visible and conscious pathways of connections to other people.

Field work autobiography

Throughout my research in Samoa and New Zealand I kept a personal diary. While I recorded personal experiences that were not directly related to my research this became a valuable way of keeping myself "on track" as far as the field enquiry was concerned. It was a way of reminding myself of my role as a researcher as I regularly recorded happenings and my involvement, reaction, or feelings. Here too personal communications with my fellow graduate students, doctoral committee members and advisor, and academic colleagues elsewhere were recorded. These communications contain many advice and words of encouragement, which at times became a source of strength to continue with the research. This was also an effective way to record my outpouring of emotions and frustrations in a private way. Although I meant to record events and experiences in my diary daily, this did not happen due to other commitments and domestic duties. At times, I would recall activities and feelings over several days.

Conclusion

Throughout my field work and analysis, the combined use of quantitative and qualitative approaches that suitably define humanist and feminist researches once again proved workable. The multi-methodological approach in this study involves a complementary use of empirical information and sensitive interpretation and critical self-reflection. This study is basically a search for 'knowledge' that constitutes and is constituted of ideas on movement and 'work' among *Teine uli*. This search has involved much complexity and layers of experiences for both the informants and myself. These experiences define the

simultaneity of researcher-participant experiences thus necessitating the use of more than one research method to provide meaningful and "better approximations" in this "search for new sources of knowledge" (Soja, 1999, 269).

CHAPTER 5

REIMAGINING THE PLACE OF *TEINE ULI:* MULIFANUA, VAITELE AND AUCKLAND

> We need to belong to places, the physical plots, taro fields, coconut groves, sandy beaches, portions of reefs, fishing corals, and the island in general. We employ our memory, our ability to remember – no matter how bad it is – to keep…our sea of islands within us no matter how physically removed we are from our islands. If there is a frightening notion that most islanders share, it is the concept of being lost, being out of place, or the inability to make connection with a place.
>
> Joakim Peters, 2004, 261

> Yet the fact remains that place continues to be important in the lives of many people, perhaps most, if we understand by place the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however, unstable), sense of boundaries (however, permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed.
>
> Arturo Escobar, 2001, 140

Until recently place was generally understood in geography as a spatial unit with a distinct scale, boundaries, and physical attributes. Rethinking the nature of place is prominent in feminist and cultural geographies and anthropological analyses. Much of this work theorizes place as constituting and constituted by dynamic processes and experience (Cresswell, 2003), and as having a sense of progressive links with the wider world (Massey, 1994). Reflected in these analyses is the dissolving of boundaries between 'the local' and 'the global' leading to the erasure of the former by the latter (Escobar, 2001). This entails the loss of place as metaphor for culture. Hence concern has been raised for "the vitality of place and place-making for culture, nature, and economy" emphasizing the idea that 'culture sits in places' (*Ibid.*, p. 141-142).

I begin this chapter with a brief discussion of the notion of 'culture sits in places. This concept provides a balanced and more realistic perspective on contemporary theorizing of place that would be relevant to my attempt to reimagine the places of *Teine uli*'s. The second section is entitled 'From a distance.' This recalls a conventional perspective of place as an entity out there that can be observed from outside with little interest in the processes that define its existence. The third part focuses on recent retheorizing of the plantation as a colonized landscape. This approach provides a critical perspective of plantations and their communities. However, it largely ignores the cultural dimension of social reality among plantation communities such as the Melanesian-Samoans. Cultural values that constitute life for the laboring community have transcended the spatial borders of Mulifanua, Vaitele and Auckland as locations that are central in the narratives of *Teine uli*. The last section emphasizes the simultaneity of 'rootedness in places' and the connectedness allowed by the transnational moves of people and cultures.

'Culture sits in places'

The notion of 'culture sits in places' as advanced by anthropologist, Arturo Escobar (2001), and embedded in the works of Karen Olwig (1997), and Arif Dirlik (1998, 2000), is rooted in a more philosophical concern for the privileging of space over place. Space is increasingly associated with 'the global', the opening up of borders, and the swift spread of transnational commercial activities that are at the core of globalization. It is to do with the favoring of global cultures over local ones. The blurriness of boundaries and the permeability of borders are implicit in the works of feminist geographer, Doreen Massey (1994), and social geographer, Tim Cresswell (2003). Massey (1994, 251) argues, "instead…of thinking of places as areas with

boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understanding." In a similar tone, Cresswell (2003, 273) articulates on place as "always changing, in process, becoming…The place is not finished, not obviously ordered and not easily framed. It is blurry at the edges." Reflected in these works is an understanding of place as *becoming* space.

Dirlik (2000) argues that this is an asymmetry of discourses of globalization. In this asymmetry, "place [as constituted by sedimented social structures and cultural practices] "has dropped out of sight" (Escobar, 2001, 141). And this "has profound consequences for our understanding of culture, knowledge, nature, and economy." (*Ibid*., p. 142). One of these consequences is the seeming disappearance of cultural roots and the anchorage of migrants in their cultures. Certain literature on the movement of Pacific peoples, for example, alludes to this. In a 1995 article, Connell analyses Samoan movement as depicted through two of the novels, *Sons for the Return Home* and *Ola,* of prominent Samoan writer, Albert Wendt. The Samoan migrant that Connell sees in Wendt's novels is one with an evolving identity over time, apparently from being a 'permanent migrant' in New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s to a contemporary one with an 'ambiguous' identity. Connell (1995, 277) sees this latter stage as "reflecting a more complex Polynesian…and the diversity of the lives of now middle-aged Samoans, as they overcome both distance and difference." In such a world, "notions of stability and coherence have disappeared" (*Ibid*., p. 276). The danger of situating Samoan (or any mover) in a fluid world is that argued by Escobar. Space overtakes place, and the conception of movers' cultural roots and rootedness in places disappear. As Strathern points out, "to have multiple roots is to have no roots." (1991, 90; quoted in Connell, 1995).

Escobar, however, is not proposing a return to the conventional understanding of place as a bounded spatial reality. Rather, he argues for a conception of places that "are surely connected and constructed yet those constructions entail boundaries, grounds, selective connection, interaction, and positioning, and in some cases a renewal of history-making skills." (Escobar, 2001, 169). In this way, attachment to place co-exists with connectivity and interactivity.

The conception of place as where 'culture sits' is not foreign to people of reciprocity-based societies. Pacific peoples, for example, generally conceive of islands as place and home simultaneously at the levels of family, village, or country. A sense of place and the concept of home are tied to the notion of identity. From a Samoan perspective, home and place are inseparable concepts as evident in their unitary meaning of *aiga*. People venture to other places, engage with new experiences and lifestyles, and may possibly pick up multiple identities, but these should never be treated as being superior to identities and experiences rooted in the Island homes.

From a distance…

From a distance, Mulifanua, Vaitele and Auckland are significantly different from each other in their outlay, size, function and development. Incidentally, they could respectively represent three prominent experiences in Samoa's 'history' as a nation: the colonial experience, urban expansion, and international movement. Mulifanua - the largest plantation estate in Samoa and once recorded as the largest copra plantation in the Southern Hemisphere (Bier, 1990) - is a major landmark that most clearly bears colonial imprint in the country. Thirty years after Samoa's 1962 independence the estate closed down resulting in the relocation of about 95% of its

laboring community to the southern end of Vaitele. About 5% remained up to today on Sagafili unit, which is Government land.

Vaitele – also a former plantation estate and the third largest in Samoa - closed down in the mid-1980s and has since been developed into an industrial zone. Today, the place represents the urban expansion that characterises modern Samoa, particularly with its landscape distinctly marked by local and international manufacturing and services industries. The radical increase of Vaitele's population over the last fifteen years was due to people from other parts of the country settling in the area (Statistics Department, 2006). It is also where the majority of the Melanesian-Samoan community at Mulifanua was relocated and where they currently reside on a 50-acre tract of land, south of the industrial zone.

Mulifanua and Vaitele plantations were established in 1865 and 1867, respectively, by the then biggest German firm in Samoa, Goddefroy and Sohns. In 1878 another firm, Die Deutsche Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft der Südsee Insel zu Hamburg (D.H.P.G), took over the management and operations of the plantations until 1914 when New Zealand took control of colonial Samoa (Cumberland, 1962, 243). Plantation operations were then placed under the management of the New Zealand Reparation Estates until 1962 when Samoa became independent. Since then the plantations had been looked after by a government-owned corporation, the Western Samoa Trust Estate Corporation (WSTEC). With the official name change for the country in 1996 when the term 'Western' was dropped, the plantation corporation accordingly became known as STEC.

Samoa's independence intensified the movement of its citizens to New Zealand, particularly under the Treaty of Friendship between the two countries. Subsumed in these early flows were those of the second-generation *Teine uli* whose contacts in New Zealand were either the Samoan relatives of their parents, a friend of their parents, a relative of the Samoan plantation manager, or a relative of their Samoan pastor. Many had worked and made their 'homes' in Auckland, New Zealand's metropolitan city with the biggest population of Pacific Islanders (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2002). All the thirty-nine (39) second-generation and three first-generation women involved in my interview survey and biographical interviews reside in Auckland with their families. Their children and grandchildren who make up respectively the third and fourth generations of Melanesian-Samoans are New Zealand citizens. Today their mothers – the first generation *Teine uli* join many of their relatives traveling back and forth between Auckland and Samoa for reasons often related to their *aiga.*

From a distance, one sees Mulifanua, Vaitele and Auckland as mere land units vastly different from each other in demographic and economic features, events and attributes. From this perspective, *Teine uli* and their families do not exist. Like their Melanesian fathers, Melanesian-Samoans become visible only as providers of labor – an important part of the copra production equation, and are classed as such. Those *Teine uli* who first travelled to Auckland in the 1970s and their many relatives who have been to visit each other in these two countries ever since similarly exist only as part of the migration data sets of either or both Samoa and New Zealand. The women's specificity and the complexity of their experiences on the plantations and beyond remain embedded in the realm of the unknown.

While understanding place 'from a distance' remains valid for the purposes of demographic and national development analysis, people do not live in an abstract framework of geometric spatial relationships. As Tim Cresswell (1996, 13) points out, "we live in a world of meaning." We exist in and are surrounded by people and places. Thus the "view from the streets" (*Ibid.*; 273) highlights the weaving together of social relations and human-environment interactions. These realities and experiences are continuous and changing, tearing apart place in its conventional meaning and identifying it instead as dynamic, fluid and even contested terrains (Adams *et al.*; 2001). Moreover, social relations in a particular locale are, as feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1994, 251) argues, linked to the wider world, and thus "integrate in a positive way the global and the local."

Reimagining plantations

Colonized landscapes

Current theorizing about colonial plantations in the non-western world extends its scope beyond conventional understanding of these enterprises as simply commercial and profit-making activities of the European colonizers. Throughout the former colonies in Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, for example, plantations are perceived part of the colonial projects of the 19th and 20th centuries with great ramifications not only for the landscapes but also the socioeconomic and political life of people in these places. Anthropologist Ann Stoler's (1985, 3) work in Deli in North Sumatra, Indonesia, for example, describes the visual reality of colonial governing that is apparent in "the *symmetry* of plantings and the *precision* with which the height of palms is *controlled* and the distances between rubber trees are *calculated*" (my

emphasis). Here, the very practice of planting signifies not only a colonial 'fashioning' of native lands but one that constitutes the idea of perfecting the 'idle' lands of the colonies. 'Calculated precision' and measurement of trees and spaces between them constitute a specific gaze onto landscape, leading to the creation of "the flat and linear horizon of a strikingly and mathematically rationalized landscape" that enforced the colonial drive to make profit (*Ibid*., 7).

Postcolonial theorist and feminist, Piya Chatterjee (2001, 17) refers to these constituted ideas about plantation landscapes as 'metaphors of cultivation.' These metaphors ultimately contrast the two landscapes of the colonies – the plantations and the 'idle' lands of the native peoples. They insist on plantations as places of 'order' and as *settled* landscapes, which have been "made *human* through a vision of empire and light on a *savage* frontier" (*Ibid*., 18). A similar tone is echoed in the work of Caribbean feminist sociologist, Rhoda Reddock (1998) who refers to the expanse of areas planted with sugar and cocoa in Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago as providing a sense of commercial mastery that once drove the economic wheel of these former colonies. Likewise, large areas of central and western Vitilevu – Fiji's largest island – are imprinted with remaining portions of sugar plantation on which a number of Indo-Fijian families reside and work today.

In Samoa, it is the northern coastal parts of Upolu Island that most clearly portray this colonial imprint. Mulifanua and Vaitele Plantations entail a story of the reordering of the natural environment through capitalist activities of the colonial companies. This reordering was part of a process in which 'idle' lands of the Samoans were transformed into "perfect order that they [were] well worthy of a visit from some

municipal magnates of other and older countries" (*The Cyclopaedia of Samoa*, 1907, 81). Part of the process involved purchase of land and transfer of ownership titles from Samoan villages to the German companies and individual planters - procedures which were "for the most part wrapped up in mystery" (Masterman, 1934, 71). Conventional history has it that political instability in Samoa in the late 1860s and internal rivalries among local factions were behind "a mania for selling land" (Turner, 1889, 250).

These localized events were closely interwoven with international politics of the German, British, and American colonizers who sought control over the islands. Like the explorers who came before them and severed Pacific sea-lanes and broke its archipelagos into "a chequerboard of nation-states" (Waddell, 1993, 31), the European powers projected their own economic interests through patterns of cultivation in islands. Central to these interests was ownership of land. Seen as empty, accessible, commercially enticing, and amenable to colonial settlement, land needed to be mapped, measured, divided, owned and 'perfected' (Clayton, 2003).

Europeans' desire for land coincided with Samoans' needing firearms stimulated by local turmoil and warfare (Fox and Cumberland, 1962). In their eagerness to secure arms, "mendacious Samoans… shamelessly mortgaged their crops and sold and resold identical tracts to different buyers" (Lewthwaite, 1962, 141-42) and the D.H.P.G established their ownership of thousands of acres of land on both islands of Upolu and Savaii (*The Cyclopaedia of Samoa*, 1907).

The desire of the German planters to 'perfect' Samoa's 'unused' lands was manifested through a pattern of plantation cropping, which was in conformity with environmental and economic facts (Lewthwaite, 1962, 143). A pattern within which cultivation – as the figurative act of civilizing native lands through the practical act of planting and harvesting – became the rationale for the plantation. As a volcanic landform, the Mulifanua coastal area provided suitable physiological conditions for tropical products like coconuts, cocoa, cotton, and coffee. Soils of the area were known to be shallow and stony with many boulders and were of moderate to high fertility. The expanse of the Mulifanua volcanics provided ample flat and relatively low hilly land areas suitable for large-scale commercial plantations (Wright, 1962, 105).

As the largest property of the D.H.P.G., 3,600 acres of the Mulifanua Estate were planted with coconuts alone (*The Cyclopaedia of Samoa*, 1907). Cocoa, rubber, and cotton took up the rest of plantation land. The Estate was divided into seven units, each of which consisted of paddocks of about 700 to 800 acres. Roads cut through the paddocks making easier transport of coconuts by wagons and tractors were used for this purpose in post independence years. In each unit, miles of footpaths and tractor tracts that crisscross the plantation complex converge at the unit center where offices, staff homes, the cutting and drying sheds, and labor lines were located. Typically the home of the *papalagi* manager sat on a hill top roughly 100 meters away from the rest of the housing units at the foot of the hill. The enforcement of rules was an important dimension of plantation management.

Today a traveller cannot miss the sight of what was once a dominant colonial feature on north-western Upolu. Mulifanua Estate engulfs Faleolo Airport, the country's only

international airport. The commanding size of the estate and neat rows of coconut trees, which are estimated to be thirty or more years old are disrupted by intermingling weeds and bushes grown over the last twenty years. It has been this long since the majority of the plantation community left the Estate, which is now closed. Today, only ten families (couples, their children and some relatives) hired by STEC to work the last harvest of the remaining trees occupy the north-western part of the plantation (Fieldwork, 1999). More than 95% of the Estate is now covered with bush and weeds (Letoa, 2000, *Interview*). The remaining trees and the in roads and tracts that are still used by STEC trucks and a handful of workers are the only visual marks left from settlements before community relocation to Vaitele.

As in former colonies elsewhere, the plantation enterprise has had its heyday. It is no longer the backbone of the national economy that is now driven by tourism and remittances. Nevertheless, the current status and physical appearance of the plantation enterprise continue to bear witness to the colonial and post-colonial experiences of those involved in its workings. It still provides a glimpse into the processes, structures, and histories that went into its making.

In a 'world of practice'

The labouring community

A striking feature of Mulifanua and Vaitele as colonial landscapes has been that they seemed to remain curiously unpeopled, even from the distance of the main road that circled the island. Surrounded by extensive fields of coconut trees, the laborer communities were 'hidden' in the interior of the estates - a reflection of colonial rule

that barred workers from 'wandering' to the neighboring Samoan villages. Nonetheless, contact between the Melanesian laborers and Samoans occurred despite strict policies of the German administrators, leading to the emergence of the community of Melanesian-Samoans, part of which continues today to inhabit sectors of the former estate lands.

The original peopling of the estates in German Samoa with Melanesian laborers was an idea rooted in European colonial perspective and informed by the logic of racial differences that extended to include social worth, culture, and language differences. This was the evolutionary perspective that ranked peoples along a linear sequence from savagery to civilization (Howard, 1990). In this view, the most suitable workers for vigorous plantation labor were the Melanesians who were placed at the bottom of the racial hierarchy after the Polynesians and Europeans. Misrepresentations and stereotypes, advanced through colonial accounts and Christianizing missions, were mapped directly onto the bodies of the Melanesians who would make the plantation enterprise a possibility. As Meleisea (1980, 18) writes,

> A patronising attitude to Melanesians was stimulated not only by the presence of Melanesians on the plantations as menial labourers, but also by the stories about Melanesians told by Samoan missionaries who had served in Papua. Melanesians gained a reputation among Samoans as a wild and savage place, and the people of Melanesia were thought of by most Samoans as being a backward people in the power of the devil.

As a second-generation *Teine uli,* growing up in the plantation in the 1960s and 1970s, I was aware of the discriminatory attitude of Samoans towards the descendants of the laborers. Sometimes there were vicious fights among the workers sparked by insulting comments by Samoans about the Melanesian-Samoans. One of the biggest fights I saw during my youth was between the men of a nearby village, Samea, and

some of the *Tama uli* in Afia, the plantation unit where my family used to live. I never knew how the fight started as I overheard many versions from the adults. In my young mind then, I figured the fight was something to do with brains because the men from the plantation were calling out things like, "I have a brain that is also white like yours!" It was pay-day and excessive alcohol drinking worsened the problem. A number of people were injured and taken to the district hospital two villages away. A church minister from the nearby village intervened, scolding and cursing the fight and those involved as the crowd slowly dispersed.

Conflicts such as this have been interpreted to indicate a persistent racist attitude towards part-Melanesians as also experienced by their fathers (for example; Meleisea, 1980). However, to a large extent, those experiences also reflect the wider sociocultural reality of the plantation community. A complex and multilayered reality was embodied in relationships that underpinned social and economic activities among plantation workers as well as between them and those of the nearby villages. In this context, conflict and harmony co-existed. With any conflict or fight there was always a reconciliation process in which the restoration of relationships, rather than determining rights and wrongs, was paramount.

Family centered identity: laborers' complaints and relational arrangements

There were often tensions between the laborers and the plantation managers or overseers who were Samoans. These were resolved through a process governed by *va fealoaloa'i* (the relationships of mutual respect). As discussed in Chapter Three, *va fealoaloa'i* refers to the space between people, which is the space of mutual respect. It

underlies and drives the lived experiences of community members and defines individuals as relational persons.

Va fealoaloa'i could not be ignored or underestimated when the harmony of relations in the plantation was threatened through disagreements. The reconciliation process began with all parties understanding that *va fealoaloa'i* overrides grievances experienced either by an individual, a gang of laborers, or a family. Within the plantation community, the overarching influence of people's understanding of *va fealoaloa'i* transcended official work status within the plantation system. It cuts across gender boundaries, as it does across generations and ethnic affiliation. Any disagreements or arguments – actual or perceived – among individual members are literally overcome through a shared understanding of the relational self.

For *Teine uli* in this study personal grievances and complaints by the laborers were never a complete or clear-cut person-to-person dispute, but always entangled with conceptions of *va fealoaloa'i*. A conflict involving two people was simply read as a conflict involving all the relatives of the individuals concerned. In April 2000 Filia Lepui, a first generation *Teine uli*, reflected on one particular incident,

> I remember one Friday my mother had an argument with Tom, the tall afakasi (half caste) overseer. I think it was about her account with WSTEC store. They argued and argued, pointing their fingers at each other…That whole week, all of us in my family did not speak with Tom, Foisaga (Tom's wife), Foisaga's sister who was living with them, and their children Molesi, Tini and Pepe…Oh, what a life. You pick a fight with one person, you end up fighting against the whole *'aiga* of that person (Filia Lepui, 2000)

These competing but intertwining practices underlie social relations in the plantation where the women continued to push the boundaries of colonial control. Cultural

values underlying everyday practices persistently influenced the ways in which *Teine uli* perceived their life both within and beyond Mulifanua Estate.

Elopement

The plantation landscape portrayed in the historical literature on German Samoa was never completely 'made perfect' through regulations imposed by the D.H.P.G. As much as it was a colonial creation, the plantation was also constitutive of 'unseen' and 'illicit' practices among the original laborers and Samoan women that literally created their descendants. Such relations were expressed through eloping - an act that was against both the strict rules of the *papalagi* administrators and the Christian belief of the Samoan *'aiga*. It was an act that transgressed institutional and societal 'norms' encrypted in the policies and practices of management, and was therefore punishable.

Punishment for a Melanesian laborer caught with a Samoan woman was carried out by the *papalagi* administrators. This was either whipping and/or being kept in custody at the Vaimea jail (*Samoa Guardian*, 28 July 1927). Punishment for a woman was carried out by her *'aiga*. Underlying a woman's punishment was the idea that her association with a Melanesian laborer was demeaning to the whole extended *'aiga* (Numera Likou, Interview, 1998). The severity of punishment for a woman was measured not so much by the act of eloping *per se*, but by *with whom* one eloped. After all, as Litia Likou pointed out in October 1998, "elopement was a common thing also among young men and young women all over Samoa." The involvement of a Melanesian laborer provoked judgement and punishment founded on patronizing attitudes towards the Melanesians, and fuelled by stories about sorcery and

cannibalism told by Samoan missionaries who had served in Papua since the 1880s (Meleisea, 1980).

The stories of *Teine uli* in this study not only identify the types of punishment their Samoan mothers received from their *'aiga*, but more importantly speak of the ways in which the women perceived and handled such punishments. The most common way parents punished their daughter was by cutting her hair. At a community gathering at Vaitele in Christmas 1999, I had a conversation with Faanunu and her five sisters who were among the last to go home after a crowd of relatives and neighbors had dispersed. We sat around on the mats that covered the dustiness of the cement floor, and in a circle made crooked by Nunu and her older sisters, Lepeka and Leitu, lying down on their sides and facing the rest of us. After a long day hosting the whole extended family, invited friends and neighbors to this annual gathering, the women finally had some time to lie down, stretch, and relax. It was time to catch up and reflect on the day's event.

