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LAND GROUPS, LAND REGISTRATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ON GUADALCANAL, SOLOMON ISLANDS

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Neoliberal economic development requires that land boundaries and land groups be identified and registered, creating property rights and titles that can be bought, sold, and transferred. Registration makes land and land groups legible, thereby allowing states to exercise control and make land accessible to potential investors. This process of commodification creates changes that are often socially traumatic. In many Melanesian societies, individual and group rights to land are traditionally fluid and dynamic. Registration, however, freezes them. This paper examines how the process of land registration not only identify but also create land groups and influences how they respond to economic development projects. Two case studies on Guadalcanal illustrate this and highlight that land groups are not always passive victims. However, their agency can only be exercised within the limits established by the state. This paper locates Guadalcanal's experiences within broader discussions of land and economic development in Oceania.

Introduction

This paper examines how customary land groups respond to large-scale economic development projects. It discusses the intersections and entanglements between customary land tenure systems and capitalist economic development. Here, landscapes and land groups become the geographical and social spaces where customary rights, state interests and laws, and corporate desires intersect and influence one another. These intersections influence the

nature and dynamics of contemporary land groups and economic development outcomes. The paper discusses how land groups respond to capitalism's need for property rights, which underlies the state's push for land reforms aimed at registering titles. This push for the creation of property rights is what I refer to here as the "disciplining of development spaces." The paper examines the state's role in facilitating changes in land tenure, how land groups respond to these changes, why they respond in particular ways, and how their responses influence the nature and dynamics of the land groups and economic development outcomes. The paper uses two national development projects in Central Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, as case studies: the Gold Ridge mine and the proposed Tina River Hydropower Development Project (TRHDP).

While the case studies are on Guadalcanal, the paper highlights broader issues that are pertinent to other Pacific Island countries and territories. Central to this is how neoliberal economic policies have led to and influenced the nature of land reforms aimed at making land accessible for economic development projects. These reforms were largely about registering land, which transforms it from customary systems of tenure to a codified system that gives rights to individuals, groups (e.g., land groups), corporate entities, or the state. In addition, the push for land registration has a long history that precedes the advent of neoliberal economic policies from the 1970s and onward. It was informed broadly by ideas of capitalist economic development and the institutions that were established to facilitate it. Since the mid-1800s, there has been a push by private business interests and various colonial administrations for land registration. The underlying rationale was that customary systems of tenure were not conducive to a capitalist market economy that focuses on using land to generate and accumulate financial capital. Examples of major land registration projects in Oceania include the Great Māhele in Hawai'i from 1945 to 1955 (Kame'eleihiwa 1992; Osorio 2002), the land surveys and registration in Fiji from 1880 to 1940 (Rokolekutu 2017; Kurer 2005; France 1969), and the creation of individual land ownership in American Sāmoa (Kruse 2018). Throughout the colonial and postcolonial eras, many Pacific Island countries have introduced land registration laws. This broader regional context will be discussed below.

In discussing the case of Guadalcanal, this paper first proposes that while customary land groups on the island have always been dynamic, large-scale economic development projects have influenced them to mutate more rapidly and in particular ways. As groups compete to be recognized by the state, they could potentially create new groups, strengthen some groups' claims to land, weaken others, and erase some claims. This could (and has in some cases) engender conflicts, intensify economic inequalities, and in the long term potentially create landlessness. Second, the paper discusses how the state—often in partnership with corporate entities—uses its legal apparatus to influence, if not

dictate, how land groups are defined, organized, and deployed for purposes of economic development. Here, land groups are organized to fit the state's legal requirements and be compatible with the requirements of capitalist economic development. The process leads to the commodification of land, as well as land groups. Third, the paper asserts that customary land groups have agency, rather than simply being victims of the state, corporate investors, and development partners. They often use—either intentionally or unintentionally—their fluidity and mutability to engage with one another and other stakeholders. This agency does not always give them better economic outcomes, but it is a useful bargaining tool, because it causes discomfort to the state, corporate entities, and development partners. However, land groups' agency is exercised within the limits established by the state through its laws, processes, and officials. Consequently, landowner agency is framed by the state.

The paper is divided into five parts. First, it provides a broad Pacific Island overview of land, land reforms, and economic development. This outlines the discourses and policies that underlie the push for customary land reform and discusses how such reforms influence landscapes and social groups in order to make them compatible with the needs of capitalist development. Second, the paper focuses on Solomon Islands. It provides an outline of the state's rationale for land reform and the laws and processes that have been established to facilitate it. Third, it provides an overview of customary land tenure systems in Guadalcanal. Fourth, it tells the stories of the Gold Ridge and TRHDP development projects and discusses how land groups responded to them. Fifth, it provides concluding remarks.

Customary Land and Economic Development in Oceania

Land is central to economic development. Consequently, discussions about land and economic development often focus on the need to access land and have security of tenure, especially for the state and potential investors. In these discussions, customary systems of tenure are sometimes viewed as impediments to economic development (Hughes 2003; Gosarevski, Hughes, and Windybank 2004; Chand and Duncan 2013). These views about customary land and economic development have been expressed by politicians, ordinary citizens, academics, and development partners in Oceania and elsewhere in the world. They are based on the premise that customary systems of tenure create "undisciplined development spaces," because they are generally communal, dynamic, fluid, and uncodified—and therefore outside the purview of the state. This, it is argued, does not provide secured property rights to land. This is particularly the case for neoliberal economists, who view land primarily as "just another factor of production, with the peculiarity that it is relatively inelastic in

supply" (Chand and Duncan 2013, 34). In discussing land and property rights in Oceania, Chand and Duncan expressed concern that

> the absence of individual rights to [the] use of land creates uncertainties with respect to investment, particularly investments that have long gestation periods before providing returns.… Insecurity of access to land could reduce private investment in infrastructure, which in turn is likely to retard the rate of long-run economic growth. (34)

Consequently, reforms to customary systems of land tenure are viewed as a precondition to economic development, because they would provide secure property rights, especially for potential investors, and reduce land-related disputes. As Helen Hughes argues, while commenting on the communal nature of customary land tenure systems,

> Changing from communal to individual property rights undoubtedly has costs for some individuals. Some will benefit more than others. But experience worldwide shows that where the transition from communal to personal property rights takes place in an open society, the benefits to the lowest income households that emerge from the process are far greater than those of standing still. (2003: 11)

Underlying the push for customary land reform is the idea and process of neoliberal capitalist economic development. Here, the term "neoliberal capitalism" is used to refer to policies that promote free market economic orthodoxy where land is viewed as a means of production—it is important primarily for the production of commodities for export and to generate profit that is viewed as central to measurements of economic development. Pacific Island places and societies have been drawn into this since the late 1800s, when most became intertwined in global trade, resulting in the acquisition of land for the development of (coconut, sugar cane, pineapple, oil palm, etc.) plantations and later mines. This has resulted in the registration and acquisition of large areas of land in Fiji and Hawai'i in particular. From the 1980s onward, Pacific Island countries have been pressured to adopt neoliberal economic policies as promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This influenced their policies toward the access and use of land (Slatter 2004).

Neoliberal capitalist development needs "organized development spaces" that would enable capitalism to function effectively. These spaces are both geographical (landscapes or seascapes) and social (socialscapes) that are identified and organized to make them legible to the state, investors, and other economic development agencies (Scott 1998). Consequently, land reform usually focuses

on land registration, which is ultimately about identifying land boundaries and matching them to land groups or owners. Such legibility is fundamental to and a precondition for the implementation of state plans. Building on Scott's notion of legibility, Dan Jorgensen states that "legibility enables systematic state intervention in the affairs of its citizens, and creating legibility entails state simplifications of social practices in the form of a standard grid whereby these can be recorded and monitored" (2007: 57). The process of disciplining development spaces to make them legible is also about simplifying complex systems and relationships that exist largely outside of the purview of the state. This simplification enables the state to appropriate lands and land groups.

This is vital to the establishment of clearly defined and secured property rights that are enforceable by laws and can provide greater security of tenure. This is important because property rights are fundamental to capitalist economic development. They are what Craig Richardson refers to as the "invisible foundation" that supports "three distinct economic pillars … creating a largely hidden structure for the entire marketplace: (i) trust; (ii) land equity; and, (iii) incentives" (2006, 4). This, it is envisaged, would encourage potential investors to commit capital, make long-term plans, and ultimately create economic growth. But the process is not only about the creation of property rights and hence the commodification of land. It is also about commodifying land groups so that they can be easily bought and sold by the state and corporate entities while giving them the façade of being owners of property. Once land groups are identified and registered, they could then be passed from one investor to another, similar to the way properties (including land and the resources on it) are traded.

Underlying this discussion and process of disciplining development spaces and making them legible is the assumption that customary systems of tenure are static. In other words, there are clearly defined land boundaries and land groups that exist in the kastom (custom) domain and need only to be recorded, registered, and transferred into the formal legal system, or the state domain. But that is not necessarily the case. Customary land tenure systems are not unchanging since time immemorial, as is sometimes implied in academic and popular discussions. They are dynamic, flexible, and malleable. Consequently, what is regarded as a customary land tenure system today is not necessarily the same system that it was twenty or even ten years ago. It has changed over time in response to new technologies, population decline and growth, greater mobility, literacy, the establishment of centralized government, different approaches to development, etc. As Ron Crocombe notes,

> What is called customary or traditional tenure in the Pacific today is a diverse mixture of varying degree of colonial law, policy and practice, with varying elements of customary practices as they were in the late

> nineteenth century, after many significant changes had been wrought on the pre-contact tenures by steel tools, guns (which facilitated large-scale warfare), population decline, labor recruiting (which increased mobility) and absentee right right-holding, cash cropping and alienation in the post-contact but pre-colonial era. (1983: 3–4)

In his study of the contemporary butubutu in New Georgia in the western Solomon Islands, Edvard Hviding provides a detailed discussion of their flexibility and fluidity and of the mutually constitutive relationships between a group and its territory (1993; 1996, 136; 2003). The state plays an important role in transforming customary systems of tenure. For example, in writing about Ranogga in Solomon Islands, Debra McDougall states, "Although they are not fully integrated into the state legal system, local tenure practices have nevertheless been profoundly reshaped through generations of engagement with the state, and many local people have internalized the assumptions of successive government actors about the nature of customary tenure" (2016: 38).

