

**TEACHING CULTURE WITH A MODERN VALUABLE:
LESSONS ABOUT MONEY FOR AND FROM TONGAN YOUTH
IN NEW ZEALAND**

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Introduction: Diaspora, Kinship, and Money in the Pacific

FOR MANY SOCIAL SCIENTISTS, diaspora is a phenomenon of late modernity in which economic advancement and security, and specifically earning money, is a central aim of actors (Bertram 2006; Bertram and Watters 1986; Dufoix 2008; Gershon 2007; Lindley 2009). Members of numerous diasporic communities maintain economic connections with their homelands, regardless of whether the diasporas have been established through work, trade, or empire (Clifford 1997; Cohen 2008; Safran 1991). To Pacific anthropologists, diaspora is a phenomenon that is experienced, for the most part, through family (Gershon 2007; Macpherson and Macpherson 2009). Augmenting, financing, and defending kinship constitute “values” in Pacific societies in the sense that these actions represent “conceptions of the desirable” (Kluckhohn 1951). Money is a key valuable ensuring that families can continue to perform according to cultural values. In this article, I seek to illuminate diaspora as a cultural phenomenon-cum-mechanism for apprehending modernity and the challenges that monetary wealth poses. I argue that diaspora can be seen as a social form in which value (of money) and exchange (of gifts) articulate with kinship (and obligation) to produce new models for intergenerational interaction within families. Using a case study of interactions within a transnational Tongan family, I analyze the

reasons why, even within one kin group, people tend to use money in a range of different ways, while citing a common aim: to uphold Tongan values.

For anthropologists who study Polynesian diasporas, and in particular Tongan diasporic experiences, the sending of remittances has been a most-studied money-sharing practice (e.g., Bertram 2006; Brown and Connell 1993; Lee 2004, 2007, 2009; Small 1997). Indeed, contemporary diasporic Tongans cite the need for money as the main reason that they, and thousands before them, chose to embark on journeys from homeland to foreign locations, a process that has been going on steadily for the better part of a century. These journeys and resettlements are now a common cultural strategy for Tongan families who want to earn the cash that will afford them the chance to live a modern lifestyle. Tongans I've spoken with have told me that money is not an end in itself; rather, it is a means to buy happiness and security, to pay for food and education, to make cash gifts to their churches, and so on. Nor do Tongans necessarily think of money in the same way that Westerners do, because they desire it for different uses and assign it different meanings.

There is a widespread assumption among Tongans that money earned in diaspora is mostly used for remittances, based on family responsibility and relationships of gratitude. However, I depart from analyzing how such transactions create, express, and sustain relationships between migrants and their kin in Pacific homelands and, instead, attend to the ways in which Tongans living in the diaspora may use money to modify, even temporarily, relationships with other transnational kin. With specific reference to Tongans in New Zealand, I investigate one of the ways in which the definition of kin groups may be shifting with changing uses of money as a representation of Tongan values.

To set the stage for understanding the role that money plays in diasporic relationships, it is necessary to go beyond discussions of remittances as material value to consider relationships of value among people whose role it has been to provide remittances, that is, expatriate Pacific Islanders. As Anna Lindley stated in a recent article, more research is needed on remittances from the diasporic perspective (2009). Nonremittance uses of money should also be studied, especially because analysts have been predicting a decline in remittances with successive generations of emigrants from Pacific homelands (Brown 1997; Brown and Foster 1995; Lee 2004, 2007, 2009). Emigrants decrease their contributions to remittances for a host of reasons, such as declining earnings or increasing costs of daily life, as well as decreasing trust that the remittance monies are being used in ways that senders would define as responsible (Lindley 2009). One approach to study

changing priorities for the allocation of money in diaspora, explored later in this essay, is to examine ways in which income earners in diasporic families use money to teach children about the boundaries of family and how these boundaries are marked with acts of gift giving.

In what is now considered traditional Tongan gift giving, women present indigenous forms of wealth, the highest ranking of which are *koloa*, textiles made solely by women. Men present traditional wealth in the form of *ngāue*, which comprises long yams and other agricultural produce, pigs, and *kava* roots. People present gifts to one another and to members of other kin groups at life-passage ceremonies such as funerals, weddings, christenings, and key birthdays such as the first, sixteenth, and twenty-first. Especially in diaspora, where *koloa* making takes place at rates well below those in the homeland, women put much time and energy into obtaining, sorting, and arranging *koloa* for gift exchange. The role of women in such exchanges constitutes what Micaela di Leonardo has called the “work of kinship.” Such work includes “the mental or administrative labor of the creation and maintenance of fictive kin ties, decisions to intensify or neglect ties, and the responsibility for monitoring and taking part in mass media and folk discourse concerning family and kinship” (di Leonardo 1984: 194–95). Men in diaspora typically purchase frozen yams and meat to give as *ngāue*, because they do not own land to grow food or raise their own animals, or because they are employed in urban environments. Both men and women contribute cash, which is highly desired as a gift, toward exchanges.

Money that is neither remitted to the homeland nor spent, saved, or invested in diaspora is often used to demonstrate a family’s commitment to living by the Tongan principle of *fētokoni’aki* (helping one another). Impromptu gifts of small amounts of money, which are often referred to as a *ki’i me’a’ofa* (small gifts), are presented to other Tongans within one’s community or within one’s family. Such small gifts bridge the tensions between obligatory gifts and unsolicited ones; between traditional wealth and money; between doing the work of kinship and following individualized, modern life paths; and between what has become traditional Tongan Christianity and new forms of worship. These tensions come to the fore now more than ever because, with increased global movement, Tongan kinship relationships are strongly influenced by the shifting geopolitics of value in Tongan culture. By “geopolitics” I mean the specific nature of power between people whose relationship is significantly defined by the geography of the place or places they inhabit at a given time. In this article, I seek to answer these questions: How does the diaspora affect kin-based exchange? How are definitions of kinship shifting among Tongans whose

kāinga (extended families) are now rooted in the diaspora? What purposes of kinship, as both a primordial bond and a future concern, are served by narrower definitions of kin being applied when delineating to whom one is obligated to give money?

For Pacific people, traveling is part of an ancient mechanism for establishing and maintaining social connections, the most salient of which is kinship. Pacific Islanders have long traveled for warfare, exploration, and trade; today they travel to join far-flung members of their kin groups, while maintaining a different sort of connection to their families in the homeland. Building on Epeli Hau'ofa's famous thesis of the connections between Pacific nations being embodied in the ocean, which he refers to as "our sea of islands" (1993), Ilana Gershon referred to contemporary intra-Pacific connections as a "sea of families" (2007, 474).

How Polynesian families maintain a face of calm and happy daily life while also navigating the waters between Western-style modernity and their own notions of "tradition" is the subject of several recent anthropological studies especially, but not limited to, examinations of Tongans (Besnier 2009; James 2002); Samoans (Macpherson and Macpherson 2010; O'Meara 1990; Shankman 1993); and other Polynesian ethnic groups, many of whose members form vibrant diasporic communities in New Zealand (Spoonley 2001). My goal in this account is to demonstrate that traditional Tongan cultural values continue to be maintained by those living in diaspora, if in circumscribed ways, and even though there is a shift in the ways roles are manifested in families.