As usual with similar 'end-of-function' women's gatherings roars of laughter from our group soon filled the air as the older women joked about the way Faamata, the women's younger sister, dressed up at the gathering. Her short frizzy fuzzy hair was almost completely covered with black and red hairpins. The older women joked that Faamata would have looked 'better' if she had shaved her hair instead. "But what's wrong with shaved hair?," I asked. My question initially provoked more laughter among the women who thought it was naïve to ask such a question in the context of Samoan society that values long thick hair among its women. However, it led to a discussion about parents cutting their daughter's hair when they eloped with a *Tama*

uli in the 'days of German administration'. According to the story they told me that evening, the women's mother, Pogai, from the island of Manono-tai, eloped twice with their father, Saloi. The first time, Pogai's mother and aunt found her at the village of Sogi, the headquarters of the plantation industry. She was staying with Saloi at the house of another *Tama uli* and his Samoan wife. She was brought back to Manono by her mother and aunt who beat her up and cut her hair. Having short and messy hair was to embarrass her and cause her to avoid seeing Saloi. Pogai stayed home for another month or so before running away again to the plantation where she and Saloi later married in a plantation church.

Although the act of eloping involves two persons – a woman and a man - emphasis in elopement stories is on the concern of *'aiga* for its daughter. Through elopement, a daughter is considered 'lost' from home and has to be found. A son/man in this situation 'will eventually come home and/or bring his wife home with him'. The attitude towards women in this situation is generally believed among *Teine uli* to be a way for their mother's '*aiga* to maintain its reputation in the village and the church community. It is an 'ugly' thing when a girl elopes. The ugliness of elopement reflects *'aiga*'s concern about its relationship with the village and the church. It is informed by conceptions among Christianized villagers and pastors towards such an act. It was, as Faanunu and her sisters believed, probably 'uglier' in those days for a Samoan woman to be associated with a Melanesian labourer. Meleisea (1980, 48) thinks this attitude is because Samoans are conscious about rank and status and it was hard for them to fit the Melanesian laborers into their traditional scheme of status. It was certainly not the attitude held by Samoan families towards union among local women and European men even if they eloped (see Salesa, 1997).

Elopement drowned any perceived ideas of a perfect life upheld by *'aiga* and the *papalagi* administrators for both a local woman and the Melanesian laborer. Elopement speaks of a 'perfect' and preferred life perceived by the laborer and his Samoan wife. It made its own mark in both the social and physical spaces of Mulifanua Estate. Many of the Samoan women that eloped eventually married their Melanesian husbands, and lived with them in the Estate. Their action marked a deliberate determination of what should constitute a 'perfect' life in the plantation. This essentially involved breaking through the boundaries idealized by her *'aiga* and the plantation systems alike, which their descendants today think were a 'brave thing to do'.

Teine uli's perceptions of elopement and punishment

Elopement also revealed a particular way that Samoan mothers of *Teine uli* 'explored' their curiosity about 'new' things happening in Samoa, especially between the late 1890s and the 1900s. This was the heyday of D.H.P.G., when harvests provided this firm maximum profits. The landscape of the plantation estate gave a different appearance of northwestern Upolu Island, and was marvelled by the travelling parties of Samoans moving from village to village or to Apia town. As noted by William Churchward, Acting British Consul in Samoa in the 1880s, the German plantations of Vaitele and Mulifanua alternated among the dense dark bushes along the western area of Upolu (Churchward, 1887). This 'different' scene clearly stood out when viewed from the sea by Samoans travelling in their long boats and canoes. The curiosity provoked by the 'difference' portrayed by this landscape provided space for these Samoan women to venture outside their village settings.

The women's curiosity was met with 'different' but well-liked ways in which the Melanesian laborers presented themselves. One of the most talked about and most attractive features of the Melanesians were their singing. This had attracted girls from nearby villages. The use of ukulele made of coconut shell, bamboo, and nylon was famous among the laborers.

First Generation *Teine uli* see these early contacts between their Samoan mothers and Melanesian fathers as both humorous and courageous. For some it was humorous because they saw themselves in these early experiences of their mothers. Like their Samoan mothers, many of the First Generation *Teine uli* also eloped with their Samoan husbands who came as short-term laborers from the villages. However, there were also other 'players' in these 'illicit acts'. "What do you remember most as a young woman in the plantation?" This was one question I asked the First Generation *Teine uli* during our conversations. All of them referred to something they could vividly remember, as in Lesa Puavasa's reply:

> "The Marines. We had many boyfriends in the Marines in those days (laughs)…They camped at almost every corner of the Estate, and they put out this huge torch-like light in the evenings. We liked the Marines. We admired their uniform and the way they marched down from the plantation to Faleolo (where the international airport is located today)…But then, one problem with the Marines as we found out after they had left and gone back to their country, was that they got three girls pregnant: our pastor's daughter, a girl from Satapuala village (near the plantation), and my mother's sister. My mother's sister came from *our*[1] village to work and earn some money to pay her school fees in the new term. She went to school at Aleipata Junior High School…" (Interview, 2000)

[1] In our conversations, *Teine uli* usually referred to their Samoan mother's village as also their village. The use of the phrase 'our village' and not 'my village' shows a lot about the close association the women hold with their Samoan families and identity.

Reference to the United States Marines provides a time frame which First Generation *Teine uli* identify as their 'young days'. This was during World War II, when the US Marines were stationed in Western and American Samoa and throughout the Pacific, to counter possible attacks by the Japanese. For *Teine uli*, the 'real enemies' were the Marines who got local girls pregnant. This situation was worse than eloping acts *Teine uli* themselves went through. "We eloped, we came back with a big stomach and a husband. We brought back a family...", was a reply from Litia Likou who, despite her death in 1998, is still 'famous' in the community for eloping three times in the three different plantation estates where she worked in. For her, elopement was reconcilable. Having a child whose father was practically never part of the *'aiga* was irreconcilable.

The first-generation *Teine uli* also think their involvement in eloping acts was not as hard an experience as it was for their mothers from the village. While the village setting and atmosphere of strict cultural codes enforced by a council of chiefs, the plantation environment did not have chiefs to enforce and punish conducts that were deemed 'illicit'. This was especially true among the adult group of First Generation Melanesian-Samoans.

Plantation girls – 'not village girls'

A major contrast between the First Generation *Teine uli* and those of the Second Generation is education experiences and exposure to worlds outside of the Estate. Having been born and raised in the plantation, both groups of women have strong feelings and connection to their birthplace. However, while First Generation women identified more with their Samoan mother's *'aiga* in the village, women of the Second

Generation tended to emphasize 'differences' between themselves and women born in a Samoan village. As young girls in the plantation, *Teine uli* of the Second Generation knew they were 'different' in many ways from the typical girls and women in a Samoan village setting. The main factor that contributed to this 'different' identity conception was the young women's constant involvement in plantation labor activities from which they earned their school fees.

The women describe 'plantation work' as a 'family activity', because it involved the parents and their children. Particular types of work were 'unofficially' designated for young girls. They were unofficial because most of the girls involved in these activities were not registered in WSTEC's official payroll as workers in their own right. They, therefore, did not receive wages directly from WSTEC. They might receive a few dollars from their mothers and older relatives in the labor gang, but even this was rare. Usually, young girls became part(s) of the different labor gangs of older women including their mothers and close relatives who were the permanent registered laborers. Consisting of between ten to fifteen women, these labor gangs were formed to clear weeds throughout the Estate and collect the nuts from blocks previously occupied by cattle.

As young girls, second-generation *Teine uli*'s involvement in labor gangs was perceived among the overseers and managers as simply 'following around' their mothers and older female relatives. After all, there was nobody to look after them at home during school holidays and/or when they finished school each day. When, in March 2000, I asked Tulino Muliau now living with her mother in Mangere, Auckland, about her experiences as a young girl in the 'labor gangs', she laughed. She

explained to me the 'labor gangs' was like a mobile childcare service. "It was the only way in those days our mothers could cope with work specific to the plantation and also looking after us" (Interview, 2000). Her older sister I'amafana Muliau added,

> But as we grew older, about sixteen or seventeen years old, we actually became involved in the works, especially cutting the grass and weeding especially when schools were on holidays. Our parents made sure they registered us at WSTEC office for two weeks, or for three months work. It depends whether it's a short school holiday or a long one during the Christmas and New Year period (Interview, 2000)

These early experiences of labor in the plantation not only underlie *Teine uli'*s conception of themselves as not entirely 'Samoan village girls', but also define their conscious awareness of work that is underpaid and hard. Accounts by the women include many stories about the ways their mothers and older women who were permanent fieldworkers would 'fight back' to receive what they believed were their full wages. Verbal arguments with payroll officers and plantation managers often happened on Fridays - the workers' payday, as women demanded explanations for their cut-wages. Calculated at an hourly rate of $1.10 for eight hours daily for five working days, a permanent worker should earn a fortnightly pay of about WST$88.00. For many women, the WSTEC's payment system cheated them out of their full wages through a system of advancing them credit at the Corporation's stores. Goods bought at the stores, either at Mulifanua or at the Coporation's headquarters in Apia, were charged against their accounts at excessive prices so that final payments were less than the actual amount owed by the Corporation. These arguments could go on for days as women continued to push their case to the officers, overseers or managers, calling them "rip offs." Women's complaints often fell on managers' deaf ears. They sometimes allowed them a day-off from work to make up for the unpaid

hours or days. These tense situations involving their mothers and older women lead to strong perceptions held by young daughters of the complex and often unfair nature of plantation labor.

Connections

…with local villages

The continuous flow of people between the plantation and villages was one noticeable feature of the plantation community since the take over by New Zealand. This contributed to increased inter-marriages between part-Melanesians and Samoans, as well as the increasing orientation of the former toward their Samoan *aiga.* While many of the first generation *Tama uli* and *Teine uli* married among themselves, unions with Samoan workers was also common. Many young Samoan men went as contract laborers in Mulifanua since the late 1920s.

Sometimes, the Samoan men took their spouses to the village but they often eventually returned to the plantation. Around the mid-1970s three of my mother's sisters moved to live with their Samoan husbands' families but there was also a lot of shifting around between the two places from time to time. My uncles would return to work in the plantation for a year or two and visited the village on pay-weeks. My aunts and their children often visited us in the plantation, especially during Christmas and Easter holidays, and when they eventually returned to stay it did not feel like they had been away at all. My family received regular visits from my father's relatives, and not just his family at Fagaloa but all over Samoa. My paternal grandparents often came and stayed for a month or two. A distant aunt or uncle would turn up usually

with a basket of fish, lobsters, or shellfish. Two more uncles from the village followed my father's footsteps: they worked in the estate and eventually married *Teine uli* and raised their own families in Mulifanua.

These contemporary movements have roots not in the colonial regulations that forbade contact between the Melanesians and the Samoans, but in the latter's reaction toward being regulated. As evidently clear in what *Teine uli* said, eloping was the fastest and most common way for Samoan women to be united with their Melanesian husbands in the plantation. It was similarly a common practice among first-generation Teine uli and their Samoan husbands who had such unions and started their families. Despite the negative connotations attached to elopement the practice largely contributed to the establishment of connections with Samoan villagers and thus creating "blurry edges" (Cresswell, 2003) on the spatial and social boundaries between the two groups.

The unions of Melanesian men and their Samoan wives created specific spaces within the plantation landscape that were to continue to define and influence the lives of their Melanesian-Samoan descendants. Through these unions, the plantation was no longer understood solely in economic terms of the European planter but also from the perceptions and meanings embedded in the laborers' world of *aiga*. Understanding of the commercial characteristics of the plantation became entangled with notions of *'aiga*. These worlds simultaneously characterized the landscape in which *Teine uli* were born and raised. As their birthplace, the plantation is home to *Teine uli*. It is where their umbilical cords are buried, to signify genealogical connections to past and future and where life began.

This birthplace is, however, a colonial creation. In that sense, the plantation signifies not only the structuring of native landscapes but also the ordering of the lives of those who were born, raised, and worked there. Labor activities and laborers' attitudes were managed through clock-determined rules and discipline that underwrote the profits of copra production. For *Teine uli*, plantation management strategically incorporated them in, and disassociated them from, its employment system. While they were looked down upon as weaker laborers *Teine uli* were simultaneously considered by plantation managers as a 'necessity' to keep. There have always been extra or side jobs for the women and, more importantly, they were valuable as producers of a much needed future labor population.

'Aiga, on the other hand, is an equally important world of *Teine uli*. Metaphorically and socially, the world of *'aiga* was well established and awaiting the births of the laborers in the plantation. Despite the rules governing plantation life, *'aiga* became an influential establishment in the plantation community through the intermarriage of Samoan women and the original Melanesian laborers. These unions marked the first serious contacts between labourers from Melanesia and Samoans. The Samoan women who married into the plantation came from nearby villages and families with strong values of *'aiga* and these were articulated within plantation life. One *Teine uli* pointed out in the interviews, "…in the plantation, the seeds of Samoan *'aiga* were planted together with the coconut trees" (Lesa Puavasa, 2000).

The world of the plantation system influenced laborers to think and live in a commercial and materialistic way. That of *'aiga* shaped the same people to live a

corporate life of resource giving, sharing and respect. Born into a world characterized by these different manners of thinking and living, *Teine uli* were introduced, at a young age, to work activities that are oriented towards WSTEC as well as their *'aiga*. Their life in later years in urban settlements marks a continuity of these plantation experiences and practices.

…with Vaitele

The relocation of the Mulifanua community to Vaitele marked the beginning of a more meaningful relationship with that place. Knowledge of Vaitele as a former plantation provided some sense of familiarity and historical connection among the community members. Otherwise, Vaitele was never really known to many Melanesian descendants who had had no work or family contact there. In the years immediately before the twentieth century, the original Melanesians were allocated to clear the land and plant the coconut trees there, and some of the *Teine uli* have recollections of the place during their childhood days when their fathers were transferred there for a certain period of time. While some of the *Teine uli* in this study were born in other estates all of them grew up in Mulifanua, and had worked and established families there. Thus Vaitele, as a place, hardly had much significance for the women in this study – not until the relocation.

As mentioned earlier, Vaitele today represents urban growth in Samoa. The place continues to expand commercially and demographically. To a large extent, Vaitele today continues to connect to other parts of Samoa, including the Mulifanua plantation. Families and relatives move in and out of the place as they visit each other; employees and commuters attend to their daily employment in factories, carpentry

and construction services, shops, bakeries, laundries, banks and supermarkets, sports team meet for a tournament, children attend schools, people go fishing or mind a road-side stall. With these movements, paid employment is generated and ties with families elsewhere maintained. For the Melanesian-Samoan community, as with many other Samoan families, Vaitele has become the hub where 'working' relatives from elsewhere converge during the week and depart during the weekend for the village. For *Teine uli* it has become 'home' away from Mulifanua or Auckland.

…with Auckland

In spite of the typical laboring life in the plantation and its demands on the families, many *Teine uli* of the second generation were sent to primary schools in the nearby villages and later entered secondary schools in Apia. High school qualifications were deemed sufficient to get a decent job in town. School experience and exposure to the urban environment of Apia have been an impetus for many to venture into the world outside the plantation. Compared to the young men of the same generation, more young women completed primary and secondary education levels. Every one of the 39 women interviewed in Auckland had completed lower or upper fifth classes at approximately 17 years of age in Samoa compared to four in ten boys of the second generation (Fieldwork Notes, 2000). Before moving to New Zealand, some of the women were already working in office jobs as typists in Apia; others were primary and secondary school teachers, nurses, junior accountants, and sales persons. Extra years beyond basic qualification spent at the Teachers' Training School and the Nurses' Training School meant these young women were well qualified in their fields.

Between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, the New Zealand economy grew rapidly and, despite discrimination against migrants particularly in the 1970s, the movement of people from the Pacific into New Zealand has been relatively smooth. "New Zealand's immigration policy during that period favoured less expensive, better educated, younger, single, migrants" (Macpherson and Macpherson, 2002, 9). Within this category of young, single migrants from Samoa were second-generation *Teine uli* from the Mulifanua plantation.

The conditions for movement to New Zealand at the time suited these young women. Their contacts in New Zealand were either their mothers' or fathers' Samoan relatives, a friend of their parents, a relative of the Samoan plantation manager, or a relative of the Samoan pastor of the plantation church. The stories of the women I interviewed revealed how much their parents, especially their fathers, wanted them not to end up being permanent plantation laborers. There had been more concern for the daughters than for sons and two important perceptions underlay these parental expectations. First, plantation tasks especially 'doing the copra' were heavy activities, and these were perceived as suited to young men. So it was a common practice among parents to send their daughters to school and keep the sons to help out with plantation work. Many of the latter group eventually became permanent laborers.

The second underlying factor was that daughters were generally perceived by parents as more generous and more attached to the families than sons who could easily leave to live with a wife elsewhere. This was a perception behind 'taking the daughters to New Zealand'. Thus young women dominated initial international mobility involving Melanesian-Samoans from plantation settlements. Not only they were better

'educated' than their male counterparts, but they also had experienced work life in the urban environment. These localized experiences were to prepare them for a far more challenging and different life in New Zealand.

Experiencing Auckland

As in current flows of population from Samoa, Auckland was the first point of contact for *Teine uli*. The place provided an initial sense of both excitement and worry. While it was exciting to be in a different place it was equally worrying because of its unfamiliarity. It was different in many respects - the employment world, the food and the language; in fact the whole physical and social environment was unfamiliar—presenting the kinds of challenges that are commonly attached to migrant experiences. In their conversations with me, the women acknowledge that life in New Zealand has not been easy at all.

Given the new environment, being with their *aiga* who went before them was crucial. This link provided not only support, as one would expect, but a real sense of being at home. Thus for young *Teine uli* in the 1970s home was a different house in a different suburb of Auckland. Yet in these unfamiliar spaces they remained close to family and maintained community particularly through church commitments. As experienced by many migrants across the world, homeland and birthplace may have been 'out of sight' with movement but history and identity are not necessarily lost.

The different world of Auckland was not necessarily constraining for all the women. In the midst of the hardships and work in the factories, for example, *Teine uli* still perceived and worked through opportunities and possibilities that they themselves

could see were around them. From the factory floor, they could see windows of opportunities for 'better' jobs in the future for them. They were not satisfied with the kiwi fruit or apple picking jobs. They were not content with work in the wool factory, cleaning jobs at a four star hotel in the heart of Auckland City, or washing dishes at some café or restaurant.

The life of being a working class, migrant woman in New Zealand was perceived as optional, and not a destiny. Choices constantly had to be made, and sometimes advice from their parents back in the plantation was sought. There was always room for negotiating the available opportunities for better paying jobs. They desperately wanted to become 'professionals' in New Zealand. One way opportunities were negotiated was by undertaking special practical courses in Polytechnic Institutes such as Manukau Institute of Technology, Auckland Institute of Technology (now AUT), Epsom Teachers Training College, and Carrington Technical Institute (now Unitec). For some women, this meant working part-time and studying part-time; for others their jobs required them to take up courses related to communication skills; others continued to work their way up in the factories or warehouses.

This was, however, not always the case for all the women in this study. While some managed to obtain a certificate or diploma from technical institutes in New Zealand, others, for various reasons, never completed their studies. Marriage and looking after their children have been the common reasons behind this. Today all but one of the *Teine uli* I talked with, have families of their own. Some of their New Zealand-born children have successfully completed formal education at secondary, technical and

university levels and are employed in 'professional' jobs that their mothers once dreamed of as young, single, female migrants in New Zealand.

In the midst of these commitments and trials in Auckland the sense of responsibility and continued commitment to their parents and families in the plantation was always there. Having being born and raised in families with strong kinship relations and Samoan values, *Teine uli* continue their cultural commitment to families in Samoa and in Auckland. Sending money and material goods, through letter writing, through telephone calls, through sponsoring a sister, brother or the parents to come to New Zealand were among the commitments to the islands. Despite their geographic situations, ties are kept through attending and contributing to family and community activities. In this way, home and identity are constantly present, and continue to be carried by *Teine uli.*

Consequently, the women could not become completely 'kiwi' or 'pakeha'. They cannot allow that to happen when part of their families, part of themselves, is not living that way. They cannot think and see New Zealand and the world from the perspectives of their paheka counterparts. It is simply impossible, because *'aiga* is constituted in their worlds of mobility and work experiences.

Regular visits by their mothers and other relatives between Vaitele, Mulifanua and Auckland constitute a strong web of relations and connections among *Teine uli* and their families. These moves and work involvement in the various places, and the reasons and meanings attached to them, underline the flexibility of *aiga*, identity and home that continue to play a crucial part in the lives of *Teine uli*. More importantly,

they underpin the porous nature of spatial and cultural borders that often impinge on their lives.

Conclusion

Place has been theorized differently by different scholars. In this chapter I have drawn mainly from Escobar's notion of 'culture sits in places' to give a broader understanding of *Teine uli*'s places as a form of lived and grounded space that is also connected to the wider world. An obvious example from the lives of *Teine uli* would be their participation in plantation work or factory work, in the colonial times and in contemporary Auckland, respectively. The cultural meanings of these activities constitute the women's definition of place-based identities; their connectedness to their Island homes. Work activities are "forms of localization of the global that locals might be able to use to their own advantage" (Escobar, 2001, 157). Likewise, labor is a form of the local that is offered for global development and consumption.

An alternative understanding of place is firmly rooted in Samoan cultural values that constitute *aiga* and community. *Teine uli*'s life on the plantation cannot be fully understood through the lenses of labouring work that seemingly dominated life in such places. There were always other activities and experiences alongside the copra work and block weeding. People continued to gather around and share stories. Women were engaged with health committees and church committees. They were often conscious of the exploitation of their and their families' labor by the WSTEC leading to arguments and fights. However, underpinning these sociocultural experiences was respect and observance of *va fealoaloa'i* that guided daily relations.

As alluded to in this chapter, Samoan sense of place and home are not separate but always tied to identity. Through movement and meanings of work involvement among *Teine uli* in the different geographic sites they have occupied a deep sense of their cultural identity, reinforced by strong family and community ties, has led them to survive in different locations. As presented in the next chapter, the practice of work and orientation toward '*aiga* reflect not only experiences anchored in places but the localization of the global through a non-hierarchical set of meanings.

CHAPTER 6

WORKING '*AIGA*: TOWARDS A BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN'S WORK

> I knew that one of the primary principles in my exploratory framework had to be its basis upon communal relationship and obligation.
>
> Selina Marsh, 1998, 667.

This chapter examines meanings of work activities among *Teine uli* at Vaitele. As noted in chapter 2, my interest in investigating alternative meanings of work (and movement) was a result of personal dissatisfaction with the narrow view of work solely as paid employment applied to the experiences of women from non-western places. This perspective assumes the binary oppositions of paid/public/mind sphere versus unpaid/domestic/body sphere, which are irrelevant in relation to cultural arrangements and life of kinship-based societies. This study pivots on cultural thinking anchored in social relations and defines women as '*aiga*. My analysis therefore delves into the cultural meanings and significance of the tasks or work activities that *Teine uli* carry out.

Teine uli undertake a variety of tasks involving reciprocal arrangements and including wage payment. Tasks range from chores related to home-and-community-keeping, to small-scale, home-based, non-daily and flexible income-generating tasks, to more regular engagement with wage employment. While engagement with waged activities indicates the need for cash, this is not necessarily associated with a shift of thinking towards a capitalistic mindset of wealth accumulation and saving for personal use. Rather, waged work has become an important pathway towards the fulfilling of commitment to '*aiga*. The dynamics of *Teine uli*'s socio-cultural world defined by persistent giving and

receiving of resources, money, and service has continued to shape their conceptions and the nature of their engagement in these activities.

This chapter draws on the narratives of *Teine uli* whose experiences with various work activities reflect a continuous commitment towards their families. The first part of the chapter examines the notion of 'women's work' and how it has been perceived through feminist approaches within the Pacific. In spite of negative reactions, feminism's advancement of social reality as complex and flexible enhances the contextual understanding of women's work experiences. The remainder of this chapter explores and examines cultural meanings that are buried/hidden within *Teine uli*'s narratives of their participation in urban-based waged employment, home-based work activities, casual, and market vendor activities. While acknowledging the commonly held money-based interpretations of women's work this chapter emphasizes the centrality of meanings that align with *Teine uli*'s thinking, perceptions of and commitment to '*aiga*. The women's pathways to the typically urban-based work they do and activities they enjoy are constituted by the persistence of reciprocities, the perception of waged work as *not* entirely life and living, emphasis on working in/as a group, practicing *va fealoaloa'i*, and eager embrace of the practice of giving and donating. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the importance of acknowledging 'other' meanings that underlie women's work, so that, as in the case of *Teine uli*, stereotypes about them and the work they do could be erased.

