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Divided loyalties and fractured sovereignty: transnationalism and the nation-state in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Paul Spoonley, Richard Bedford and Cluny Macpherson

Abstract *New Zealand represents one example of the way in which a colonially-inspired transnationalism linking the country with the UK has been supplemented by new and intensified forms of transnationalism encompassing the Pacific and Asia. Our focus in this paper is on the nature of an emergent Pacific diaspora involving primarily Polynesian communities and the challenges that this transnationalism presents to the state and national identity. The transnationalism of Pacific peoples is reflected in the circulation of people, capital and ideas, the latter increasingly via the Internet, but the nature of transnational linkages is also significantly influenced by changes to ethnic identity and practice, and by the impoverishment of both 'homeland' and diasporic communities.*

KEYWORDS: NEW ZEALAND; MAORI; PACIFIC PEOPLES; TRANSNATIONALISM; NATION-STATE; CIRCULATION

Introduction

The formation and intensification of transnational social spaces have highlighted the issue of 'troubled nation-state formation' (Faist 2000: 191) and have served to disrupt traditional notions of state sovereignty and national identity. As Ong has argued, there is a need to 'consider how the hyphen between the two [nation-state] has become reconfigured by capital mobility and migration' (1999: 11). We argue here that an historical form of transnationalism that was constructed and reproduced as part of a set of colonial relations (UK–New Zealand) has been supplemented by new forms of transnationalism involving the Pacific and Asia. The project of establishing a nation-state in the New Zealand context remains not only incomplete, but the issues are being further complicated by the intensification of new transnational networks. These are creating significant problems for the state, particularly given the state's acknowledgement in New Zealand of indigenous issues, and the reluctance and/or inability of the state in particular, and many in the wider community more generally, to recognise the significance of new forms of migrant and minority cultural identity and transnational networks.

In an interesting challenge to those researchers who seek to address the meanings of transnationalism in the context of contemporary globalisation tendencies, John Connell has argued:

In theorising transnational migration, it is necessary to bring together an understanding of the economic position of countries within the global and regional economic system, and the relationship between economic dislocations, unemployment and restructuring; the current

political, economic, racial and gender structuring of core countries, which provide employment for migrants, but neither economic security nor equal incorporation into the body politic ...; and the construction by migrants of multiple networks, meaning and identities as a means of simultaneously participating in and resisting their subordination (1997: 199).

While we endorse Connell's agenda, our aim in this article is more modest. We want to discuss the way in which a relatively small society, that of New Zealand, has undergone a transformation in terms of its international (transnational) linkages, from one that was dominated by a colonial relationship with the United Kingdom, to the current situation which has seen the intensification of new forms of association, notably with Asia and the Pacific. We selectively focus on the transnational communities that involve Pacific peoples as a form of 'transnationalism from below' (the grounded and everyday practices of communities as opposed to global governance and economic ownership; Smith and Guarnizo (1998)), and the challenge of divided loyalties and mobile social capital for a state that is struggling to maintain control and sovereignty on a series of fronts. We address some of the issues identified by Connell (1997), although our focus is on issues of belonging, nationality and identity rather than the broader questions of international and regional political economy.

Our contention is that the historically underdeveloped or weak local conceptions of citizenship and nationality, which are largely a function of colonial processes, have created the space for active new forms of transnationalism, thereby presenting some significant challenges to the contemporary state in New Zealand. We start by briefly rehearsing the historical and colonial-inspired nature of transnationalism and citizenship, with particular reference to New Zealand's distinctive colonial history. This provides a context for the second section of the paper which deals with the contemporary debate about identity in a country where an indigenous population has recently reasserted its place as the 'people of the land' (*tangata whenua*)¹ at a time when the most recent waves of immigrants from the Pacific Islands and Asia are seeking to establish their identities in a new location. The third section elaborates on the transnational nature of contemporary Pacific peoples and the linkages between island and Pacific Rim homes which involve the circulation of people, capital and ideas. The final section returns to Connell's (1997) argument about the political economy of transnationalism and transnational migrants with reference to responses to new forms of capitalist production and consumption, and the embedding of new and enhanced forms of impoverishment.

Colonial transnationalism

A particular population or community is transnational when there are significant links, or networks, between members in a place of origin and in the various places of residence, however distant, that comprise the diaspora (Van Hear 1998: 242). The concept of a diaspora emerged from a particular history of expulsion or involuntary exile (Levitt 1998: 928), although it has also been used to refer to the dispersal of populations as a result of various means, including as victims, for labour, trade or imperial reasons, or as part of a cultural diaspora (Cohen 1997: x). While the imagery of the diaspora is a powerful one, and will be used here, the notion of transnationalism shifts attention to the nature and content of *linkages* between communities (see Levitt 2001).

Transnationalism refers to the existence of significant networks that are

maintained across borders. These networks challenge the very nature of nation-states (cf. Schiller 1997), especially by virtue of the fact that culturally different communities are connected with similar communities elsewhere. The notion of what constitutes a 'nation' is problematised (Fleras and Spoonley 1999). Resources and loyalties are divided for these transnational communities between the place of residence and their 'homeland'. As Davis points out with regard to Hispanic communities in the United States:

The new logic of social reproduction under conditions of global reconstruction, compels traditional communities to strategically balance assets and population between two different place-rooted existences. Economic and cultural umbilical cords now permanently connect hundreds of Latin American and Caribbean localities with counterpart urban neighbourhoods in the United States (1999: 27).