Tongan Diaspora, Wealth, and Remittances

Money was introduced to Tonga with Western contact and Christianity in the early 1800s. Prior to that time, Tongans had no ubiquitous token of value. Their wealth system was based on the circulation of valuables in the form of food, handmade textiles, scented coconut oils, and carved wooden objects such as headrests. Such items were exchanged according to principles of reciprocity—exchanges were recorded and gifts presented at life-crisis events; they were reciprocated with equivalent kinds and amounts of valuables. Yet none of these constituted a token of value. Money quickly became a link in the circulation of valuables, as it could be widely exchanged and was demanded by churches, government, and family members for a wide variety of purposes, such as obtaining food and clothing, paying taxes, making traditional compensation payments and church donations, and seeking God's blessings. The burden of meeting such financial obligations meant that money was rarely saved and often gifted.

The economic survival of Pacific families, communities, and even whole islands has become largely dependent on the labor of emigrants. But although sending remittances is a common cultural feature of first-generation immigrant life, the level of remittances from the second generation appears to be less than from the first (Lee 2006). One reason for the decline may be that members of the second generation share fewer personal ties and memories of growing up in the islands (Lee 2006). But even if they remit less, they are arguably no less entangled in webs of kin-based obligations to those in the home islands. These include paying for aspects of modern life such as imported luxury foods, transportation, electricity and phone bills; funding rituals such as rites of passage ceremonies; and shouldering routine kin-based responsibilities such as school fees or church donations.

How people assign meaning to forms and uses of money in their societies is an important aspect of expressing identity. Scholars of Melanesia have presented analyses in which local money and Western money are exchanged; these analyses highlight the uniqueness of Pacific modernities (see Toren 1989; Robbins and Akin 1999; LiPuma 2001). Their work suggests that, among other things, the notions of tradition applied when using or eschewing cash as an exchange valuable warrant deeper examination. As Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch pointed out two decades ago, “What money means is not only situationally defined but also constantly re-negotiated” (1989, 23). The contexts for these renegotiations are far from arbitrary; they are linked with people’s values, social roles, and other realms in which things have meaning or value. Thus, a discussion of money in diasporic contexts is about the intersection of how people think about what they value and the specific ways in which they put cultural values into practice. As David Graeber pointed out, what one values bears heavily on how things are treated in an act of economic exchange. He related “values” in the sociological sense—that is, “[shared] conceptions of what is ultimately good, proper, or desirable in human life”—to “value in the economic sense,” or “the degree to which objects are desired, particularly, as measured by how much others are willing to give up to get them” (Graeber 2001, 1).

Analyses of the Polynesian diaspora must encompass what Polynesians do with money while they are abroad—not least because the populations of the home islands are now, in many cases, smaller than the populations living in diaspora. Samoans, Tongans, Tuvaluans, Niueans, Rotumans, and Tokelauans are but a few of the Pacific peoples whose overseas numbers now exceed their homeland populations. Another reason for including the study of money in the examination of diaspora is that the value of money today articulates with the value of traditional wealth in virtually all Pacific societies, both in the home islands and abroad.

The particular form of gifts is also changing because of the political economy of diasporic communities. When the first waves of commoner Tongans emigrated, *koloa* was only being made in the homeland, partly because the necessary raw materials were unavailable in the diaspora (Addo 2007). But in the last two decades, diasporic Tongan women have introduced hybrid versions of *koloa* that have been accepted into traditional systems of exchange and categories of wealth. One of these is *ngatu pepa*, a textile devoid of any bark content that women create using processes identical to those involved in producing traditional barkcloth and that they also gift like barkcloth (Addo 2007). Homeland-based Tongans also send large amounts of *koloa* abroad, but, as the amount of *koloa* in the diaspora increases, some emigrants are in a position to send barkcloth and fine mats back to the homeland.

Tongans have told me that they experience a constant need for money and that to get it many will *kole* (request) it from relatives; take out high-interest loans (see Addo and Besnier 2008); or sell *koloa*. They also express concern that money is preferred to, and is replacing, traditional valuables. Their reactions suggest that an analysis of the role of money has to take into consideration emotions such as anxiety about how to live in the modern world without losing their traditions (Addo 2009; Addo and Besnier 2008; Brison 2001; Fajans 1983). Some elderly, first-generation Tongan emigrants fear that when everything, including traditional valuables, can only be bought, it will mean that the diasporic community has lost touch with its traditions. It would also indicate a restructuring of power relationships because, although elders and highly ranked people held power in the traditional system, those with access to money, including younger people who perform wage labor, would have greater access to both modern and traditional wealth.

However, money's value does not preclude the need for or replace traditional valuables. Over many generations, Tongan families have continued to exchange them while adjusting to the availability and use of cash. Further, in the homeland and the diaspora, people effectively store some of their earnings by buying and stocking up on *koloa*. The mutual convertibility of *koloa* and cash affords Tongans a way to gather the specific resources they need to meet their kin-based obligations. Earning money in the diaspora is a way to increase cash wealth, but cash may preferentially be converted to *koloa*. Money can be lost, become subject to *kole* (requests) from relatives, or be gifted to others when a family need arises. If money is quickly converted into material valuables like *koloa*, airline tickets, and consumer goods, it can be used over a longer period of time.¹ Thus, the Tongan diaspora deserves to be analyzed with regard to how the economic value of

cash articulates with cultural values—the attitudes and beliefs that Tongans say guide them to do *anga faka-Tonga*, that is, to live in “the Tongan way.”

Among diasporic Tongans, *anga faka-Tonga* is considered the antithesis of *anga faka-Palangi* (the Western way). The latter is epitomized by people hoarding money for themselves rather than seeing to the needs of their extended family. Tongans harbor a learned anxiety in the face of competing demands—to appear competent in Western contexts without being considered *fie Palangi* (wanting to be Western) or unwilling to adhere to *anga faka-Tonga*. This anxiety is most evident in those who have well-paying jobs and, thus, who are expected to uphold the pride of the kin group by furnishing their dependents with money for daily life and ritual exchanges. They may also be called on to remit money not only to relatives in the homeland but also to family members in other parts of the diaspora who request assistance.

Tongans give up large amounts of money to buy traditional wealth, most of which is then gifted away, trusting that they will receive equivalent amounts and forms of valuables in future reciprocations. However, people also give up large amounts of money over the course of a lifetime in the form of small cash gifts. As in other indigenous communities trying to manage the contradictions between their cultural values and the values of late capitalism, one of the purposes of such gifting is to reinforce the Tongan value of mutual help in places outside the homeland by exploiting the multiple levels of the interchangeable nature of money (Cattellino 2009).

Tongans say that family—both extended and nuclear—is one of their highest values (Fitisemanu et al. 2002). Family is a socially constructed system for categorizing people along lines of biological descent and social affinity. Those who constitute family are a group of people whose relationships to one another form a particular structure for social experience that is tied to growth, maturation, and marriage, as well as notions of descent and inheritance. Experientially, family can be defined as the people with whom one shares one’s valuables. The high value of family as a concept and as an experience in peoples’ lives is apparent in Tongans’ continued efforts to do things that bring respect and status to their families. These efforts include the exchange of gifts as well as the contributions of time, money, and the support needed to organize ceremonial events at which exchanges take place. Money is the primary form of value that diasporic families exchange today to ensure that they can feed their families, educate their children, contribute to ceremonial occasions that are the duty of the kin group, and make the regular church donations that remain an essential part

of being a Tongan Christian in the “traditional” way. Insofar as money is an expendable valuable that Tongans use to relate to one another, money is a Tongan valuable. The relationships in which money is produced, circulated, and consumed are important ones in Tongan culture, and they constitute the social world of the Tongan diaspora.