Perceptions of women's work

I pointed out in chapter two that the notion of 'women's work' is assumed in the employed/unemployed dichotomy that not only upholds the privileging of waged employment over unwaged work but also perpetuates the invisibility of 'unemployed' women and the multiple tasks that they do. For women in the Pacific, this concern has been addressed in a number of avenues and official forum although many of these analyses seem to be influenced by themes central to the feminist movement and the field of women's studies in Western societies (Ralston, 1992).

Despite the rigor and attraction of theories generated by mainly white feminist scholars and imported into the Pacific, these have never been fully embraced by local scholars and Island women in particular. A workshop on "Women, Development and Empowerment" was held in Fiji in 1987 and aimed to form "a feminist framework for changes and ideals that women would like to see in the future" (Griffen and Yee, 1989, 2). Spearheaded by female staff of the then School of Social and Economic Development (SSED) of the University for the South Pacific, and attended by 26 women from 11 Pacific Island countries, the workshop revealed the participants' ambivalence about feminism. Many saw it as stemming from a different social context, namely Western/European societies, and hence irrelevant to the Pacific situation. In exploring possible parallels with Pacific women's thinking, the workshop organizers opted to discuss and critique the concept of (Western) feminism. While this was a useful start the critique did not fully convince the women. Many remained suspicious of feminism and a Pacific feminist framework could not be established.

Twenty years after the workshop real suspicion of feminism still exists. My personal experience with scholarly discussions of this kind indicates that because the starting point of discussions was never the Island woman (her conceptions, identity, and lived experience) there was little chance to 'discover' appropriate frameworks or approaches. Too often the socio-cultural relations that constitute the "centrality of our identity" (Smith, 1992, 35) are presented as an addendum to, rather than the starting point of, discussion. The centeredness of socio-cultural identity is clear in the words of one Maori scholar at Massey University in New Zealand, Huia Tomlins Jahnke (2002, 4),who stated that "it is the importance of an identity *as Maori* that is the single defining characteristic which brings into sharp focus the inability of feminism to adequately explain the experiences of Maori women." Similarly, Maori film-maker Merita Mita contends "I am Maori, I am woman, I am family, I am tribe and only one of the facets of who I am fits comfortably under the label of feminism" (cited in Tomlins Jahnke, 2002).

In the Pacific, more women's conferences in Oceania and island-oriented publications point to a growing concern about the betterment and empowerment of women's position in their societies (Underhill-Sem, 2000). Hence more questions need to be asked and space allowed for dialogue. As Selina Tusitala Marsh, a Samoan scholar at Auckland University, New Zealand, points out,

> [F]or some women of the Pacific, feminism has become (and is becoming) a worthy seafarer and a knowledgeable traveler. Those who share a common context of political struggles against class, race, gender and imperialist hierarchies are able to show that feminism can voyage the cultural and historical specificities of the 10,000 islands in the Pacific, travel through the veins of Pacific oppression

> without rendering blanket victim status and ignoring contradiction and potentially subversive strategies (Marsh, 1998, 677)

While this statement may reflect the scholarly orientation of a new generation of younger Pacific women including Marsh, it is also indicative of the changing social, economic and political environment that Island societies are currently experiencing. As part of a global society under the influence of globalization and critical socio-political problems, Pacific societies are experiencing inevitable changes. In this context, women's status and well-being have, among other things, become an issue of concern. In this context, also, an increasing number of island scholars tend to 'reach back' to cultural ways of thinking and living as an approach to contextualize contemporary experiences and navigate/guide Islanders' journeys today.

Selina Marsh's quote above alludes to an outcome of experiences in the contemporary Pacific. Differences of social, economic and political status are not isolated from experiences elsewhere especially since place boundaries are, as emphasized in Chapter 5, porous. Different women experience real and perceived problems differently either through "class, race, gender and imperialist hierarchies." (*Ibid*., p. 677). Hence the need to draw that which is useful from feminism and other thinking in our attempt to "[map] solutions embedded in specific, contextualized understandings." (*Ibid*., p. 678). As Marsh (2004, 120) clearly explains in a longer and more recent study,

> [T]o argue that feminism is totally unrelated to Pacific Islands women's lives is problematic. There is no typical "Pacific woman." Colonisation, independence, self-government, the urban drift, modernization, employment, and reliance upon a cash economy have altered Pacific realities. More Pacific Islanders today are exposed to foreign ideas, through education, business and the modern media, than

> was the case several decades ago…Most women whose voices are heard [in the literature] have encountered feminism outside their island context. …They have (temporarily) lived outside the more traditional "cultural constraints" to which [Konai Thaman] refers. Many are activitists in local and/or international affairs, education and politics. Most speak and write English fluently, in addition to their own languages. Exposure to wider foreign environments has allowed these women to experience new and different ideas, among whose effects are varying degrees of tension upon the return home, or to an island community.

My own journeys and experiences as a *Teine uli* and student are reflected in the quote above. My encounter with feminism began in a 'History of Geographic Thought' course taken for the Bachelor of Social Sciences Honors program at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. My exposure to western lifestyle and thinking has also helped me to appreciate feminist theorizing although much of it was considered inappropriate to my situation as a woman with strong cultural roots. My identity as a daughter and grand-daughter of plantation laborers recruited from within Samoa and Melanesia respectively, and as a former young female laborer, situates me (and my community) at the margin of my country's history, and its social, economic, and political arena. Simultaneously, however, I am a descendant of the '*aiga Sā Mulipola*[1] of the island of Manono, and of the '*aiga Sā Feā*[2] of the village of Fagaloa, in Samoa. Through my Samoan genealogies I am rooted in at least two of Samoa's chiefly families that will always be part of my plural identity. Through this also the margin of my stereotypical identity rooted in the colonial plantations fades.

[1] My grandmother Pogai, who married my Melanesian grandfather Saloi, was the daughter of Faasuka who was daughter of Mulipola Elikapo of Manono.

[2] My father Liki Fea was the son of high chief, Fea Samuela, of Fagaloa village. My grandfather was village mayor and held one of the two high ranking titles in the village.

My multiple identities and journeys define the complexity of my lived experience. Despite our various journeys *Teine uli*'s experiences and perceptions as constituted in place-specific identity weave into each other. Thus, as I discussed in Chapter Two, the useful parallels that I draw from feminist (and humanist) approaches for my study are their recognition of lived experiences as complex and flexible and, therefore, beyond binary categorizations. Recognizing the complex dynamics of *Teine uli*'s experiences is a crucial step towards understanding and appreciating alternative meanings that the women hold and value for their work activities. This is what I mean by 'starting with *Teine uli'*!

Pathways to urban employment

Waged work is an important part of living at Vaitele. Having resided in Vaitele for the last fifteen years, *Teine uli* have been involved in various types of employment found at the Vaitele Industrial Zone and in Apia town. At the time of my field study, many of the second generation women were employed as shop assistants, factory workers, cleaners, baby-sitters, housekeepers, and tea girls. Some worked as clerical officers in town. A handful were employed in more specialized fields such as three teachers at primary and secondary schools, two nurse aides, and three accounts clerks.

At a very early stage of my fieldwork, my interest shifted from identifying the types of employment *Teine uli* were involved in to learning about *how* the women found employment. It was not enough to know whether the women worked in waged work. I wanted to understand the processes involved in getting a job and the meanings of 'waged work' for the women. As I conversed with them either casually or formally during

interviews, I sensed there was always a broader picture to 'working.' This broader picture was '*aiga* within which the pathways of 'finding a job', 'doing a job', and 'keeping a job' criss-cross.

I explored this further in the life history and biography interviews with Eseta, a 34-year old, Second Generation woman working at the Samoa Snacks factory at Vaitele. Part of my edited conversation with Eseta and her mother Tuli illustrates how 'finding work' was among the cultural pathways that the women considered effective.

> Eseta: I already had three children when we shifted from Mulifanua to Vaitele (in 1989). In those days my children were small…I was happy for our new place. Life was like new for us. We had to settle in and start the family again, but moving here was a nice change. We're closer to Apia (town) and I used to think I could easily find a job, you know, something different from what we were used to in the plantation. I was excited about working in Apia…
>
> *Me: Did you look for a job immediately after you moved here?*
>
> Eseta: No. What happened was Siaosi (her husband) and I had to put up our house first. We thought, since my mother came with us, it was better to set up the house first and plant some crops around it, then maybe Siaosi can look for a job.
>
> *Me: How long did it take you to put up the house?*
>
> Eseta: I think just a month, eh Mother? (looking at her mother, Tuli, who is fanning herself at the other side of the open Samoan *fale*)
>
> Tuli: We finished our house quicker than most other people who shifted here with us. The boys from Siaosi's family at Vaimoso came and helped in the work. That's why we built our house fast. If it wasn't for those boys….
>
> Eseta: And also the help we got from Tau and Kalepo…[Turned towards me] These are my brothers who remained in the plantation to work after our family shifted here. They helped us with some money when they got their pay on Fridays.
>
> *Me: Did you look for a job after you finished the house?*
>
> Eseta: No, I told my husband that it was better I stayed home and looked after

the old lady and the children. So he found himself a job as a night watchman for T-N-T (Engineering) Workshop but after about six months there, he quit. He didn't like the boss who had a bad temper and treated the workers as if they were kids.

ME: So you had to find work for yourself?

Eseta: Yes.

ME: Where did you find your job?

Eseta: You may know Saiete, my father's sister? She was a clerical officer at the Rothmans Tobacco Company. My mother went to see her if she could help find a job for me there…

Tuli: And how about Fialua? (Tuli's niece)…While I was busy looking for Saiete, Fialua was busy looking for me. She wanted me to talk to your brother, Uaina, at the Vailima Breweries for a job for her….I don't know what's wrong with these young people, as if they don't have mouths to go and talk to people…

Eseta: I think after three weeks, we got a message from Saiete for me to come and see her. And when I went down to her work, she asked me to go and see this cousin of her husband at the Samoa Snacks Limited which is not very far from Rothmans. That's how I got my first job. I was so happy I found a job… packing and sealing packets of twisties, banana chips, and taro chips.

ME: So you didn't find the job yourself, it was the old lady who…

Eseta: Yes. You know what it's like here. The old people are more respected. It was good that my mother asked Saiete because she loved my mother as her own, especially after my father passed away. Poor Saiete will do anything for my mother…

Eseta's mother and her late husband, Faasau, are the adopted parents of Saiete. While working in the plantation, Tuli and Faasau helped to pay Saiete's school fees, her boarding fees, and other payments required by Leulumoega Fou College. Since she stayed in the school hostel, Saiete's fees were more expensive than other students'.

As our conversations continued with Eseta and her mother, I asked, "And Fialua? What

happened to her job search?"

> Tuli: I ended up writing a letter to poor Uaina to have compassion on Fialua. I sent her to take the letter, and I don't know what happened…
>
> Eseta: Fialua got a job as a housekeeper for one of the *palagi* managers of the Breweries. But her older sister, Lesa, in New Zealand later took her there.

Although Fialua went on a 3-month visitor's visa she overstayed her permit and was illegally working at various jobs in Auckland; at a wool factory and in apple picking jobs. In my conversation with Lesa in Auckland, she mentioned that she did not want Fialua to come back to Vaitele. "Fialua would have found a better future here in Auckland", Lesa said. Lesa's two older daughters tried very hard to apply for Fialua's permanent residence on the grounds of family reunifications, but these were declined. Eventually, Fialua was deported to Samoa in December 1997. She married, and is now living with her husband and her two younger siblings at Vaitele. Fialua's story, however, did not end when she returned to Vaitele. In March 2000, Lesa claimed,

> "My daughters and I always try to send something for Fialua at Vaitele. We know she's not a bright girl to find a good-paying job…So, we send her some wools to sell. There are a lot of mat weavers at Vaitele she can go and sell the wools to. She gets that money to help with what they need there…" (Interview, 2000)

Despite the irregularity of the wool supplies, Lesa feels satisfied she is able to assist her sister to earn some money. There is hope, still, to bring her and her husband to New Zealand some day where the dream of 'a better future' is centered.

Reciprocities continued

Despite Eseta's excitement about her family's "new place", new life at Vaitele and

"about working in Apia" the reality of getting a job was quite different. This difference was experienced first by her husband, Siaosi, who found the short-tempered boss at TNT too much to handle, and quit. This may have reflected Siaosi's unfamiliarity with the working environment in peri-urban Vaitele: being employed amongst people he did not know before (as workers in the plantation always knew each other usually since childhood), and having a rather strict boss who is the owner, not manager, of the business. It was an environment that Eseta herself would probably not be able to fit in comfortably given her relatively recent arrival from Mulifanua where work responsibilities were more group-focused and commonly shared. As Salome told me told in October 1999,

> "…at first I didn't know where to look for a job, because I've never done that sort of thing before. I've never applied for a job before. Besides, I'm a shy person; too shy to go knock at a stranger's office and ask for anything…You know it's very different at the Plantation where the job is there for you, so you just get into it like everyone else. But here at Vaitele, it's very different. That's what I'm seeing here in this place."

Thus looking for a job really started with looking towards relatives. Identifying '*aiga* members who are already employed means re-activating and practicing the lineage connection through parents and others. Eseta sought help from her father's sister, a clerical officer at the Rothmans Tobacco Company (RTC). While acknowledging family links with Saiete, Eseta also alludes to the rootedness of such links in history, movement, education, and place. These provide the common ground upon which to build continue reciprocities between Eseta, her mother Tuli, and Saiete.

Looking after one's younger siblings was a common practice among plantation families.

Many of the First Generation *Teine uli* started families of their own at a young age (between ages 16 and 25), and the responsibility of raising a family often began with looking after their or their husbands' younger siblings. The case of Saiete was among the many in plantation families. Contemporary experiences in Vaitele link to life and living in Mulifanua, and the practice of *looking after* and *looking towards* one's relations continue to thrive in peri-urban Vaitele, traversing time and place.

Movement has obviously helped facilitate reciprocities among '*aiga* members. As in the case of Fialua's family, her sisters and cousins in Auckland took her there in the hope she would be able to stay longer and legally. Despite her eventual return to Vaitele, Fialua often received something from her New Zealand-based relatives.

Another woman, Menime, commented on how she felt about having to look for a job:

> "Almost everyday, my parents would tell me to go and talk to my cousin, Mili, if she can 'fix' a job for me at Charlie's Bakery down at Vaitele-tai…I talked to Mili one day, and she said there's not that many vacancies at that time because that was just after White Sunday (in October) and the bakery was not busy anymore. Mili said they might hire more workers in December because that's another busy time for her work. Christmas time is always a busy time for them, and she was going to give my name to the man (Mili's boss)."

Eventually Mili, who has been working at the bakery for about 14 months, took Menime to the bakery because she was anxious that her cousin might miss out as there were always people also looking for work and coming to the bakery to enquire. The fact that Mili has a very good record at the Bakery was an added benefit for Menime. However, regardless of Mili's performance at her job, Menime looked firstly towards her blood

connection with Mili as the starting point for her search for employment. Moreover, Menime's parents encouraged her to pursue this connection; to practice what '*aiga* is about – giving and receiving. Their daughter's job search would not be a lone voyage but one that charts its ways through the already existing web of their family genealogies. Through each strand of their genealogies, knowledge of support and reciprocities flows continuously to and fro. Such were the pathways set by ancestors before them and connections across generations were not severed or dead despite their passing.

When waged work is *not* life and living

The Japanese-owned wire-harness factory at Vaitele has, by far, been the main employer for a large number of Samoan women including second generation *Teine uli*. Since its establishment in 1991 about 44 young *Teine uli* have worked there. This number slowly declined over the years and, at the time of my study, only three of the original group were still working there. This pattern was to be explained partly by the women's perception of the company and partly by the nature of factory work. My conversations with former factory workers, Tafito and Oge, revealed a common perception about Yazaki employment.

> *Me: So you were all employed before by Yazaki?*
>
> Tafito: Yes. We were the first *Teine Yasaki* (Yazaki female workers) in 1992. There was me, Oge, Fipe, Lisi, Moe, Vela, Tina, Siafi, Moemai,…
>
> Oge: And Luisa and Pua'aelo…
>
> Tafito: …And many others. We heard about the Yazaki job from other people.
>
> Oge: Yasaki was very well known then …because it was the biggest factory, it was new in Samoa, and it asked specifically for women workers, and it's located

very close to us here too.

Tafito: Everybody was talking about Yazaki, that it was a great company because it was offering employment for all women in Samoa.

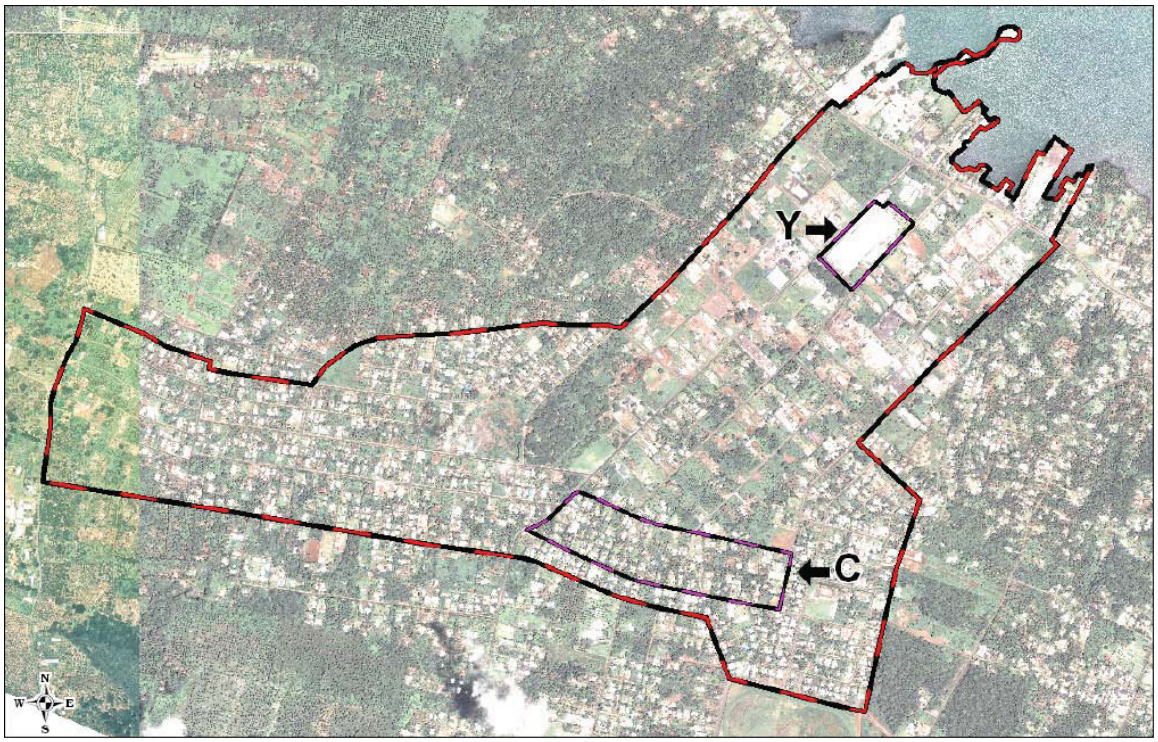
Me: What were your initial thoughts about Yasaki? Like, did it appeal to you? Did you think this was the place to go and work, or did you hesitate a bit, and want to ask around some more?

Tafito: O yes. For me, when I first heard about this company, I thought I'd like to *fa'aka'ika'i (*try it). I said to Saloma (her husband), that I'd like to go and try the work at Yazaki'. You know, for me, I thought it would be good to work there and earn some money to help with lots of *fa'alavelave* in our *'aiga*. So I wanted to *try it out*… I wanted *to taste* what factory work is like because I've never been to a factory before (my emphasis).

Oge: For me, I also had similar thoughts especially because the two of us were also discussing at that time to try out Yazaki. And of all the things I heard about this company, what appealed most to me was the free transportation it was providing for its workers, and the free lunches (laughed)… and also that it's mostly women there…

Tafito: (Laughed with Oge)..I remember saying to Oge one day, 'it's probably better to work at Yazaki and get free meals there than staying at home'…
(Group Interview, 1999)

It is obvious that, as a group, the women contemplated on working in the factory. They had some idea of a satisfactory job: good pay, good working conditions, and overtime pay which was generally considered an extra benefit. For them, any job that pays SAT$100.00 or more a week is considered good. However, it is also clear that the women's attitude did not focus entirely on earning money. Although they did not earn SAT$100.00 from Yazaki, *Teine uli*'s perception was to *try it out* and *taste* what factory work was like. Expressed jokingly, this view of 'tasting' factory work alludes to a different and rather flexible approach to paid employment. Factory employment was not treated seriously and as if life and living depended entirely on it.



Map 7. Locations of the Yazaki Wire Harness Factory (Y) and the Melanesian-Samoan Community (C), 2003

Source: MNRE, Apia.

For these *Teine uli* the opportunity to experience waged work at Yazaki came to them. Work was there when they arrived at Vaitele, and "*it asked* specifically for women workers." This reflects more a demand by the Company than a desire from the women and, their not-so-serious attitude about 'working for Yazaki' contains a rather subtle sense of humor. As Oge said, "And of all the things I heard about this company, what appealed mostly to me was the free transportation…and the free lunches (lauged).." Laughing with Oge, Tafito added, I remember saying to Oge one day, 'it's probably better to work at Yazaki and get free meals than staying home…"

Their sense of humor persisted even during the time the women actually took up

employment with Yazaki. They all experienced the physically hard work in the factory. Despite the tea and lunch breaks, these were quite insignificant compared to the long, tiring hours of standing and doing repetitive work. This was worse for women like Fipe who, in her sixth month of pregnancy, had to quit because of the pain in her legs. About these experiences, *Teine uli* continued to treat them with laughter as if this was more rewarding than the dollars that Yazaki paid them. Tafito told me,

> "You figure this out, I stand (at the jig board at the factory floor) from seven in the morning to four thirty in the evening, everyday of the week, and my weekly pay doesn't reach one hundred Tala. I only get more than $100.00 when I work overtime, from five to eight or nine at night… Besides, when I work overtime, I have no strength left. By the time I get home I'm too tired to eat, too tired to have sex, and the husband gets more angry (laughed)...and too tired to go to work the next morning. *Aue*, what a life! (laugh)" (Interview, 1999)

'Tasting' what it is like to work at Yazaki underlies the women's particular way of approaching factory employment or any waged employment for that matter. Thus, while the attraction of Yazaki as the largest private sector employer was effective, it was effective to the extent that it brought mixed feelings of excitement, curiosity, and suspicion among the women. Many therefore went to work with this attitude and perspective; that 'if the job turns out to be 'good' they would stay. If not, they would quit.' Working at Yazaki, was to a large extent, a choice by the women based almost entirely on their own quiet, unseen, and unspoken terms. The work has to be 'good' according to their definition of the term upon which their decision to stay on or quit was based.

A certain degree of contradiction emerges when the women's perceptions are not

considered in the context of 'who they are' culturally. Previous studies on Yasaki workers highlight a consistently poor level of work attendance, which has been a very serious problem for the company (Gravel-Lameko, 2000; and Tsujita, 2002). A Japanese manager, was quoted by Tsujita (2002, 153) saying,

> "I wonder why they (the women operators) absent themselves so often from work. I'm sure that all of them are fully aware of how absenteeism disturbs the manufacturing processes and causes delays in production, as others have to cover for absent co-workers. If they know how hard it is, why don't they have a much stronger sense of responsibility toward their jobs?"