In the customary systems of tenure, ownership, access, use, and disposal rights to land intersect, overlap, and influence one another in complex ways that reflect relationships between people. These land tenure systems are ultimately about social relationships and how they are mapped onto landscapes. The complexities of customary land tenure systems reflect the complexities of people's relationships and responsibilities to one another. It is fundamentally about rights and responsibilities to land, as well as to and between individuals and groups. In writing about Marovo in the western Solomon Islands, for example, Hviding describes butubutu as a "diverse set of groups and categories of people related through some source of 'sameness' and commonality, be it descent, filiation, or residence" (1996: 136).

The dynamism and mutability of land groups differ from one place to another, or at a certain period compared to others, depending on internal group dynamics, as well as responses to outside forces and factors such as population growth or decline, migrations, and settlements and resettlements. The nature of these groups is also influenced by how society organizes its members around the complex intersections and overlaps among the different rights to land—ownership, access, use, and disposal—and the responsibilities associated with them. So the terms "tribe" and "clan" are often used loosely for any group that forms and claims rights to land. Writing about land tenure systems on Isabel, in Solomon Islands, Colin Allan alludes that, "The definition of tribe is necessarily a loose one" (1957: 52).

Consequently, to identify a tribe and clan as the landowning unit can be misleading, because it does not reflect the flexibility and dynamism of the social units that claim rights to land, the complex relationships between groups, and how those relationships influence rights to land. While tribes and clans are often

identified as landowning units, communities involved in large-scale development sometimes form and reorganize groups in response to such development and in order to meet the requirements of the state, especially to identify and register land in ways that will meet state definitions of a landowning unit, or to become legible to the state. As stated above, land groups are relatively fluid, flexible, and accommodative. For example, in response to large-scale development projects, communities in a project site may create smaller land groups, subclans, or extended family units. This is perhaps done to maximize the group's potential benefits from the project: a smaller group could ensure greater benefits for each member. However, it could be that these groups have always existed and rights to land were vested in these smaller groups, rather than larger units that are referred to as tribes. Maybe these smaller groups were invoked because they were viewed as the best response to large-scale development projects and in anticipation of potential benefits.

In customary land tenure systems, access to land is typically fluid, depending on relationships (such as intermarriages, adoptions, and kinship ties), reciprocities, needs and the prospects of building alliances for the future. While a land group might, at a particular time, have the right of ownership to a piece of land, others could have user rights, accessing land to cultivate food, harvest fruit trees, collect building material, hunt and forage, etc. Eugene Ogan (1971) illustrates this fluidity and accommodative tenure system in his discussion of Nasioi land tenure in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. Similarly, Allan (1957) discusses how customary land tenure on Isabel in Solomon Islands provided for the accommodation of people, even those captured in war, thus ensuring that people were not landless, or at least that they had the right of access and use to land they might not necessarily own. As Jim Fingleton notes, customary land tenure systems are dynamic, flexible, and complex, allowing for different kinds "of rights and obligations at individual, family, clan and tribal levels" (2004: ix). Alex Golub (2007a) discusses how the fluidity of Ipili land groups allowed them to forge new forms of sociality in response to modern laws and state regulated land registrations to facilitate the development of the Porgera gold mine. The relative flexibility of land groups in the customary systems provide social safety nets in ensuring people have access to land for subsistence, even if they do not have ownership rights. There are, in other words, various layers of rights that allow at least a subsistence livelihood (Fingleton 2005).

The dynamism of the customary land tenure system is also reflected in the changing roles of members of the land group. For example, over time, the roles of women *vis-à-vis* land have changed, mostly marginal compared to those of men (Stege et al. 2008; Monson 2011). Rebecca Monson (2011) discusses the marginalization of women in villages close to Honiara in Solomon Islands. In other places, such as the Cook Islands, women have become more visible in land dealings (Crocombe 1983). Many Pacific Islanders also live in the diaspora but

continue to claim rights to land back home. In some places, these absentee landowners influence decisions about land in the islands, as Crocombe discusses in the case of the Cook Islands.

But proponents of neoliberal capitalist economic development see these customary arrangements, or the kastom domain, as disorganized and undisciplined. They therefore see the need to organize and discipline these arrangements in ways that make them compatible with the needs of capitalism, which is often the same as the needs of the state. This is often done through the establishment of laws and institutions that facilitate geographical and social mapping—the identification and registration of land boundaries and landowners and the introduction of registration systems, such as the Torrens system, that make them indefeasible. Here, the needs of capitalist economic development are mapped onto landscapes and socialscapes.

This neoliberal capitalist push for land reform often ignores the important social role of customary land tenure and that economic development could occur (and has occurred) on customary land. It therefore provides a socioeconomic safety net, especially in societies where a large percentage of the population live in rural areas and are more dependent on land for sustenance. Ward (2013) and Fingleton (2004, 2005) argue that instead of dismissing customary tenure as a problem, practical suggestions should be made on how to adapt customary tenures to the new demands on land. They also warn of the need to be cognizant that registration could lead to alienation and therefore produce a landless population. Iati (2016) argues that the Torrens system of land registration that could potentially lead to land alienation in Sāmoa, especially through long-term leasehold arrangements.

In Oceania, major capitalist economic development projects started in the 1800s. Central to this was a push for the identification of landowners and land boundaries, which led to the registration of land in some parts of the region. In some places in Oceania, the changes to land tenure systems have been more rapid and permanent than in others. Two places where there have been extensive land registrations are Hawai‘i and Fiji. In Hawai‘i, the Great Māhele of 1845–55 saw the conversion from customary land tenure systems to registered freehold titles that could be transferred through fee simple arrangement. This has resulted in unfavorable outcomes for most native Hawaiians and has made land central to past and contemporary discussions on politics, culture, and economics in Hawai‘i (Chinen 1958; Banner 2005; Van Dyke 2008). This has, arguably, led to the alienation of land and displacement of many indigenous Hawaiians, thereby creating a landless population (Kame‘eleihiwa 1992; Osorio 2002).

In Fiji, the land survey and registration took longer, from 1880 to the 1940s. This led to the codification of land rights and the establishment of state institutions such as the Native Land Trust Board (now called the iTaukei Land

Trust Board) that assumed the power to manage native land—determine lease arrangements, rental prices, and how land rents were shared. Here, the *mataqali* (extended family unit) was recognized and registered as the landowning entity. The act of identifying, recording, and registering the mataqali as the land group was not a simple process of recognizing a landowning unit that existed traditionally. Rather, it was also a process of creating land groups in order to create property rights that were necessary for the development of the sugarcane industry. Consequently, it was a process that created neatly organized Fijian social entities that might not necessarily reflect precolonial Fiji (Rokolekutu 2017; Durutalo 1985, 1986). Rokolekutu (2017) provides a detailed discussion of the history and politics that underlie land registration in Fiji and the impacts, especially on indigenous Fijians. It was an example of the disciplining of development space to make land available for sugarcane plantations that were vital for financing the British colonial administration. Consequently, Fiji's development space was disciplined through the processes of surveys, the identification and registration of mataqali and *veitorogi vanua* (land boundaries), and the establishment of the *vola ni kawa bula* (the registry of indigenous Fijians). It was a process of mapping landscapes and socialscapes. Despite the disciplining of development spaces and the registration of land, land-related issues have become central to Fiji's politics, both prior to and after independence (France 1969; Kurer 2005; Rokolekutu 2017).

In the other Melanesian countries of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, land registration has been slower and in some cases was overtly resisted. This is why customary land makes up a majority of the land area in these three countries. However, successive governments in these countries, often with the backing of development partners and the tacit (and sometimes overt) support of corporate entities, have pushed for land reforms. At the core of the land reform agenda is land identification and registration, or mechanisms for leasing land (Larmour 1986, 2002). This, it is envisaged, would reduce land-related disputes and make land more accessible to potential investors who were seen as important to economic development. Consequently, Papua New Guinea enacted the Land Registration Act (Cap. 191), Solomon Islands enacted the Customary Land Records Act (Cap. 132), and Vanuatu has a Land Leases Act (Cap. 163). In the next section, the paper focuses on Solomon Islands.

The State and Customary Land in Solomon Islands

The issues raised above are reflected in discussions about land and economic development in Solomon Islands. For example, while speaking to a workshop on land reform in August 2015, the then–Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare (2015) referred to land as a "hurdle to development." He states that the

country is "decades behind in addressing this single most important hurdle to development." He went on to say that in order for Solomon Islands to compete in international trade and grow its economy, it must "make land available for development and whether such a program can be undertaken without the need to alienate land from our people. That itself is a major achievement if we can find a solution" (2015, 2). There are two issues that underlie Sogavare's statement. The first is the view that customary systems of land tenure are incompatible with capitalist economic development. Consequently, when he referred to land as a "hurdle to development," he wasn't talking about land per se. Rather, he was referring to customary systems of land tenure, of managing ownership, access, and use of land, that were viewed as hurdles and therefore needed to be changed. Second, it was important to establish legal and institutional mechanisms for accessing and using customary land for economic development without alienating indigenous Solomon Islanders, or customary landowners. It raises questions about how this could be done and about the role of the state in making and imposing regulations on something that exists largely in the kastom domain.

Sogavare's successor, Rick Houenipwela, expressed similar sentiments. In addressing the Provincial Premiers' Meeting in Auki, Malaita Province, in November 2017, Houenipwela stated,

> Availing land for the Government to use continues to be a major setback. Land disputes have always been the major stumbling block to the commencement and progress of any infrastructure development in Solomon Islands. As such, a priority policy for the SIDCCG [Solomon Islands Democratic Coalition for Change Government] is land reform. The SIDCC Government is embarking on a land reform policy that will enable Customary Land owners to free up their resources for the allocation of these projects such roads, bridges, economic growth centres to name a few.

Houenipwela's statement focused specifically on the need to access land for public purposes, such as infrastructure development, and the need for reforms that would free up land, making it accessible to the state for the development of public infrastructure. This underlines that customary land is inaccessible to the state and there is often resistance to development, even for building schools, health centers, roads, etc., that would benefit communities, including landowners. Although the state has the power to compulsorily acquire land for public purposes (eminent domain), this power is usually used dispassionately and is subject to negotiations.