Tongan Families, Gifts, and Money

In both the Tongan diaspora and the homeland, the importance of family is reinforced by the values of *’ofa* (love), *fētokoni’aki* (mutual help), and *faka’apa’apa* (respect). All of these are learned in the context of family socialization, and all are vital principles for interacting with family members across prescribed distances of age, rank, and gender (Funaki and Funaki 2002). Thus, maintaining that which is of greatest value—the notion and experience of family—requires Tongans to maintain a socially legitimate context in which to realize and enjoy other things of value. In Tongan culture, as in all cultures, there are rules about how and when it is appropriate to keep, gift, receive, and reciprocate money.

Among Tongans, there are almost no transactions in which money is unsuitable as a token of value or as a gift. There are also certain kinds of transactions for which money is particularly appropriate. These include ex-student associations’ donations to their old high schools in Tonga. Members of an ex-student association meet at a specific venue, usually in the diaspora, to raise these funds. Their contributions include making time to practice, perfect, and perform solo and group dances at fund-raising events, as well as the money that they “earn” from these performances. Audiences—usually consisting of other ex-students and their families—reward the dancers for a fine performance with gifts of cash known as *pale*, which are pooled and donated to benefit the school or to fund the activities of the ex-student association. Whether or not graduates have relatives currently attending the school in Tonga, they gain status as donors, and if they can see, or get news of, the material effects of their donations in improved infrastructures, they are further encouraged to keep giving.

Another form of transaction in which only cash is gifted is *misinale*, the regular monetary donations that members make to their Christian congregations in the homeland or abroad. The rewards from making such gifts include blessings from God and the knowledge that one has helped the church to continue its spiritual work in a specific Tongan community.

Church donations are cultural obligations, but they are also sources of competition between kin groups who belong to the same congregation. The amount of each donation is publicly announced, and people freely discuss

the sizes of gifts that their kin groups and others presented at an event. Families donate several times a year, making the burden on cash-earning members substantial and placing pressure on *kāinga* who may not have given as much to give more at the next event. Even though people are asked to give only what they can, the average gift per nuclear family at one particular Methodist church serving Tongans in Auckland is between NZ\$1,500 and NZ\$2,000 per year. I have met several Tongans who have drifted away from regular worship at Methodist churches where their *kāinga* have worshipped for generations. Instead, they now attend mainstream Methodist churches or have converted to Mormonism or other denominations. They tell me they have done so to avoid social pressure to gift ever-increasing sums of money during *misinale* time.

Such larger cash gifts are said to constitute *kavenga* (obligation, in the sense of both duty and burden), and the practice of presenting them is cited among the quintessential symbols of Tongan tradition. When gifts are given at ceremonial occasions to commemorate life-passage moments, they usually constitute a combination of valuables (food, *koloa*, and money). A woman in the receiving family usually makes a note of what and how much is gifted and by whom so that an even reciprocation can be made. Funerals are especially important in this regard, because they represent the last moments of a person's life with his or her kin, and the obligation to attend the event, to help with arrangements, and to gift both cash and traditional valuables is very strong. On such occasions, money is the only form of gift that is not normally reciprocated right after the event. Food is immediately reciprocated, usually as part of a redistribution of leftovers from the feast used to celebrate the life-crisis occasion. When the gifting family celebrates a rite of passage event of its own it will receive, from the families it gifted to in previous events, approximately equal amounts of cash. This can sometimes be on the order of hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Such gifting is considered the duty (*fatongia*) of families to one another and the members of each family to their respective *kāinga*.

In the context of *kavenga*, money is treated like a traditional valuable: it is accumulated and gifted in large amounts that are publicly acknowledged by announcements or by writing on the envelope in which the cash gift is presented. Cultural values are actively taught to and reinforced for second- and third-generation members of diasporic communities by openly displaying key behaviors such as gifting one's valuables (including money), thus showing *ʻofa*, which can be defined as love, concern, respect, good will, and sincerity (Kavaliku 1977). These behaviors put into practice the values of mutual help, respect, and empathy (*feʻongoʻiʻaki*), and thus perform *tauhi vā* (nurturing the social relationships between people; see Kaʻili 2005).

Younger generations learn the lessons of culture when they witness elders giving large gifts at kavenga, including presenting “large gifts” to fulfill their duty to support their families’ endeavors to help others and to distinguish themselves in the community. It is optimal to use traditional wealth for such gifts, but the form of the valuables being exchanged is not static. Even in Tonga, gifted food items are no longer limited to pig meat and long yams but also include frozen yams and tinned meats, as well as bottled soft drinks. Adult emigrants are just as likely to use cash as traditional wealth to teach younger Tongans important cultural principles such as putting oneself after others by gifting valuables, redistributing gifts received, and always sharing one’s food. On a daily basis they balance the demands of cultural pride and material need as they fulfill their dual responsibilities to teach a culture of selflessness to their children while making monetary ends meet.

One kind of gift that might appear to contradict the value of putting kin before oneself and of using all of one’s resources to do so is a cash offering referred to as a “small gift,” or *ki’i me’a’ofa*. There is a qualitative difference between large gifts and small gifts along the lines of *fatongia*: small gifts are considered voluntary, and there is no obligation to reciprocate them. When people give small gifts, they should not expect counter-gifts. Because *ki’i me’a’ofa* are not considered obligatory and, therefore, not a form of duty, there is no strict accounting of them. However, there is a tacit obligation to recognize the givers through a process of generalized reciprocity.

Where *ki’i me’a’ofa* are concerned, neither the form nor the timing of reciprocation is prescribed. No one is obligated to give another person a *ki’i me’a’ofa*. Rather than a ceremonial practice, giving such “small gifts” is considered to stem from an emotional moment of *loto mafana*—a moment of “warm-heartedness” when one may be moved to recognize the value of a social relationship, or to feel empathy for another, by performing an act of generosity. Tongan youth learn the value of being emotionally in tune with the needs of others by periodically witnessing how elders channel their “warmth of heart” feelings. The presentation of small gifts is not obligatory but does serve to teach and to reinforce culture.

It is becoming increasingly important for adult emigrants to support kin, especially elderly kin, by providing them with money for expenses. Such acts come under the umbrella of *anga faka-Tonga*. A child may notice her mother skipping the payment of one month’s electricity or telephone bill to finance her grandmother’s church expenses, and the child may infer from this that religious obligations trump all others. According to many second-generation members of Tongan communities in Auckland, such an example is a skewed conception of cultural obligation; they feel it is more

important to teach children to use money for education and to provide food for the *fāmili* (close kin). Yet church participation is integral to daily life because it provides an anchor for faith as well as a physical site for meeting as a community in diaspora. Big gifts for kavenga (life-crisis ceremonies such as birthdays and funerals) are also occasions for enacting identity. How diasporic families finance so-called traditional obligations while covering daily life expenses is the topic of the next section.