'Wondering' is probably the appropriate term to describe the reaction of a typically business oriented factory manager who is socialized into profit-making. To claim that the women should have "a much stronger sense of responsibility toward their jobs" is assuming jobs are the highest priority for the women. To the contrary, and unlike the manager whose existence seems to be dependent on his employment, the women including the young *Teine uli* of Vaitele think otherwise - with or without a job life and living goes on.

On (not) working as a group

The decline in the number of *Teine uli* working at the Yazaki factory between 1991 and 1999 (when I interviewed second-generation *Teine uli*) could easily be explained by an assumption in the dominant business-centred view that stigmatizes the women as lazy or unable to cope with 'work' pressure. However, as I gathered from my conversations with *Teine uli* it was the individualistic nature of factory work that many disliked. Before they were hired, *Teine uli*, as a group, discussed and arrived at the conclusion to try out

Yazaki work – together. As they had never been in a factory before unfamiliarity with work activities there was obvious, and a sense of voyaging out to experience this 'unknown' world of work was to be done as a group.

Working in groups was always part of life in the plantation – on the field, in the copra shed, in the church, in the women's committee, in the homes. The women's expectation of factory work aligned with their notion of 'group work' defined by corporate pulling together of resources, energies and know-how, the sharing of stories and jokes, informing each other of social and health support available, and warning each other of possible dangers for themselves, their children and families. Ultimately, all this sharing was to be beneficial to all and their families, the community as a whole. The reality of factory work was quite different. While standing next to each other along the factory line the women did not face each other but the jig board that each separately operated. Despite working alongside each other they did not communicate or share a joke with one another. They might have been able to whisper a word or two. Most times, they were kept under the watchful eye of the mean supervisor, a senior Samoan woman who tried her best to be entrepreneurial in thinking and approach, yelling out commands to the girls. Time was spent with/at the machine rather than with people. This was a complete contrast to the work world that *Teine uli* are familiar with and appreciate. For them it was worse than being a laborer on the plantation.

The women's decision to continue or discontinue working at Yasaki was a result of the reality of factory life they experienced once they entered and became part of this company. Like most of the young Samoan women employed by Yasaki, *Teine uli* started

as shop floor operators. Promotions to line leaders and supervisor positions affected only a few women who convinced the managers of their ability. The rest have nowhere to move but remain at the shop floor. Realistically, many *Teine uli* chose to leave the repetitive factory work, move out, and back home. While this move allowed space for new recruits to continue the cycle of factory life, *Teine uli* were back to their families where they continued to draw help from and lent support to extended family members at Vaitele and elsewhere, as has always been the case.

'*Staying at home': a less visible world of work?*

Teine uli responses to the field census were outlined in chapter four and, like many other words, 'staying at home' gradually emerged to have more critical meanings. Further investigation showed the term to indicate not necessarily non-participation in paid employment, but non-engagement with paid work outside the home. It became increasingly clear that some form of paid work were carried out in the homes. Thus, earning money was not necessarily a performance/selling of labor exclusively in the public sphere of formal employment, but an inclusive process where the home at Vaitele was central. This situation provides new meanings to the concept of work and workplace as involving *Teine uli*.

The two major paid tasks based in the home are weaving and sewing work. Despite their obvious differences, these tasks represent local articulation of broader economic opportunities in the country and overseas. These locally based work activities have an international dimension through the influences of and contributions from families

overseas and also through the informal networking with people within Vaitele and places nearby.

'The things that we give grow': The story of Losa Tunu Leiataua

Losa is a first generation *Teine uli* who is in her mid-50s. She is the only daughter of original *Tama uli*, Kosime, who came from Kalakana in the Solomon Islands. Kalakana most probably refers to Guadalcanal Island, but it could possibly be a village or tribal group in the Melanesian Islands of the Western Pacific. Losa was born and raised in Vaipapa plantation unit in Mulifanua. She, her Samoan husband, Leiataua Tunu, and their children spent many years working on another unit, Afia plantation, before moving to their half acre land at Vaitele.

On this piece of land in Vaitele, there are three open Samoan *fale* and a cooking *fale*. One *fale* is occupied by Losa and her husband and their two grandchildren - the sons of their eldest daughter, Luafitu, who resides in American Samoa. It contains the family's important furniture – the TV, the fridge, the radio, the dressing table, an old hand-sewing machine, a food safe, strings of ropes that crisscross below the ceiling to hang clothes and towels, and a few rectangular wooden boxes for clothing and other belongings. The other *fale* is the sleeping house for Leiataua's sister and her family who recently moved from Manono village because of 'some family disputes' there. The third house is the sleeping *fale* for Losa's 26 year old son, Aleli, who works as a security guard at Kitano Tusitala Hotel in Apia town. This is the *fale* also used to store Losa's dried pandanus leaves. The rest of the land space is planted with pandanus trees, banana trees, and some taro. Behind

the garden is the family's pit toilet.

When I went to talk with Losa, she was preparing dried pandanus leaves for weaving fine mats and sleeping mats. We talked about her weaving. It Losa's little 'business.' Although she had some reservations in calling her work a business (because she thinks of business as a bigger operation), I could sense her pride in telling me how her work operates.

Losa has two daughters in Tutuila, American Samoa: Luafitu, aged 38, and Asoleaga, aged 35. Through their Samoan father's relatives residing in Tutuila, arrangements were made for both girls to go there in 1992 to work in the fish cannery. Later, they both married men from Tutuila. Luafitu no longer works at the cannery. She and her husband have begun a small operation as suppliers of Samoan fine mats and handicrafts to a shop at Nu'uuli and to the public market at Fagatogo. Her younger sister helps out although she is also still working at the cannery. Losa told me,

> "My daughters are very good weavers. They can weave anything, and that's their job now in Tutuila. I send them dried pandanus leaves and they weave the mats and fine mats themselves, and sell…I send herring carton-sized boxes of pandanus leaves every two weeks or once a month. I send them on the Salamasina (boat)… I send like one or two boxes each time" (Interview, 1998)

Losa has been sending the raw materials to her daughters for almost a year, and she is not only used to the Customs and Quarantine procedures but also know quite well some of the officers in the Shipping Company. This helps a lot especially in times when she is running late with her boxes of pandanus leaves.

> "In the beginning it was hectic trying to get permits and papers from the different offices of the Quarantine and the Shipping company. But I'm used to it now, and a lot of the men in those offices know me now. These days, when I go down to get a permit, the guys there joke with me and call me the business lady…Things are a lot easier these days." (Losa, Interview, 1998)

Losa also weaves at home and sends some mats when her daughters run out. However she and her daughters prefer to send the pandanus leaves because they are not as bulky as the mats. This helps reduce boat and other transportation costs. Although Losa cuts leaves from her garden, she has to buy from other women and from the marketplace most of the time. The US dollars that her daughters send is "more than enough" to purchase the leaves and food for the family.

> "Some of the women here in Vaitele know about what I'm doing because I tell them. And I tell them, if you have dried leaves, sell them to me…I give between $15.00 and $20.00 a bundle…depending on the size. The ladies are used to selling their dried leaves to me." (*Ibid.*, 1998)

In addition to selling leaves to Losa, quite a number of women now are also planting pandanus around their houses. This is true of both *Teine uli* from Vaitele and women from other places nearby. Although the initiave to plant pandanus seems to have been sparked by the emergence of Losa's business, leaves are not necessarily all sold to her. Some *Teine uli* weave their own fine mats and do not want to sell their leaves. What prompts this feeling is the women's concern for their household or family contributions to *fa'alavelave*. Pene, for example, prefers to do this pointing out,

> "You figure this out. The cheapest price for a fine mat these days is $50.00. And that's for a small-sized mat, that's the 10 by 6 feet. You can sell that… But what's more important to me and my husband is that we're able to give our share when there's *fa'alavelave* in our family. And you know this too… So when there's *saogamea* (allocated contributions) for a *fa'alavelave* you don't give just one or two fine mats, no, the number you give is five and upwards. So where would I go to get the $250.00 to buy five fine mats?..No way, it's better for me to eat just *faalifu 'ulu* (breadfruit cooked in coconut cream) and tinned fish, and be able to

> meet our *tusaga* (contributions) than eat expensive corned beef and get a bad name for not contributing to *fa'alavelave*…" (Interview, 1999)

Clearly, there is not just one way to finding resources to fulfil *fa'alavelave*. What remains similar is that the women's work activities are conducted around the concept of *fa'alavelave*. Although Pene's calculation may reflect a more entrepreneurial thinking, the rationale was not to save or invest for herself but to give to family and community *faalavelave* whenever these arise. Being able to meet one's *tusaga* is a central concern among the families as is the case in all '*aiga*.

Losa's little business traverses the spatial borders of Samoa and American Samoa and weaves into the more structured world of business enterprises guarded by set trade policies. Her hectic days in the beginning, when she tried "to get permits and papers from the different offices of the Quarantine and the Shipping Company", are now over and "things are a lot easier these days." She takes the initiative in stimulating and encouraging the women from her community to plant pandanus and sell dried leaves to her. Her work has, in fact, influenced many at Vaitele about the potential of this kind of activity.

Losa's husband is a high chief of his '*aiga*, and this according to Losa is one important reason why her business is useful. Their contributions to *faalavelave* for Losa's and Leiataua's families have been supported by her business. Her capacity as a *matai*'s wife, mother, and grandmother in the family is built on her belief that nothing is impossible if the heart is willing. As she said to me,

> "I'm proud to be the wife of the Leiataua. You know, it's not that I want to be someone high up there… but if you think about it Leiataua is one of the four highest titles in my husband's village. It's a great honour. Maybe other people are asking, 'where would they get things for *faalavelave*?' You know, that's the life of a *matai, faalavelave*, *faalavelave*, *faalavelave*, every day. But I'm not worried about where to get things…because I know as long as we work. Small work everyday. We'll have something in our hands to give away.

As Losa continued, my aunt Leitu, who went with me to Losa's place, agreed saying, "*E moi lava. E moi lava"* (True, true)

Losa continued,

> "You know in the world of the *faa-matai,* people believe that proverb *E tupu mea e avea* (the things that we give grow). And you don't see blessings walking to you like a person. No, they come in so many different ways. The ways of God that people don't understand…"

In the evening as I reflected on my conversation with Losa I recorded my feelings as follows:

> I truly appreciate my conversation with [Losa] today. She's quite a character. I'm amazed by her deep love and commitment for her husband's '*aiga*. The depth of her understanding of Samoan culture is quite amazing. Not only she knows what she's talking about, she *lives* it. (Fieldnotes, 1998)

Living *va fealoaloa'i*: The story of Nunu and Malu

Nunu, a 68 year old Teine uli, and her 34 year old daughter Malu, are quite well known in Vaitele for their sewing work. Although Nunu used to sew casual clothes for her nine children in the plantation she and her daughter became 'more serious' with sewing after they received their first boxes of cut materials from Iosefa and his wife in Auckland in 1992. Iosefa is Nunu's only child living overseas. Back in the plantation days, Iosefa lived with the Samoan manager and his family. Although he was officially a WSTEC laborer, Iosefa was more a son to Sa'u and his wife, Leiua. When Sa'u retired in 1987,

he did not want Iosefa to remain a plantation laborer but arranged for him to go to New Zealand to Sa'u's older sister in Mt.Albert. Iosefa left Samoa in 1988 on a visitor's visa, but he never returned. He married Fenika, who is a New Zealand citizen, and he is now a permanent resident there.

Cyclone Val struck Samoa in December 1991 and the country was devastated. In the following year, Samoan families experienced an overwhelming outpouring of *meaalofa fa'amomoli* (love offering and gifts) from relatives and friends all over the world. Iosefa and his wife sent five large boxes of food and clothing for his family at Vaitele. Cut materials included in these boxes came from Fenika's work in New Lynn. Nunu and Malu made the family's clothes from these materials, and they never stopped making clothes for people since. Word quickly spread across Vaitele and nearby places as their sewing activities grew famous. Some years later, Iosefa and Fenika sent a second-hand sewing machine for Malu. Nunu continued to use her old hand-sewing machine her husband bought for Five Pounds back in 1967.

For this mother and daughter,

> "We're not professional dressmakers, you know, we don't use any patterns or measurements as they use in the Island Styles. We tell people to bring their dress or shirt and we use that as measure…" (Malu, Interview, 1998)

Despite this 'non-professional' nature of their work, the number of sewing jobs they have had to do, especially at times of White Sunday, Christmas, and beginning of new school year, would make their work a good business. Nunu pointed out;

> "We don't see our work as a business, because we're not professional dressmakers, as I said before. Also, another thing is, we don't have a business license…But you know, we cannot stop people coming….we see this work as something to help with what our family needs. It has been very handy that we get some income for our church contributions, and we manage to pay for Malu's children school fees, and help with *fa'alavelave*…." (Interview, 1998)

Although there is no more supply of cut material from New Zealand, the women sometimes receive some outdated Woman's Day magazines from Fenika from which they can get ideas about clothing styles. The clothing fashions in these magazines however are never used by Nunu and Malu partly because they are hard to copy and that they do not fit their tastes. Nunu cheerfully talked about how she is both fascinated and put off by some of the palagi women's fashion she sees in the magazines. Although she loves the colors and patterns of the materials used for clothes she cannot figure out why palagi women would, for example, wear a nice long dress and "decides to have one or two…or three slits at the back." (Nunu, Interview, 1998).

While the women's sewing is a significant means for the family's livelihood, it is also providing an affordable and a relatively cheap alternative for many families. It is getting more expensive these days to put children in the *aoga palagi* (European or formal schools). Besides fees and tuition, school uniforms are a major concern for families. There are no set prices for the jobs Nunu and Malu do and the women (for it is mostly them who bring materials to sew) are left to "pay us whatever they think is appropriate" (Malu, Interview, 1998). This is a very common and acceptable practice in the community as in much of Samoan society. Through the exchanges between the so-called

seller/provider and customer a significant dimension of cultural respect and humility surfaces and predominates.

As Nunu explains,

> "This what our life here is like. Even though you work and earn a small amount or big amount of money that will not alter our relations with people. We have to nurture our relations with people…in the family and outside the family. This is the life we are used to. It is very hard for us to say this is how much you should pay…I don't know. It's just the way we are. We're used to it.."

I was at Nunu's place one day when her pastor's 15-year-old son came to their house. The boy came inside the house, sat down slightly behind Nunu, and whispered a message while one hand was sliding an envelope onto her laps. Nunu told the boy to take the envelope back to her mother. It was supposed to be payment for a dress that Nunu sewed for the pastor's wife. The boy, being a respectful pastor's son, rejected Nunu's offer, saying that his mother will smack him if he brought back the money. Nunu said, "Please, tell the good lady I will not accept this money. Tell her if she's giving me any more payment, then I will never again sew any of her clothes". Eventually the boy took the envelope back to his mother.

The relations that are often mentioned, and referred to, in our conversations with Teine uli is *va fealoaloa'i* – the space between. The space exists because people exist. It is people that give birth to and nurture that space. Members of the *'aiga,* for example, exist within that space and their activities are understood within it. It guides not only social relations but also predominates in economic and political relations. With the pressing

complexity and influences that accompany economically-defined work activities, '*aiga* can be the last place to be situated within. But, as repeatedly mentioned by the women, '*aiga* and all the practices and values that underpin it, it cannot be ignored.

Becoming market vendors

There are two types of market vendors among *Teine uli*: those who operate on a casual basis, and those who are involved on a full-time basis. Casual operation is irregular and flexible in terms of time and days to sell produce, mobility of operation from place to place within Apia town, and the rotation of sellers (operator following/chasing the buyers). Full-time operations are usually more stable, rooted in one place (buyers following the seller), but also characterized by a mixture of structured and flexible times of operation. The stories of Tafiaiga and Pogai are given to provide a sense of these activities as ultimately oriented towards the corporate unit of *'aiga*.

The rootedness of flexible vendor activity: Tafiaiga's experience

Tafiaiga, who is known in her family and Vaitele as Tafi, is 54 years old, and one of the youngest of the first-generation *Teine uli*. Having been born, raised, and worked at Vaipapa Plantation, Tafi married her Samoan husband, Ioane, a man from the village of Afega on Upolu island. They worked on the plantation for 'many years' and later moved with their five children to live on Ioane's family land because "there was no one to look after the land there" (Tafiaiga, Interview, 1998). While residing there, Tafi and her family collected coconuts from the family's 5 acre plantation and sold copra to the local store. This was their main livelihood.

After the sudden death of her husband in April 1994, Tafi decided to move with three of her children (the older two married and are staying with their spouses' families in another village) to live with her older brother, Puata, and his family at Vaitele. According to Puata, Tafi did not receive land of her own at Vaitele because she was not registered in the *Faapotopotoga o Suli o Tama uli mai Solomona* (the Association of the Descendants of the Solomon Islanders). She was "reluctant to join the Association" at the time of negotiations with the Samoan government for compensatory land (Puata, pers.comm.. 1998). Her name was not included in the list of first generation Melanesian-Samoans entitled for a half-acre land. Tafi preferred not to talk about why she did not join the Association in 1986 because she "loves [her] late husband and [her] children" (Ibid., . 1998). This phrase contains elements of confidentiality on her part, which have to be accepted out of respect for her late husband. Obviously, Tafi wanted to focus on her contemporary situation. She was thankful to her brother who gave her and her children quarter acre of his land to live on.

Although Tafi was asked by Ioane's family (which were mainly his two older sisters in New Zealand) to remain back at Afega, she decided to move to be with her own "flesh and blood"

> "What's important to me is that my children know their father's *'aiga*. All of us spent many years living in Afega, and my children know the village and '*aiga* of their father now. And they don't have to physically reside there now to know that. I wanted them also to know my *'aiga*. They haven't spent much time with my *'aiga* here. So that's a very important move I've made…to come back to Puata (her brother)" (*Ibid.*, 1998).

Part of the process of knowing her *'aiga* is for her children to *tautua* (be of service) to Puata who is the family *matai*. He is older than Tafi and is a *matai* with their Samoan mother's family in Sapo'e village. This *tautua* ranges from providing a plate of food for Puata and his wife to contributing money and fine mats for big *fa'alavelave* of the *'aiga potopoto* (extended family). While agreeing that this might be an expensive thing for her and her children in contemporary times, Tafi maintained that she "cannot see what's abnormal about *tautua*".

> "This is life in Samoa… We've done our *tautua* for the family of my children's father. We are doing it now for my brother. Everybody's doing it. It's true we sometimes moan that the cost of living is expensive and we have no money to buy things for the *fa'alavelave*, but, you tell me, who should we rely on to do these things?…we moan and complain but we still carry on doing it …we cannot avoid *fa'alavelave*, and we cannot avoid being part of them…" (Tafi, 1998)

This simultaneity/double-sidedness of *'aiga* life projects it as a continuous "give-and-take" experience rather than an either/or situation determined by two extremes of 'good' and 'bad'. This conceptual understanding of *'aiga* is not explicitly stated in much of the conversations I had with *Teine uli.* Nonetheless, it need not be stated in any explicit manner for one to value it. This conception of *'aiga* life need not be voiced in order to be understood for the daily work activities and lived experiences of *Teine uli* and their families revealed a clear commitment among the women towards *'aiga*. For while tangible contributions are visible versions of commitment to *'aiga*, unseen blood and social relations also serve as equally valuable and strong.

Soon after moving to Vaitele in 1996, Tafi found a job as a house girl in the nearby village of Siusega which is occupied predominantly by families of government officials

and Samoans of European ancestry. Tafi started at her job at 7am and finished at 3pm, and earned about $80.00 a week. When she is at home, she helps prepare baskets of huskedcoconuts for her two older children Lisaki and Mose, aged 22 and 19 respectively, to sell in Apia the next day. The coconuts are from a nearby section of the old Vaitele Estate now under the Samoa Trust Estate Corporation (STEC). This section of the old Estate remains the only part that is yet to be subdivided for individual sale. It is left unused, and Tafi's brother Puata asked permission from STEC to make use of the coconuts 'for their food'. The family however ended up selling the coconuts as well – a move that remains unknown to the Corporation. On this issue, Tafi commented, "Well, we got permission to use them…and besides, our poor *Tama uli* fathers (the original laborers) slaved over planting and maintaining this Estate. So, why not?"

Tafi recently quit her job as house girl for two reasons. First she wanted to be more involved in selling the coconuts with her children. Second, she wanted to be a regular fisherwoman. Part of Tafi's daily activity is fishing for and bottling seafoods such as internals of sea slugs, and sea urchins to sell in Apia. There are three other *Teine uli* and two women friends from Falelauniu (an inland settlement behind Vaitele) who used to go fishing with Tafi on Saturday for Sunday lunch. Tafi and her friends recently started to fish everyday for, as Tafi stated, "as long as [they] get the strength from God".

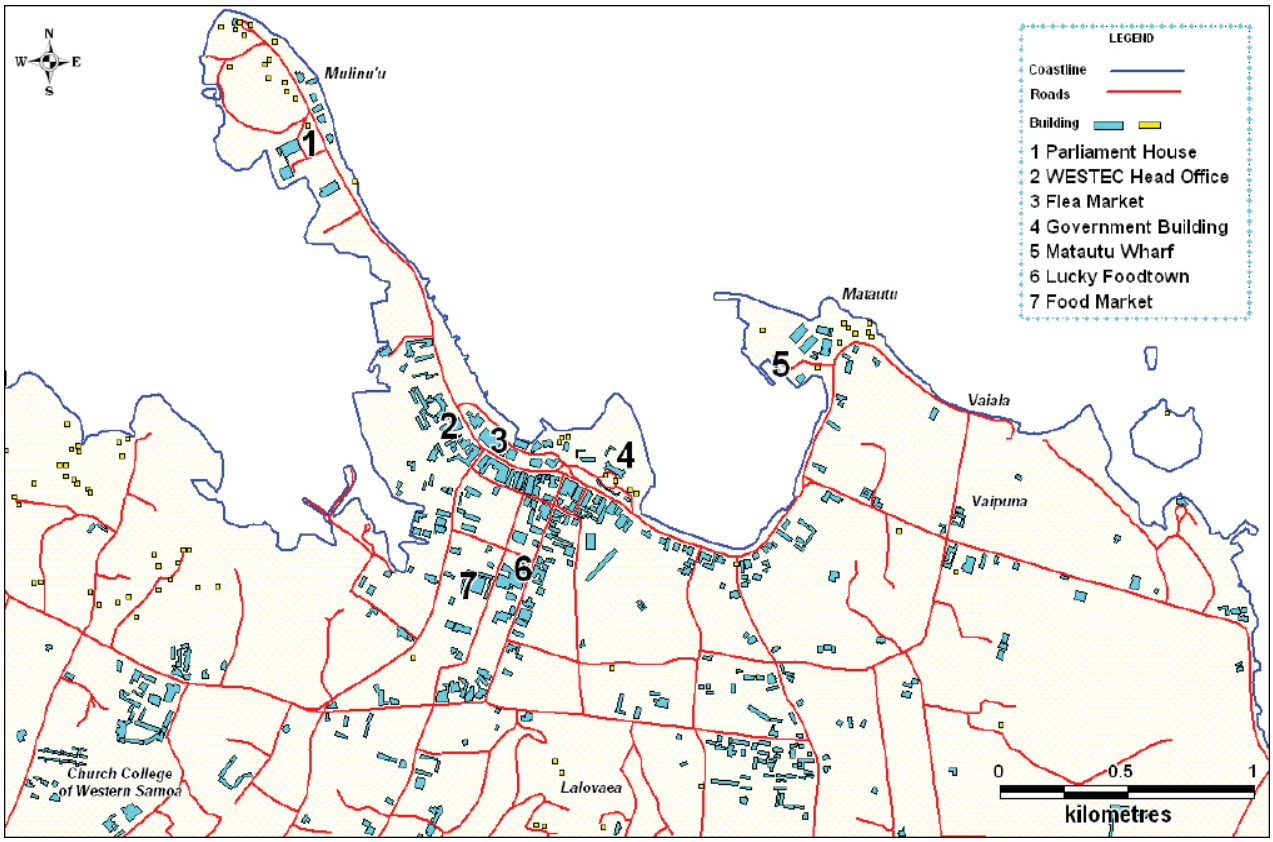
Selling coconuts and bottled seafood in Apia involves a good knowledge of the town. This entails an understanding of the spatial flows of the (potential) buyers and their behavior/mood in various times. Tafi and her boys earmarked certain places where they

can situate themselves at different times of the day and different days of the week. Tafi learnt this tactic from the 'match-box boys' who are hired by certain wholesalers to sell match boxes (and other small items) on the streets of Apia (Map 7). At the price of WST$1.00 each, the husked coconuts are sold faster at places like bus stops and the wharf where inter-island travelers congregate at all times. The marketplace is not always the fastest selling spot because there is high competition from other sellers. Besides a fee of WST$5.00 per day has to be paid to the market management. During slow days like Monday and Tuesday, Tafi sends her children 'to cover' the offices located in the fifth storey Government Building in Central Apia. The best times to do this Government Building 'round' is late morning and just before the 12 noon lunch break for the public servants. While her children are doing their rounds, Tafi sits outside the verandah of Lucky Foodtown Supermarket to sell coconuts and bottled seafoods. This supermarket is frequented by many expatriates, who are considered by the vendors as 'good buyers' of coconuts and other local produce.