In Solomon Islands, the state has established processes to identify land groups—tribes or clans—and boundaries. These are provided for through

three pieces of legislation that give the state the authority to determine, record, register, and keep the records of landowners and land boundaries: the Land and Titles Act (Cap. 133), the Customary Land Records Act (Cap. 132), and the Forest Resources and Timber Utilisation Act (Cap. 40). The state therefore appropriates, frames, and influences kastom and inserts itself into the kastom domain. To legitimize the process, the state deploys and engages kastom in the land identification process. For example, chiefs are involved, and kastom forms of evidence are accepted as proof of claims to land. Here, kastom functions within the state's legal frames. This is what Foukona and Timmer (2016: 119) refer to as strategies that not only illustrate "the state's inroads into people's lifeworlds but also illuminate that the state expresses itself in the form of a blending of 'the law' with two other prominent normative systems in Solomon Islands: Christianity and kastom." For this paper, the focus is the state's role in framing the definition and exercise of kastom in land identification processes.

The land identification processes include the following: (1) an officer of the state is authorized by the relevant provisions of the law to administer the land identification process; (2) he or she identifies a parcel of land and the purported landowners, or customary land groups apply to have their land recorded and/or registered; (3) the state publishes notices and invites competing claimants; (4) it holds public hearings for the claimants; (5) the officer determines the rightful owners of the land; and (6) the land recorder records the outcomes of the public hearing. There is a provision for an appeal by those aggrieved by the determination of the state official, and this should be done within three months from the date of the determination and record (Land and Titles Act, Part V, 66).

There are several issues related to this process. First, the power to determine the rightful owners of the customary land is vested in the state, as represented by officials such as the acquisition officer (Land and Titles Act, Part V) and land recorder (Customary Land Records Act), or through a hearing process that includes chiefs or community leaders, in the case of timber rights hearings (Forest Resources and Timber Utilisation Act). Therefore, the state not only facilitates the process of land determination but also assumes the power to determine ownership of customary land. Second, this is a social and geographical mapping process that ultimately creates properties and property owners that could be easily identified by the state and potential investors. Third, the process alienates land in a three ways: (1) alienation of information when customary land groups give up (or give away) information about land that used to be kept in the kastom domain and controlled by land groups to the state through the recording process; (2) alienation of use, such as the use or harvesting of trees as provided for by timber rights hearings and subsequent agreements; and (3) alienation of titles through the registration process, giving the state the authority to record and keep titles. Fourth, the process of land identification forces people to create groups, merge,

server relationships, forge new ones, and define and redefine relationships in ways that they might not have otherwise done. Consequently, the process not only identifies groups but also could create groups as people align and realign or break into smaller groups in ways that they think would best serve their interests. Therefore, the state not only identifies land groups that exist but also could create them. But there is also agency on the part of land groups as they decide which groups to form, which ones to sever relationships with, and which ones to align with. These decisions are made based on how they think they could best benefit from the groups. But land groups' agency can only be exercised within the regulations established by the state—the state, in other words, frames and regulates the ways in which land groups exercise agency.

Such mutability of land groups, especially in response to large-scale economic development, is neither new nor unique to Solomon Islands. Similar development has been seen elsewhere, especially in neighboring Papua New Guinea (Jorgensen 2007; Golub 2007b; Stead 2016). Therefore, the state process not only looks for and identifies land groups but also creates them—at least by influencing how individuals and groups align, form, and reform.

So how does this disciplining of development spaces manifest on land and economic development in Guadalcanal? The next section focuses on land tenure systems in Guadalcanal, providing the context for understanding how large-scale development projects such as Gold Ridge and Tina hydroelectricity have affected it or were affected by it.

Customary Land Tenure Systems on Guadalcanal

Guadalcanal is one of the nine provinces in Solomon Islands. It is the largest island of the Solomon Islands archipelago, with a land area of 2,060 square miles (5,302 km^2). It hosts the national capital, Honiara, and a number of current and proposed national development projects that are (or could become) vital to the country's economy. These projects require access and security of tenure to land. They include Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Ltd., the Gold Ridge mine, the proposed TRHDP, and the proposed Mamara-Tasivarongo tourism development. It also hosts cocoa and coconut plantations, other agricultural development, and numerous logging operations, all of which contribute to the national economy. These require land and have influenced changes to land tenure systems on the island, especially in the north, northwest, northeast, and central parts of the island, where most of these development projects are located. Customary land tenure systems have also influenced the nature and dynamics of these development projects.

As in the rest of the country, a large percentage (about 92%) of land on Guadalcanal is customary land. Titles to these lands are vested in groups, which

are made up of people who claim a common ancestry. The groups are often referred to as clans or tribes in academic and popular discourses. However, here I use the pijin (Solomon Islands pidgin) term laen, which is derived from the English word "line" or "lineage" and refers to a group of people who claim the same line, lineage, or ancestry. This avoids the use of the terms "clans" and "tribes" as though they are universally applicable or describe social organizations and groups everywhere. It is acknowledged, however, that popular discourses about land in Solomon Islands tend to use the terms laen, "tribes," and "clans" interchangeably to refer to land groups. In these discussions, the definitions of what constitutes a tribe or a clan are ambiguous. The state, however, often writes tribes and clans into policies and statutes as though they are clearly defined entities. The state's identification of clans and tribes as landowning entities is often not an identification of what exists but rather what the state desires or requires in order for the state (and along with it, capital) to be able to have clearly legible entities to govern (Scott 1998). As discussed above, state processes could potentially create tribes by requiring land groups to take particular forms.

In order to claim a common ancestry or the same laen and therefore belongingness to particular places, stories about origins; migrations; taboo sites; peo (worship sites); hunuvale/vunuvale/vanuaravu/vulinikomu/luvunavera (old residential sites); and moru/karuba/alisapuru/hatuba (old garden sites) are important. Paul Tovua, a senior Guadalcanal man and respected elder, refers to "tabu ples, bolo tabu mana golona en sam ples say who na malahai hem usim … en peo" (taboo places or sites, taboo pig, shell money, and in some places they ask, who was the warrior who used these … and the sacrificial altar) (pers. interview, August 16, 2016). They provide proof of one's membership to a laen and claim of belonging to a place (or places) and therefore rights to land. Stories are powerful; they map people's relationships to one another and to places, and they determine their rights to land. But there are usually multiple and competing stories. Consequently, those who control, own, or tell the dominant stories, or could make their stories become dominant, usually become powerful. People therefore guard their stories about land, unleashing them only when they need to. This creates social and geographical arenas where stories are told, performed, verified, contested, and retold in attempts to claim ownership of land and the resources on it.

With regards to land, origin stories and those of migration and settlements are vital. In Guadalcanal, there is no single origin story throughout the island. However, there are similarities in the various stories about how the different laen originated and the way in which lineages are passed down. Except for the Areʻare speakers of Marau Sound on the eastern tip of the island, the rest of Guadalcanal has an exogamous matrilineal system of descent (1). The number of laen and the names for the groups and subgroups vary slightly across the

island. One story says that all laen on Guadalcanal started from two laen that could be traced to the original female ancestors and what was initially a moiety system of lineage. These two laen were Manukiki and Manukama. Murray Bathgate recounts an origin story that was told to Ian Hogbin by the people of Tetekanji bush, which states,

> Guadalcanal was built out of the sea by two men, and when they had finished they planted two trees. An eagle laid eggs in one of the trees from which came a man and a woman who created the Manukama line. Simultaneously, leaves from the other tree fell to the ground to metamorphose into a man and a woman who established the Manukiki line. Subsequently, Sivotohu, a sky spirit, gave them pigs and all other living things. (1993: 176–77)

This story shows an origin from a moiety to a four-line (or more) unilateral system of descent. This is not unusual. Anthropologists have observed similar development elsewhere.

On Guadalcanal, the word for laen differs in the different languages. In the Lengo language, it is referred to as a kema, while the sublines are called mamata. In the Ndi-Nggai language of West Guadalcanal, the main line is called a duli, which translates to "group" in English. The sublines are called puku (bottom). They are also called pinau. In the Malango language, the lines are called lilivu, while in the Tolo, Birao, and Moli languages, they are referred to by various terms, such as alo, vunguvungu, and puku.

The number of lines and names differ across the island, although there are similarities in the names. Woodford (1890, 41) lists four lines (Haubata, Kiki, Lokwili, and Kindipale), while Rivers (1914: 243–44) identifies six kema (Haubata, Kiki, Lokwili, Kindipale, Kakau, and Simbo), and Hogbin (1938) lists four (Haubata, Lokwili, Kindipale, and Kakau). In discussing West Guadalcanal, Bathgate (1993, 176) identified seven laen: Manukiki, Kakau, Haubata, Lokwili, Kiki, Kindipale, and Simbo. In his work on Longu Kaoka, Hogbin (1961, 4) identifies "five matrilineal dispersed clans": Hambata, Lasi, Naokama, Thimbo, and Thonggo. In Tasimboko, there are five laen (Nekama, Ghaobata, Lathi, Thimbo, and Thongo). In the Tolo, Moli, Birao, Poleo, and Malango language areas, there are two main laen, Qaravu (Manukama) and Manukiki, as well as two smaller laen, Lasi and Koenihao.

Bathgate attests that "the confusion appears to arise from over-reliance on informants and, more particularly, on the part of the later separation of the lineages present from those which are the most dominant and own land" (1993: 177). But this might not necessarily be a result of confusion. Rather, it is because there are differences across the island (Table 1).

According to Tovua, "iumi lo bigining tu nomo ia. E ruka soba puku … a Manukiki mana Manukama … den bihaen kam na hem split into four. Fofala ia na mekem enikaen vunguvungu" (for us, in the beginning, there were only two. Only two sublines … Manukiki and Manukama … then later on it split into four. Those four then split into many different lines) (pers. interview, August 16, 2016) (2).

The two laen have often been described in the everyday pijin parlance as big laen (big line) for Manukama and smol laen (small line) for Manukiki. It is not clear when the reference to these lineages as big and small started. It is perhaps a reference to the names, which literally translate to "big bird" (manukama) and "small bird" (manukiki). The totems for the two laen are eagle and hawk, respectively. The regular reference to two main laen implies that Guadalcanal has a moiety system, but it is more complicated and dynamic.