Traditional Expectations and Shifting Obligations: Financing Family Pride

In a Tongan family I grew to know well in Auckland, two middle-aged sisters named Sina and ‘Ana support their “mother,” Kalo, an elderly spinster who raised them. Biologically, Sina and ‘Ana are Kalo’s nieces: Kalo had adopted them from her younger sister and raised them since they were under the age of ten, following Tongan custom and a widespread practice in the Pacific of kin adopting, raising, and being recognized as the “parents” of children (see also Rauchholz 2012 [this issue]). Sina regularly gives Kalo money to supplement her small pension so that Kalo can meet her daily expenses—rent, electricity and phone bills, food, and other incidentals of daily life. ‘Ana tends to give Kalo money to finance her other expenditures, such as the church donations that she makes four times per year and the gifts of cash, koloa, and ritual food that she presents along with her annual gift of a sermon.

From Kalo’s perspective, the younger women are simply fulfilling their duty to help her to fulfill her *fatongia* to her church, but the younger women have a somewhat different interpretation of their agency in making these gifts possible. ‘Ana told me: “I give Kalo a certain amount every month for her to pay for whatever she needs. This is over and above her pension money. I know she uses a lot of it for her church things [that is, donations], but I can’t stop her [from giving her money to the church]. I used to try to fight her about it because, to me, she was wasting money. But now, I just want her to have enough money to pay for the things she wants, rather than her not paying her electricity bill so that she can give the money to the church. . . . I just want her to be happy.”

‘Ana also said that she wanted to help Kalo avoid feeling embarrassment around other elderly people in her congregation resulting from lack of money. The money ‘Ana gives to Kalo allows them to cooperatively realize their affective ties as kinswomen: when Kalo can make the family name proud, then her “daughter” has realized the value of money beyond its material exchange value. As income-earners, ‘Ana and Sina are highly

regarded for the way they fulfill their roles vis-à-vis Kalo as well as their biological mother, whom they also help to support. Little consideration is given for the level of the younger women's earnings or how much money they have available to give after meeting their basic expenses.

By giving money to Kalo and her sister, the younger women also partially avoid the *kole* (requests) they may receive from other members of the family. It is interesting that 'Ana, who was a housewife when her children were younger and now works in a relatively high-paying, white-collar job in the New Zealand Customs Department, has never sent money to relatives in Tonga. She said that her family responsibilities in New Zealand are too demanding and that her affective ties with kin in Tonga are "not as tight." For 'Ana, people in Tonga are *kāinga*, not *fāмили* in the sense of being close-knit. Members of this Auckland-based Tongan *fāмили* include Kalo, Kalo's four surviving sisters, and their children and grandchildren. They share the work of paying one another's bills, meeting everyday expenses, and providing whatever church donations members of the elderly generation deem important to make in order to bring blessings to the family and uphold its good name in the Tongan community and in their Methodist congregation.

Financing various everyday, church, and ceremonial costs are some of the basic expectations that first-generation Tongan New Zealanders have for younger members of their families. Throughout the world, an implicit agreement between Tongan parents and children entails children's obligations to support or care for their parents once the children are economically able or the parents are too old to do so themselves. Parents expect that their children will provide for their needs and desires, while also supporting grandchildren and teaching them *anga faka-Tonga*. Sometimes, parents also incur obligations with relatives in Tonga and expect their children—members of the "one-point-five" and second generations in diaspora—to finance these obligations through remittances.² However, like 'Ana, members of these younger generations may have a weaker allegiance to homeland relatives and may resist inheriting their parents' obligations to people located at far reaches of the globally dispersed communities of Tongans—what Heather Young Leslie (2004, 392), following Arjun Appadurai (1996, 3), refers to as the Tongan ethnoscape.

A Word on Expectations

Diasporic experiences, family obligations, and cultural values all have in common the fact that they are about people's expectations. People embark on diasporic projects to augment earnings, to enable contributions to larger

projects like institutional donations, and to “pursue dreams” that cost more money to achieve than local sources of wealth can provide.³ People also pursue their dreams because they have learned—from families, governments, the media, their cultures—that it is reasonable to expect support for pursuing them. Thus, as Tongans are taught to expect kin to provide assistance for one another in the pursuit of their dreams, the sending of remittances has been construed as a duty and the receipt of remittances as a right. Based on the cultural assumption that those with greater wealth and resources should support those with less, sending remittances from diaspora has entered the realm of expectations that must be fulfilled, at the risk of loss of face for the wider kin group, or *kāinga*. However, as some Tongans have told me, the efforts needed to fulfill this obligation often result in their failing to meet expenses incurred by their *fāмили* in diaspora—buying food, paying bills, or putting some money aside for the sudden occurrence of *fatongia*, such as a funeral.

Nevertheless, it remains important for those living in diaspora to demonstrate the cultural principles of mutual help and empathy. If a person phones (or possibly texts) Tonga and learns that someone in their extended family is in need, they know that the expectation is that they send money. Commonly, remittances are required for paying school fees and household bills, donating lump sums of cash to church, covering the cost of extra medicines, and supplementing the rising cost of food in the homeland. Phone calls from Tonga often result in the emigrant receiving a request, or *kole*, for loans or outright gifts of money. Dealing with *kole* is a major source of anxiety about shame for those living abroad. They are anxious about losing face among relatives or others in the community, and to meet the request they often siphon off money, which is always in limited supply, from some other impending expense or responsibility (Addo and Besnier 2008). Thus, as other analyses of remittances suggest, diasporic individuals sometimes screen phone calls so that they do not have to respond to requests for money from relatives in the homeland (Gershon 2001; Lindley 2009). With the rising cost of living in New Zealand, diasporic Tongans have to spend increasing proportions of their earnings on meeting the needs of members of their *fāмили* who share their households. Some of them opt to decrease or forestall remittance payments, or they find ways to avoid acknowledging requests from their extended kin in the homeland.

Belonging to a church congregation, or *kāinga lotu* (literally, “church family”), comes with certain obligations to uphold the name of the family. During my fieldwork I often heard the phrase, “*Ko ‘e kāinga ‘e kau lotu,*” meaning, “Those we pray with are family.” However, some diasporic

Tongans restrict their recognition of this notion of *kāinga* by limiting their gifting of money to the church and reframing it as money shared within the *fāмили*. Gifting to church, while considered a duty, is a clear example of an introduced tradition that is having detrimental effects on the ability of some *fāмили* to meet the costs of their daily needs. Keeping up with demands to support the church donations of both their diasporic and homeland relatives has caused some Tongans to reconsider which of their cultural duties are most in line with long-standing principles of Tongan culture.⁴ As one Tongan in New Zealand told me, “Not one of our cultural principles means that we must put the church ahead of our *fāмили*: not ‘ofa, not *faka’apa’apa*, not even *lotu* (church attendance). These [principles] remind us to put our family before ourselves, but not the church before our *fāмили*. . . . How can we even take our *fāмили* to church if they are not well fed and the bills not paid for?”

Similar sentiments have been recorded by other researchers, such as Helen Lee, who stated: “Concern is frequently expressed about the impact of [high levels of church donations] on children whose parents are committing a great deal of time and money to the church, sometimes leaving children inadequately supervised and the family with little disposable income” (2003, 43). All of this suggests a growing discourse that seemingly puts responsibilities to *fāмили* above those that diasporic Tongans have to their extended kin in the homeland, which are in turn above obligations to *kāinga lotu*.