A daily earning for Tafi and her children from the sale of coconuts and bottled seafood ranges between $60.00 and $80.00 on 'good days', and between $30.00 and $50.00 on 'bad days'. Tafi's family is very happy with this income, but admits that it is a return for their hard work. There are days they do not sell at all for reasons such as 'wanting to have a break' or attending to a family *fa'alavelave*, or illness. However, the ability to earn money and pay for expenses comes only from hard work. Towards the end of our conversation, Tafi shared her inner desired:

> to help her brother pay off the remaining balance of about $5,000.00 for his land. My brother does not have children, and he sees my children as his own. We

already talked (with the brother and his wife). Our agreement is that we all put in whatever we can afford from time to time for our payment. Once that is done, this ¼ acre can be registered under my name. I like that very much…I'm so happy about this arrangement. I'm happy for my children. And that's why my boys and I are working hard now. I say to my children, 'You two look here. Nobody knows the will of God. Maybe sometimes soon God will take me away. I might get sick and be gone, but I want to confirm this land for you before I die'. That's what I tell my children. They know that they have no good education, so they have to endure…and put their strength in good use. Not to go and rob other people's things…but to earn their own future. (Interview, 1998)



Map 8. Places in Apia urban area for Tafi's vendor activities

Source: MNRE, Government of Samoa, Apia

When I asked Tafi how she was so sure about this verbal agreement with her brother and his wife, and the possibility it will not work out in the future, she did not speak for a while. And as I sat there, having second thoughts as perhaps I should not have asked that question, Tafi turned her head and fixed her view on a pair of rectangular cemented graves just a few meters in front of her *fale*. Tears started streaming down her dark wrinkled face. She grabbed the corner of the tattered blue floral *lavalava* she was wearing over her dark red floral *muumuu*, blew her nose on it, and wiped her tears, and then said…

> "Nati, I'm not crying for any other reason. I'm crying because you don't seem to trust my story… I know there are people in our Community who doubt my brother will grant this land to me, and my children. But that's the seal (pointing to the graves). Our parents' are buried in this land. They are the witnesses…and I know my brother will not break our agreement" (Interview, 1998)

The bones of Tafi and Puata's parents were dug up and relocated from the Mulifanua Plantation cemetery in December 1994. With permission from STEC, all the Melanesian-Samoan families at Vaitele have also done the same with the bones of their late Melanesian fathers and Samoan mothers. The descendants moved with them. Their parents cannot be left behind in the Plantation land for, as Puata once said, "The spirits of our ancestors ensure the continuity of this Community". This is important for this continuity is manifested in the sense of taking care of each other even in times when it seems and feels 'too expensive' to do so. Today, as Tafi continues to operate her 'mobile food stall' in Apia, 'pushing' her children to push hard the wheelbarrow of coconuts from place to place, not an inch of doubt overshadow their dream for the land now sealed/guarded by their ancestors.

Gatherings of work at the flea market: the story of Pogai

Pogai, a 40-year old, second-generation Teine uli, considers herself a full-time vendor at the flea market at Savalalo, Apia. The flea market, as it is known among locals, is a special market place for handicrafts. Unlike the food market at Fugalei at the other end of town that opens in the evenings the flea market is opened only during day time. Vendors at the flea market transport their goods and prepare their displays in the early hours of the morning. In the evening they pack and hit the road for the return trip home. Like most business places in Samoa, the flea market is closed on Sunday.

Although I knew Pogai from before, as we grew up together in the Plantation Estate, I did not know about her current work as a market vendor. During my earlier visits to the Vaitele families for my field census, I talked with Pogai's mother, Repeka, a 65 year old first-generation *Teine uli.* When I asked about Pogai, Repeka said that she was hard to find at home because she goes to 'her block' at dawn, and comes home when it's dark. Repeka added that her daughter was doing quite well in her 'little' business, and she's the one that feeds the family. 'Her block' refers to Pogai's space at the market where she sits all day to sell her handicrafts. I caught up with her at the flea market a few days later. When I found her block, Pogai was bowing her head as she concentrated her efforts on weaving a fan.

We talked for a while. Her mother was right that Pogai was the main income earner for their family. Pogai asked me a lot of questions especially about life in Hawaii. She was interested to know as she has a younger sister living in Waianae on Oahu Island, Hawai'i,

and who has been supplying her paints to color chicken feathers to sell. This first conversation led to longer and more detailed *talanoa* sessions which mostly took place at Pogai's 'block' at the flea market.

Pogai's story may not be typical of a *Teine uli* born in the Plantation. Her experiences of the Plantation and the different Samoan villages she lived in, as well as her education in an all-girl London Missionary Society Church school – Papauta College - in Apia, constitute her diverse experiences in work activities carried out within the *'aiga* context. Her experiences of plantation labor at various points in her life – first as a young girl and later as a matured, married woman: her involvement as a teenager with women's *fale lalaga* (weaving groups) in her father's village of Satitoa, her role as *fafine nofo tane* (woman married into and lived with the husband's family) in Savaii, and her school life at a once prestigious Papauta College in Apia, have not only molded her current interests in making and selling of handicrafts, but also shaped her conception of how activities can simultaneously and paradoxically demolish and enhance *'aiga*. Pogai elaborated on this paradox with what seemed to be a metaphor. As she smilingly and smartly pointed out, "in the market you have to wear pants; in the '*aiga* you have to wear *lavalava*" (wrap around material). Comprehending Pogai's imagery became clearer for me as we continued our conversations in the following weeks.

At one level, Pogai's metaphor provided an interesting contrast of the flea market and home as places that are linked through the flows of handicraft, cash, the vendors, and their stories. At another level, it identifies two contrasting yet intertwining worlds of

business enterprises and *'aiga*. At the market place, where goods and services are exchanged for cash, a pair of pants is the appropriate attire to wear. Pants have pockets to hold the vendors earnings. In the pockets, cash is hidden for hours and days. Pockets are like vaults. They are a closed environment and extremely private space. Details of money contained in the pockets are usually not discussed in the open.

By contrast, wearing *lavalava* at the market place is not appropriate. It is too loose. It cannot hold cash. Nothing can be hidden in it. It is too flexible a world to be in for at any moment *lavalava* can reveal the vendor and her earnings. With *lavalava* the vendor loses her money. She might eventually lose the business. *Lavalava* is too risky for business. Its appropriate place, therefore, is *'aiga*, where people publicly display and acknowledge the exchange of food, fine mats, sleeping mats, and money. *Lavalava* represents openness, simplicity, and flexibility of the world of *'aiga*. Above all, it represents generosity embedded in *va fealoaloa'i* – the space in between.

Despite these contrasting worlds of the market and *'aiga*, Pogai finds herself at the intersection of both. She wears both *lavalava* and a pair of short pants - the former over the latter. This represents a metaphor of commercial activities operating in the context of culture and '*aiga*. Where the two worlds meet defines a space that appears unsettled and in conflict; where competing meanings and spirits of respective work activities defy each other. Pogai is constantly juggling shapes and this contributes to the continual existence of her kinship and herself in that kinship. This is particularly critical for people like Pogai, who physically reside within the proximity of extended family members. To be

part of *'aiga* is to live a life full of expectations and surprises cocooned within the notion and practice of *fa'alavelave*.

Born in 1958 at Vaipapa Planation to a part-Melanesian mother and a Samoan father, Pogai was, like many children in the estate, introduced to the world of plantation labor at a young age. Light tasks in the copra shed included watching her baby sister sleeping soundly in the dusty mosquito net at a cooler corner of the shed, taking a borrowed cigarette for her father, carrying baskets of coconut husks to the family cooking *fale*, collecting rubbish, and snacking on the juicy coconut flowers. This was the world she missed dearly when her family moved to her father's village, Satitoa, in 1968. Her father's mother had been ill. Pogai attended primary school in Satitoa, and quickly adjusted to the life of *fale lalaga* (groups of women weavers) among village women and girls. "That's where we all went when school is finished each day. That's where I started to learn to weave fans, food mats, thatch, floor mats, sleeping mats, fine mats…" (Interview, 1998). Pogai continued to tell me about her life as a young woman on the plantation:

> "My father's mother passed away in 1974. I completed Form Five at that time. The relationship between my father and his sister was not good. She was a greedy woman and wanted to chase us out of Satitoa…We went back to Afolau Plantation, and my parents worked there again. One day, Pastor Sifo and his wife at our plantation parish talked to my parents about taking me to Papauta Girls College. (This school has a reputation for educating prospective wives of pastors in the LMS church). This was probably the thought behind the desire of our pastor and my parents for me to attend Papauta. I spent two years there, 1975 and 1976, and no theological student from Malua proposed to me (laughed)… But I continued to learn to weave better and got to learn tapa cloth making, as well as a lot of real *faasamoa* stuff…like formal speeches and formal presentations of mats. I completed my two years at Papauta in November 1976. I could not find a good job in town, and I ended up again in the Plantation. I worked again in the copra

shed as my parents were doing their *igoa sali popo* (copra work organized and registered as family group work) like other families too…

In Christmas of 1977, I met Lopeki,..from Savai'i who was a relative of our pastor. Lopeki visited the copra shed where we were all working, and that's how we met. A few weeks later, we eloped to his family in Safotu (Savai'i) , and we stayed there for many months. There were not many people in Lopeki's family. It was only him, his parents, and a male relative of his mother from Paia. His two older brothers had gone to live in New Zealand. So Lopeki's family were relying on us to work the land …plant taro and some bananas….

My mother visited us a few times in Savaii and begged us to come back to Afolau. For her, the Plantation provides a guaranteed income, which could not be obtained if we stayed in my husband's village. Lopeki and I eventually came back to the Plantation to my parents in 1978. That same year, our eldest son was born. He's named after my father, Toetu. Lopeki and I became permanent laborers at the copra shed, doing the copra everyday. He was always working hard in the field, and often told me to stay home and weave fine mats while he went out to do the copra. We knew that although there was not much real *faasamoa* in the daily life of the Plantation community, fine mats were still a precious item that can either be sold or given as contributions to a funeral or major activities like that in the church or our *'aiga* in the villages…

In the plantation, we stayed together with my parents. They had their our house at the front and we have ours at the back. We had a family *igoa sali popo*…

Our second child was born in 1980, and my third one in 1983. At that time, I looked at myself and thought… "I'm getting bigger and bigger, and having more and more responsibilities around the house." I became busier with the children, but it was good my husband was helping out a lot. My parents and my younger sisters also were always helping out and looking after the children especially when I'm out fishing. Every Saturday there's a gang of women who went shore fishing. I always went with them. We would walk for two hours from Afolau to the beach, and early in the morning too. We always tried to get there at low tide… Oh, those days. I won't forget those days. Weekend fishing was what we (young women) always looked forward to. We searched for sea slugs while catching up on the lastest gossip in our plantation unit and church especially. You know, we work faster when we *talanoa* all the time. Litia was the one that cracked all the jokes. She was bad-mouthed too…She will always be remembered, poor Litia. It was so sad at her funeral last month..."

This part of Pogai's life history reveals her life's work as continually evolving around her kin. Her taking part in various work activities at different places she has lived indicates a continuous intertwining of the worlds of *'aiga* and her life as an employee of the plantation estate. Despite the stereotypes, the latter and the values that underpin it cannot

be fully understood without the former. The two are effectively linked in principle and in practice through *Teine uli* like Pogai whose experiences of *'aiga* and paid work activities ultimately led them to a conscious and simultaneous embracing of both, no matter how puzzling this might seem to outsiders.

Pogai's knowledge of handicraft making stemmed from her younger days in her father's village, through the Papauta Girls College, and her movement between the plantation, and the villages of her father and husband. Her movement constituted opportunities for enhancing her weaving skills, which later translated into a business venture based at Apia's flea market. Through movement, Pogai continued to negotiate not only the worlds of the plantation, the villages and school, but also the cultural threads that run through the making, buying and selling of handicrafts.

Pogai is conscious of these values as she engages in her localized entrepreneurial activities as a market vendor. Although she started as a vendor selling only fine mats, home-made brooms, bottles of coconut oil, and bundles of pandanus leaves, Pogai quickly established links with 'bigger suppliers' who are currently employing her also as a 'small vendor'. She is making full use of her overseas-based sister to supply what she needs for her flea market shop. She does not confine herself in 'her block' but ventured into other spaces and created relations within and beyond the flea market. The result has been an expansion of her handicraft selections and her knowledge of the localized vendor business. As she proudly told me:

> "Besides my own handicrafts, I also sell tee shirts for *Siva Afi* (a famous locally-owned T-shirt company). These come from America, and I get a good commission from them. I also sell *titi fulumoa* (waistline decorations made of colored chicken feathers) for the YMCA. All they do is bring the stuff to me and I sell them…These are making my 'block' look more attractive for the tourists, and it's really good…."

At the same time, links are also maintained with her sister, Paolo, in Hawai'i. The sisters have been in regular contact since Pogai started at the flea market in 1996. Capitalising on the YMCA's idea of coloring chicken feathers, Pogai asked her sister for metallic paints. Pogai does her own feather coloring and sells them for $4.00 per packet. Today, Pogai continues her daily tasks at the market. Her work world expands territorially and, at the same time, drives deeper into the world of *'aiga* thus contributing to its growth and influence.

Conclusion

In many ways, the activities that characterize life's work of *Teine uli* vary. However, the specificities of these tasks at home and outside of it are enmeshed with conceptions of multiple links that underpin an alternative understanding of work. From the experiences of *Teine uli* it is clear that work constitutes part and parcel of the women's conception of their '*aiga*. Work activity, waged or otherwise, is understood in the context of its value and contribution towards '*aiga* and continue to be defined relative to kinship relations and *fa'alavelave*. Thus, while earning money is an important aspect of one's life's work, it is never considered an end in itself. Earning wages is oriented towards, and always associated with the bigger circle of kin.

Underpinning work activities is the broader thinking towards the communal good of the *'aiga.* This is expressed through the practices of giving money and resources earned from paid work for family *fa'alavelave*. There is a strong belief in giving away to *'aiga* activities as a type of investment because the persistence of *fa'alavelave* itself guarantees a return of more or less the same things that one gives away. Performing of work itself is a process defined by the principle of *va fealoaloa'i.* Practicing *va fealoaloa'i* would involve respect and consideration of other persons also involved in the process. This respect would oversee a colleague's wrong doing and extending generosity by giving discounts or non-payment on work or services rendered by the women. These practices also reinforce the notions of reciprocities which, in turn strengthen sociocultural relations among *'aiga* and community members.

The specific examples of experiences of *Teine uli* at Vaitele indicate the continuity of spatial and social links through both movement and work activities. Their stories are complete in so far as they encompass experiences of the plantation world, Vaitele, and overseas *'aiga*. The specificities of these experiences are complex given the various contexts within which they are situated. Appreciating complexity, however, serves to provide a richer analysis and different understanding of *Teine uli*'s world of work.

CHAPTER 7

MOVEMENT, CONNECTEDNESS, AND CONTINUITY OF *'AIGA*

> For the people involved, the basic principle in circulation is a territorial division of activities and obligations
>
> Murray Chapman, 1978, 559.

In chapter six *Teine uli*'s work activities were examined in the context of Samoan culture. It is clear in that chapter that conventional notions of work as economic activity are always entangled with socio-cultural meanings as prominent in the principles of *va fealoaloa'i*, working together, and orientation toward *'aiga*. In this chapter, focus is on movement as a concept and practice grounded in *'aiga* and perceived as a spatial manifestation of culture, evident in relatives' participation in *fa'alavelave* – the socio-cultural events of *'aiga.* It is through *fa'alavelave* that ones commitment to kin and place of origin are publicly acknowledged. Thus *fa'alavelave* constitutes sharing and the "carrying together" of an event thus making it a lighter rather than a burdensome activity.

This chapter argues that *'aiga* as constituted in *fa'alavelave* defines movement and the connectedness of places through its continuity. Constituting of socio-cultural practices and protocols that revolve around trips and visits, *fa'alavelave* indicate the persistence of genealogies and the connectedness of '*aiga* through time and space. In this context, contemporary movement not only charts the existing webs of '*aiga* relations but, ultimately strengthens them. As Chapman's (1978, 560) work on individual, group, and community movement in the Solomon Islands reveals a process that incorporates not only "a territorial division of activities and obligations" but also a territorial **linking** of these.

In this chapter, stories of the movement of three First Generation *Teine uli*, and their daughters - the Second Generation women - are discussed. These accounts further illustrate how *fa'alavelave* encompasses movement and place through the commitment of the two generations of *Teine uli*. Basically, *Teine uli* of the First Generation are visibly more active and involved in *fa'alavelave*. That is, they initiate and often lead the coordination of *fa'alavelave*, and are usually the ones who travel on behalf of *'aiga*. Second Generation women, on the other hand, seem to play an 'off-stage', unseen role in contributing to *fa'alavelave* through support for their mothers.

The first part of the chapter examines the various aspects of the movement of *Teine uli* and their families from the plantation to overseas. It blends the different movements that constitute socio-cultural life of the shifting community of '*aiga.* The second part discusses visits that constitute *fa'alavelave* and vice versa. The intergenerational coordination of visits is a significant component of *Teine uli's* mobility discussed in the third section. It tells of movement as hardly an individual endeavor but an event for whose preparations, beginnings and ending is inclusive of '*aiga* members. Visits to Samoa are discussed in the last section relating movement *to Teine uli*'s conception of home and meanings of their orientations towards it.

A shifting community

As mentioned in chapter five overseas movement from Mulifanua Plantation began with young *Teine uli* of the second generation in the late 1960s and 1970s. These earlier shifts to New Zealand involved a handful of *Teine uli*, and the following decades witnessed not only the growth of '*aiga* members traveling to that country but the frequency of visits to and fro. These contemporary flows, however, have a long history. So many plantation laborers and their descendants moved through porous borders for years while taking their own borders with them. Many bravely negotiated the colonial borders of the plantation, the social borders of the "pure" Samoan society and the international boundaries of nation-states. These earlier movements, followed by subsequent flows, unsettle notions of migration as one-dimensional, permanent, and solely economically-driven. Rather they forge the continuation of cultural ways and the persistence of '*aiga* connectedness over time and space.

'Aiga relations as pathways

The experiences of the families of Lesa Puavasa, Tufue Tifaga Terllam and Litia Likou - all first generation *Teine uli* – reveal the dynamics of social and cultural realities that are central in the movement of '*aiga* members within and beyond the plantation.

Lesa Puavasa's family

Lesa was born at Sogi in 1933 to a Melanesian laborer, Soka Barepa, and his Samoan wife Sape, from Satitoa village in Upolu. Lesa was the eldest of five children. Like the

families of other original *Tama uli,* Lesa's moved from plantation to plantation as instructed by the *papalag*i managers. She commented,

> Our families were like resident pastors who shifted around, from village to village. Sometimes we spent about six months in one unit, and the word from the boss came to move again to another unit, so we moved. The wagon came and we took our sleeping mats, clothes and other household necessities…(Interview, 2000)

Lesa recalled that the last time her family moved was around the early 1960s when her father was very old, and she and her siblings had begun families of their own and settled in different plantation units within Mulifanua. Her two brothers' wives were daughters of other laborers in nearby units. Her older sisters Malifa and Tasi married the sons of original Melanesian laborers, Soka and Tamiliano, respectivel. Lesa met her Samoan husband Puavasa at Vaipapa plantation around 1953 when she was about twenty years old. Puavasa came to the plantation in the early 1940s from the village of Falefa, and worked as a copra collector. Afraid that Lesa's family would not approve of their union Lesa and Puavasa eloped to Afia plantation to stay with another family for sometime. Eventually they returned to Vaipapa to stay with and look after Lesa's parents.

Unlike her parents who shifted between plantation units, Lesa and Puavasa, lived in Vaipapa all their life. This reflected a different administration at the time as the Estates were brought under the control of the WSTEC and saw Samoan managers were replacing *papalagi.* The practice of moving laborers and their families was deemed expensive and unnecessary and Samoan laborers were generally widely available. Rather, it became more common for the Samoan unit managers to rotate. A significant effect of the new

changes in the management was that many second-generation Melanesian descendants grew up attached to Mulifanua Estate not only as their birthplace but as home in Samoa.

Lesa's seven children (Luisa, Inosia, Lealofi, Alatina, Evile, Toafa, and Vaituutuu) were all born at Vaipapa between 1955 and 1970. They attended the Pastor's school run by the plantation parish. They also attended the nearest school - Satapuala Primary School after which only Inosia, Lealofi, Toafa and Vaituutuu went on to High School. Luisa, being the eldest girl and married quite young; and Alatina being the eldest boy, shouldered more work at home and at the plantation than their younger siblings. Consequently, the latter received relatively better education than Luisa and Alatina. These two however, receive support from their sisters and brothers now residing in New Zealand.

The international movement of Lesa's family indicates a typical pattern among plantation families (Table 4). It can be said that the movements of Lesa's family started with Inosia who resigned from her job as a shop assistant in Apia town and went to Wellington. However, Inosia's first trip to New Zealand was ultimately part and parcel of a long-time social connection between the families of Lesa and Tomasi, the assistant manager for Vaipapa plantation. Tomasi and his wife Faavae originally came from the village of Fasitoo, and had been working as overseers since 1966 when they first arrived at Vaipapa. As neighbors in Vaipapa the two families exchanged and reciprocated food and other items on a daily basis.

Year	Traveller	Sponsor in NZ	Place of stay in NZ	Visits to Samoa by March 2000*
1970	Inosia (daughter)	Matagi	Wellington	Three
1976	Lealofi (daughter)	Inosia and her husband, Siliaga	Auckland	Three
1982	Lesa (mother)	Inosia and Lealofi and their husbands	Auckland	Eleven
1984	Puavasa and Vaituutuu (father and brother respectively)	Inosia and Lealofi and their husbands	Auckland	Puavasa Taulai - three (died in 1987) Vaituu – two
1986	Toafa (son)	Inosia and her husband	Auckland	Two
1988	Evile (son)	Inosia and her husband	Auckland	None (died in 1990)
1994	Alatina (son)	Lealofi and her husband	Auckland	Two

Table 4. New Zealand –bound movement of Lesa and her family

* This was the time I conducted interviews with Lesa.