The notion of transnationalism can also be used to describe the diasporas of colonial empires. Transnational networks were an aspect in the process of settling colonies such as New Zealand. For most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the 'homeland' for many New Zealanders (other than the indigenous Maori) was Britain, and this is reflected in a particular history of nationalism and citizenship.

Establishing who constitutes a citizen of the 'New Zealand' nation, and who is an alien, has frequently caused problems by virtue of the country's historical status as a colonial outpost for absorbing British settlers (Fleras and Spoonley 1999; McKinnon 1996). The contemporary nation-state, such as it is, evolved from the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 between some Maori, representatives of the European settlers and the colonising power, Britain. But the process of actually establishing the *nation*-state has been compromised by the process of settlement and its cultural and economic subservience to British interests, the presence of a significant Maori population, and the ambiguities that arose from membership (cf. citizenship) of a dependent state. New Zealand is one of the 'so-called "white dominions"' (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995: 6; see also Cohen 1997) which, along with Canada and Australia, saw the numerical (and political) dominance of European settlers as part of British colonial expansion. For much of the country's history, nationality was defined by reference to membership of the British Empire and the legal citizenship conventions that prevailed. It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that new understandings, new policies and new constructions of nationality and citizenship evolved, at times dramatically.

British settlement began in earnest in the first half of the eighteenth century, and the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi provided the grounds for increasing numbers of British settlers (Belich 1996). At the time of signing, only 10 per cent of the residents were Europeans, but by 1860, there was parity in population size between European settler (*Pakeha*) and indigenous Maori (Pool 1991). Although small numbers of settlers from India and China were admitted in the late nineteenth century, the vast majority of those new settlers were British, and it remained this way until major changes to immigration policy in 1986. In the 1921 census, 99 per cent claimed British nationality, emphasising the fact that even though many had been born in New Zealand, the pre-eminent legal, and social, identity was defined by having the same rights and legal status as British citizens. In this context, aliens were defined by their non-Britishness, the degree to which they differed from the characteristics which were seen as

quintessentially British, as well as the prejudices held towards particular racial groups (Belich 1996; McKinnon 1996).

What emerged was a definition of who belonged, and who did not, by virtue of New Zealand's connections with Britain. As Malcolm McKinnon observed:

The contrast in experience between British and non-British immigrant, between the kin and foreigner or alien, as all foreigners were officially known until 1977, was marked. Britons could enter the country as they wished, the foreigner had to be admitted or permitted ... Thus, in policy as in attitude, New Zealand in this respect was not a new country embracing people from all over the world ... it was a British country and other people did not belong or could stay only on sufferance (1996: 13).

The arrival of Asian migrants from the 1860s encouraged vigorous and racist opposition that was reflected in a series of Acts of Parliament (27 in all) that defined Asian immigrants as undesirable (McKinnon 1996) and which limited their entry by discriminatory means. The First and Second World Wars also encouraged the selective targeting of certain groups, including various European (non-British) migrants such as Dalmatians who were defined as enemy aliens (as in the Registration of Aliens Act of 1917). Citizenship and state policies were lenient as long as the settlers were British (and Irish) and a hard line was adopted by the state only when the racial sensitivities of the dominant group in New Zealand – *Pakeha* – were seen to be under threat.

At the end of the Second World War, along with other British 'dominions' (colonies) such as Canada and Australia, a new form of nationality was established by defining citizenship for a particular country. As of 1 January 1949, all British subjects born in New Zealand, those who had been naturalised in New Zealand or who had been residents of New Zealand for one year became New Zealand citizens. Now immigrants, including British immigrants, had to register, although few of the latter did in any number (McKinnon 1996: 36–7). For the first time, the legal status of New Zealand citizenship, and therefore nationality, was established. A further Citizenship Act was passed in 1977 although, as McKinnon notes, 'there was in practice little distinction made in rights and obligations between citizens and those who were usually called permanent residents, that is, those with rights to live in New Zealand but without citizenship' (1996: 44). New Zealand in the last few decades has readily accepted the 'portability of national identity' (Sassen 1998) and made relatively few demands on migrant populations in terms of requiring a declaration of loyalty or citizenship.

The transnational (colonial) governance of New Zealand which is reflected in the trajectory of the notion of citizenship (British to New Zealand) was paralleled by economic and social ties. Two-thirds of New Zealand's exports were destined for Britain until the 1970s, largely organised around state-to-state relations. Socially and culturally, virtually all of New Zealand's migrants were from Britain and Ireland, until the 1950s. The cultural umbilical cord that this represented was reflected in the common reference to Britain as 'home', despite the fact that the person using such repertoires of connectedness might have been born in New Zealand and never visited Britain.

There are two points to be made by way of conclusion to this section. The first is that New Zealand's colonial links with Britain established transnational social spaces and strong cultural and economic links between the two countries. New Zealand was part of a British diaspora that was an integral part of settlement and governance, and which dominated questions of state policy, citizenship and identity in New Zealand. The second point is that the intensity and intimacy of

this relationship meant that locally-derived and imagined conceptions of identity were weak, as were notions of citizenship. Beginning in the 1890s, the New Zealand state pioneered policies and the provision of universal welfare and enfranchisement but against the backdrop of an underdeveloped sense of national identity. This ambiguity was to be exposed dramatically in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

Renegotiating identity and citizenship

Two quite different developments have transformed debates about identity in New Zealand, and have drawn fundamentally different and, at times, contradictory responses from the state and the community. The first of these concerns the rights of Maori in the wake of a renewed and assertive Maori ethno-nationalism dating from the late 1960s. The second concerns the arrival of migrants from sources other than Britain, notably Pacific peoples from the 1960s and Asian migrants from a variety of origins from the late 1980s.