Family, *Kāinga*, *Fāмили*: A Word on Words

There is some precedent for the increasing use of the term *fāмили* rather than *kāinga* in the perception of Tongan kin groups. *Fāмили*, while “not the nuclear family touted by the missionaries” (Gailey 1987, 260), is a more circumscribed notion than *kāinga*. As Christine Ward Gailey stated, the idea that the *fāмили* may be assuming more of the responsibilities than the *kāinga* (bilateral extended family group) is a notion that warrants further investigation (1987, 260). This notion is supported by a similar trend among diasporic Pacific Islanders generally. According to one recent study that included interviews with Samoans, Tongans, I-Kiribati, and Fijians in Hawai‘i, Pacific Islanders are likely to emphasize the nuclear family when asked for a definition of family (Fitisemanu et al. 2002). Just as Gershon noted for Samoans in Auckland (2001), I have observed that, among diasporic Tongans, *fāмили* is the site of teaching culture and discipline. Among diasporic Tongans, day-to-day value orientations—“assumptions about the ends and purposes of human existence” or “what human beings have a right

to expect from each other and the gods [and] about what constitutes fulfillment and frustration” (Kluckhohn 1949, 358)—may be shifting from expecting extended family to meet needs to relying more on nuclear family units. For example, when asked about “actual decision-making, discipline, and expressions of love,” Tongan respondents emphasized their nuclear families (Fitiseanu et al. 2002, 271).

Tongan parents, whose role it is to teach lessons about how to comport oneself in “the Tongan way,” pass on this propensity for concern about money, along with daily strategies for saving or borrowing money or otherwise meeting financial obligations. It is important to think of small and spontaneous cash gifts as embodiments of kinship obligation. Since Marcel Mauss (1925) wrote in the early 1920s about gifts as a triad of obligations—the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to reciprocate—analysts have been attempting to tease apart the differences between the motivations behind giving gifts out of gratitude versus those given out of sense of obligation (Bloch 1999; Graeber 2001; Rupp 2003). However, as Marshall Sahlins articulated, the way, timing, and form of the reciprocation fit into several different frameworks: balanced, generalized, and negative reciprocity (1972). Practices of the modern Tongan family provide clear examples wherein recipients of gifts are obligated to engage in more or less balanced reciprocity over a series of ongoing life-crisis ceremonies in their community; they engage in generalized reciprocity with kin and other community members with whom they exchange small gifts; and they participate in negative reciprocity with the church, from whom they receive few material gifts while presumably receiving much in terms of spiritual gifts.

Within Tongan kin groups, members of the first generation of immigrants are attributed with having established the practice of sending remittances to relatives in Tonga after their initial emigration. They also often cling to older practices of gifting money across *kāinga toto* (blood kin) and *kāinga lotu*. Christine Ward Gailey reported on a 1970s and 1980s trend of emigrant couples leaving their children with, or sending their children to, female relatives in Tonga while the parents worked long hours in New Zealand and Australia (1992). With two generations of New Zealand-born Tongans now fully ensconced in New Zealand’s society and economy, parents rely less on homeland relatives to help care for, and teach cultural lessons to, their children. Today, Tongan youth whose parents live in diaspora are also living in diaspora.

As parents experience increasing anxiety about rising costs of living abroad, they may also be encountering a value shift from standards set by members of previous generations of migrants from Tonga, including their

parents and grandparents. When first-generation immigrants arrive in New Zealand, they almost invariably meet obligations to remit cash to their kin in the homeland. To them, helping members of the wider *kāinga* is a duty of the utmost importance. They also become beholden to *kāinga lotu* in the diaspora, for these are normally the people who help them “settle into” the new country, connecting them with jobs, advising them about homes to rent, schools for their children, and praying for the newly arrived family’s safe establishment in their new community. Members of *kāinga lotu* are thus also often included in the broader notion of *kāinga*.

My research reveals that more one-point-five and second-generation Tongan migrants, now in their 30s and 40s, strategically gift money to reconstruct the boundaries of the group who constitute *kāinga*, and more importantly, to define who belongs to the *fāмили*. These people are now parents in their own right and are attempting to teach behaviors different from those taught to them by their parents. Rather than giving priority to remitting money to their relatives at home, these middle-aged Tongans, whose burden it is to support their immediate families, choose to limit gifting outside their nuclear families to close kin. At ceremonial occasions, wherein people have the obligation to present large gifts of cash, textiles, food, and kava, these same heads of *fāмили* nevertheless spare few resources to make the family look good in front of the Tongan community. The family as an institution is shown to be a fluid category of allegiance and experience, as reflected in their use of the both traditional and modern valuables.

Sita and the Pale: A Case Study on Kinship and Cash

Kalo also experiences the value of being a member of her church through the blessings she believes she receives when she publicly gifts prayers and a sermon to her *kāinga lotu* at the turn of the New Year. As an elderly woman who is renowned in her congregation for her generosity to pastors and to her local congregation, Kalo has been giving this gift for several years now, always during what is called *Uike Lotu*. This is a very important week for Tongan Methodists, as they open their year together, set spiritual goals, pray, and eat together. Known as a *failotu* (sermon, or prayer-giving), the presentation of a composite gift of cash, cloth, food, and a sermon is extremely prestigious, and only those who have demonstrated both spiritual commitment and competence in navigating the verses of the Bible volunteer their time and material gifts in this way.

During *Uike Lotu*, Methodist Tongan congregants attend church at least twice a day, beginning with a prayer at daybreak and ending with an

after-dinner service, in accordance with how they remembered it being observed during their younger days in Tonga. According to this model in Tonga, congregants eat together, ideally in a feast-like context, seated at long tables laden with island-related foods, the tastes and smells of which create a sensory experience of identity (see also Carucci 2012 [this issue]; Howard and Rensel 2012 [this issue]; Kuehling 2012 [this issue]). Eating communally as a congregation is one of the traditions associated with marking the New Year. Members of a *kāinga* who belong to the same congregation will usually attend church together during this week. In New Zealand, it is not uncommon for families to retire to the home of one nuclear family branch of the *kāinga* to share a large meal. Indeed, the practice of feasting after each church service—two per day for the entire first week of the year—is changing into these smaller and more intimate, but equally highly anticipated, events. Food, after all, is a material locus of Tongan fellowship.

The event I want to relate took place while members of Kalo's *kāinga* *toto* were eating and relaxing together after an important Uike Lotu church service. In Kalo's home were two of her four surviving sisters, their children and grandchildren.⁵ The event illuminates how being in diaspora affects the way a Tongan family might articulate their cultural values using gifts of cash, while also (re)defining the boundaries of their smaller, *fāмили* kin group. Small gifts of money circulate within a Tongan *fāмили*, against a background of larger gifts of cash between people in the wider *kāinga*. With some of the same actors involved in multiple modalities of kin-based exchange, different aims can be accomplished and different cultural values reinforced. I provide an excerpt from my field notes:

After a Uike Lotu church service in early 2008, one at which Kalo performed a service known as a *failotu*, she hosted “a feed” at her small apartment that adjoined the church grounds. Present were Kalo's younger sister Linitā, Linitā's three daughters and their children, Kalo and Linitā's nephew Etuate, and his wife Vea with their three children. Their youngest child was named Noa, short for Talanoa, after Etuate's mother who had died the year before; her nickname was “Noa leka,” or little Talanoa. The “feast” comprised a homemade shrimp salad, boiled root crops, two buckets of fried chicken, coleslaw, mashed potatoes from KFC, cakes, and various liter bottles of sugary soft drinks. After blessing the meal, Kalo stood and offered words of thanks to us for being there to support her and she also praised God for the health of her *fāмили* who were gathered around her.