Over the years, this close friendship developed into what is known in Samoa as *faa-'aiga* where members of both families consciously treat each other as *'aiga* although there is no blood or marriage connection. This kind of relationship has been particularly strong in the plantation communities especially with employment of young Samoan men as temporary laborers around the late 1940s (Cumberland, 1962, 256). Many of these young Samoan men came from large families where adoption of younger siblings by older ones had been

common. They brought this into the plantation communities where they had wives and families of their own.

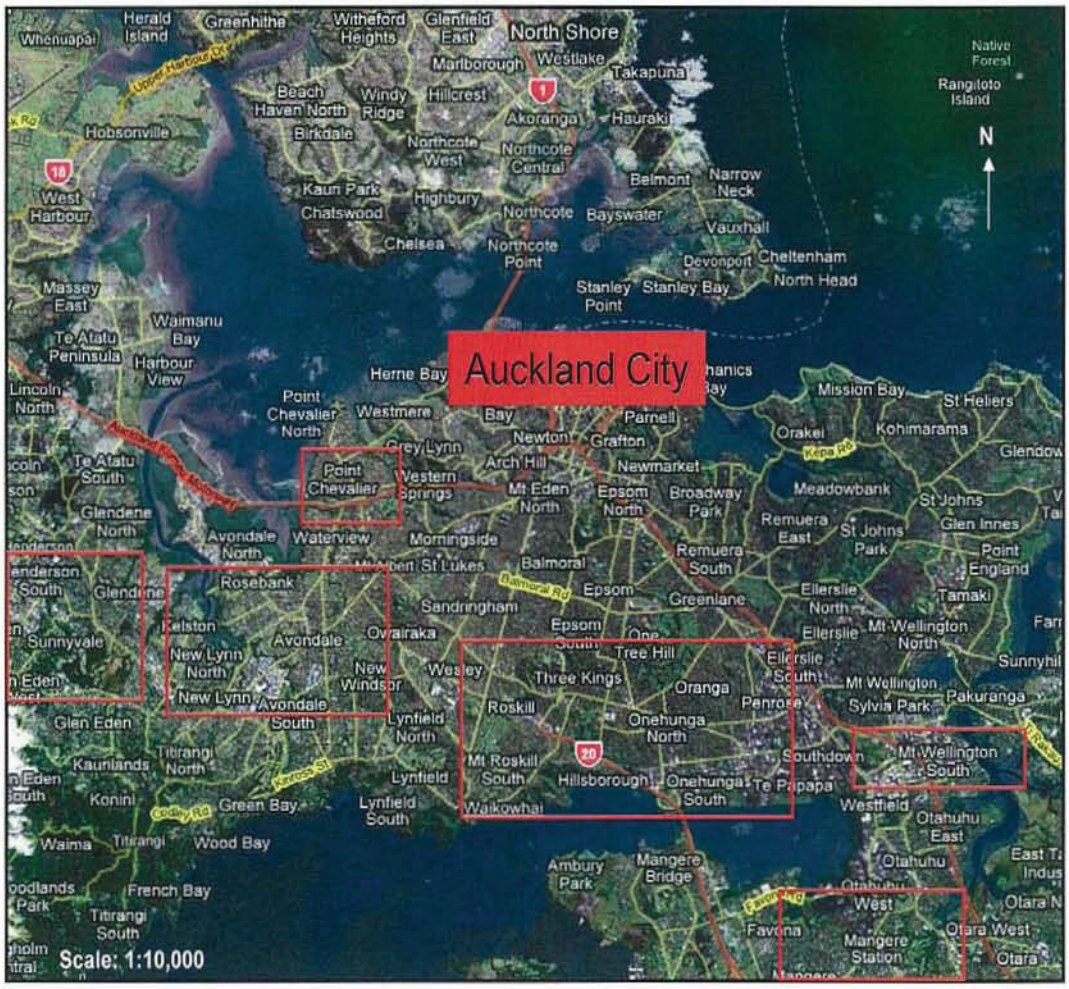
Fa'a-aiga relationships often extended beyond the arena of the *'aiga patino* (nuclear family) to include extended family members. Tomasi's brother, Matagi, in Wellington knew about the *fa'a-'aiga* between Lesa's family and that of Tomasi and Faavae's. It was this connection that made possible Inosia's move to New Zealand in 1970. This was particularly important as none of Lesa and Puavasa's relatives were overseas at the time to assist their children with the move. Initial travels and subsequent movements for Lesa's family therefore existed *through* social ties between *'aiga*. Thus, movement ought to be appreciated as an integral dimension of social connections, not merely spatial activity and visible links between nodal points like Auckland and Faleolo international airports.

For the first two years, Inosia stayed with Matagi, his wife Pele, and their daughter Pua in Porirua, Wellington. Tomasi's eldest daughter Lesina, who went to New Zealand two years before and knew Inosia as her friend in the plantation, was also staying there. During her time in Wellington, Inosia worked in a wool factory and earned about $450.00 a week. She often sent money to her parents through the mail and people she knew who were visiting Samoa at the time. During this time also, she developed close contact with her cousin Sia, also a *Teine uli* from Mulifanua who went to Auckland to stay with the relatives of their church pastor, Reverend Topeto. After consultation with her host family in Wellington, Inosia shifted to Auckland at the end of 1972, partly because she wanted

to be near her cousin and partly because the flights between Samoa and Auckland were more frequent and cheaper than the ones to Wellington (Interview, 2000). Obviously, Inosia had anticipated future visits of her parents and siblings in Samoa.

Inosia's marriage to Siliaga in Auckland in 1974 was a step towards the consolidation of an Auckland-base '*aiga* for Lesa and her family. Two years after the wedding, Inosia's second sister, Lealofi, arrived from Samoa "to help look after Lealofi's first child." (Lesa, 2000). She did just that and, while baby-sitting her nephew, there was already a plan for Lealofi to get a part-time job somewhere closer to their Mangere home (Map 9). Her introduction to the employment world of Auckland was a part-time cleaning job at a warehouse. Later she secured a full-time job as a packer in a shoe factory. At the same time, arrangement was made for their mother, Lesa, to come from Samoa to assist with Inosia's two children as Lealofi prepared for her wedding in December 1980.

The arrival of Lesa in Auckland provided the much-needed help looking after the young children. As an elder of her family she arrived in Auckland determined to bring the rest of her '*aiga* from the plantation. It had been her dream to obtain New Zealand citizenship not only for herself but, for her husband and children. She got her permanent residency in New Zealand in 1984 and her citizenship papers and passport two years later. Today, she is grateful for achieving all this. Before she went to New Zealand, Lesa learnt of the social and financial benefits one could earn as a citizen of that country. While these



Map 9. Locations of *Teine uli's* families in Auckland, New Zealand

Source: http://maps.google.com/maps

benefits also attracted her to live in New Zealand, they were not the primary factors in her decision. Helping to look after her children and grandchildren was a motivating factor For her long term residence there. Except for Luisa, who has her own family in Vaitele, all of Lesa's six children now live in Auckland.

Litia Likou's family

The story of Litia Likou is significant for two main reasons. First, Litia was the eldest daughter of Ti'a Likou, one of the four original Melanesian laborers interviewed by Samoan historian, Malama Meleisea, in his doctoral research in 1974. Meleisea published a book entitled *O Tama Uli: Melanesians in Samoa*. Although she was mentioned in that study, Litia was only noted as a typical daughter of a plantation laborer subsumed by the shadow of the copra work. In that study, she did not speak, nor was she given the opportunity to, but obediently posed with a smile in the family photo that was an addendum to her adoptive father's story.

In this study, Litia takes centre stage. Her story as told to me reveals not only a laborer's daughter's perceptions and experiences but the centrality of those experiences to understanding processes of work and movement. Unlike that of her father's, Litia's story is multi-colored with strength, persistence, and hope in the continuity of her *'aiga*.

The second reason why Litia's story is important is because my interview with her marked the first as well as the final time her story was told and actually recorded on tape and on paper. She passed away at her family's place at Vaitele in October 1998 – a

month after our interviews. She was sixty nine. It is customary among social scientists to hold confidential the identity of their informants. However, in this case, Litia, before she died, insisted that her name be used. Her family, out of respect for her wish, complied.

Litia was born at Suga[1], Samoa, in 1929. This was where her biological Melanesian father, Maligiligi and her Samoan mother, Limala'u, worked in the 1920s. Maligiligi passed away while Litia was very young, and, following her mother's union with Likou in around 1933/1934, he adopted her.[2] Litia was the eldest in the family, and had three younger siblings. She and her half-brother, Uesili, were the only ones in the family who married and had families of their own. Her two half-sisters remained unmarried and one passed away a few years before Litia. Litia married her Samoan husband, Loto, but he died in 1960, a few months after the birth of their daughter Felolini. Felolini is now living in New Zealand with her husband and two children. In her old age, Litia was taken care of by her younger sister and brother at Vaitele. Felolini in New Zealand sent money and food for them.

Like the children of other Melanesian laborers Litia spent her childhood days in the plantation estates where her father and his Melanesian friends worked. She could remember vividly the time her family spent at Vaivase, a unit of the Vailele Estate. Her father's major task was clearing thick bushes for planting new coconut trees. He and his

[1] A unit of Vailele Estate (see map)

[2] Meleisea (1981, 22) explains that Litia's mother "was from Tiavea village which was a long way from the plantation. She had come to work on the plantation when she was a young woman in the early 1920s and had started living with a Melanesian labourer from New Ireland. After the birth of her daughter, her husband died. She then became Likou's common-law wife and Likou adopted her child." The daughter mentioned by Meleisea was, indeed, Litia.

family attended the London Missionary Society church at Fagalii, the closest parish to where they lived. The church was the central place where the children, Litia included, congregated in the early afternoon during weekdays for activities like pastors' school, sports, and Sunday school work days. This was where Litia not only learnt to read the Bible and write her name, but also started to learn Samoan dance which she developed a passion for in her adult life. She had a beautiful voice matched by the graceful movement of her Samoan *siva* (dance).

The relocation and shifting around of *Tama uli* and their families from one plantation to another was a common practice under the New Zealand administration. Litia recalled;

> I think it was around the time of the [Second World] War. I used to see soldiers walking around…My father came home one day and told my mother we were moving again, from Vaivase to Mulifanua. That was Vaipapa plantation we were moving to. We [the children] did not know much. All we knew was we were shifting. We were happy the wagon came to take us for a long ride to Mulifanua…That was the nature of work our dear fathers were doing.

Likou's job at Vaipapa was collecting fallen coconuts, cutting and drying copra, and clearing rubbish and weeds along the plantation roads. Litia's mother, Limala'u, sometimes assisted with the copra cutting, but she spent much of her time at home mending torn clothes and sifting cotton to make pillows and sleeping mattresses. This was part of the women's committee activities in which Limala'u was actively involved. Women's committees at that time were recent establishments throughout Samoa through the campaigns of Dr. Mabel Christie of New Zealand and Dr. Ielu Kuresa, one of the first Samoan graduates of the Suva Medical College in Fiji (Schoeffel, 1984). Effective primary health care policy in Samoa was implemented by the New Zealand

administration in the 1920s. Part of the colonial concern was that the native populations in the Pacific were in the danger of dying out. This was of specific concern to New Zealand since an administrative bungle had failed to effectively quarantine Samoa from the 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic, which caused the death of approximately twenty percent of the population (*Ibid*; p.209). As a result considerable efforts by the colonial government were directed towards upgrading primary health care through village sanitation, rural health centers, and rural maternal child health (MCH) services. Because the plantation communities were directly under the daily administration of the New Zealand government, the effectiveness of activities by the Women's Committees (also known as *Komiti Tumama*) was guaranteed.

Beside its role in promoting community health, the Women's Committee also became a major socializing group for plantation women. Committee gatherings were usually once a month or when the registered nurse from the main hospital in Apia was available to conduct the medical check-ups and sanitation-related inspections. There was always feasting and dancing to end the formal programs of the meetings. As a young girl, Litia attended these meetings with her mother and younger siblings. These provided opportunities to observe and imitate new dances from the older women. It was Litia's passion to dance that later made her traveled to outer villages and American Samoa to perform in *koneseti* (group concerts). By her late-teens, Litia was quite famous among the plantation communities for her dancing and singing talents, and out-going character.

In 1950, Litia's family transferred again to Vaitele plantation where her father worked on the horse wagon collecting and transporting copra from the field to the sheds. Her mother helped with coconut collecting although she was not paid for this as Likou was the registered family laborer. Litia and her mother worked in women's gangs as weeders of new plantation sections. But these gang works were temporary and short-term, thus the pay received was not regular. It was during this time that Litia also saw the gangs of young Samoan men from the villages being brought to work as temporary laborers. She dated one of the young men from the village of Samatau, who, unfortunately, could not handle Litia's participation in dance groups. Litia says Tuuta was a very possessive and jealous man who refused to let her get involved in her dance groups. The relationship lasted for only about a month.

Litia continued to be involved with dance groups after her family shifted back to Vaipapa plantation around 1953, when she was about twenty-four. By then, she also had a new partner, Semi, another temporary laborer from the village of Fagaloa. Again, they stayed with Litia's parents. Three years later, Litia chased Semi out from her parents' house. In 1958 she eloped with Loto to his relatives at Samatau. In 1959, her daughter Felolini was born and they returned to Vaipapa. By the time Felolini went to school, both her parents were regular income earners in the plantation. Litia joined the women's work gangs to harvest cocoa beans and weeding and Tolo worked in the copra shed to monitor the oven. Felolini was thus afforded a high school education at the LMS Church College on Upolu. Although she did not complete her senior years, she managed to pass her interview with the New Zealand High Commission to migrate to New Zealand in 1979.

Litia's account of early movement of her daughter Felolini, to New Lynn in Auckland (Map 8) reflects her family becoming part of a common trend in the plantation then to send their daughters to New Zealand. It also indicates the existence of these movements along the paths of '*aiga* relations that broadened through marriage. Part of my conversation with Litia is reproduced below to illustrate this point.

> **Me:** How did Felolini first get to New Zealand?
> **Litia:** Yes..as you already know, my daughter did not finish her Form Five (senior year at High School), but she managed to pass her interview with the New Zealand Office and she went to New Zealand…In those days (the 1970s) almost every family in the plantation was sending their daughters to New Zealand…it was a dream for families to do that; and when their family member finally went, it was a dream come true…And also, the other helpful thing I think was it was so easy to work on immigration papers in those days. These days it's hard. In those days it was easier to go to New Zealand…
> **Me:** So who sponsored Lini to go there?
> **Litia:** It was Lini's father's sister and her husband. It was Lelei. She came to Samoa for Christmas in 1978, and she was staying with her mother's family at Samatau. Lini and I took an *asiga* for Lelei at Samatau, and that's where we started talking about taking Lini to New Zealand. Lelei kept her word. She went back to New Zealand and sent all the papers for Lini, and Lini's airfare also.
> **Me:** So it didn't take long for Lini to apply for New Zealand?
> **Litia:** As I said, immigration papers were so easy to get in those days. Lini flew to New Zealand in April 1979. All her papers were ok.

It is clear in Litia's comments that the initial movement of Lini to New Zealand took place in the context of her '*aiga* relations as well as more relaxed immigration policies by New Zealand. Despite the death of Lini's father many years before, the links with his family had been maintained. The practice of *asiga* is a custom in Samoa where food is prepared and taken by family members for relatives who are visiting from overseas. It is to acknowledge '*aiga* relations and a public display of welcoming the visiting relatives. In this case, *asiga* acknowledged both the connectedness of the families of Lini's father

and mother and the continuity of that connection despite death and geographic location. Through these lines of connection visits between families in New Zealand and Samoa take place.

Between the time Lini left for New Zealand and her mother's death in 1998, Litia had traveled nine times between the two countries. Lini, in contrast, traveled only two times; her third visit was to attend her mother's funeral. Litia referred to her journeys back and forth as to do with 'visits to families' and these visits were actually part and parcel of her 'a*iga* activities. Some of these included Lini's wedding in 1985 and the birth of her first and second children in 1987 and 1990, respectively.

It was during Litia's fifth visit to Auckland in 1990 that she really felt homesick for Samoa.

> It was during one of our *lotu afiafi* (evening prayer) that I felt really homesick. My dear children (referring to her daughter, Lini, and her husband, and their children) all watched me cry throughout the prayer time…It was nice to be with my dear children in Auckland. I went and saw that they had plenty of food to eat. They had a car; a TV and everything that is found in that country. But I missed being with **our** family at Vaipapa. New Zealand was different. I was not used to it…

Although Lini had been asking her mother to move and live with her in Auckland, Litia decided she could not handle living permanently in New Zealand. Every time she went to Auckland she always wanted to return to Samoa. Moving to and fro has, thus, characterized her life as the eldest sibling, as a mother, and grandmother. For her, she was content with the visits she has had. She was not familiar with Auckland's external environment and had not much desire to 'go out' and 'explore' the place as one would

expect of visitors. Litia's desire was to be with her daughter and family in Auckland through which she found warmth as they embraced her arrival and presence.

Tufue Tifaga Terllam's family

Born at Sogi in 1932, Tufue is the eldest of five children of Melanesian laborer, Terllam, who was commonly known as Tifaga, and Faafofola, a Samoan woman from the village of Falefa. Tufue was about twelve years old when her mother left her father and children for a Samoan man from Tutuila. A few months later, Terllam met Taavao from the village of Sapo'e. They lived together since, and had seven children in addition to Terllam's five. These changes brought a lot of uncertainties and instability in Tufue's family and in her own life as a teenager. As the eldest child, she shouldered much responsibility for her younger siblings in the absence of her mother. It was, however, her mother's mother Fiafia, who often came to Sogi and took Tufue and her younger brothers to Falefa where they were well-looked after. Tufue spoke fondly of her Samoan grandmother without whom she and her brothers would not be as warmly connected to their Samoan family at Falefa.

At 15 years old, Tufue experienced and appreciated moving to and fro between her grandmother's '*aiga* at Falefa, and the various plantation units where her father worked. She explained:

> It's just the way it was with *Tama uli* in those days. They shifted around. *Tama uli* moved from one plantation unit to another…Sometimes, it was the old men (*Tama uli*) who requested to be shifted to another plantation that they preferred. And usually, the manager accepted the request. When my mother left my father,

> my brothers and I continued to stay with our father at Sogi…When we wanted to visit our mother we went to Falefa, but we stayed with our father all the time.

Terllam was relocated to Vaipapa twice, and during those times Tufue stayed longer at the plantation and only visited the village on the weekends when her father got paid. The last place where Terllam was moved to was Suga, a plantation unit at Vailele that was nearer Tufue's mother's village (See Map 6). This proximity made it easier for Tufue and her brothers to visit their mother's family more often. She wanted to work and earn some money. Although she went on a women's gang to weed the plantation, she always wanted to work as a housekeeper. Eventually, she was hired by the *palagi* manager, Meki, to be his housemaid.

Tufue was happy with her job as a housekeeper. She would often compare her job with the girls of her generation who were either laboring in the field all day or staying in their homes not earning money to help their parents. It was not that she looked down upon the activities of the other girls, but Tufue was determined to do what she was good at and got what she wanted. She told me:

> I grew up in the plantation but I never wanted to labor in the field. It's not that I couldn't weed. No, I can do all that hard labor …But, I used to think different. I always wanted to be employed by a *palagi*. I was curious about what's inside their houses…what they eat and what they drink….

Although her wages were only four shillings a week (about twenty cents) Tufue was content with her job because through it, she had come to have contact with and know the domestic world of her *palagi* boss and his family. This was a world that was rich with

material necessities and possessions: food of all sorts placed in cupboards, containers, and an icebox; clothing of all colors and styles for both sexes, shoes and socks of different sizes and mainly white colors, and guns - big, small, and medium sizes. She was impressed with all these and although tempted at times to steal food from her boss, she never wanted to disappoint her father by doing this. Her exposure to the world of the *palagi* manager however made her appreciate even more the confines of her father's hut where she felt freer to be herself. She was equally impressed with the world of her Falefa grandmother who seemed to indulge in the habit of giving away fine mats and tapa cloth, hidden for months and years under her Samoan mattress, to family members for *fa'alavelave*. Tufue never questioned the logic of her grandmother's practice of giving away things to people. However, she sometimes wondered how her grandmother's supplies of fine mats and tapa cloth were never exhausted – something she came to understand in her adult life as a mother, grandmother, and leader of her '*aiga*.

It was also during her family's residence in Suga that Tufue met her husband, Usu, a Samoan chief from the next village. Usu's matai title was from his father's '*aiga* in Falealupo Savaii. Vailele was the village of his mother. After he and Tufue married at her LMS church, the couple moved to stay with Usu's family at Vailele. Soon after, Tufue and her husband moved to live with her grandmother at Falefa who often became ill. While at Falefa, her first daughters, Upu and Malo, were born in 1957 and 1958, respectively. After the death of her grandmother 1966, Tufue moved again to Usu's family that was closer to the Mormon school her daughters were attending. They resided there until her eldest daughter moved to New Zealand to stay with Usu's brother in

Auckland in 1978. Upu married in 1984. She and her husband and the three children now live in Three Kings in Auckland (Map 8).

These early experiences of family shifts and visits among the plantation communities are localized versions of contemporary international movement. Visits were part and parcel of the daily reality of people's lives. Visits were, and have always been, culture in practice. That movement was consistently taking place in the face of staunch colonial rule with established boundaries speaks to something that is deeply rooted among the plantation families. That is, movement is an inevitable aspect of people's lives and, as observed by Fox (1962, 124) more than forty years ago, the willingness of Samoans to migrate was a characteristic that deserved wider recognition.

> It is apparent that [Samoans] are more mobile and less conservative than has been supposed, and particularly under circumstances following upon a dearth of cultivable land, the younger *matai* [chiefs] and *taulele'a* [young untitled men]are ready to transplant themselves and to carve out new futures…

Moral obligations to visit relatives or at least the desire to do so basically constitute an understanding of movement as part and parcel of a process, rather than a discrete spatial event. For *Teine uli*, visits between Samoa and New Zealand are part and parcel of the conception and practice of *fa'alavelave*. These continue to link, bind, and define Samoan *'aiga* today.

Obliged to visit

The stories of both the older and younger women describe *Teine uli*'s visits to families in New Zealand and Samoa as inevitable events. For those residing in New Zealand, visits

to Samoa are essential not only for *'aiga* in the islands but for the traveler who has been away for a period of time. For those living in Samoa, visits to New Zealand acknowledge the presence of *'aiga* in that country and, more importantly, that those *'aiga* members do not sever their ties to their island home. Visits then are a public display of the continuity of social connections and moral obligations to *'aiga*. The older *Teine uli* referred to their visits as constituting a strong sense of obligation not only to the younger relatives in both countries but to themselves as older members. They owe it to their children and *'aiga* to visit. It was a duty they must not fail. The First Generation women in New Zealand were especially mindful of this obligation saying

> we didn't come to New Zealand to abandon our families in our country. We came in order for our children and other *'aiga* members to also come… (Lesa, 2000)

Tufue commented,

> I keep in touch with my relatives at Vaitele, my mother's family at Falefa, and even with some of my relatives who are still at Mulifanua…You know, I don't write to them or ring them everyday. But while I live in this country (NZ) I can never ignore my God-given obligation to my '*aiga* in Samoa, and also my '*aiga* here in New Zealand.

Older *Teine uli* spoke of the immigration difficulties involved in bringing a relative over to New Zealand these days and acknowledged international mobility today as not a smooth process. Contemporary immigration problems are often placed against the backdrop of the women's earlier experiences, beginning with their younger years in the plantation. As echoed in their stories, moving from one plantation unit to another was a common experience among plantation families and while leaving relatives and friends was hard, this shifting around also helped create new friendship and links with people

elsewhere. Movement from the plantation unit to another established common links among the laboring communities themselves – links that continue to exist today.