A debate emerged from the 1970s concerning the separate rights of Maori as New Zealand citizens. New Zealanders, whether Maori as indigenous people or *Pakeha* as descendants of European settlers, are New Zealanders in the sense of a set of British-derived understandings of individual rights and loyalty to certain values and institutions. However, debates concerning the Treaty of Waitangi have confirmed that there are two sorts of citizenship. One of these specifies New Zealanders as subjects of a liberal-democratic state with all the rights and protection afforded to individuals. The other is the right, exclusive to Maori, which recognises their membership of *iwi* (tribes) and *hapu* (sub-tribes or extended familial groups) and the fact that the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) guaranteed the possession of traditional resources, including land and fisheries, and the protection of their culture.

The state has responded to this duality in an interesting and radical way. Beginning in the mid-1980s, the rights of Maori were recognised in legislation, and confirmed by the courts in a series of landmark decisions and in the government's creation of the Waitangi Tribunal which was charged with investigating breaches of these rights and recommending ways of resolving them. Even in a conservative government elected in 1990, and committed to reducing state activity and expenditure while emphasising individual/community responsibility, the recognition of the 'Treaty' rights of Maori, and a commitment to seek remedies for past breaches of those rights, was a major policy platform. The approach adopted by the state has resulted in the transfer of significant resources such as land, control over fisheries (freshwater and sea), a commitment to formal partnerships in a number of areas of government administration, and the promotion of Maori language. The recognition of indigenous rights that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s has implications for citizenship. Maori spokespersons have tended to declare their interest in continuing to be New Zealanders and to be active in the affairs of the state of New Zealand whilst exercising a form of citizenship which differs in significant respects from that of non-Maori. This is in contrast to the experiences of migrants, especially from the Pacific.

The first significant wave of non-British migrants in the second half of the twentieth century were Dutch who arrived in the 1950s under a scheme jointly promoted by the New Zealand and Dutch governments. These migrants did not

excite a lot of hostility, probably because they were seen as the victims of a devastating war. A very different response prevailed in the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s when large numbers of Pacific Island migrants from Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau arrived in New Zealand to provide labour for the expanding urban manufacturing sector (Gibson 1983). During an economic downturn associated with the first oil crisis in the early 1970s, these migrants were seen as contributing to a deteriorating employment situation, taking the jobs of 'New Zealanders'. In addition, they were seen to be challenging existing immigration law and policies, and fostering the development of what some perceived to be as 'slums' in some of the major cities.

An interesting dimension was the relations between Maori and Pacific peoples. Labour migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers from the New Zealand hinterland (Maori) and the Pacific meant that Maori and Pacific peoples competed for employment and resources such as affordable housing. At a street level, there was animosity, represented at the most extreme by inter-gang conflict. There were also some commentators from both Maori and Pacific communities who sought to argue for resources for their own communities to the exclusion of others. But an increasingly common political analysis, which portrayed the state and major institutions as colonial and/or racist, shifted the nature of the relationship between Maori and Pacific communities (Pulotu-Endemann and Spoonley 1992). This derived from the leadership of urban-based Maori and Pacific peoples who had been educated together, often to tertiary level, and a growing emphasis on similar community welfare and economic development goals, often accompanied by an emphasis on common and ancient cultural origins. By the mid-1980s, a significant level of accord had been reached which typically included a recognition of the *tangata whenua* status of Maori.

The notion of 'overstayer', someone who stays on in New Zealand after they are legally required to have left, became an excuse for the police and immigration authorities to harass these newly resident communities. The question of their right to be in New Zealand, and what rights they might have whilst they were in the country, became a political and legal issue. In the early 1980s, the Privy Council in Great Britain ruled that a Western Samoan, Falema'i Lesa, who was facing prosecution under the Immigration Act 1964, was a natural-born British subject and therefore a New Zealand citizen (Macdonald 1986: 73). This decision had the effect of establishing that two-thirds of the population of Western Samoa, some 100,000 people, were New Zealand citizens.

The political implications of this change in the citizenship status of more than half of the resident population of Samoa were considerable for both countries and the Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act 1982 was rapidly introduced to control migration and the status of those Samoans already in New Zealand. It was based on a Treaty of Friendship between the New Zealand and Western Samoan governments, signed on the occasion of the independence of Samoa in 1962. Amongst other things, this Treaty specified conditions under which an annual quota (1,100 people) of Samoans could gain access to permanent residence in New Zealand. The Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act qualifies the provisions of the Citizenship Act 1977 as part of the racialisation of Pacific peoples. It was an important point in a period of New Zealand history which was often marked by explicit, public racism and represented by discriminatory state policies and action (Fleras and Spoonley 1999).

In the same period, important aspects of the relationship with Britain were being renegotiated in the wake of the declining strength of economic linkages and a more culturally assertive and aware (in terms of a particular colonial history) generation of postwar baby boomers. The entry of Britain into what was then called the European Economic Community, and the loss of favoured access to the British market for New Zealand exporters, began a process of reconsidering New Zealand's geo-political links. By the 1980s, a reforming Labour Government had begun to focus on links with Asia.