The laen are fundamental to Guadalcanal societies. They regulate relationships such as marriage, adoption, political and economic alliances, and rights to land. They also connect people from different parts of the island. The importance of these relationships is illustrated by the rule that one cannot marry within the same laen. To do so is to commit incest: chio, as it is called in the Tolo, Birao, Moli, Poleo, Gharia, Qeri, and Ndi-Qae languages, or sio, as it is called in the Lengo language. That is one of the most serious offences in Guadalcanal societies, which in the past was punishable by death, or the offenders would be cheka or seka (ostracized or exiled) from their lineage, land, home, and community. Now, pigs would be killed in the place of the offenders, and shell money would be given to mend relationships.

As stated above, most of Guadalcanal has a matrilineal system of lineage. Rights to land are therefore inherited through the maternal line. In discussions about land tenure in matrilineal societies, there is a tendency to portray women as the owners of land. For example, it is common for people to say oketa woman na onam lan (women own land). Such statements often confuse matrilineal

Table 1. **Lineages in Guadalcanal Languages.**

Lengo	Ndi-Qae, Nginia, Gharia, and Qeri	Birao, Tolo, and Moli	Poleo	Malango
Nekama	Lakwili	Qaravu	Lakuili/ Qaravu	Manukama
Thimbo	Kakau	Manukiki	Manukiki/ Kakau	Manukiki
Ghaobata	Haubata	Koenihao	Haubata	Koenihao
Lathi	Simbo	Lasi		Lasi
Thongo	Kindipale			

with matriarchal. Just because a society has a matrilineal system of descent does not necessarily mean that it is a matriarchal society. In other words, a system of descent and inheritance does not necessarily mean political power or ownership of land. While the two are interrelated and overlap, they are not the same. Women are the means through which rights to land are transferred because they are mothers to the next generation and hence responsible for the continuity of the laen. Without women, the laen dies. They play an important role as progenitor of the next generation of landowners and hence the lifeline of the laen. However, the roles and powers to make decisions about land were traditionally shared between male and female members of the laen. Although men are often the spokespeople, women contribute to and may even dictate the agendas and outcomes of discussions. Weta Ben, a senior Guadalcanal man, states that "sista en brata tufala holem ikul raets lo lan, eksep taem iu kam lo onasip. Oketa pikinini blo sista ia na onasip hem folom oketa" (sisters and brothers hold equal rights to land, except when it comes to ownership. The ownership follows the children of the sister) (pers. interview, September 28, 2016). He goes on to state that children of the maternal line cannot discriminate against their paternal cousins, because they also have the rights to access and use of the land.

However, the nature and dynamics of women's role vis-à-vis land and economic development have changed over time. Generally, woman have become marginalized and disempowered in discussions about, and therefore control of, land. This is partly because of the role of the state. Monson observes that state laws have "operated to the detriment of many landowners, particularly women, who often lack the formal education or customary authority required to speak in public arenas" (2011: 5). In writing about Kakabona, a periurban community west of Honiara, Monson discusses how development projects and state laws could, and have in some instances, marginalize and disempower women from decision-making processes about the use of land and the benefits accrued from development projects. Stella Kokopu, a nurse and woman leader from Tiaro on Guadalcanal, states that while titles to land are transferred through the female line,

> in the case of Guadalcanal at the present and past times, decisions have been made by men. It is true they are members of the tribe, but they are custodians of land that belongs to women because women are the owners of land. We should be the decision makers too. Men should simply convey the decisions we make … they [men] are simply spokesmen. (pers. interview, November 23, 2016)

She continues to state that women should be involved in decisions about economic development initiatives on Guadalcanal, especially with logging.

Maetala (2008) made similar observations about the marginalization of women in matrilineal societies on Guadalcanal, Makira, and Isabel.

In terms of inheritance, one knows one's laen because it is inherited from one's mother. Furthermore, generally one cannot switch laen—you are born into a laen and become a lifelong member. For example, one cannot be born Manukiki and later in life switch to become Manukama. So at that level, the laen is clearly defined and unchanging. However, in some circumstances, one could be adopted into a laen, where the adopted child would assume the adopting mother's laen. In the contemporary era, the traditional system of lineage is often disrupted when Guadalcanal men marry into patrilineal societies in other parts of the country. The children from these marriages cannot inherit their father's laen on Guadalcanal or their mother's laen in the patrilineal societies they come from. They could however be adopted into their paternal grandfather's laen by presenting chupu to the grandfather's line. This gives them access and use rights to land.

An important function of the laen is that membership determines access to land rights. But the laen as outlined above might not necessarily be the land group, or the landowning entity. The land groups are often smaller units, or subgroups of the laen. For example, in the Tasimboko area of North Guadalcanal (Lengo language), while the kema is the larger group, land rights are vested in smaller groups known as mamata. Similarly, on West Guadalcanal, the bigger group or line is the duli or puku, but land rights are vested largely in smaller entities. Tovua describes these smaller entities as vunguvungu (fruits) that grows out of the puku (bottom).

As will be demonstrated in the cases of Gold Ridge and the TRHDP, rights to land in Central Guadalcanal are also vested in smaller groups or sublines that have mutated from the main laen. For example, within Manukiki in parts of Tasimauri, there are smaller groups such as qaresere, lupalupa, and raunikolo that hold rights to land. These smaller groups emerge as a result of migrations, internal conflicts, someone being cheka/seka for having committed a crime like chio, etc., where groups find areas of land, clear them, establish their peo and bolo taboo (sacred pig), dedicate ghado/qolo tabu (a sacred shell money) to the land, and therefore claim rights to it. These groups also mutate in response to large-scale national economic development projects such as mining and hydropower. At this sub-laen level, the groups are dynamic and fluid; they mutate and are not as rigidly organized as is sometimes implied or as the state wants them to be. This fluidity, dynamism, and mutability allow them to adapt to different situations. This is not unique to Guadalcanal, or Solomon Islands. Anthropologists like Stead (2016), Golub (2007a, 2007b), and Jorgensen (2007) have made similar observations in neighboring Papua New Guinea.

The next section discusses what happens in the face of large-scale development projects, focusing on the experiences of the Gold Ridge mine and the

proposed TRHDP. It examines the state's role in framing land groups and how land groups respond to state and corporate demands, as well as competing and complementing demands within land groups.

Gold Ridge Mine

The Gold Ridge mine is located in Central Guadalcanal. It was the first large-scale mining operation in Solomon Islands, but has been closed since 2014. There are, however, plans to reopen it (Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation [SIBC] News 2018). In October 2019, a ceremony was held at the mine site to officially mark its reopening. The holding company, Gold Ridge Mining Limited (GRML), is now jointly-owned by local landowners through the Gold Ridge Community Investment Ltd. (GRCIL) (10%), Chinese-owned and Australian-based property developer AXF Group (13%), and Hong Kong-listed Wanguo International Mining (77%). GRML will in turn contract Chinese state-owned enterprise, China Railway, at a total cost of US$825 million to operate the mine. At the time of writing, the only active mining operation in the country was the bauxite mine in West Rennell in the RenBell Province. But there are numerous prospecting operations around the country, and alluvial mining in Gold Ridge has a long history that continues today. The proposed operations include the mining of nickel on Isabel Province and bauxite in Wagina, Choiseul Province.

Two land-related lessons could be drawn from the Gold Ridge experience. First, it illustrates the fluidity of land groups and how state-sponsored processes to identify land groups could lead to the proliferation of land groups and engender intra- and intergroup disputes as groups compete for access to the expected benefits from mining. This makes the task of land identification difficult and expensive, both monetarily and socially. Second, it illustrates that this process can influence how land groups form and mutate.

Interests in mineral resources in Solomon Islands, especially Guadalcanal, can be traced to the 1930s, when S. F. Kajewski, a botanist from the University of Queensland, discovered economically viable quantities of gold on Guadalcanal (Moore 2013; Nanau 2014). But industrial mining started in the 1990s when the Australian company Ross Mining established a subsidiary known as Ross Mining (Solomon Islands) Ltd., which began operations in 1998. However, it closed operations in 2000 as a result of violent conflicts that began on Guadalcana in late 1998 (Evans 2010). During the 22 months that the mine was in active operation, the total gold production amounted to approximately 210,000 ounces and contributed 30 percent of the country's gross domestic product (Nanau 2009). In 2010, the mine was sold to Gold Ridge Mining Ltd., a subsidiary of Australian Solomons Gold, which is in turn a wholly owned subsidiary of Allied Gold Ltd. In 2012, Allied Gold sold the mine to St. Barbara, another Australian company,

which operated the mine until 2014, when it closed following flash floods that devastated parts of Solomon in April that year. In May 2014, St. Barbara transferred ownership of the mine, via a sale at a nominal amount, to a local landowning company, Gold Ridge Community Investments Ltd. (GRCIL). In early 2018, the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification (MMERE) reportedly told the Solomon Islands National Parliament that the mine was expected to resume operations by the end of 2018 or early 2019 (SIBC News 2018). As stated above, at the time of writing, GRCIL had partnered with AXF Group and Wanguo International Mining to reopen the mine.

Under the current arrangements, as provided for by the Mines and Minerals Act, the state facilitates land identification, recording, and registration processes. This process of social and geographical mapping is also supposed to be regulated by the state. However, prospective investors often approach land groups prior to being authorized by the director of mines, as required by the law. This means that they could potentially influence the process, sometimes causing conflicts between and within land groups and between land groups and the state. This is because mining negotiations take place even before proper land group and land boundary identifications take place. The new National Minerals Policy, as proposed by the MMERE, recognizes this. It states that

> The current practice of companies leading the landowner identification process has raised a number of significant problems. Allegations of companies paying inducements to landowners and "cherry picking" landowners sympathetic to their cause are an issue. Likewise, registration of land at the prospecting phase has often been premature leading to false hopes but, more significantly, interfering in the ability of landowners to make informed decision about potential mining activities. (Solomon Islands Government [SIG] 2016, 26)

Following the land identification, the land is leased by the government, through the Commissioner of Lands, and then subleased to the investor. The perpetual estate (PE) title remains with the customary land groups.