Most people are famished after a long church service, which usually closely follows the hard work of preparing the clothes for oneself and one's children and getting everyone to church on time. The meal at Kalo's house was also the stage for acts of intrakin group pride, which reveals itself as a value through the exchange of gifts during an informal dance performance by one of the children after the meal. It was a traditional Tongan dance by the youngest member of the family, little Sita, a girl of about four years of age.

After we had eaten, Sita stood in the middle of Kalo's small, crowded living room and began to tempt us with a performance of a *tau'olunga* solo dance to a *hiva* song that she called "*Fakafiefia*." Sita's cousins had taught her the dance, but she did not know all the words to the song, so her mother and her grandmother sang it for her. She performed the *tau'olunga* sweetly and well, and the adults were duly impressed by how she held her hands and feet, and one of her aunts, 'Ana, exclaimed, "*Sio ka va'e!*" (Look at her feet!). About two minutes into the performance, another of Sita's aunts leaned over and tucked a ten-dollar bill into the little girl's shirt collar. During the next two minutes, two or three other adults gifted Sita money; her pale reward by the end of the dance amounted to over thirty dollars. Sita danced for about half a minute more. Once she stopped, we applauded, and her mother and grandmother both told her to give her entire pale to little Noa, the young girl who had been named after her now late grandmother.

As her dead grandmother's namesake, Noa leka had been particularly deprived of a relationship with her grandmother, so she tended to be coddled by her cousins, aunts, and great-aunts alike. She was considered deserving of receiving the material signs of 'ofa and *faka'ofa* (pity), embodied in gifted cash. Yet Sita was encouraged to realize the full value of her newly earned money by gifting her pale to Noa leka. Kalo then reinforced this moral lesson with a gift of her own:

Kalo closed off the formal aspects of the evening by gifting money, right after little Sita ended her dance, to most of us assembled in her modest, two-bedroom home. She handed out about a dozen crisp, new \$20 bills, which she had obviously saved and prepared before the evening. Those who received them included all the teenage grandchildren and their mothers, as well as other members of the *kalasi 'aho*, a group from church with whom she formally collaborated to make large annual donations to her church.

In the diaspora, earning money often involves long hours away from Tongans' comfort zones of their homes (or homeland), their children, and other members of their ethnic community. A gift of money, however small, is often the hardest-won form of Tongan value. Thus, gifting money is noted as a particularly generous act. Children deserve to be "lifted up" with gifts and displays of 'ofa—hence the love lavished on Sita by the cash gifts during her dance, and on Noa leka by encouraging Sita to share her gifts with the second little girl. A child who lifts up another with a gift of money comes from a fāмили in which her elders have taught her well:

A few minutes later, one of Noa leka's cousins—a teenaged girl who was Kalo's namesake—gave her money to Noa. Without being prompted, this teenager put into practice the lesson of passing on money and of not keeping it or holding it for herself, a lesson she had learned in the bosom of her natal family. The cash economics of daily and ceremonial life were intertwined in fluid ways before my eyes and centered around Kalo's failotu, the focal point for this family's experience of the long-standing tradition of Uike Lotu, which they shared with the other fāмили in their congregation.

A Family Problem with Diaspora: The Rules of Family and the Purpose of Money

Although diasporic Tongan communities have "come of age," as have other Polynesian communities in New Zealand (see Macpherson 2002), most Tongan immigrants have been unable to rise above working-class status. Even for those who attain middle-class jobs, their financial security can be relatively elusive. The loss of employment of one or two key income earners in an extended family household can result in a reversal of fortune overnight. In the midst of such economic and social instability, one can observe some object lessons about the value of money being taught by first-generation Tongan migrants to their children and grandchildren. As in Kalo's family, gifting of money is used to demarcate the boundaries of the extended kin group, and diasporic children learn who constitutes "family" by learning how to both receive and to give small gifts of money. In the case discussed above, the money given to little Noa served to symbolically activate her ties to her dead grandmother. These two examples demonstrate how money operates to strengthen ties between members of a fāмили in diaspora and is thus being used to uphold Tongan values.

A general concern with kinship overlays the majority of economic exchanges in the Pacific, and people use both traditional and modern

wealth (money) to communicate such concerns. Thus, Joel Robbins and David Akin observed that “social reproduction is at the heart of the matter where currencies are concerned” (1999, 17). Families are about social reproduction and, thus, constitute a key locus for teaching values and the value of money for Pacific Islanders living in many parts of the world. In diasporic families, imparting cultural values is an ongoing concern, but the responsibility for reinforcing the teaching seems to have become more circumscribed. According to Ilana Gershon, who does ethnographic research on Samoans living in New Zealand, the ties that a child feels to the homeland (and to gifting money to church and to extended family in Samoa) tend to be stronger if the child was raised in the homeland; “the parent-child relationships articulate Samoanness in different ways, depending on whether or not the person was raised in Samoa. In Samoa, children would learn expected behavior from a wide variety of people, partially as a by-product of the multiple hierarchal kinship relationships that Samoans are constantly navigating. Once they move to New Zealand, parents become a much more important source of the teaching of appropriate behavior” (Gershon 2001, 308).

Gershon’s work suggests that, after moving to diaspora, Pacific Islander parents may operate their households under different assumptions about who fulfills particular leadership roles in children’s lives. My research suggests that second-generation and one-point-five generation income-earning Tongans in diaspora are relying less on wider community (fictive kinship) ties in the day-to-day rearing of their children. For example, in Kalo’s family, Sina, one of her adult “daughters,” has recently started pursuing a university degree in early childhood education. Her other “daughter,” ‘Ana, who works in the New Zealand Customs Department, is now the sole breadwinner for her family, because her husband has given up his job as a panel beater in an auto body shop to be home with their three school-aged children on afternoons and during school holidays. Both Sina and ‘Ana regularly gift money to Kalo and to their own mother, Kalo’s sister, to finance their local expenses and obligations, but neither of them remits money to relatives in Tonga.

As social scientists, we continue to debate the longevity of first- and second-generation Tongan immigrants’ levels of remittances (Bertram 1986; Lee 2004; Brown and Connell 1993), and other large gifts such as church donations (Lee 2004, 2006). However, the uses of money in diaspora also have much to teach us about alternative possibilities for “doing kinship” in diaspora. We might ask whether the diasporic Tongan family is shifting from an extended family model to one more focused on the nuclear family. Is it rather, as W. J. Goode (1963) argued in his treatise on

modernity and changing family forms that nuclear families and extended families are better suited to societies with capitalistic markets? For Tongans in New Zealand, at least, the extended family is certainly not giving way to an obvious preference for the nuclear family. Rather, notions of the family are shifting between the two in response to the decreased visibility of the extended kin group. Although families may donate significant sums to the church, they tend to gift across fewer familial connections. The exchange of small gifts in particular reinforces the strongest affective ties—those within the *fāmilī*.