An important part of this geo-political realignment was a new immigration policy from 1986 that departed from the previous racially exclusionary policies and sought to attract migrants who had skills or capital that would enhance New Zealand's economic performance (Burke 1986). Migrant flows from new source areas for New Zealand evolved quickly. In the mid-1980s, two-thirds of migrants came from Europe and North America. By 1995, 60 per cent of those approved for residence were Asians, representing a major shift (Bedford and Lidgard 1997). The Immigration Act 1987 removed 'race', culture and national origins as criteria for immigrant selection, although a subsequent moral panic about the numbers of Asian migrants coming to New Zealand in the mid-1990s saw the introduction of more stringent English language requirements (Trlin 1997). The latter were subsequently softened in January 1998 because they were seen as racist and targeting Asian immigrants.

In the context of the USA, Davis has commented that the 'stubbornly binary discourse of American public culture has...yet to register the historical significance of the urban landscape' (2000: 7–8). Much the same could be said of New Zealand. The state has adopted quite fundamentally different policies towards indigenous rights (reparative and redistributive in nature) and the rights of Pacific and Asian migrants (at times racist, at other moments stressing community and individual responsibility for cultural institutions and values). For example, it is increasingly accepted in policy literature that language maintenance helps migrants adapt as well as being a factor in encouraging individual and community pride. However, there are no national policies in New Zealand for dealing with any aspect of immigrant language and culture, with the exception of some Pacific Island communities (Roberts 1997: 85). There is a reference in New Zealand's contemporary immigration policy to social cohesion (Roberts 1997: 87), but this does not extend to the explicit recognition of immigrant community languages. Those who enter the country as refugees, and schools which have significant numbers of non-English-speaking students, receive additional support – but this is in order to help improve English language competency (and other skills). Some support is available to Pacific Island communities for the teaching of Pacific Island languages and culture, but this is modest. If language is going to be maintained, then it is held by government agencies and politicians to be the responsibility of the community (Hunkin-Tuileufuga 2001).

The absence of state policies that directly address the issues of the civic and economic participation of migrants post-arrival, or the needs of culturally-diverse descent communities, has generated a number of tensions in a society where there is a relatively undeveloped conception of nationality and citizenship. The intensified transnational linkages generated by the new migrant communities provide a challenge to the bicultural/indigenous rights policies that have dominated debates concerning the cultural politics of New Zealand. In

the next section, we explore some dimensions of these tensions with specific reference to Pacific peoples.

The transnationalism of Pacific communities

Epeli Hau'ofa, an eminent Tongan sociologist, draws attention to the migratory traditions of Pacific peoples:

... so much of the welfare of ordinary people of Oceania depends on informal movement along ancient routes drawn in bloodlines invisible to the enforcers of the laws of confinement and regulated mobility ... [Pacific peoples] are once again enlarging their world, establishing new resource bases and expanding networks for circulation (1994a: 156).

Since the end of World War II, the nature of the diaspora of Polynesian Pacific peoples has changed significantly. For example, in 1945, there were only 716 people of Samoan descent living in New Zealand, but the numbers effectively doubled in the decade from 1971 (22,198 to 42,453 in 1981) and, with high fertility rates, the Pacific peoples have the highest annual growth rates in New Zealand. A younger demographic profile and high (although declining) fertility rates translate to a growing proportion of the New Zealand population, with an estimated doubling from 6 per cent in 1996 to 12 per cent in 2051 (Ministry of Justice/Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs 2000). Further, the New Zealand-resident populations now constitute a significant proportion of the diaspora, as Table 1 indicates (see also Bedford and Didham 2001). There is also an important distinction to be made between the smaller island nations (Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau), all of whom have special economic and political relationships with New Zealand, and whose citizens are automatically New Zealand citizens, and the larger countries of Samoa and Tonga whose citizens must fulfil certain conditions in order to gain residency in New Zealand.

Table 1 shows the number of people self-identifying as Polynesian peoples in five Pacific countries as well as in New Zealand around the mid-1990s. The totals in New Zealand include people born in this country as well as those born in island Polynesia. The very high proportions of Cook Island Maori, Niueans and

Table 1. *Percentage of Pacific Island Polynesian populations resident in 'homelands' and New Zealand*

	Pacific Island 'homeland'		New Zealand	
	Population	%	Population	%
Samoa	171,000	62.7	101,752	37.3
Tonga	98,100	75.8	31,389	24.2
Cook Islands	20,200	30.1	47,019	69.9
Niue	2,100	10.2	18,477	89.8
Tokelau	1,577	24.3	4,917	75.7
Totals	292,977	59.0	203,554	41.0

Note: These figures are derived from the mid-1990s, specifically the 1996 Census in the case of the New Zealand figures. Other countries with Pacific Island Polynesians, such as Australia and the United States, are not included in this table.

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Justice/Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (2000: 37).

Tokelauans resident in New Zealand reflect long-established special economic and political relationships, including citizenship, that link these islanders closely with New Zealand. In the cases of Tongans and Samoans, there are many islanders resident in the USA (especially in Hawai'i and California). Australia is also home to increasing numbers of Pacific peoples, including many who have migrated across the Tasman Sea from New Zealand.