The Gold Ridge Mine Agreement was signed by the company, the SIG, and 16 land groups, referred to in the agreement as tribes. These land groups are (1) Rausere, (2) Charana, (3) Kaokao, (4) Roha, (5) Sutahuri, (6) Vatuviti, (7) Halisia, (8) Soroboilo, (9) Chacha, (10) Sabaha, (11) Salasivo, (12) Chavuchavu, (13) Kaipalipali, (14) Koenihao, (15) Lasi, and (16) Sarahi (GRML and GRCLA 1996: 14–15). They all belong to only four laen: Manukiki and Manukama/Qaravu, which are the two main laen or lilivu (in the Malango language), and Lasi and Koenihao, the two smaller laen or lilivu (Figs. 1 and 2). However, in the land identification, negotiation, and signing of the agreement, Manukiki

and Manukama/Qaravu were not identified as the landowning units. Instead, sub-laen were identified as the land groups. As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, many sub-laen are related to one another through a common lineage. But when it comes to dealing with large-scale development projects such as mining, they choose to identify as separate land groups.

The mining lease has been bought and sold by three Australian companies since the late 1990s. But the landowning groups have remained the same since they were identified and registered. The agreement between them and the investor (the company) simply transfers from one investor to the other. In a way, the identification and registration of land groups have turned them into a commodity that could be bought and sold by investors. This is what I referred to above as the commodification of land groups.

Gold Ridge consists of different land parcels. To illustrate the dynamics of the land identification process and its impact, I look at two of these land parcels: Koku and Bubulake. The Koku land parcel in Gold Ridge was initially registered under three land groups that belong to the Manukama laen: (1) Sabaha, (2) Sarahi, and (3) Salasivo. However, by July 1995—prior to operation of the mine—the Sabaha land group decided to break away from the other two. The minutes of a meeting by Sabaha representatives held on July 25, 1995, states, "It was discussed and agreed that Sabaha Tribe to isolate themselves from the above two tribes." The reasons were that (1) they were never included as signatories to bank accounts, (2) they never received royalty payments, and (3) they were represented by a non-Sabaha individual (SIG 1995). In addition, the appropriation and use of the term "tribe" identified the group as separate from the others, although all of them belong to Manukama. "Tribe" is the term the state uses to refer to the landowning groups. Sabaha's identification as a separate tribe was

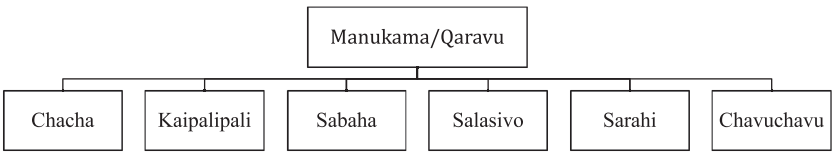

Figure 1. **Manukama Land Groups.**

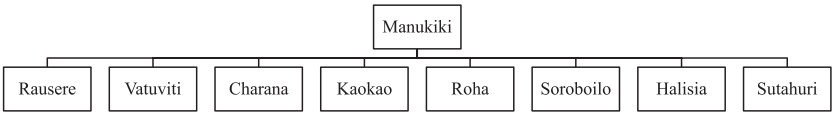

Figure 2. **Manukiki Land Groups.**

both a reaction to what had happened and an attempt to gain recognition from the state by adopting and deploying the state's language of social identification. The reasons for the separation were the distribution of royalty payments and representation, which illustrate the role of capital in self-identification of land groups. Large-scale development projects and the injection of capital contribute to the making of tribes, or at least influence social identifications.

The Bubulake land parcel was identified as a potential site for the relocation of those displaced from the mining area. The land identification process started in December 1991, following mining interests by Arimco NL (now Australian Resources and Mining Co. NL) and Cyprus Gold Australia Corp. In March 1997, the Kolobisi tribe was registered as the landowning group and represented by five trustees: Solomon Tiva, Primo Lungu, Samson Maneka, John Bosaponoa, and Primo Amusaea. In a note (undated), the land acquisition officer states, "During the course of the meeting Mr. Solomon Tiva presented to me the Local Court decisions over Bubulake Land and upon receiving them I was satisfied that Bubulake Land must belong to Solomon Tiva and group." However, John Tueke (Soroboilo tribe) and Chief Tango (Chacha tribe) challenged Kolobisi's claim of ownership and the land acquisition officer's decision during public hearings on November 18 and 30, 1994. So they appealed to the magistrates court, which heard the case and handed down its decision on May 9, 1996, ruling to uphold the land acquisition officer's decision that the Kolobisi tribe was the rightful land group (Land Appeal Case No. 1/95). This illustrates the power that state officials have in not only facilitating land determination processes but also determining land groups.

There were also divisions within the Kolobisi tribe. For example, Tiva, one of the trustees, wrote a letter to Amusaea, another trustee member, trying to exclude him as a trustee and therefore access to the benefits from land rental and other payments. Tiva wrote, "Due to the fact that you belong to another tribe, as opposed to my tribe I hereby suspend the agreement to share rights over Bubulake land" (letter dated July 26, 1996). The letter was copied to the MMERE, and the project coordinator subsequently interjected, stating that the "exclusion of any member of the above trustees would only take place if a formal letter sign by the four (4) trustees informing this office of the changes in trustee we then can change our records. Otherwise this should have been sorted out in the first place during the public hearing, that is if Primo Amusae was of a different tribe, and not to be included in the trustee" (letter dated August 19, 1996). Amusaea defended his right to be a trustee for the landowners, pointing to the state process as legitimizing his claims:

> To my understanding I have a right on the share in the proposed tailing site. If you still insist in position to put me out, I assure you that the Bubulake land will face some problems. I understand that we have

> already held discussions at Pitukoli Village during the first hearing held by the Land Acquisition Officer, Mr Mason Nesa dated 05/12/96 and we have made an understanding before we elected the trustees of Bubulake land. (letter dated August 14, 1996)

These cases illustrate three things. The first is the role of the state in determining and legitimating landowners through its processes, officers, laws, and institutions. So the state plays an important role in determining landowners and tribes. Second, the fluidity of the land groups is illustrated by the continuing changes of the groups, with memberships being negotiated even during and after the land identification process. However, after land has been registered and is within the purview of the state, that fluidity ceases. Consequently, those who challenge the determination after it has been completed have no legal recourse. Some have therefore opted for illegal means of challenging the outcomes. This has often resulted in conflicts that have sometimes resulted in violence. Third, the registration of land groups has turned them into clearly defined commodities that could be sold by one investor to another. Hence, commodification occurs of not only land but land groups as well.

Proposed TRHDP

The TRHDP is a proposed hydropower project in Central Guadalcanal that is in the development phase. There are three lessons to learn from the TRHDP. Like Gold Ridge, it illustrates the dynamic nature of land groups and how the process of land identification is not only a process of identifying land groups but also a process that forces land groups to form and mutate to meet the requirements of the state. Second, it shows agency on the part of land groups, especially how they purposefully mutate in the hope of maximizing benefits from the state and investors. Third, it illustrates the power of the state in influencing how land groups form and in its ability to exclude through compulsory acquisition.

The TRHDP is a multidonor collaborative effort involving the World Bank as the lead agency supporting the project preparation, the International Finance Corporation as transaction adviser to the SIG, and several agencies supporting preparation: the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility, the Australian Government, and the European Investment Bank. These agencies, along with the Asian Development Bank and the Government of New Zealand, are considering continued support through provision of funding for various activities during the implementation phase. The TRHDP will consist of two components: (1) a hydropower facility with an installed capacity of 20 MW to be developed and operated by an independent power producer under a thirty-three–year concession that would sell power to the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority

(SIEA)—now trading as Solomon Power—under a long-term power purchase agreement, and (2) technical assistance to the SIG to monitor and support project implementation. The project was coordinated by the MMERE and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey (MLHS).

Central to this project is land. Land for the core area of the project was compulsorily acquired, using the powers vested in the government as provided for by Part V, Division 2, of the Land and Titles Act. This gives the minister responsible for lands the power to compulsorily acquire land for public purpose and outlines the process for doing it. According to this process, any person with an interest in the land had the right to challenge the minister's declaration on the basis that the purpose for which the land was acquired was not a public purpose. There is also provision for compensation coordinated by the permanent secretary to the MLHS. These processes could happen concurrently with the land identification and registration. The process for the compulsory acquisition of the TRHDP started in August 2014. A letter notifying the land groups about the compulsory acquisition stated that "The acquisition provides the Commissioner of Lands with the rights to use and occupy the land on behalf of the Government. It removes customary rights of ownership or usage on the land and changes those right into the right to receive payment for their value." It went on to inform them, "Should you wish to make a claim for the value of any customary interest you may have in the land this must be done in writing to my office on or before 21 November 2014" (letter from the Commissioner of Lands, October 2, 2014).

As part of this process, the SIG—through the MMERE and the MLHS—signed a process agreement with the core land groups. Under this agreement, it acknowledged ownership, consent to acquisition of core land, consideration, valuation of guarantee, and revenue sharing. The completion of the process of compulsory acquisition of the core land was contingent to prior informed consent of land groups (Commissioner of Lands, October 2, 2014).

When the land identification process started in 2008, twenty-seven groups (3) claimed to be landowners or were listed by the state as landowners of the project area. According to Tovua, who is also a Tina landowner and member of the Garo Buhu group, many of the groups split into smaller groups because "they don't want to be left out if you have the bigger [group] … iu lukim Sarahi and Salasivo, wan nomo ia … ivin if iu lukim Kochiabolo en Bulahe, wan nomo oketa ia" (you see, Sarahi and Salasivo, they are one … even if you see Kochiabolo and Bulahe, they are one) (pers. interview, August 16, 2016). Despite this, the state legitimized them as land groups by giving them goodwill payments. In 2011, the SIG, through the Tina Hydropower Development Project Office, paid each of the twenty-seven groups SI$100,000 (US$11,860), which totaled SI$2.7 million (US$320,226). This payment was for the access agreement, which gave the project office access for 18 months to carry out social and

environment impact assessments and other studies to determine the viability of the project. The then–minister of mines explained it as a "goodwill payment," which "confirms and implements NCRA's [the National Coalition for Reform and Advancement government] policy to ensure maximum benefits accrue from the sustainable management of natural resources" (TRHDP 2017).