Georg Simmel, writing about the developing West in the mid-1800s, presupposed a social world built entirely out of exchange; he wrote that money has the power to transform social relations, including those within families. He theorized that the more capitalistic exchange became rooted in societies, the freer people would be to make rational decisions about their own consumption and to engage in new forms of social integration (Simmel 1978). Rather than suggesting that the exchange of money per se is transforming relationships, I propose that different forms of kinship interactions may be transforming the types of exchange that are considered normal, desirable, and most efficacious for expressing cultural values. For example, diasporic youth probably encounter fewer members of their extended kin group on a regular basis than their parents did when they grew up in Tongan villages. Changing as well, therefore, are the lessons regarding which of their kin they ought to have strong feelings of obligation toward and thus be moved to give money or gifts to. Furthermore, although I do not attribute these shifts in kinship to the diaspora per se, the fact that they are happening among generations of Tongans who are geographically removed from the homeland, and not being reinforced for gifting beyond the immediate family, implicates the diaspora as a variable that influences shifts in family forms.

I am not arguing that the primary notion of the “Tongan family”—that is, the *kāinga* or extended family as the locus of socially emphasized relationships—is shifting. Nor am I saying that the model for the Tongan family will definitively shift from the predominant extended form to a nuclear one, now that the majority of Tongans live in diaspora. Rather, I am suggesting that diasporic Tongans have embraced justifications for delimiting the scope of obligations they feel that they have to support with gifts of money and that they are systematizing these contracted family forms in interactions that they are keeping quite separate from other institutions, such as the church. Although not uncommon, this is nevertheless a daring move, because living in diaspora does not decrease the intensity with which Tongan families scrutinize one another for lapses in Tonganness. Modern

communication forms lead to a situation where even families who choose to reconstruct the boundaries of their daily, affective family ties are likely to be monitored by more people, both in diaspora and in the homeland.

A Word on Kinship and Cash

Given that Tongans expect themselves and others to “put family before themselves,” they are particularly proud of financing large gifts on the occasion of a life-crisis event. However, because they may spend an excessive amount of cash on such an occasion, they might have to conserve as much money as they can until the next life-crisis event occurs. One strategy is to conceal just how much money one has at one’s disposal. As among Samoans in New Zealand and California (Gershon 2001) and Gambians (Shipton 1995), Tongans are less likely to ask for money from kin if they do not know how much money those kin have. Although this practice is advantageous to individuals because it allows them to strategically avoid sharing money with kin, it can also serve the purpose of upholding family pride, because they can act and talk as if a given kinsman is well off financially without specificity.

However, one thing that money may not enable in many Pacific communities is the accumulation of economic capital. As discussed above, diasporic Tongans use money to delineate the boundaries of their kin networks. But challenges to those boundaries occur apart from the kin group. Likewise, Paul van der Grijp reported that on Uvea storekeepers were unable to realize a profit because they found it difficult to refuse credit to kin who were unable to pay their debts (2002). Niko Besnier and I heard similar reports from entrepreneurs in Tonga and in Tongan communities in New Zealand (Addo and Besnier 2008).

These examples reinforce the cultural fact that personhood in Pacific societies is based on kinship roles, which include obligations to share and to provide for others in the kin group, regardless of opportunities that may compete for resources (Gershon 2001). In small face-to-face communities of Pacific Islanders, the desirability of having money, along with the general practice of approaching kin first when in need, has resulted in money being semantically opposed to the assured value of family. As ‘Ana, Kalo’s niece, put it: “I can’t change Kalo, . . . and it’s only money. What is important is that [she] is happy.” Another way to parse this indigenous Tongan theory of money is to say that one cannot always rely on money to be available, but one should be able to count on one’s family; and if people maintain good relations with their family members, they and their kin will surely have access to money when they need it. Therefore, the concept that our

contemplation of Tongans' use of money has led us to rethink is their notion of the family.

Rethinking Approaches to the Study of Family in Diaspora

As we rethink anthropological conceptualizations of the Tongan family in light of diaspora, we must also rethink indigenous conceptions of diaspora. The extended family, as a notion that connects actors who live in Tonga and in diaspora, is being replaced, not by nuclear ties in Auckland, but by other configurations of extended kin that are more localized in Auckland. Increasingly, Tongans in diaspora no longer have any relatives living in Tonga whom they consider *fānili* and, thus, to whom they are obligated to remit money (Lee 2004, 239). This reflects a possible change not only in the demographics of Tonga but also in how Tongans in diaspora relate both to Tonga and to specific people there who may have expectations of being recognized as "kin." Thus, it is imperative that we continue to analyze the exchange practices of diasporic families in addition to the levels of remittances from the diaspora to Tonga.

The literature on diaspora and transnationalism is largely concerned with how second-generation migrants think about remittances they are expected to send to relatives in the homeland (Brown 1997; Brown and Foster 1995; James 1993, 1997; Lee 2004, 2007, 2009; Small 1997; Spoonley 2001). Remittances constitute signs of "strong ties" of diasporic Tongans to the homeland and index overseas relatives' prosperity and commitment to Tongan values. They also are a reflection of the prosperity and commitment of far-flung kin as a whole. Helen Lee's recent research on second-generation transnationalism has confirmed that, "at least in the Tongan case, remittances and other transnational ties are much weaker for migrants' children" (2009, 29). I prefer not to conflate remittances with "transnational ties" because of the broad range of forms that such ties can take: ties of affection, material ties that include cash remittances, social remittances such as "ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving communities to sending communities" (Levitt 2001, 11). Materially speaking, remittances sent to relatives in the homeland constitute a major form of reciprocation for sacrifices of homeland relatives who are seen as deprived of the company or labor of others within the *kāinga* who are already abroad (Lee 2004; Small 1997; Young Leslie 2004).

Lee has also noted that "the literature on Pacific remittances ignores the second generation, or simply assumes they will remit at lower levels than their parents but does not pursue the implications of this" (2009, 29). Because Tongans raised outside of Tonga have qualitatively different ties

to the homeland than those who were raised there, it is important to employ a different lens in analyzing the strength of ties to Tonga; strength of such ties often appears different depending on whether we are focusing on the experience of a first-, second-, or one-point-five generation emigrant. As Lee suggested, it is not enough to isolate and compare first- and second-generation spending patterns and amounts for a nuanced sense of commitment to Tongan values and maintaining active ties to the ancestral homeland (2009, 29). Ties to the homeland might also be assessed in terms of diasporic Tongans' return trips, as well as with their patterns of spending while in Tonga. Desires to reunite with kin by participating in life-crisis ceremonies being held in Tonga keep diasporic Tongans committed, if sometimes only intermittently, to the homeland.

However, what is the nature of commitment for people in diaspora? Diasporas have been characterized as border zones because those who inhabit them are neither completely rooted in the homeland nor entirely at home in the host country (Bhabha 1994; Brah and Coombes 2000). Diasporic members of kin groups must continually, and often simultaneously, navigate particular demands from people in each location. The contradictions between demands is a feature of border zones that forms part of the daily experiences for migrants from developing nations who resettle in the nations of the industrialized West. These contradictions result in the emergence of a multiplicity of ways of navigating between tradition and modernity, because both are necessary for survival in homeland and diaspora contexts (Bhabha 1994; Kraniuskas 2000). I am suggesting that diasporic Tongans actively explore ways to be Tongan while not being subsumed by those aspects of Tongan "tradition" that could curtail a family's ability to participate in modernity. The effects of such explorations have many implications for categories of valuables and notions of the family with which analysts and Tongans alike constantly grapple. Hybrid valuables such as money and the textiles that Tongan women produce from synthetic materials become vehicles through which people can act in novel ways and have novel relations imposed on them (Thomas 2000).