Visits and the territorial linking of *fa'alavelave*

This study identifies cultural meanings of movement that demand scholarly attention. My ethnographic research reveals that, as concepts, movement and *fa'alavelave* constitute an intimate and inseparable entanglement. This is clearly shown through the experiences of *Teine uli* whose visits between New Zealand and Samoa are integral parts of *fa'alavelave* specific to their *'aiga*; as in the examples below.

"*Lototetele, o Tasi ua maliu"* (Be strong, Tasi has passed away)

The above phrase was one of the first things that Lesa heard over the telephone when her daughter Luisa rang from Samoa on Saturday morning, 10 April 2000. Lesa and I had just finished our last interview session and were enjoying tea and scones that her daughter Inosia prepared for us. Upon hearing the news, Lesa broke into a loud wail, calling out "*Aue, talofa e, isi o'u uso*.." (Oh, my dear, dear sister..). Inosia and I rushed to the telephone, and we sat her down on the nearby chair, fanning and massaging the back of her neck and forehead. Her grandchildren came running, worriedly inspecting their grandmother as they formed a semi-circle around her. Inosia took the telephone, and spoke with Luisa who must have explained to her the news of Tasi's death, which happened the night before.

"We'll ring you back. Ok? We'll ring you back. We have to attend to the old lady first." Inosia put the phone down, hurried towards us, and helped massage her mother's head.

"We shouldn't be sad, Mum. We should be thankful that Tasi has now rested from the sufferings she's had. We shouldn't be sad…". She continued. She sounded bold although I could see the pretense in her voice as she herself struggled to hold back her tears. Such was the beginning of this particular *faalavelave* for Lesa and her family.

News of Tasi's death reached her family in other parts of New Zealand before the end of the day. Upon receiving the news from her daughter Luisa in Samoa, Lesa asked Inosia to ring their other relatives through out New Zealand and relay the news to them also. These included the following people:

<u>in Porirua, Wellington</u>:

i. Tafa (Tasi's adopted son), and his wife, Taiana

<u>in Christchurch</u>

i. Tomasi and Sene (cousin of Lesa and Tasi from their mother's side)
ii. Lolini (a cousin of Lesa and Tasi from their mother's side)

<u>in Auckland</u>:

i. Ta'ape (eldest adopted son of Tasi)
ii. Eseta (a second-generation *Teine uli*, and widow of Tasi's adopted son, Matagi)
iii. Tufue (a First Generation *Teine uli*, and close family friend)
iv. Pokati (the pastor of the AOG church that Lesa's family attended)

In addition to these people were Lesa's children, and their families in Auckland.

Lesa mentioned in our conversations

> "…when things like this happens to one of our family members it's not easy to handle them. This is no time to mourn …this is a time to seriously think of how to deal with this *faalavelave*."

The death of Tasi was immediately translated into the context of *fa'alavelave* where several stages involving deliberations among *'aiga* members had to take place. To deal with Tasi's funeral means proper organization for those preparing to travel to Samoa within a time frame of one week. Lesa would go, as would Tasi's adopted son, Taape. Airline bookings for them were done almost immediately with Polynesian Airlines. Immediate relatives were informed and asked about what they think should be the *saogamea* or contributions. Lesa commented:

> In my own family here in New Zealand, I'm the person everybody looks for making plans and decisions for *faalavelave* like this. I make sure I ring and tell them about the *faalavelave*. I also ask their opinion as to how much money our individual couples should give…They usually donate a bit more than what they mention on the phone. This is one thing I really appreciate about my family here… Sometimes they give whatever they can. That's ok. Things like this, as you know, always depend on the 'weather forecast'[3]…

Lesa later gave me a list of *saogamea* from within her own *'aiga* in New Zealand.

i. Tafa and his wife, Taiana sent $1,500.00 (New Zealand dollars). Tafa could not go as he recently had an operation.
ii. Tomasi and Sene sent $500.00
iii. Lolini sent $200.00
iv. Eseta gave $200 and 10 medium size fine mats, and one large fine mat
v. Tufue gave $500.00, 9 medium size fine mats, and one large size fine mat
vi. Lesa and her children and their families put in $2000.00 and 20 fine mats

As an older *Teine uli* residing overseas it was important for Lesa to coordinate the collecting and use of these contributions. Not only was she leading the traveling party to Samoa, she was also 'standing at the *va'* between her family and other people in New

Zealand who learnt about the *faalavelave* and came to give money and *si'i alofa* (love presented)[4]. *Si'i alofa* also came from a number of families in Lesa's church who brought envelopes containing money. Some, in addition to money, brought medium-sized fine mats, and others contributed a large fine mat. Perceptions on the use of the money presented are contained in the speeches during the presentation. The money is considered a 'help' for the *lauava/peau faamavae* (the collection of all contributions of food items, fine mats, and money by family members for a funeral. This collection is to be distributed among all the people who brought *si'i alofa* and other assistance to the funeral).

Having learnt about the passing of Lesa's sister, my own family in Auckland (my three sisters and brother) deemed it appropriate to prepare and present a *si'i alofa* to Lesa's family. While this gesture materialized my family's support for Lesa and her family it, more importantly, represented a part of the continued relations between the two families. Commonly known among social scholars as giving and taking (reciprocity), this continued connection is heavily characterized as giving rather than taking. Thus, any *si'i alofa* presentation is a step towards consolidating giving as an invaluable aspect of social relations.

Si'i alofa from friends of Lesa's family included the following donations of fine mats and money in New Zealand dollards:

i. Pokati (the pastor of the AOG church) gave $500.00 and one large size fine mats
ii. Fale and Sina (friends from church) gave $100.00
iii. Leapai and Toeupu (friends from church) gave $100.00

[3] This is common expression used by Samoans to figuratively refer to their financial situation especially at times when *faalavelave* occurs.
[4] Literally the term *si'i* means 'to carry', and *alofa* means love. The term has always been used in times of funerals when one family or groups of family present(s) food, fine mats and/or money for the family where the funeral is held.

iv. Losi Liki and family (*Teine uli* and family friend) gave $200.00 and one large fine mat.
v. Pisisami and family (from church) gave $200.00 and 5 medium size fine mats
vi. Tomasi and Simea (from church) gave $200.00 and one large fine mat
vii. Mulipola and Moe (from church) gave $200.00
viii. Simoli and Apo (from church) gave $300.00 and one large fine mat.

Although these non-family members who donated had some idea of the costly expenses involved in *fa'alavelave* such as a funeral, this was not the reason why they gave. The fundamental issue in *si'i alofa* was acknowledging relations and support. This is why for those bringing *si'i alofa,* words of sympathy as well as *fa'alalolalo* (submission) are said at the presentation. For the giving party, they expressed submission and declared the inadequate amount of their donation, yet simultaneously emphasized the purpose of their coming as invaluable for strengthening bonds and social relations as in *va fealoaloa'i*. For Lesa and her family receiving *si'i alofa*, acknowledgement with thanks was expressed and they referred to future meetings to give back something as an appreciation of what they have now received.

I argue in this study that family deliberations, preparations, donations, and *si'i alofa* constitute the trip to Samoa. Without these pre-trip arrangements and preparations the actual visit to the island home is meaningless. These preparations reflect a basic reality in Samoan '*aiga* – that in travels something must be taken over for the awaiting party. Thus, the act of leaving Auckland to attend Tasi's funeral in Samoa ultimately begins with the deliberations and gathering of resources in Auckland, and this continues on to Samoa, and ends back in Auckland when Lesa and Taape return at the end of April, three weeks after the funeral.

After the funeral and when the traveling party arrives back in Auckland, the immediate family gathers once again at Lesa's place. Detailed accounts of the presentations and the use of money and fine mats taken to Samoa was given by Lesa and Taape. Food and fine mats were distributed to family and non-family members who brought *si'i alofa*. Food such as cartons of chicken, tinned fish, salted beef and corned beef are purchased by Lesa and her family in Auckland to give back, together with fine mats, to those who brought *si'i alofa*. This is called *teu,* which literally means a bouquet of flowers. This is a way to say thank you, and also to publicly acknowledge the support and love for Lesa and her family.

While this part of giving back marks the end of this particular *fa'alavelave*, it simultaneously marks a point of continuity and connection of relations within and beyond the families involved. *Fa'alavelave* will happen again in the future, and a similar pattern of support is expected to happen as people acknowledge their connections through giving once again. Evidently, visits home are a continuation of *fa'alavelave* events that inevitably draw together families overseas and in the island homes. So true is Fata Simanu's poem, *Morning after the funeral?:*

> "No time to mourn
> After the funeral…
> The widow waves good bye
> Her tears carry me to her pains
> Waiting at the edge of the mountain's shadow
>
> After our funerals,
> memories are delayed
> For the living must be nourished
> For the next funeral"

Figure 6. Families attending the funeral of Litia Likou at Vaitele, Samoa in October 1998

Source: Asenati Liki, 1998

Intergenerational coordination of movement

The coordination of movement is an important pattern that is clear through out this study. The focus of much of the migration literature is on the individuals who move, who are being placed at a more significant level of analysis than those who stay behind. This study identifies an important dimension of contemporary mobility among *Teine uli* and their families where both generations of women are heavily involved in the process.

While it is the mothers who travel more frequently between New Zealand and Samoa, it is their daughters and their families who consistently provide the financial and other necessary support for these visits. In the light of this reality, analysis of movement must include the first and the second generations of women who effectively coordinate movement, yet who are unseen in mainstream migration analyses.

This pattern indicates the different types and levels of demands on both of these groups of women. The second-generation women have young families to look after and/or jobs to attend. The first- generation women are mostly widows and have no other time commitments as those of their daughters. At the same time, these widows are undertaking leadership roles in their families, especially those in New Zealand. Their children look up to them when there are *fa'alavelave* in the family. As apparent in the stories of *Teine uli* in Auckland, their involvement in and influence on *'aiga* matters is a crucial part of their lives in New Zealand. Their role as mothers is coupled with leadership for their children and their respective families in times of *fa'alavelave*. Their families' visits to Samoa are an integral dimension of their leadership responsibilities.

Interviews with second-generation *Teine uli* in Auckland provided a wider context for their New Zealand-based mothers' visits to Samoa. Although Upu's mother, Tufue Tifaga Terllam, has her own flat at Dominion Road, Auckland, it does not mean she lives alone.

> Mum moved to her flat…about two years ago. My sister and I did not want her to live in a flat by herself. We didn't want anything to happen to her while she is alone there. But she insisted to go…. She wanted to be like some *palagi* women who live alone in their flats (laughs).

Her sister Lafo added;

> …for all these days since she moved to that flat, Mum was never alone. She had grandchildren day in and day out (laughs). We are always there to see her. If Upu and I can't go, then definitely our children would go. And spend the weekend or even weeks with her…

The two sisters also added that their mother also rings to pick her up when she wants to come for a visit at either of their homes in New Market and Point Chevalier. It is within this context of close family knit and moral obligation of children to look after their parents that Tufue and the families of her daughters do almost everything together. This kind of corporate interdependent living is particularly obvious at times when Tufue leaves for a visit to the islands. Upu commented;

> My mother's heart is with her family at Falefa and Vailele[5]. All this time she's been living here (in Auckland) with us, she talks and sometimes asks me how her brothers in Samoa are doing. We have sore ears… she always talks about her *'aiga* in Samoa… When we go shopping, I see Mum buying things like shirts and towels; and when I ask her "what are those for"?. She says, I'm just piling up my things to take for so and so when I go to Samoa…

The trip to Samoa is always anticipated. The mothers know that some day they would get to visit home. And when that day draws near,

> We always gather to *talanoa* about Mum's trip…My sister and I have always paid all or part of Mum's fares…it's our duty to look after our mother; and supporting her trips home is part of that duty. Both of us… Lafo and I do the running around. Make her bookings, because she cannot talk English to the *palagi* at the airline office. We buy the ticket. We purchase things she wants to take to Samoa. We do all of it. All Mum does is, hop on the plane and fly away to Samoa...(laughs)

[5] Vailele is the place name commonly used to day to refer to the place that used to be called Suga, where Tufue spent much of her childhood days.

The main source of money to finance these trips comes from continuous fund-raising activities such as the weekly compulsory donation of $20.00 from each working person, and bingo which is held in the first and last Saturday of the month.

In the 20 years since Tufue moved to New Zealand, she has had eleven trips to Samoa. All of these trips were related to family *faalavelave*. The daughters admit that there are times they cannot afford their mother's trip. There are also times their mother could not travel due to her health. In such cases, they would send whatever amount of money they can afford to the family in Samoa to help with a certain *fa'alavelave.*

The case of Vaitele land payment negotiations was a common reason for continuous visits among *Teine uli* in the 1990s. The case prompted those who are now residing in New Zealand to visit home. As many older *Teine uli* were involved in the earlier negotiations in the 1980s, they also wanted to be part of the land payment negotiations. Moreover, all first generation *Teine uli* have half-acre lands at Vaitele registered under their names. In this particular case of land payment negotiations, the older *Teine uli* received tremendous support from their children and their families, and friends in New Zealand. This support came at a huge gathering for the descendants of the Melanesian laborers, which took place at Mangere Hall in Auckland on 19 December 1999. Called and organized by sons and daughters of *Teine uli* in New Zealand, the gathering was really a public portrayal of togetherness and unity of those descended from *Tama uli* in Samoa. The Vaitele land issue was central to this gathering, and it was the focal point of

attraction for many of the younger generations who were not familiar with the history and development of the community at Vaitele.

I have never seen a gathering of overseas-based Melanesian descendants of this magnitude before. Registration was carried out at the front door, and every adult who got registered had to pay $20.00. A total of NZ$6,240.00 was collected which means close to four hundred adults alone were present. About $500.00 went for hall hire, and the rest was to be taken to the families in Samoa to help with their arrears in land payment. The money was to be given to the Samoa Lands Corporation in Apia. A certain percentage was to go into the arrear payment of each of the forty families at Vaitele. The idea was to help with whatever amount the Association could give.

At this meeting, the final list of those going to Samoa was confirmed. These were: Lesa Puavasa (67 years); Lesao Muliau (69 years); Tufue Tillam (68 years); Losi Fea (70 years) ; Faasuka Misikei (67 years); Losa Kosime (68 years); Matumu Maifea (71 years); Tilia Tanevai (68 years); Sela Kokone (66 years); Inosia Elavai (69 years); and Malo Sitele (70 years). All were first generation *Teine uli* residing in Auckland. By this time, all had done their own bookings and already had tickets to travel to Samoa. Except for Faasuka Misikei who had a medical appointment in the first week of January 2000, the rest of this group went to spend Christmas in Samoa and remained there until after the meetings with SLC in January 2000. The group traveled to Samoa on 23 December 1999.

For each of the women, there was appreciative acknowledgement of the work of their daughters and sons in New Zealand for materializing the women's desire to travel to Samoa on this occasion. One mother commented,

> …it's very true…it's our dear children here in New Zealand who are putting into practice the things that we want to do. I wouldn't be able to go on this special trip to Samoa without my children's help. I rely on them to do these things for me. Otherwise, I'll just wish and wish and wish, and not go to Samoa…

Lesao Muliau added,

> Without my children, especially my eldest daughters I'a and Tulino…in fact, they are the ones who are really behind this whole thing, together with the children of other *Teine Uli* here. It's like, they can't go but they're sending us to do the negotiation for them…

Teine uli of the second generation saw the visit related to land payment negotiations as well as other visits as their mother's desire. As children they are giving the support that their mothers needed and requested. For the daughters, there is no way they themselves could travel to Samoa. It is only wishful thinking because they have not only full-time jobs in Auckland, but young families that demand much of their time. A second-generation woman I spoke with at Auckland Airport commented;

> When you really think about it; about all these moving back and forth, this is what keeps our families going. I mean we could easily ignore those guys in Samoa (the relatives) and leave them to deal with their land stuff. We have enough things to think about here in New Zealand – our children, our jobs, our church things, our rent, our bills…but the fact is, we cannot. These old ladies here (pointing at the traveling party of *Teine uli*) cannot ignore the land issue at Vaitele; and neither can we because these old ladies and us…we are seeing this case from the same perspective…the perspective of *'aiga.* …It's not about the land alone. It's also about our relatives who are occupying the land. If we don't do anything to help them, who would?

The concern for relatives in Vaitele is one small but important dimension of the visits to Samoa. It was obvious through out my conversations with *Teine uli* that visits or the desire to visit Samoa reflected much more the corporate pull of *'aiga* on the individuals concerned. Mobility acknowledges, facilitates, and incorporates this pull. The visits by the older women between New Zealand and Samoa illustrate movement that involves not only both generations of *Teine uli* but also the wider network of their families. In this context, the underlying social reality of *Teine uli* and their *'aiga* fundamentally defines the continuity of mobility as in continued visitations between the two countries.

Figure 7. Sunday lunch gathering of *Teine uli* and their families at Vaitele to welcome some of the First Generation women visiting from New Zealand.

Source: Asenati Liki, 1999

Visits to New Zealand

Like those residing in Auckland, First Generation *Teine uli* living at Vaitele frequently visit their children and families in Auckland. Visits to New Zealand are basically a family affair involving the 'unseen' contribution and networking among relatives in both countries. For the children in New Zealand, it is their moral obligation to bring their parents for a visit to Auckland. These visits however are almost always associated with an important event or reason. Thus for example, the reasons for the mothers' visits are usually twofold: a chance to visit this 'land of milk and honey' and a time to, once again, give practical support for their children's families. Thus family obligations underlie parental visits and simultaneously define the inevitable sense of reciprocity that continues to dominate *'aiga* life.

All of the first-generation *Teine uli* residing at Vaitele have made at least one visit to New Zealand since 1991 for reasons varying from birth of a grandchild to funerals. These visits come almost every year and are mostly invitations by the New Zealand-based children of *Teine uli* to the mothers. Mothers always visit before the birth of a grandchild. This is in order to help the pregnant daughter or daughter-in-law and to attend to the older grandchildren when the daughter is in the hospital. More help is given in the early months of the newborn baby.

Mothers' support is a taken-for-granted reality in Samoan society. This also characterized life in the plantation days, where younger mothers worked in the fields while their children were looked after by their grandparents. Contemporary visits to New

Zealand reflect the continuation of this practice within families. It is the older *Teine uli* (grandmothers) who would have to adjust their work activities in order for their daughters and daughters-in-law to consistently engage in work with remuneration in Auckland. While this could be a strategic choice benefiting the whole family, it also shows the strength of *'aiga* in this day and age of advanced capitalism and globalization. Movement between Samoa and New Zealand, as a cultural norm, continues vigorously, in spite of rising cost, more regulations, shifts in airline connections, and travel policies.

While in New Zealand, the mothers often meet with other *Teine uli* residing there. In Auckland, for example, it is not hard to find out where *Teine uli* and/or their children live. Nunu tells how she met up with other *Teine uli* during her first trip to New Zealand:

> When my children first took me to the flea market at Mangere, I was shocked to see so many Samoan people there…Yes, other islanders too go there, but they all look like Samoans to me…I went with my children and they told me "this is where other *Teine uli* and their children also come to shop". Sure enough, we ran into Lesao, Lesa, Oli, Lima, Elena…Those were the girls I used to work with in the plantation. We hugged each other and joked about life in the plantation… O, those days when we were young and full of energy. We'll never forget those days…

One of Tufue's daughters in Auckland said to me,

> If you want to meet this gang of *Teine uli*, you go to the flea market. You'll sure find them there.

At the flea market, not only greetings are exchanged but also telephone numbers and latest addresses. This guarantees continued connection in Auckland, and is a practice of Auckland–based children to help their visiting mothers not feel homesick. As Fitu commented;

> When Mum (Nunu) visits from Samoa, we know very well where she wants to spend some of her time – at the houses of other *Teine uli.* If she wants to sleep there for a week-end or so, we just take her there…She does whatever she wants to do…The other ladies also come to our house. And when they are together, they talk from morning 'til late at night. They're just so happy to be together again…

These women's conversations center on life in the plantation and the whereabouts of their other *Teine uli* friends these days. Despite their being in New Zealand, their interests are not necessarily about that place. The plantation, as the subject of their talks, tends to overshadow the 'freshness' of New Zealand and all the glittering material culture that the country provides. The plantation lives in their memories as the place where they have been and continue to stay connected to each other. It continues to define part of their identity as *Teine uli* of Samoa where their contemporary lives direct experiences of the plantation world have ended, yet, it provides a sense of continuity. This makes these women different from 'other' Samoans: their shared histories, their experiences, and their stories are grounded in experiences of European colonialism and closely interwoven with the strength of *faaSamoa* through *'aiga*. Through the telling and re-telling of their stories in places they visit and gather, *Teine uli* continue to make themselves at home. As Rapport and Dawson (1998, 33) point out,

> It is in and through the continuity of movement that human beings continue to make themselves at home; seeing themselves continually in stories, and continually telling the stories of their lives, people recount their lives to themselves and others as movement.

Homeward orientations: movement and rootedness in 'aiga

International movement is a complex process defined by original movement and subsequent visits of *'aiga* members. The nature of these visits and the frequency of their occurrence in contemporary times strongly reflect the inevitable cultural underpinnings of movement. As cultural events continue to be valued by '*aiga* members in various geographic locations, mobility should no longer be recognized solely as a spatial process that service *fa'alavelave* and other kin-related activities. By its very nature, movement is a cultural norm that is successfully coordinated by *'aiga*. It constitutes commitment to *'aiga* and is central to the defining and re-defining of home among the geographically-dispersed relatives.

Although *Teine uli*'s conception of 'home' seemed initially to be influenced by their experiences of previous and current places of residence, contextualizing their stories and emotions during the interviews provided much insight into this. The women's stories referred regularly to the Melanesian-Samoan community and different expressions were used at various times, depending largely upon which part(s) of the stories they were telling. The terms used were *'pologa i le faatoaga'*/plantation slaves, '*tavini*'/servants, '*le 'au leipa'*/laborers, *tama-uli*/black men, *teine-uli*/black girls, '*fanau a tama-uli'*/children of the black men, and *afakasi*/half-castes. The frequent use of these terms by *Teine uli* is indicative of a fairly strong sense of attachment to a community which is, in many ways, different to, yet simultaneously inseparable from, the larger Samoan society within which it exists. Reference to 'home' reveals attachment to and familiarity with something that is

more than physical space. 'Home', for *Teine uli,* is the Melanesian-Samoan community where they, to use Rapport and Dawson's definition

(1998, 9) "best know [themselves] – where 'best' means 'most', even if not always 'happiest'." Home, it seems, is increasingly no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived (*Ibid*., pp. 27). This is reflected in some of Litia's responses to my questions, as given below:

> LITIA: You've asked me about my travels and my trips. And I have told you. It is my *'aiga* in those trips. Now you ask me about my home. I tell you also, it is my *'aiga.* My *'aiga* over here and over there (overseas) makes me the person that I am; makes me complete. You work that out yourself and see if it makes sense…
>
> ME: Yes, it makes a lot of sense to me. But, I myself am part-Samoan and part-Solomons. How do you think I should make this a sensible statement to someone who is not Samoan…or not of our community?
>
> LITIA: I have come to accept my being *Teine uli* as something that I am very proud of. I used to be ashamed of our people being identified as laborers and Solomons descendants. Now, I regret that. I am an old woman now, and have come to learn that respect for myself as *Teine uli*, and as daughter of *Tama uli* laborers starts with myself and my *'aiga*…and the whole of our community. This is what our people need to know. We must understand and appreciate ourselves first before bothering about how others should understand us…I have learnt that lesson. It's a good one that all our children should know and understand.

Embedded in Litia's comments is the conception of home as community. Such a community, it seems, is paradoxically metaphorical/imagined and grounded. As a metaphor, the Melanesian-Samoan community travels with *Teine uli.* In being physically away from Vaitele/Samoa – their assumed physical 'home' – *Teine uli* in New Zealand are continuously locating and re-locating themselves 'at home' through memories, stories, *fa'alavelave*, and visits. In each of the places they have resided and visited, there have always been Melanesian-Samoan people who share the same cultural practices, food, religious beliefs, and stories. Their 'home' is always shifting primarily as part of

the traveling Samoan community, which constitutes a larger structured movement within which *Teine-uli* and their families locate themselves.