The land identification process was done by chiefs through the Bahomea House of Chiefs and supported by the government and project office. The Bahomea Land Identification Committee was subsequently established and worked with the Bahomea House of Chiefs and the MLHS to identify land groups, especially in the core lands. The land identification process resulted in four tribes being identified as core land tribes, which included the amalgamation of many of the twenty-seven groups that initially claimed ownership. The four core land tribes were Roha (Manukiki), Garo Buhu (Manukiki), Kochiabolo (Manukama), and Vuraligi (Manukama) (SIG process agreement, July 17, 2014). As part of the agreement, the SIG agreed to pay each tribe a minimum value of SI$12,000 (US$1,423) per hectare for their acquired land. The agreement states, "This is a minimum payment and will not affect the Core Land Tribe's entitlement to the full amount of any compensation awarded under the Lands and Titles Act." During the signing, the SIG paid, "each Core Land Tribe a consent fee of SI$75,000 [US$8,895] and each signatory (up to a maximum of 7 for each tribe, of which at least two will be women) a signing fee of SI$5,000 [US$593]." The two smaller groups at the margins of this agreement that land in the area, but not within the core area, were Lasi (Uluna Sutahuri) and Kaokao.

One of the main issues of contention in TRHDP was the value of compensation for the core land that was compulsorily acquired. The commissioner of lands carried out the negotiations with land groups, using the process provided for by the Land and Titles Act. The value of compensation determined by a SIG-selected land valuer was set at SI$22 million (US$2.6 million). The government offered to pay SI$70 million (US$8.3 million). The total amount of compensation offered by the commissioner of lands to two of the two core land groups was SI$37,564 (US$4,553) per hectare for Kochiabolo and SI$40,780 (US$4,753) per hectare for Garo Buhu. This exceeded the minimum compensation rate agreed to by the land groups in the process agreement. The compensation offered to the two land groups has been transferred to a trust account to be paid to their cooperative societies once established (SIG 2017).

However, some members in the Garo Buhu and Kochiabolo land groups disagreed with the value of compensation awarded, stating that the two land valuers they had contracted put the value of the land at SI$205 million (US$24.3 million). The land groups claimed that they were willing to settle for SI$145 million (US$17.1 million). As a result of the disagreements over the value of compensation, the chairman of the Kochiabolo land group, George Vari, threatened that

his land group will "pull out of the project" (Namosuaia 2015). Tovua also said that his land group, Garo Buhu, refused to sign, because the members think the compensation was insufficient (pers. interview, August 16, 2016). By 2016, two of the land groups had accepted the compensation offered to them by the SIG: Roha received SI$6.9 million (US$818,340), while Uluna Sutahuri accepted SI$1.2 million (US$142,320). Uluna Sutahuri was not a core land tribe. At the time of writing, negotiations were continuing with the remaining land groups. In September 2019, Garo Buhu had received half of the payment that was due to them, while Kochiabolo received the full amount.

The other substantial issue in the TRHDP is the mechanism for benefit sharing. The TRHDP was established on the principle of build-own-operate-transfer. Consequently, it is jointly built, owned, and operated by an investor or developer, the SIG, and land groups, with the objective of eventually returning it to the SIG and land groups. This is reflected in the arrangements on land, as well as the proposed equity share in the project. In terms of land, after compulsory acquisition, the commissioner of lands holds the PE title on behalf of the SIG.

The commissioner of lands will eventually transfer the PE title to a core company, which will be owned jointly by the SIG (50%) and the landowners cooperative (50%). The core company will lease the land to the project company, which will be responsible for operating the hydropower dam plant. The project company will be owned jointly by the investor or developer (51%), which will be responsible for the design and construction work and for managing the repayment of the loan, and the core company (49%) (SIG 2017). After thirty years, the developer will relinquish its 51% share to the core company. The SIG and landowners will therefore become the sole owners of the plant, which will sell wholesale electricity to the SIEA.

When this paper was written, work on the project was continuing with commitment from the SIG and development partners. In June 2017, for example, under a three-year Solomon Islands–Australia Aid Partnership, the Australian government announced that it had committed AU$17 million (US$11.6 million) for the TRHDP (*Solomon Star,* June 30, 2017). In September 2019, the World Bank reported that a series of agreements had been signed to move forward with the TRHDP. The commercial agreements were signed in Sydney and

> included the on-lending Agreement between Tina River Hydropower project company and [the] Solomon Islands Ministry of Finance & Treasury, as well as agreements related to the funding support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), who yesterday confirmed a commitment of US$30m to the project. The ADB now joins the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), the Australian Government (DFAT), Green Climate Fund and the Korea-EX-IM Economic Development Cooperation Fund, all

of whom, alongside World Bank Group, have all committed to supporting this key nation-building project in Solomon Islands (World Bank 2019).

Despite these commitments, land continues to be an issue of contention, especially disagreements on the value of compensation for the land that was compulsorily acquired.

Conclusions

This paper highlights how land registration and economic development projects influenced land groups on Guadalcanal in Solomon Islands. It also highlights broader issues that are relevant to land-based economic development and land issues in the Pacific Islands and other places where a large percentage of land is regulated by customary systems of tenure. It discusses how land registration, by identifying and codifying land boundaries and land groups, disciplines landscapes and socialscapes.

Using two case studies on Guadalcanal in Solomon Islands, the paper demonstrates how customary land registration has transformed land groups from fluid and dynamic entities to standardized and static groups. Terms such as "tribes" and "clans" are deployed, not necessarily to describe what exists but to define social entities and facilitate standardization and the recording of land groups and land boundaries. This is necessary to make land groups and landscapes legible to the state and development partners and to create property rights, which are fundamental to capitalist economic development. The creation of property rights requires the identification, appropriation, and commodification of both land and land groups so that they can be bought, sold, and transferred from one investor to another. This could privilege ownership rights and undermine, if not erase, land group members' access and use rights to land. It could subsequently create landlessness, which could in turn engender conflicts. Furthermore, the process of land registration produces disputes as groups and individuals fight over ownership rights because of what they perceive as the potential economic benefits at stake. Such disputes could in turn undermine economic development projects. This is illustrated in the two case studies discussed in this paper.

The paper also shows that land groups have agency in these interactions—they are not just passive victims. The two case studies illustrate how land groups form and reform in attempts to maximize benefit from the development projects. The degree of their success varies across time and place. Furthermore, not all members of land groups are affected by and benefit from economic development projects or have agency in the same way. Women and youths, for example, continue to be in the margins of decision-making about land and economic development, although they are often affected the most. More importantly, the paper shows

that land groups' agency is exercised within the limits established by the state. As demonstrated in the case of Solomon Islands, state laws regulate how land groups are defined and identified and the processes through which they prove ownership or belonging to particular landscapes. Land groups could refuse to participate in that process. However, as the case of the TRHDP on Guadalcanal demonstrates, the state possesses the power of compulsory acquisition in the name of a common good. This will ultimately force land groups to participate.

The role of the state as the discipliner of geographical and social spaces is vital, demonstrating that the state is not (and has never been) an independent arbiter of development, working with customary land groups and investors. Rather, it actively facilitates capitalist economic development with and on behalf of investors and development partners. In order to do this, the state appropriates kastom by incorporating the language of kastom and appearing to include customary structures and systems in its processes. Consequently, the land identification process, although facilitated and controlled by the state, appropriates kastom to legitimize it. Words such as "chiefs," "tribes," and "clans," are deployed as though they describe something that exists. In reality, they create social entities, rather than being used to describe what exists in society.

Land groups in Solomon Islands in particular, and Melanesian more generally, will continue to be dynamic and fluid. Governments are pushing for land registration, because it is seen as necessary in order to access land for economic development. But the process could also lead to exclusions, marginalization, and creation of landlessness and poverty. Land issues will continue to be important in Solomon Islands, as well as other Pacific Island countries.

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NOTES

1. Many Are'are speakers of Marau Sound are the descendants of people who migrated from Are'are on Malaita hundreds of years ago. They have a patrilineal system of lineage.

2. The word *vunguvungu* maybe translated into the English word "fruits" or into "bunches of fruits." This could mean that the smaller groups, some of which became land groups, were actually the fruits of the puku.

3. The twenty-seven tribes or land groups initially identified were Kochiabolo, Koenihao, Uluna, Bulahe, Chavuchavu, Sudungana/Vatubina, Garo Buhu, Soto, Lango, Charana, Sarahi,

Kaokao, Gaegae, Sunakomu, Salasivo, Halisia, Rausere, Kaipalipali, Sabaha, Barahau, Soroboilo, Kohana, Sutahuri, Vuralingi, Chacha, Riva, and Roha.

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FRIENDS IN THE MAKING: THE CONTEXTUAL FRAMING OF *JERĀ*-RELATIONSHIPS AMONG MARSHALL ISLANDERS

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Friendship is an odd kind of relationship among Enewetak/Ujelang people in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. It sits juxtaposed between kinship and otherness, categories that are themselves continuously generated and regenerated through ongoing practice. The diversified universe of everyday life is constituted by a wide array of kin relationships, and those relations with both living and noncorporeal significant persona are engendered and rendered viable in the discourses, exchanges, and face-to-face manner in which people—both living and "dead"—treat one another in day-to-day life. It would be misguided to think of them as labels for statuses that people move through during their lives, as the wide variety of kin relations depend on practical realization to bring them into being and maintain them as viable ways of discussing those interpersonal relationships. Beyond the edge of these everyday face-to-face relationships lies an undifferentiated group of people known as *ruwamāejet*, outsiders or others, and this group is marked by their lack of interrelational qualities other than, perhaps, basic shared humanness. In the earliest contacts with these others, in 1529 and a few times subsequently on Enewetak, during times that preceded the era of substantive colonial interaction (Hezel 1983), local people say they were not even certain about the shared humanness of those odd European explorers. Friendship occupies the liminal space between ruwamāejet and face-to-face relationships labeled by the substantial variety of kin terms. It moves an ambivalent relationship into the kinship domain, relying on the same referential devices used with kin terms yet maintaining a sense of

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potentiality and deniability that does not hold for other kin term–designated relationships. Kinship always specifies and elaborates on "within" relations, particularly on Ujelang and Enewetak, the two atolls discussed in greatest depth in this article. By contrast, *jerā-* relationships always begin as between relationships but deploy the discursive potencies of kin-designated categories in the hope that friends will act and become like kin. The contours of this ambivalent relationship form the core of this article.