The centres of these diasporic communities are now more fragmented as village and kin networks now operate across much greater geographical distances. The growing influence, size and economic power of New Zealand-based communities has altered the relationship between 'homeland' and 'overseas' populations (Macpherson 1997). The extensive networks that exist remind communities of their similarities, specifically in terms of common family and village origins and culture, at the same time that the differences and often unequal relations and styles of life are brought into sharp focus. These communities routinely divide social and economic capital across various settings as diverse purposes are served. Such purposes include: educating new generations in New Zealand while maintaining land and cultural obligations in the Pacific; supporting family, village and church to varying degrees in varying sites; and balancing cultural commitments with those required to participate in a globalised metropolitan economy. Transnationalism translates into the significant movement of people and resources across borders, both formal and documented, and informal and undocumented, in order to meet multiple loyalties – to place of residence, culture of origin and to traditional, diasporic and non-Polynesian values and institutions. These are apparent in the circulation of people, capital and ideas, each of which we now examine in turn.

Circulation of people

In the postwar period, the demand for semi- and unskilled labour in New Zealand's expanding urban and industrial economy saw the recruitment of Pacific peoples, as domestic sources were insufficient (Gibson 1983; Macpherson 1997). In the initial stages of migration, the point was to generate financial returns for the origin community, and the returns of wage labour in New Zealand were significantly better than those in island economies (Macpherson 1997: 89). By the 1970s, the migration process involved complete families or the reunification of families, and the New Zealand-based communities began to sustain a broader range of activities and institutions as the demographic profile of the community became more balanced. Kinship, religious and village affiliation were still important, but activities were increasingly focused on a New Zealand location as an investment was made in the infrastructure required to sustain community life in a new location (Spoonley 2001: 85). Macpherson, for example, has pointed out that 'most congregations have built their own churches and halls and have, in the process, often become very close, cohesive, social entities' (1997: 83). These entities have emerged out of the trials of undertaking large, expensive projects with relatively small numbers of people and the pride of succeeding.

By the 1980s, New Zealand's Pacific communities had reached a maturity in terms of their ability to sustain a collective life (see Macpherson 1997). The numbers born and raised in New Zealand began to grow significantly so that, by the late 1990s, two-thirds of the Pacific peoples resident in New Zealand had

been born there. The New Zealand communities also had access to resources such as education, health facilities, paid work and consumer goods in a way that is often limited in their 'homelands' (Macpherson *et al.* 2000). This, combined with the size of the New Zealand-resident communities, altered the nature of diasporic relations. The communities outside the 'homeland' were now demographically significant as well as politically and economically powerful, and emerging in their own right as centres of cultural and communal life (Macpherson *et al.* 2001).

There are important circuits involving both the short-term and sometimes long-term movement of people between New Zealand and the Pacific, and the wider Pacific Rim, most notably Australia and California (Bedford 1992). Levitt (1998: 936) talks of social remittances (i.e. non-monetary) or the social exchanges which occur when migrants or their descendants return to a country of origin to live or visit, when non-migrants visit their migrant family members, and the exchanges that occur through calls, letters, videos and cassettes.

New forms of travel and communications technologies supplement more traditional linkages, and the immediacy of contact – physical in the case of travel, but also with information technologies – has produced real-time linkages over distance that intensify the traffic of networks and alter their nature (Spoonley 2001). Important events in the life of families and communities – major life events such as births, deaths and marriages, the opening of a new church, or hall, cultural competitions – continue to bring diasporic communities physically together at regular intervals. Furthermore, video recordings of these events are shown in 'home' communities and involve these communities, albeit vicariously, in the diasporic community. Temporary or more long-stay moves occur regularly as communities and households decide where best to locate human capital, and return migration to the Pacific allows Pacific peoples to convert even modest New Zealand resources to significant capital assets in 'homelands' (Bedford *et al.* 2001), within the obvious and often substantial constraints that dictate the location of human capital.

Circulation of capital

The circulation of capital constitutes an important defining characteristic of transnational Pacific communities. Following major national disasters such as cyclones in Samoa in the early 1990s, Pacific communities have used their networks to deploy assets, including capital, strategically in different locations, with a particular example provided by remittances.

An important reason for migration from the Pacific to New Zealand was the opportunity it provided of increasing the income available to kin or community, enabling capital to flow within new social circuits within a Pacific 'homeland'. Remittance income has played an important role in island economies that have struggled with declining commodity prices, limited alternative income options, environmental disasters and government policies and institutions which combine elements of traditional (typically gerontocratic) cultural systems of leadership with Western democratic and technocratic aspects (Bedford 2000; Connell 2000).

Remittance flows have become critical in sustaining economies, political elites and cultural systems. It is estimated, for example, that in 1989, remittances provided Tonga with four times the revenue earned through exports and that

they represented about 45 per cent of GDP for the country (Philips 1999: 476). Undeclared flows, which might represent 40 per cent as much again as recorded remittances (Brown 1995), are difficult to estimate, yet are an important element in the circulation of capital. The totals that flow from New Zealand, or other Pacific Rim countries, to the micro-states of the South Pacific, are significant. Bedford (2000), Brown (1998), Connell (2000) and Connell and Brown (1995) contain useful overviews of migration and remittances in the Pacific.

The circulation of capital is supplemented by the circulation of goods, sometimes as part of a system of donating to others, sometimes in a barter system for other goods, and sometimes in exchange for money. The system of labour migration in the 1970s created new and unmet demands for certain goods, for example foods such as taro or coconut milk, in a New Zealand context. Trade in cultural goods, such as the 'fine mats' which are at the centre of Samoan ceremonial exchange, expanded as the New Zealand-resident communities increased in size. By the 1980s, this was epitomised in New Zealand's largest open air market in Otara which fulfilled a growing need for Pacific communities to buy and sell various types of food, traditional textiles, clothing and music that were not generally available elsewhere (see de Bruin and Dupuis 1999, 2000).