A number of second-generation Tongan migrants whom I interviewed say that they spend a large portion of their income on Tongan community concerns in diaspora, such as the church, ex-student associations, and other voluntary associations, while minimizing remittances to Tonga. Many of these same people reduce their extra-famili gifting of money by reducing or stopping donations to their church. Kalo's adopted daughters are a case in point: for weekly worship they attend non-Tongan Methodist church congregations, thus avoiding the social pressure to make large competitive donations like their parents. However, they do two significant things that

maintain a positive connection to their Tongan heritage and that other Tongans look on in a good light—they gift Kalo and the other senior women in their *fāмили* with money, thereby facilitating their elders' church donations, and they attend church for the “big kavenga,” which are the occasions whereby their *kāinga*'s reputation is really set (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009). Thus, by performing their duties as daughters who monetarily and publicly support their parents' designs for doing Tongan culture, these two one-point-five generation Tongan New Zealander women reinforce important assumptions of traditional kinship notions—for example, that one puts one's family before oneself—while exemplifying other ways to uphold Tongan principles in their interactions with different levels of kin.⁶ Thus diasporic Tongans create spaces for agency over their earnings, spaces where Tongan cultural values are reproduced.

Conclusion

In this article, I have looked at how articulating the meanings of money and of family, while living in diaspora, gives members of immigrant minority communities a sense of their own agency within modernity. In examining contemporary diasporic Tongan kinship through the exchange of money, I have defined a local notion of the institution of *kāinga* as it encapsulates *fāмили*, *kāinga toto* and *kāinga lotu*, thereby applying ethnographic and cultural data to test the limits of defining such forms of family. The evidence suggests that definitions are shifting situationally in the diaspora to delimit people who constitute *fāмили* as a result of emphasizing everyday gifting over ceremonial gifting, and *fāмили* over *kāinga*. To continue fulfilling their ascribed roles in a family, diaspora-raised Tongans must strategize ways to provide money to their parents, grandparents, and siblings—members of their *fāмили*. How strongly they feel obligated to provide money for *fāмили* members and the wider *kāinga* depends on what other expenses they have incurred, how “close” they feel to people in the wider *kāinga*, and what relationships parents teach their children to honor with gifts of money.

Although I have focused on one particular way in which diasporic Tongans gift money to express belonging, my analysis also challenges the relevance of some conservative ideas about the role of money in transnational communities. Anxiety about money—its sources, its apparent ephemerality, and Tongans' general inability to do without it—seems to be a basic component of, and a necessary sacrifice for participating in, modernity and transnationalism. Yet specific practices regarding money afford diasporic Tongans some sense of rootedness in the apparently sweeping tides of modernity. Contemporary Tongans have shown that they are able to

transform the symbolism of money and of certain aspects of exchange. Thus, money is often made to act as a Tongan valuable (for Rotuman examples, see Rensel 1994), and Tongans have absorbed this elusive valuable into a highly meaningful transnational economy of affect. In other words, Tongans in diaspora use money to redefine the notion of family even as they live it. How they articulate nontraditional forms of value with family where family or kin group is said to be one of the highest values, reveals that the diaspora is instrumental to Tongan culture. Insofar as living in diaspora enables Tongan families to express allegiance through exchange, from wherever they may dwell in the world, diaspora is Tongan culture.

If, over the past fifty years, there has ever been a persistent way of doing *anga faka-Tonga* in the homeland, it surely has been the result of informational, attitudinal, and everyday political interactions between people who apprehend the world through their kin groups and not simply as individuals. As Aihwa Ong noted in her analysis of overseas Chinese investors and other diasporic identity constructions: “their subjectivity is at once deterritorialized in relation to a particular place, but highly localized in relation to family” (1993: 771–72). Regardless of generation, Tongans abroad demonstrate the integral place of *anga faka-Tonga* in their uses of money. That is, what makes money valuable and an object of desire for Tongans is not that it affords them ways to become individually rich or independent. Having access to money can enhance their cultural sense of being people worthy of respect (*faka’apa’apa*), known to be loving (*’ofa*), and respectful of the space between themselves and others (*tauhi vā*). What matters for diasporic Tongans is that there is the sense of what it means to be Tongan, that is, what it means to be a member of a Tongan kin group, however defined at a particular moment. Families thrive when their members are able to respectfully and lovingly negotiate their use of material value to uphold and update cultural values.

NOTES

1. In buying *koloa* and storing it in their homes, Tongan women might be said to have what Parker Shipton would call “a contrary liquidity dependence” (1995, 247). This means that objects that are treasures—in that they are exchangeable as gifts for ceremonial occasions—can be liquidated, under certain conditions, when cash is needed (see Addo 2007).

2. “One-point-five” is a term often used to describe members of a generation of immigrants who were born and lived outside of the host country for a significant number of their formative years—usually into their teenage years—before resettling with their families in a new country.

3. I am the product of parents who traveled from West Africa and Southeast Asia for further education and who bore and raised me in countries far, and far different, from their own. The stories of why and how my parents left their families and homelands for Canada, where I was born, and a subsequent move to Trinidad where I grew up, frame my study of diaspora. I see diaspora as a matter-of-fact and a normal way of being in the world but also as a condition in which people recognize the continuities and ruptures in the experience of any one place as “home.”

4. An example of other Tongan causes that are often led by churches is disaster relief for Tonga. For example, during their 2002 New Year’s services, Methodist Tongan churches throughout Tonga collected money, food, clothing, and building supplies to benefit the victims of Hurricane Waka, which hit several islands in Polynesia but most drastically affected Vava’u, in Tonga. During this time Tonga’s lack of infrastructure for disaster relief and its history of reliance on people in the diaspora being willing to live out Tongan cultural principles came together.

5. This event took place on a trip I took to Auckland for New Year’s season in early 2008. It was my fifth research trip to Auckland and my fourth time staying at Kalo’s home. Having lived with Kalo in 2002, while completing my dissertation fieldwork, I was familiar with most members of her fānili. My history with this fānili and command of the Tongan language gave me a partial insider’s view to the intricate relationships and happenings that led up to the particular events at this intimate dinner.

6. It is only minimally significant that these gift-givers are women, because sons of elderly Tongans similarly gift money to their elders. Whoever is earning money in a community is obligated to share it with kin group members. Money is widely convertible, but traditional wealth is only convertible under certain conditions. However, individuals are afforded some autonomy in the nonconversion of traditional wealth. A man cannot ask his wife or sisters to liquidate their koloa to meet family expenses, although many women do liquidate textile wealth out of ‘ofa for their kin. In contrast, men can rarely leverage power against selling traditional foods if it is required to provide for their wives, mothers, or sisters. As I have discussed elsewhere, anxiety about adequately performing these traditional roles is distributed equally across genders (Addo and Besnier 2008).

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