It is quite clear that for Marshall Islanders, jerā- relationships, that is, "friend of-" relations, have no meaning except as a part of the universe of kinship relationships even if their position has an ambiguity that does not typify most other close interpersonal relationships. Jackobson notes that kinship and friendship are similarly interrelated in Mbale, Uganda (1986).[1] Indeed, while Ferdinand Tönnies (1955) is best known for the contrast between the ideal types, *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, classically "community based" and "society based" social forms, he fully understood that, in practice, the two were interrelated yet were at least theoretically differentiable. For Tönnies, historical changes in the types of sentimental attachments among consociates—in essence, the nature of friendships—formed one key distinction between the way people acted in community-based societies and in urban, capitalist types of societies. The shift from sentimentally saturated kinship and friendship relations to emotionally hollow, formal relationships in capitalist societies was a central concern of Töinnes, however much his dualistic schema overdetermined the contrast in order to construct distinct types. Indeed, an entire session at the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania attempted to provide a far more nuanced account of the way that such sentiments, embedded in relations frequently translated as "friendship," have been refashioned in colonial and postcolonial contexts within Pacific societies.[2]

Historians have looked extensively at the relationship between friendship and empire, and those working in Pacific history have noted the way that the discourse of civic friendship comes to be an integral part of the colonizing mission. In *Intimate Strangers*, for example, Vanessa Smith argues that friendship relations like *taio* (the category presumed to mean "friendship" by the earliest visitors to Tahiti) become a "complex compound of economics and affect" (Smith 2010, 20), categories that, for Europeans, were part of the "centuries-old collision between material self-interest and intimate recognition" (Simoonds [encapsulating Smith] 2013, 370). At times, this contradiction operated dialectically, whereas, in other cases, it reflected the shifting stances of the European interlocutors who were lending significance to local interactions. The latter circumstance, argues Smith, typified the varied interpretations of friendship placed on the interactions between the Marquesans and Crook, a missionary, and Robarts, a deserter from the *New Euphrates*, a whaler who passed through

the southern Marquesas in 1798. While both men become adequately embedded in relationships with local Marquesans to experience taio-like relationships, each, for quite distinct reasons, ultimately retreats from the entailments of Marquesan "friendships" to the comfort of European ones because of the acategorical characteristics of the Marquesan relationships (Smith 2010: 263–81). Mixing exchange and sentimentality, Smith argues, forced these men to bridge categorizations between the savage and the civilized in ways that caused them discomfort (264), ultimately leading them to retreat to the comforts of the familiar.

American cultural studies theorist Ivy Schweitzer (2006) argues that Aristotle's distinctions, in which "natural slavery" was viewed as the inverse of perfect friendship, formed the underlying rationale for imperialist endeavors as many "medieval and early modern apologists for colonialism applied Aristotle's theory to . . . indigenous peoples . . . to justify social hierarchy, wars of conquest, and religious conversion by force" (16). While she analyzes these processes through perspectives presented in various Europeans' inscribed texts about indigenous peoples of the Americas, analogous rationalizations were used in the Pacific. Nevertheless, as Alecia Simoonds (2013) demonstrates using sequential editions of Turnbull's *Voyages* (1805 and 1813), the European gaze is far from monolithic. In Turnbull's case, he first presents friendship as "an impossible model of exchange thwarted by native incorrigibility" (370), a view in which Tahitian's "performance of hospitality exposed [the] epistemological collision between the supposed altruism of friendship and the self-interest of commerce" (377). When the first edition of *Voyages* proved to be a market disaster in the metropole, a mere trader's account in which, as the *Critical Review* claimed, the "voyage's 'commercial objective' gave Turnbull all the 'incitements of individual avarice'" (380), Turnbull reinvented his view of friendship with the Tahitians, and in the 1813 edition he replaced the Adam Smith–grounded view with a "natural law conception of friendship as commercial imperialism in its ideal, morally-virtuous form" (370). The 1813 edition of *Voyages* reimagines "imperial commerce . . . as a form of [cross-cultural] friendship" (381) and, Simoonds argues, the fact that the 1813 edition "won instant applause demonstrates the necessity of sentimental culture to British expansion in the Pacific. . . . Friendship [was critical] in securing the virtue of an imperial project in a region where traders were charged with corruption" (385).

Terrell (2015) deals with Pacific friendship from one anthropological perspective, though his is a largely archaeological project and has, as its target, a critique of the evolutionary biological or sociobiological views of theorists like E. O. Wilson and Steven Pinker. Terrell contends that there is good evidence that, as inherently social beings, humans are not at their core violent but rather have, throughout long evolutionary history, developed a "talent" for friendship.

While he grounds a substantial part of his argument in research that he and Rob Welsch conducted in the Pacific, more specifically, around Aitape, New Guinea, Terrell never really defines for us the specific *cultural* contours of friendship, that is, what is unique about friendship on Tumleo or other areas where he has worked. Indeed, Terrell provides some evidence that these friendships were multigenerational, inherited relationships (39–40), reminiscent of Kula exchanging partners. The exchange of clay, pots, and other valuables was part of these friendships. While the exchange dimension of these relationships is certainly widespread in the Pacific, as has already been seen, it lends a contour to the relationships that makes them very different from the "self-in-other" type of friendship idealized by Aristotle. For Terrell, these regional or cultural parameters are largely irrelevant, much less what might distinguish Tumleo friendship from friendship among other groups along the northern coast of Papua New Guinea. The coevolved ability to read friendly intention among dogs and humans, for Terrell, points to this generically evolved social talent (105), a phenomenon of interest in thinking about the shared propensities of all humans. At the same time, if even these generic friend-like qualities are extremely hard to read out of the physical and material records of our ancient pasts, they reveal nothing substantial about the nuanced cultural shapes, much less the performative contours, of the many practices that are considered to be friendship-like by specific groups of Pacific Islanders. As Beer (2001, 5806) notes (also in Beer and Gardner 2015), these practices are highly variable from society to society, and these are the practices deserving of further in-depth inquiry. Of equal interest may be societies of ample complexity to harbor multiple, contested views of personhood and friendship, social settings that only complicate the idea that friendship is immediately recognizable, always grounded in sentiment, or always manifest in egalitarian relationships (Desai and Killick 2010: 9–13).

Certainly, cultural anthropologists have worked toward digging deeper into the way that friendship-like relationships operate among local people. One of the most thought-provoking analyses, by James Carrier (in Bell and Coleman 1999), posits that friendship, in the Euro-American mode, brings with it an analytic perspective that requires autonomous individuals. Recognizing that Marshallese persona (and likely the persona taken to be the norm in many other Pacific persons) are highly interrelational (Carucci 2004, 2008; Graeber and Sahlins 2017), it is hardly surprising that the imagination of the self, projected onto/into an other in the idealized friendship of Aristotle, would seem like nonsense to Marshallese. What person would be so selfish and insensitive as to think that they could exist other than as a contiguous piece of those around them? Marshallese act and reflect on those actions as dyads, triads, and larger groups. To claim an action or thing simply as one's own is offensive.[3] Jerā- relationships, so-called friendships in this scenario, are reserved for those

who have crossed into being out of the realm of nonrelationship, not for those who might epitomize an ideal friend. Hence, a dilemma still exists for Terrell, for whom friendship is everywhere fashioned of the same type of thread, if not a piece of comparable fabric.

Like Bell and Coleman (1999), Amit Desai and Evan Killick (2010) have also provided an overview of friendship-like engagements among eight very different societies and among groups from rural to urban. While none of the chapters deal with Pacific friendships, certain lessons, nevertheless, may be learned from the Desai and Killick collection. Michelle Obeid (2010), for example, dealing with relationships in the Lebanese town of Arsal, notes the way in which local residents think of friendship and kinship as a "single form of social relationship" (93). Indeed, such is the case for Marshall Islanders even though jerā- relationships form one edge of the set of kinship, alliance, adoption-like relationships that exist in that locale. A much broader point is made by Coleman in the epilogue to *The Ways of Friendship*, a warning *not* to relegate friendship as "the informal negative to kinship's formal positive" (Coleman 2010, 199). This tendency only perpetuates British functionalist biases regarding the primacy of kinship in so-called primitive societies. David Schneider encouraged his students to place all sorts of interpersonal relationships on the same plane and not to privilege kinship—particularly the biogenetically grounded assumptions of Euro-American kinship—over a broad array of conceptually compatible human relationships. Once biogenetic bias has been winnowed out of the anthropological record of Marshallese kinship, the compatibilities between kinship and friendship are apparent. In Janet Carsten's (2000) terms, relatedness, always given a specifically local articulation, can allow us to escape the constraints of the contrast between culture and biology. Returning to Obeid, she, too, notes that the elaboration of friendship-like ties among her Lebanese consultants emerged under a regimen of shifting population characteristics in Arsal, with the community moving from a herding lifestyle to a much more diverse set of "occupations and livelihoods" as the population increased. In other words, as is true for Enewetak/Ujelang people, cosmopolitan and globalizing forces have caused the community to "change their attitude toward the nature of social life" (Obeid 2010, 96), and friendship-like relations have flourished under these altered social conditions. As Gillian Evans notes in her study of boys in the working-class neighborhoods of Bermondsey (southeast London), friendships are as much about exploring the potentialities of a relationship as they are about defining the identity characteristics of boys themselves (Evans, in Desai and Killick 2010, chap. 8). Certainly, such is the case for members of the Enewetak/Ujelang community in the contemporary era. In exploring the territory opened up by a plethora of new acquaintances, the risks involved in establishing jerā-relationships represent an investment in potentialities, in uncertain futures, and

in expanding the universe of relationships that were far less available during more than a century of colonial control.