This is seemingly why women like Litia and Tasi, before they passed away, tended to 'dwell' and 'dance' on the edges of the places they had lived in. When Litia was in Auckland, she longed to come back to Samoa. But Samoa to her was not entirely about Vaitele-- her place of residence at the time of her death. Vaitele was always another plantation. It was always connected to Mulifanua plantation where she lived and worked in much of her life. Litia's stories of labor, dance, and visits to her *'aiga* kept the three places of Auckland, Vaitele and Mulifanua intact to such an extent that she did not really mind where she would be buried. At the time of her death, she had relatives in all three places, and had often asked her younger sister, Numera, to visit those at Mulifanua and call her grandchildren in Auckland and see how they were doing. She could not physically reside in all three places. It was through her relations that the imagined community existed for her. Until her death, this imagined community was very much intact.

Although the idea of physical places such as Vaitele in Samoa and Auckland, New Zealand as 'home' is becoming increasingly irrelevant or ineffective in today's world of complex global mobility, their significance as sites where experiences are rooted can never be undermined. As local relocation and international mobility continue to define their varied geographic experiences, *Teine uli* and their families simultaneously anchor themselves in the web of family and community relations. Such a web characterizes the

connectedness of the two places of Samoa and New Zealand upon which the imprints of movement as culture are abundantly clear. By focusing on the continuation of lifestyles characterizing Samoan *'aiga*, *Teine uli* are, in a way, consciously ignoring the dominant cultures and histories surrounding them as migrants in New Zealand. Instead, they continue to "look inward" to their families regardless of location. In doing so, they maintain the connectedness of Mulifanua, Vaitele, and Auckland as the places where their changing experiences remain rooted.

Conclusion

By focusing on the experiences of older and younger *Teine uli,* this chapter has emphasized movement as an integral part of culture. My analysis offers an explanation for the persistence of movement among *Teine uli* and their families in this day and age when globalization is considered a force that brings even the most isolated places into a cosmopolitan global framework of socio-economic interaction. Although this perspective assumes, among other things, loss of migrant identity and culture as the so-called glocal community evolves, there is ample evidence to the contrary. In fact, the mobility experiences of *Teine uli* and their families emphasize the inevitability of *'aiga* events such as *fa'alavelave* that ultimately define the persistence of movement.

Regular visits between Samoa and New Zealand strongly suggest the continuity of commitment to *'aiga.* Behind these visits lie the 'unseen' efforts of Second Generation women in coordinating activities for their families in both countries. These visits also have their roots in the plantation where, in the face of colonialism, *Teine uli* engaged in

familial relations as evident in their commitment to *fa'alavelave* involving *'aiga*. The discussion in this chapter implies the continuity of contemporary mobility as ultimately connected to '*aiga* whose existence transcends spatial boundaries. Such is 'home' for *Teine uli* as they journey in life telling and re-telling their stories to each other and to the world.

Figure 8. Families from Samoa attending the funeral of one *Teine uli*, Faasuka Misikei in Auckland, New Zealand.

Source: Asenati Liki, 2003

CHAPTER 8

'ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UNFAMILIAR'[1]

> …I don't know of a single Pacific Islander who saved. As a general rule, we liked to spend our money.
>
> Teresia Teaiwa, 2004, 220

In her article, "Mānoa Rain", renowned Pacific scholar Teresia Teaiwa (2004), an island woman of both Banaban and African American ancestry, tells of her experiences of Mānoa – a place where different people and diverse cultures meet and where many relationships are rooted. 'A beloved land', Teaiwa passionately writes, where her parents met and married; her birthplace and, where she learned histories from her graduate seminars at the University of Hawai'i, and during gatherings with Pacific island students at the East West Center. The Pacific students are known for hosting gatherings marked by feasting and the loudest, longest, most generous, and most lively parties. For Teaiwa, these gatherings "epitomize the ideals of the center by bringing people together through affinity rather than strict identity politics" (*Ibid*.p. 220). On these gatherings, the Pacific islanders spend their money.

I chose to begin this concluding chapter with Teaiwa's story because it has a theme that resonates with the underlying argument of my study. Pacific islanders and their cultural orientations and activities have been perceived by proponents of 'development' as money-wasters and barriers to economic progress. I discussed in the beginning of this study that dominant interpretations of work and movement define these processes

[1] Yvonne Underhill-Sem, 2004, 55.

primarily as monetary-related and impetus to profit-making and economic growth. Thus, for colonial administrators, any other activity besides those for making money was to be stamped out. Samoan *malaga* was a target by the German colonial administration. *Malaga* was more than the movement of people between villages. It involved elaborate exchanges of cultural materials, acknowledgement of genealogies, strengthening of familial links, feasting and, displays of cultural generosity. Underpinning these practices are core principles, such as *va fealoaloa'i* (social space between people) and *fa'alavelave* (family and cultural events) that define reciprocity-based societies.

Cultural characteristics continue to feature in contemporary *malaga* that transcends boundaries of the nation state (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004). Until recently, cultural orientations and practices have been largely ignored by dominant approaches in Pacific movement (and work) whose focus is narrowly restricted to the economic rationale of development. The failure of these approaches have been recently acknowledged by Connell (2007), Barcham, Scheyvens, and Overton (2007) and this appears to indicate that scholars are beginning to "pay greater respect to island cultures, traditions and initiatives" (Chappell, 2007, 139). Attention is now directed towards the inevitable challenge of making sense of the 'complex,' 'more flexible' and, 'ambiguity' of, flows that characterize Pacific movement today (Bedford, 2007). On the one hand, it seems this concern is rooted in the inability of the empirically-driven research methods, themselves reflective of dualistic thinking, to capture the fluidity of the social realities or what has come to be known as the transnational experience of Pacific people. On the other hand, it tends to portray complex movement as a relatively recent phenomenon in the Pacific. The

reality is quite the contrary. Movement – within and beyond the spatial boundaries of the island nation states - was always fluid and flexible. The problem has been the scholarly ignorance of 'cultural nuances' that underpin island mobility. A few studies that recognize this include those by Chapman (1976 and 1985) in the Solomon Islands, Bonnemaison (1985) in Vanuatu, Underhill (1989) in the Cook Islands, Young (1998) in Fiji, Peters (2000) in Chuuk, Quan-Bautista (2001) on Satowan Atoll and Guam, and Salesa (2003) in Samoa. Young (1998, 320), referring to the context of Fijian society argues:

> Movement…is not unrelated to the conceptions of movement and relationship pathways. As people work together in preparation for ceremonial events and, for example, divide a *magiti* (feast), the pathways they follow encode a relationship between people and place and between past and present. Similarly as people move from one place to another they embody relationship pathways; who a person stays with, where they spend their time when visiting kin…is closely tied to concerns with belonging and legitimacy.

I argued in this dissertation that cultural practices, as embodied in such activities as work and movement, are anchored in Samoan understanding of sociocultural relations. Scholars need to appreciate cultural thinking as an alternative way of knowing work and movement. In this frame of thinking, 'spending money' and 'inability to save money' are healthy indicators of a different socioeconomic system that is alive and well in Pacific societies, namely a reciprocity-based one.

Teine uli's work and movement: summarizing the themes

My overall aim in this study was to present Samoan cultural thinking as an alternative way to understand work and movement among *Teine uli* in Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand. I discussed, in chapter one, the intellectual and personal stories behind my focus

on this topic and on this particular group of women from Samoa. My dissatisfaction with dominant explanations of Pacific movement overlapped with rediscovering myself as a woman of the Melanesian-Samoan community. A common thread of marginalized and ignored stories and histories runs through these experiences. Studies of Pacific movement overlook the experiences of women (Underhill-Sem, 1999). Studies of labor in the Pacific ignore the experiences of women particularly those of Melanesian ancestry (Jolly, 1985). And *Teine uli* are located at the conjunction of these "processes of silencing" (Underhill-Sem, 2007).

In chapter two, I navigated through existing approaches in search of an appropriate framework through which I could address the scholarly forgetting of *Teine uli*'s experiences of work and movement. I pointed out that although more recent analysis in postcolonial and feminist post-structuralist scholarship have countered the absence of women in earlier studies of population movement, these tend to underplay the significance of cultural thinking as a way of knowing in and through which daily interactions are perceived and defined.

In situating *Teine uli*'s work and movement, feminist theorizing is useful but incomplete. Post-structuralist feminist studies in the Pacific, for example, see the body as constitutive; the enculturated gendered body (Underhill-Sem, 2000). From this position, Underhill-Sem addresses the silences of, and processes of silencing women, and her approach clearly revolves around a political goal of 'emancipating' women (Underhill-Sem, 2007). While this approach has greatly enhanced analyses of Pacific women, particularly those

of the western Pacific, the question that remains to be answered satisfactorily is: How is 'woman' defined? In the context of many Pacific societies, this is a crucial issue because women, like men, conceive of themselves as first and foremost, *tino o le aiga* (body of the family). I pointed out in chapter three that understanding woman in this context – of body as inseparable from *aiga* and *aiga* as inseparable from the body - has to be the starting point of analysis for *Teine uli*.

Conceptions of the Samoan self, as explained in chapter three, are rooted in one's identity or *fa'asinomaga* defined by genealogies, *gagana* and *fanua* (Le Tagaloa,1997). Through these dimensions the self connects to kin and land. Of course, this understanding is not unique to Samoan society. Patterson (1992) and Perrett (2003) discussed Maori conceptions of the self as radically non-individualistic and narrative-based. Parrett (2003, 258) explains, "[a] person's identity is determined predominantly by his or her inherited status and relationship to the larger social group, membership of which is genealogically determined." In this context, the reading of women's diverse experiences – be it of gender subordination, exploitation, empowerment or, leadership – should anchor not in how women *are defined*, but how the women *define themselves* and *conceive of* their life and living. This study has shown that the meanings of work and movement are embedded in the cultural conceptions, and materiality, of such processes. In their day to day life, *Teine uli* actively negotiate and define meanings of their experiences across time and space.

Understanding 'woman' in the context of '*aiga* resonates with perspectives from an indigenous standpoint (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, 2001), around which the humanist geographers' approaches to population movement in the Pacific. Bonnemaison (1981) suggested, almost three decades ago, that "…geographers should try and understand the conception of the world that is at the core of the group or society they are studying." Ten years later, Chapman (1991, 286) gave a reminder:

> [Pacific Islanders] are well aware of the material benefits and wider range of social services that come from residing or working for longer periods in towns [and cities]. But, as practical people rather than incurable romantics, they also recognize that their socioeconomic marginality to national trends makes it more prudent to follow past practice, build on the genealogical ties and social relationships evolved over many generations, and continue to operate predominantly within a [reciprocity-based] orbit."

Recently, Barcham, Scheyvens, and Overton (2007, 16-17) echoed these previous arguments and, referring specifically to Polynesian movement, pointed out that the "enduring features of [movement] remind us that the island heartlands are far from passive and powerless. Cultural dimensions … are long-standing, durable and cross generational in ways that transcend simple and rational economic calculations." Embedded in these works is the persistence of culturally-based meanings of experiences that the people carry with them wherever they shift to.

Despite the incompleteness of the feminist approaches as mentioned earlier, there are useful leaves that I draw on to weave a broader understanding of *Teine uli*'s work and movement. Feminist and humanist approaches converge at their recognition of the lived experiences as complex and flexible. The lived experiences of *Teine uli* are situated

within the realm of their being *tino o le 'aiga.* The strength of both of these approaches, for my analysis, lies in their resistance to dualistic thinking that freeze women's experiences of place in dichotomies such as domestic/public, unemployed/employed, reproduction/production and undeveloped/developed. This underpins the multi-method approach that I used to gather information for this study, set out in chapter four. Of particular significance is the positionality of the researcher in the research itself. It is impossible to separate the researcher from the researched, so this study has attempted to acknowledge this by telling not only the stories of *Teine uli* but also my own. Our stories overlap at many points and this serves to give a broader picture of *Teine uli*'s experiences and of the different ways of thinking that underlie studies on women's work and mobility in the Pacific.

The complexity of *Teine uli*'s lived experiences is both rooted in place and transcends place. In chapter five, I discussed the three geographic places of Mulifanua, Vaitele, and Auckland. These places are prominent in the narratives of *Teine uli*. As geographic sites each of these places is constituted of internal and external dimensions that define them as landscapes that are changing. Through narratives, memory and networks, *Teine uli* "are not only 'local,' [but] are also indissolubly linked to both local and extralocal places" (Escobar, 2001, 143). In the context of the Samoan self connected to kinship relations and the land, the women are never out of place regardless of their shifting around and changing work activities. As Peters (2004, 261) passionately writes, "Islanders are the neediest creatures on islands. We need to belong to places…If there is a frightening notion that most islanders share, it is the concept of being lost, being out of place, or the

inability to make connection with a place." For Pacific peoples, the need to belong to places is as crucial as the need to belong to genealogies because place is an inseparable dimension of identity. For Escobar, connection to place can be through networks of relations. Through movement and work, *Teine uli* have occupied or currently reside in different places and, for them, a deep sense of cultural identity reinforced by strong kinship ties had led to an ability to survive in various locations.

The theme of women's rootedness in their identity or *aiga* is clearly seen in their conceptions of work activities. In many ways, the activities that characterize the life work of *Teine uli* vary. However, the specificities of these tasks at home and outside of it are enmeshed with conceptions of multiple links that underpin an alternative understanding of work. Work activity, waged or otherwise, is understood in the context of its value and contribution towards *aiga* and continues to be defined relative to kinship relations and *fa'alavelave*. Thus, while earning money is an important aspect of one's life's work, it is never considered an end in itself. Earning wages is oriented towards, and always associated with, the bigger circle of kin.

My discussion in chapter six that culturally-rooted concepts of reciprocity work as a more corporate and group undertaking, products of work, and the practice of *va fealoaloa'i.* Work is a sociocultural process and not merely a basic or elemental activity guided by notions of clock-time and measured by monetary rewards. Work is a cyclic process through which one moves along pathways of kinship defined by ancestral and genealogical time(Young, 1998). Such moves, however, do not end in a cul-de-sac.

Rather they connect again to kinship thus strengthening its ties. Working through these pathways also means activating and reactivating the practices of reciprocities that endure throughout the lifetimes of women in places where they and their families have both lived and currently reside.

Cultural meanings also underpin movement within and beyond Samoa. As noted in chapter one, *malaga* among *Teine uli* and their Samoan families has been an inevitable feature of plantation communities during and after colonial rule. Their magnitude might be relatively small but these flows were multidirectional, fluid, and often *fa'alavelave*-related. These flows traced and retraced the indelible social and genealogical pathways of the Samoan '*aiga* . These meanings continue to underpin the fluidity of transnational flows that now span many national boundaries and borders. Their sizable magnitude and the culturally-rooted meanings that contradict the prevailing economic assumptions in migration studies are now becoming increasingly difficult to map (Bedford, 1997).

I discussed in chapter seven examples of the continuity of cultural practices with movement. Ongoing visits between the islands and New Zealand and the intergenerational coordination of these moves reflect far more the persistence of sociocultural relations and activities. I argued that the concept and practice of *fa'alavelave* is central to Samoan movement because it is constituted of sociocultural relations and pathways that simultaneously initiate and maintain flows. On these activities the movers and their families spend their money. Regardless of their economic status as poor, working class migrants Islanders continue to 'spend their money' to fuel

an age-old socioeconomic system anchored in reciprocity.

Cultural thinking and Pacific population geography

In many ways, this research occupies what Underhill-Sem (2004, 55) calls the "spaces for engagement with the unfamiliar". This study is situated within the unfamiliar cultural thinking of *Teine uli* as *'aiga.* This is unfamiliar ground for population geography in the Pacific, let alone population geography as a subdiscipline. But this unfamiliarity should not be portrayed as passive or impervious to challenge. It stems from what I see as a bigger project of the forgetting of the sociocultural world of island women, in particular, and Pacific peoples in general. This forgetting is rooted in the preferred epistemologies of most population scholars who wish to understand the Pacific.

Dominant thinking in Pacific population research is clearly that which also prevails in the subfield of population geography. Underhill-Sem (2000, 2004) bravely attempts to engage population geographies from the Pacific, as an 'out-of-the-way place', with the broader subfield by offering alternative articulations of the body drawn from her research into maternities in Papua New Guinea. She also challenges prevailing scholarship on Pacific populations arguing against its masculinist approaches. This dissertation continues this challenge by focusing on alternative perspectives of work and movement for island women. I build on a more nuanced group of existing work on Pacific mobility, which situates the researched in the complexity of lived experiences defined by genealogies and pathways of sociocultural relations. My study calls for an understanding of 'woman' and 'kin' as inseparable. This position offers an understanding of how island

women persist in their orientations toward their kin across time and space, and despite other scholarly constructions of themselves.

Much has been said about the researcher-researched gap and methodologies have been suggested by feminist and humanist geographers, among others, that can help towards closing this gap. In this day and age, where transnational experiences of work and movement are becoming more and more complex, diverse methods of data collection are useful but incomplete. The insider/outsider divide is irrelevant. The critical need lies not with the question of *who should carry out research*, but in the question of *whom to research*. In the context of contemporary Pacific research, the latter question would have an important requirement: a radical, deliberate, and genuine shift of scholarly focus on and thinking about the researched. This should ultimately gear us not just to navigate instinctively the visible lands and seascapes, but to dive energetically into the unseen belly of the ocean. Therein lie stories and understandings that can make our search for knowledge more meaningful.

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APPENDIX 1

Field census survey questionnaire

1. Family of : _____(Give name of *Teine uli)*

2. What church does your family attend? _____

3. Name and age of person answering questions: _____

4. Name of eldest member of family: _____

5. Number of *fale* occupied by your family:_____

6. What is the total number of persons currently living with you at Vaitele? _____

7. Please give the information for each member of your family living with you

Name	Sex	Age	Generation MS belong to	Level of formal education	Type of work activity commonly involved in	Monthly income if in waged work
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

Please use extra paper if needed.

Family members living **outside** of Vaitele.

Name	Sex	Age	Generation MS belong to	Current place of residence	Work activity involved in	How often do they visit Vaitele	How often do you visit them
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							

Please use extra paper if needed.

APPENDIX 2

Basic interview questions (Vaitele)

1. Name of Teine uli: _____
2. Are you first generation or second generation *Teine ul?i*
3. What is your age? _____
4. Where were you born? _____
5. Your father's name? _____
    a. Was your father *Tama uli* from the Solomons? _____
    b. Do you know where in the Solomons did he come from?

        _____
    c. When did he die? _____
    d. How old was he when he died?_____
    e. Where is he buried at?_____
6. Your mother's name?_____
    a. What village in Samoa did you mother come from?

        _____
    b. What year did she start working on the plantation? _____
    c. Where is she buried at? _____
    d. How old was she when she died? _____

7. How many siblings do you have? _____
    a. Where are they living now?

        _____

        _____

_____

_____

_____

8. If you have siblings overseas, how often do they visit you here at Vaitele?

_____

   a. Do you visit them overseas? How often?

_____

_____

9. If you have siblings in other parts of Samoa, how often do you get to see them?

_____

_____

10. Is/Was your husband Samoan or first generation *Tama uli*?

_____

11. If your husband is/was Samoan, which village(s) is he from?

_____

   a. Do you visit his family in the village? How often?_____

_____

Does his family visit you here at Vaitele? How often?

_____

_____

_____

12. When you were living on the plantations, how often did your family and your husband's family visit each other?_____

_____

13. When you were living on the plantations, how often did your family and your Samoan mother's family visit each other? _____

14. What were the common reasons for those visits?

_____

_____

15. How many children do you have? _____

a. Where are they living now? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. If you have children overseas, how did they move there in the first place?

_____

_____

_____

_____

c. Do you visit your children? How often?

16. Please tell me about your visits to your children overseas?

Use extra paper if needed)

17. What sort of **work activities** do you do at Vaitele? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Use extra paper if needed)

18. Do you earn money from these activities? _____

19. Do you get money from your children and other members of your family? ___

_____

20. On what sort of things do you normally use your earnings for? _____

_____

_____

_____

22. When you do not have money, what do you do? _____

_____

_____

21. Tell me please about your experiences as a laborer on the Mulifanua estate?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Use more paper if needed)

APPENDIX 3

Basic interview questions (Auckland)

1. Name of Teine uli: _____
2. Are you first generation or second generation *Teine ul?i*
3. What is your age? _____
4. Where were you born? _____
5. Your father's name? _____
    a. Was your father *Tama uli* from the Solomons? _____
    b. Do you know where in the Solomons did he come from?

        _____
    c. When did he die? _____
    d. How old was he when he died?_____
    e. Where is he buried at?_____
6. Your mother's name?_____
    a. What village in Samoa did you mother come from?

        _____
    b. What year did she start working on the plantation? _____
    c. Where is she buried at? _____
    d. How old was she when she died? _____

7. How many siblings do you have? _____
    a. Where are they living now?

        _____

        _____

_____

_____

_____

8. When did you come to Auckland? _____

9. Are you here for a visit or long-term stay?_____

10. If you are staying here long term, have you ever been back in Samoa? ___

_____

11. Is/Was your husband Samoan or first generation *Tama uli*?

_____

12. If your husband is/was Samoan, which village(s) is he from?

_____

13. Do you have relatives from your husband's family here in Auckland?

_____

    a. How often do you see or speak with them on the phone?

    _____

    b. Does his family visit you here at _____,in Auckland? How often?

    _____

    _____

    _____

APPENDIX 4
List of interviewees

Eseta Iopu. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 11 October 1999.

Filia Lepui. Personal Interview, Auckland, New Zealand, 7 April 2000.

I'amafana Muliau. Personal Interview. Auckland New Zealand. 29 March 2000.

Letoa, Isaako. Personal Conversation. Olo Plantation, Mulifanua. 18 January 2000.

Lesa Puavasa. Personal Interview. Auckland, New Zealand. 26 March and 10 April 2000

Litia Likou. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 6 October 1998.

Losa Leiataua Tunu. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 25 September 1998.

Menime To'a Penitito. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 12 October 1999.

Mili To'a Siaosi. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 12 October 1998

Numera Likou. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 29 September 1998

Nunu Taua and Malu Ioane. Group Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 17 November 1998

Pene Eletise. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 15 October 1999

Pogai Lopeki. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 30 November 1998

------ Personal Communication. Flea Market, Apia. Samoa. 27 September and 17 November, 1998.

Puata, Olese. Personal Communication. Vaitele. Samoa. 20 November 1998

Salome Isaako. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 18 October 1999.

Tafiaiga Ioane. Personal Interview. Vaitele, Samoa. 20 November 1998

--- Personal Communication. Apia, Samoa. 23 November 1998

Tafito Saloma; Oge Nofoaiga; and Fipe Saolotoga. Group Interviews. Vaitele, Samoa. 4 November 1999.

Tulino Muliau. Personal Interview. Auckland New Zealand. 28 March 2000

APPENDIX 5

Personal Communications and field notes

Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa. President, Le Amosa o Sa Vavau/Indigenous University of Samoa, Alafua, Samoa. 26 July 2007.

Aumua Mataitusi Simanu, Siusega, Samoa. 13 July 2007.

Malaefono Taaloga, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Statistics Department. Apia, 12 December 2003.

Senira Su'a. Secretary, The University of the South Pacific Alafua Campus, Samoa, 20 March 2007.

Sonny Lameta, Senior Lecturer, School of Agriculture, Food and Technology, Alafua. 14 and 17 March 2007.

Field notes

Personal Reflections. Vaivase-uta, Samoa. 25 September 1998.

Fieldwork Notes. Vaitele, Samoa. 15 February 1999.

Fieldwork Notes. Auckland, New Zealand. 29 March 2000