It is now routine for containers to circulate between Auckland and Apia, Sydney and Nukualofa, bringing Island-produced goods or foods, to be replaced by second-hand clothing, household appliances or tinned food. Again, the undeclared trade makes the estimation of the value or tonnage of this circulation of goods difficult, but it represents an important point of connection and a set of reciprocal obligations that sustain transnationalism. The undeclared content, from minor amounts of money and goods carried by individuals, through to much larger transfers, makes it difficult for states to monitor or control these flows of capital and goods.

Circulation of ideas

Along with the movement of people and capital around the Pacific has been the flow of ideas, especially with the use of new technologies. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has provided new options for maintaining transnational links and contributing to new (virtual) forms of community (Jones 1998: 5). Indeed, it has reinforced fundamental questions about what exactly constitutes a community (Spoonley 2001: 89). Alan Howard notes in this regard:

The concept of 'community', always somewhat problematic, has increasingly been called into question, in large measure as a result of computer-mediated communication ... The key question is whether the Internet will allow a measure of continuity to what were 'real-world' (physical) communities that have dispersed over the globe. In this case bonds of kinship or friendship precede electronic communication (1999: 160–1).

The role of information technologies has greatly enhanced the opportunities to interact with others, to increase information flows and to negotiate over ideas and values, with obvious implications for transnational communities. But, as Howard points out, information technologies and the linkages that these provide generate interesting conceptual, and pragmatic, questions about the nature of community given the possibility of a virtual ethnicity.

The use of information technologies within the Pacific is uneven, given the very low telephone densities and limited access to the required technology

(Ogden 1999). But there are some interesting examples, not necessarily typical, of computer-mediated communication networks that provide new challenges to cultural orthodoxy and the nature of communities. For example, Taholo Kami, based in New York, has been instrumental in establishing a number of web sites such as the Kava Bowl, Wantok Forum, Bula Forum and the Melanesian Forum, and Al Aiono has been involved with the Polynesian Café. The Kava Bowl, which caters for Tongans, has received up to 600,000 hits per month. The Kava Bowl has fulfilled a number of uses: the chat room is used to identify potential sexual partners as much as maintaining cultural links; there is some interesting information on Tongan cultural events and traditions; and it is used to debate political options, especially in relation to the Kingdom of Tonga.

Information technologies provide important new means for diasporic communities to keep in touch, and Taholo Kami has argued that the economic and social future of the Pacific and of Pacific peoples is tied to the use of the Internet (Spoonley 2001: 90). There are important benefits in connecting with others but there are also significant implications for traditional cultural and social institutions, values and practices. Howard (1999: 161–2) notes that information technology could ‘play a corrosive role in island societies’ or, equally, preserve culture. In the case of the Kava Bowl, Morton discusses the role of the Internet in questioning traditional institutions, noting that it gives the opportunity to discuss broader issues, including those which challenge Tongan social and cultural values and those which would normally be ‘forbidden’ (Morton 1999: 245).

Recently, the political direction of Tonga and its governance has been criticised by new democratic groups, often led by return migrants who have been university-trained in New Zealand or Australia (Hau’ofa 1994b). The response has been to repress such dissent by seeking to control those parts of the media that have publicised this dissent, either through legal writs or imprisonment. But as Morton (1999) points out, no such constraints exist in cyberspace, and the Kava Bowl operates as a forum unhindered by cultural institutions or sanctions. The control mechanisms of Tonga are ineffective against the flow of ideas available via computer-mediated communications, and the endpoint of these developments is still not clear.

There is a tension between using information technologies to network diasporic communities, thereby reinforcing transnational linkages, and the possibility that these same links might erode traditional institutions and beliefs. Alan Howard (1999: 172), who has helped establish a web site for Fiji’s Rotumans (Rotumanet), argues that adequate communication is the key to maintaining a sense of community, and that the Internet ‘may provide the most effective vehicle in the long term’. Howard sees the need to use new technologies to maintain the linkages amongst the diaspora of Pacific peoples, and there is little doubt that the linkages play an increasingly important role in the networking of transnational communities. It helps real-time interaction amongst physically dispersed communities and connects in a culturally inclusive sense those that might have been marginalised. It also democratises discussion about culturally significant issues without relying on the norms, institutions and sanctions which would prevail in traditional cultural processes, thereby subverting or altering cultural dynamics. And it also signals a new era in the way in which diasporic communities interact. The use of computer-mediated communication does not replace local networks so much as supplement them as new flows of infor-

mation, and new ways of understanding the politics of identity, are the subject of internet traffic. What it means to be a Samoan or Tongan, what should be the political direction of the Cook Islands, or deciding how to celebrate a Niuean event, are all discussed in cyberspace.

Do such transnational links fundamentally redefine, or problematise, the nature of community? Without doubt, the circulation of people, capital, goods and ideas all represent important transnational linkages that have contributed to the development of Pacific peoples in their island homes and 'homes abroad'. However, the 1980s and 1990s have also marked an important period of economic adjustment as states have sought to respond to new global forms of capitalist production and consumption, often by radical measures. In the case of Pacific peoples, this restructuring has led to new or enhanced forms of impoverishment.

The economic fragility of transnational communities

At the beginning of this article, we cited John Connell (1997) who has challenged researchers to pay more attention to the political economy of transnationalism and transnational migrants. It would be remiss of us not to return to such issues, albeit briefly. The growing economic difficulties of Pacific microstates, mirrored in Pacific Rim economies, or in those sections of the economy where Pacific peoples are most likely to be located, have been further exposed by problems of governance. The colonially-constructed political institutions of Pacific states have reinforced the gerontocracy of traditional systems of leadership in contrast to the democratic ambitions of post-colonial political movements (Macpherson 1987, 1990).

Economic vulnerability has been accompanied by political fragility and significant challenges to both political and cultural institutions, with conflict apparent in states such as Tonga. Often, those challenging the political and cultural systems and elites are return migrants or those active in diaspora politics. Ideas and documents are easily communicated by transnational communities, as Morton (1999) noted with regard to Tonga above. What has yet to be fully tested is the reaction of the diasporic communities to major economic or political upheaval in homelands, although the 2000 coup in Fiji indicated the power of the Internet in organising opposition and accessing the world's media. Pacific issues and conflict will become the concern of the diaspora given the nature of transnational Pacific communities and the relative sizes of the overseas populations compared with those in the Pacific microstates.

Economic fragility is not confined to island states (Spoonley 2001: 93). Migration from Pacific homelands since World War II was intended to gain access for Pacific peoples to income, education and a future for new generations. But the economies of the Pacific Rim have experienced major transformations with the relocation of employment, deindustrialisation and suburbanisation as a product of a new, global and reinvigorated capitalism (see Waldinger 1997; also Kelsey 1995). There is a spatial and employment mismatch between the location and skills of Pacific peoples and employment in centres such as Auckland. These changes in the labour market and economic production, plus the disinvestment in welfare, have stripped the urban areas where Pacific peoples are located of their absorptive capacity (Waldinger 1997: 2). The new service-based urban

economies have emphasised the ethnic segmentation that has long existed. Saskia Sassen observes that:

Much of what we narrate in the language of immigration and ethnicity I would argue is actually a series of processes having to do with a) the globalisation of economic activity, of cultural activity, of identity formation, and b) the increasingly marked racialisation of labour market segmentation (1997: 3).

Prior to the structural changes in the nature of production in New Zealand during the late 1980s and the 1990s, one-fifth of the workforce worked in the manufacturing sector. By 1999, this had dropped to 16 per cent. In the case of Pacific peoples, in 1985, 42.5 per cent worked in manufacturing but this had fallen to 30.7 per cent by 1999, 'indicating that restructuring has had a much greater impact among this group than among the population at large' (Cook *et al.* 2001: 57). This is reflected in higher unemployment levels (twice that of the general population in 1999), lower median personal income in all age groups, lower academic qualifications, especially in terms of higher qualifications (8 per cent of the total population have degrees compared to 2 per cent for Pacific peoples), and lower home ownership (Cook *et al.* 2001). The profile reflects long-standing socio-economic forms of segmentation that are now intergenerational.

In the face of such impoverishment, Pacific peoples seek to deploy their human and social resources strategically across various locations. One option is to use the new established ethnic niches in the metropolitan sites that revolve around ethnic recruitment and sponsorship. It is possible to gain employment via ethnic networks and kin reciprocity obligations (cf. Waldinger 1997). These are obvious in niches such as hospital laundries, or shift work in factories where there are long-standing arrangements concerning recruitment and management. But there is also a degree of specialisation in areas of contract work such as stone wall construction. Most recently, there is evidence of growing levels of self-employment, often within the context of small businesses employing kin (Cook *et al.* 2001).

To compensate for the skills and location mismatches which occur within urban centres such as Auckland, Pacific communities are using their ethnic networks to access other labour markets beyond the cities in which early settlement was concentrated, notably in Australia and the USA. There is also social mobility between migrant cohorts and subsequent generations, but it is very dependent on the ability to access education and training, especially at a tertiary level (cf. Waldinger 1997: 7; see also Cook *et al.* 2001). However, there are significant numbers of people within Pacific communities who lack the resources, inclination or qualifications to access these options, either for onward migration or domestic channels of upward social mobility.

The strategic use of human resources within these transnational Pacific communities, notably labour and skills, will need to adjust to the changing skill requirements and nature of service economies in the information age, whatever the location. Investment and disinvestment decisions made by households, communities and key organisations (such as churches) may be less influenced by traditional obligations and beliefs and rather more by global and non-ethnic contextual considerations in order to maximise returns and chances. Informal trading which meets the needs of ethnic groups will continue to expand into the Pacific and into centres such as Auckland and Sydney. The question of remit-

tance decay becomes a significant consideration as financial pressure is placed on communities in Pacific Rim locations (Brown *et al.* 1995; Macpherson 1992), and as migrants redefine long-term personal and political goals (Macpherson 1994). However, there is little evidence yet that remittances are declining (Brown 1998).

There are substantial and growing internal pressures which compete with ethnic communal and kin obligations. The communities are becoming more divided; those who are upwardly mobile constitute a significant middle class in contrast to other members of the same community who are impoverished (Spoonley 2001: 95). Significant generational and religious differences also exist. These divisions are not confined to a location such as Auckland, but mirror the transnational nature of these communities.

The nation-state and the transnationalism of Pacific peoples

The developments described above present interesting challenges for the New Zealand state in the twenty-first century, particularly in relation to notions of identity (nationalism), assumptions about loyalty to a particular nation-state and traditional conceptions of citizenship. The creation of new transnational linkages and social/cultural spaces has diminished the significance of borders, and altered the shape of those (national) identities that are contained within boundaries, along with the regulatory frameworks and narratives that underpin such constructions. To conclude, we examine some of the more significant areas of tension for the state in New Zealand.

Firstly, there is the disruption of the formation of a nation-state narrative. For much of New Zealand's modern history of settlement, the transnational identities and linkages that have prevailed have reflected colonial relations; in recent decades these have been transformed, and new post-colonial forms of transnationalism have emerged. The state has adopted a more inclusive and reparative approach towards Maori (biculturalism), but has yet to establish a credible position on transnational or multicultural communities. The binary discourse of the state, both bureaucratic and political (cf. Davis 2000), which privileges Maori and *Pakeha*, has yet to encompass the range of divergent ethnicities and competing claims to rights and resources. Communities of Pacific peoples represent one of the more obvious examples of those who are marginalised by the Maori-*Pakeha* discourse of biculturalism and have yet to negotiate options that sit alongside this in New Zealand society and politics.

Secondly, in the wake of a colonial history and the under-development of an imagined nation, the state has articulated a weak conception of citizenship. The dominance of, and relationship to, Britain has been an important factor in delaying the development of a strong local notion of citizenship, despite being a remote island-state. This is apparent in terms of the expectations about what is required to fulfil the conditions of citizenship. There is little emphasis placed on the need to be citizens *per se* (legal residency provides almost exactly the same benefits as full citizenship) and this 'soft' approach to citizenship has contributed to the development of various forms of transnationalism. The state has sanctioned multiple official identities and loyalties (e.g. dual citizenship, generous provisions in the case of legal residency, joint residency and benefits with other countries, most notably Australia), and this has provided a platform for transnationalism.

Having produced this situation, the state seems bemused as to how to manage transnationalism and the cross-border activity and the multiple, and diverse, loyalties that result. An example is provided by the immigration policies adopted since 1987. The state still 'continues to define, discipline, control and regulate all kinds of populations, whether in movement or residence' (Ong 1999: 15), but in New Zealand, while opening up entry requirements and migration from new source countries, the policies for 'defining', 'disciplining', 'controlling' and 'regulating' immigrants are still very obvious for Pacific peoples. There is almost no attention to the provision of resources or services that would ease the post-arrival problems for Pacific migrants (or others), although this has been changing at least in policy rhetoric since 1999. Some migration flows are encouraged for a period, and then discouraged, with consequences for both host communities and migrant source countries. 'Overstayers', people who are resident in New Zealand without approval and typically, and inaccurately, racialised as 'Pacific Islanders', are offered amnesty at certain points while they face bureaucratic censure and removal at other times. What citizenship means, especially for transnational communities such as Pacific peoples, remains problematic for both historical and contemporary reasons.

Thirdly, technology has contributed to new transnational spaces, and new forms of transnational exchanges and solidarity (Faist 2000: 195) which are simply beyond the repertoire of the state. The use of such technologies in the development of 'virtual ethnicities' (cf. Poster 1998) or 'virtual neighbourhoods' (cf. Davis 2000) links communities in New Zealand with those in Asia and the Pacific. The tension is between the state, which expects local loyalties and participation to prevail, and the growing importance of technologically-mediated and globally-derived identities.

The size and maturation of the Pacific communities in Auckland represents the opportunity for alternative and multiple readings of ethnic identity, new forms of association and new personal and communal biographies. It also means that the Pacific is 'here' – in Auckland and New Zealand – rather than a colonial other 'out there' in either a geographical sense or as a racialised problem within New Zealand civic society. New identity positions have begun to emerge in a New Zealand location, the *fa'a Aukilani* or *fa'a Niu Sila* (the Auckland or New Zealand Samoan 'way' in the sense of cultural traditions) as a variant on a 'traditional' *fa'a Samoa* (Macpherson 1997: 93). Indeed, the notion of Samoanness, itself largely a product of colonialism and migration (Macpherson 1999), is now also a product of the emerging sense of location and politics of identity of its New Zealand context. The same process is apparent, with important variations, amongst other Pacific communities.

These new multiple identities, and the role of information technologies, are seldom acknowledged by the New Zealand state in policies to do with civic participation, educational and economic development, or in encouraging international trade and social networks. To date, the use of virtual networks has helped maintain cultural contact but they have also increasingly been used as a form of resistance and political opposition to the events and nature of origin societies or homelands, rather than in the host metropolitan societies. Pacific democratic movements that have been critical of the exclusive nature of traditional cultural institutions or political corruption have used these technologies and networks to mount campaigns from a distance, as well as offer support locally. Given the economic dislocation, unemployment and restructuring (Con-

nell 1997: 199) that characterise the situation faced by Pacific communities in New Zealand since the 1990s, it is perhaps surprising that the option of using transnational networks and the opportunities provided by information technologies for political mobilisation or resistance in metropolitan settings have yet to be exercised in any major way. The 'globalisation of domestic politics' (Vertovec 2001: 14) is obvious but still limited.

The state in New Zealand has yet to grasp the significance of the transnationalism of Pacific peoples. In part, this reflects the early and yet to be fully realised stages of the transnationalism, especially as a means of political mobilisation and pressure in the New Zealand context. In other respects, it reflects the weakly developed conceptions of nation which have resulted in a degree of openness in both immigration and economic access. That said, the state and its key agents still operate with traditional twentieth-century notions of nationally-bounded institutions and loyalties, and a common core of values and institutions. It provides for some interesting areas of ambiguity and tension.

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Notes

- 1 The indigeneity of Maori has been imagined and politicised in new ways since the 1970s (see Greenland 1991) and is now firmly established as a claim about identity that incorporates special rights.

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