As Vanessa Smith (2010) notes after surveying the historical landscape of friendships in the Pacific, "affective engagement is crucial to observation from within." At the same time, she notes that a "friendly methodology," such as that deployed by Malinowski, was part of a "new science trying to authorize itself . . . through a mixture of friendship and its disavowal." Far more in a Pacific mode than the inscriptions of Crook or Turnbull, Smith premises her book on the assumption that "professions of friendship disguise their opposite, that friendship is always calculating on other goals" (293). Certainly, jerā- relationships among Marshall Islanders are of this order, finding no contradiction between calculation and friendship in its perfect form.[4] For Marshallese, "if the friend is 'another self'" (Schweitzer 2006, 14), that other is loved not out of self-love but rather out of relational differences that position one's alter-self in a set of social circumstances different from those occupied by the person. Extensions of person and of the full array of available social interrelationships lie at the core of jerā- relationships. How better to make the transnational local?

The Inscribed Landscape of Jerā- Relationships among Marshall Islanders

A review of the literature on the Marshall Islands reveals little about relationships translated as "friendship." Certainly, the term appears in dictionaries that attempt to provide reasoned translations of terms used in everyday life in spoken Marshallese. Mentions of friendship also appear occasionally in the anthropological literature, though in-depth accounts of jerā- relationships, roughly "friend of-" pathways, do not exist. Importantly, Abo et al. (1976), in the *Marshallese-English Dictionary*, list "befriend" as the primary definition of jerā, followed by "friend," thus stressing some of the relational component of jerā- pathways (100). Equally, the ongoing interactive component of such relationships is suggested when the authors note that *jemjerā* might be roughly translated as "be friends; friendship; (or) friendly relationship" (97). One active example they provide is "He/(She) befriended the family," a translation of *Ear jemjerāik baamle eo*. This more nuanced interpretation of jerā- relationships represents a greater understanding than Bender's earlier suggestion that jerā- (which, at that time, he phonetically represented as *jeray*) meant "befriend, friend" (Bender 1969). At that point in time, Bender (1969, 227) adhered closely to Spoehr's biases about what Marshallese kinship was all about (Spoehr 1949, chaps. 7 and 8). While Spoehr was wise enough to recognize that Majuro residents were far more bilateral in their kinship practices than one might expect if they adhered to the African lineage model, kinship, nevertheless, was a domain he supposed was based on blood ties. Spoehr's biological bias is reflected in

Bender's separation of friendship from the dedicated chapters on kinship (Bender 1969, chaps. 17 and 22). As a linguist, however, following the common discourses of Marshallese speakers, Bender did include jerā- relationships as a logical part of a set of common phrases that includes everything from *ruwamāejet* "strangers/foreigners" to the closest of relatives (153–54). I further clarify the complexities of translation, meaning, and use of jerā- and other relationship terms below.

Like Bender, Tobin also adheres to Spoehr's model in his discussion of kin relations on Ujelang, with no mention of friendship. Therefore, kinship on Ujelang is presented as an isolated domain with kinspersons discussed as part of a steady-state lineage-style pattern that remains in alignment with ecological resources and economic conditions (Tobin 1967). Even though several Ujelang marriages at the time of Tobin's visit had begun as jerā- relationships, jerā- remained unexplored in Tobin's writings about Ujelang people. However, Tobin briefly does mention friendship in his work on Marshallese land tenure. Even though Tobin (1958) says nothing about gift land (*imōn aje*) being part of relationships with those termed jerā, something that certainly occurs in the Marshall Islands, he does note that *bwōl*, taro swamps, were given to persons related by friendship and marriage (65). While Tobin discusses lands transmitted through "adoption" (*kokajiriri*) and through pathways of marriage (21), his work reinforces the idea that kinship, which he judged to be a biologically grounded domain, stood in opposition to friendship, grounded in active social practices. This limited his understanding of kinning practices among Marshall Islanders. As much as Tobin's exploration of the various types of land tenure and use in the Marshall Islands are incredibly valuable, those local categories and practices do not align smoothly with his biologically grounded interpretations of kinship.

Neither the earliest of investigators of Marshall Islanders nor most of the recent Marshall Islands' researchers deal with friendship relationships in any depth. The mid-twentieth-century researchers, with their focus on relationships among kin, perhaps come closest to describing friendship-like relationships. For nineteenth- and early twentieth-century investigators, the idea that friendship might be contiguous with kinship was far beyond their limited, broad-brush, interpretive interests and understandings of the Marshall Islands.[5] Decades later, Mason and Kiste, like Spoehr and Tobin, mentioned above, were critical mid-twentieth-century Marshall Islands researchers who perpetuated the discussion of kinship as a biological domain. At times, they discuss kinship as an arena analogized and extended by adoption practices but without any consideration of friendship relationships.[6] This began to change, if slowly, following Carroll's publication of *Adoption in Eastern Oceania* (1970). Rynkiewich, Pollock, and Alexander, for example, explore and incorporate some

of the insights detailed in the Carroll volume.[7] By contrast, recent researchers have chosen to focus on specific domains of inquiry that have largely skirted friendship relations. Guided by the necessity to pursue far more in-depth and nuanced understandings of culture-specific topics in their inquiries, researchers in recent decades have elaborated on critical issues other than the shifting and emergent contours of friendship. An overview of these important research endeavors is provided in note 8.[8]

Of greater relevance to the analytic framing of jerā- relationships is McArthur's (1995, 2004) work, which draws attention to the critical way in which narrative and cultural performances operate at the contested interface between local and emerging national-level discourses and the negotiation of power in the Marshall Islands. Even though jerā- relationships do not form the core of his inquiry, McArthur's concentration on intertextual production and power as a critical leading edge of Marshallese cultural fashioning certainly informs the way I discuss the dynamic contours of jerā- relationships as they are reimagined and deployed through time. His brief discussion of jerā- relationships and Etao are addressed near the end of this article.

Another helpful contribution is Berman's (2019) work, which provides a series of explicit interactional sequences detailing the discursive practices of Marshallese children, particularly as they interface with adults. Nevertheless, her focus on the ways in which giving can be avoided leads her down a path contrary to the way in which jerā- relationships are generated, maintained, and altered through time. Similarly, Berman's (2014) research on kokajiriri "adoption," a practice that I have argued is a core part of Marshall Islanders' "kinning" practices (Carucci 2008, 2017), offers a very different view of the meanings and intents of this frequent, if waning, Marshall Islands relationship-generating activity.

Finally, Dvorak's (2018) book *Coral and Concrete* delves deeply into the ethnohistory of Kwajalein. He explores the complex interpersonal/international encounters that have taken place on the atoll and among its many transnational community members as well as with those with whom they have interacted. While jerā- relationships are important dimension of the interactions that took place among Kwajalein people and Japanese, Koreans, and Americans who have occupied the atoll over the past century, Dvorak's focus on the "structural violence and systematized racism" that were pervasive in these interactions leads him in other highly productive directions. Therefore, like the works on World War II by Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci (2001) and Falgout, Poyer, and Carucci (2008), Dvorak's work, while mentioning friendships, does not focus on jerā- relationships and the way in which the everyday practices among the partners to those relationships have altered their contours through time. This article attempts to fill that void.

Exploring Jerā- Relationships

For Marshall Islanders, establishing and maintaining jerā- "friend of" pathways and the whole process of befriending (*jerāiki*) transforms nonrelationships and uncertain relationships into kin-type categories when definite, perduring alignments do not yet allow those relationships to be considered a specific type of kin relationship. Jerā- relationships exist in a purgatory-like state, awaiting further classification once active relationships are perpetuated long enough to grant them specific kinship formulations. They are exploratory first moves that offer those from outside an as yet unproscribed position within the community. While that position is marginal and exists for a time in a sort of suspended animation, it may bring the privileges of the guest, placing one front and center, with special access to goods and no (overt) expectation of return. At the same time, like all those positioned in the center, a jerā- will always receive overelaborated attentions that allow others within the local community to assess just how those prestations are received and reciprocated. Jerā- relationships initially require some risk, dangling a sacrificial gift in the lap of the recipient to see what type of reciprocation it evokes, to establish what type of added kinning practices may lie in waiting if the relationship is maintained and, it is hoped, nurtured and enhanced. On the other hand, frequently jerā- relationships fizzle, moving back toward oblivion as someone departs from an island or otherwise leaves a social scene, never to return. Nevertheless, the discursive labels for those one-time relationships of the past allow the relational characteristics that linked people together to be discussed retrospectively, sustaining a liminality that states to others that this was not just an interaction with a stranger, but neither was it a relationship among us.

The expansionist aim of jerā- relationships makes them well aligned with the era of globalization, for under such conditions, new relationships are constantly available to be tested and assessed in terms of their short-term lives or perduring character.[9] The World War II era presented prime opportunities to explore the expansive depth of jerā- relationships for Marshall Islanders, with friendships established with ordinary Japanese soldiers and with pseudo-jerā- relationships explored with American servicemen as well. The early years of the American administration of the Marshall Islands placed Enewetak and Ujelang people back in an isolated position in the world, but in the years leading up to and following Marshallese independence, mobility increased, and the opportunity to deploy strategies of jerāiki "friend making" moved onto center stage. In many instances, those friend-making strategies eventually proved vacuous, but in some cases, they have led to long-term friendship or kinship/marriage relationships, and in that sense, they have borne some interrelational fruit. In the course of this article, I provide some examples of the way that jerā- relationships

operate and equally concentrate on the way the contours of the relationship category have shifted through time as expanded ideas about community have accompanied the movement of Enewetak/Ujelang people from their outer island locale to Majuro (government center of the Marshall Islands) to Hawai'i and to additional settings in the mainland United States. One hears jerā- spoken of with increasing frequency during this period of time inasmuch as it has been an era of communal exploration and dispersion, undoubtedly not the first in the long history of Enewetak and Ujelang atolls but certainly the first within colonial times, an era when people were largely restricted to a single atoll or nearby atolls where one might still assert shared pathways of clan identity. By contrast, within the past forty years, members of the community have moved to foreign locales where they encounter few, if any, kinspersons, and at the same time, others have come to the various locales where Enewetak and Ujelang people now live, establishing ties of greater density than those that typify outsiders.

To provide a bit of context, I have worked extensively with members of the Enewetak/Ujelang community over the past forty-four years, living for more than seven years of that time in the Marshall Islands, in Hawai'i, or in one of the other locales that Marshall Islanders now call home. The self-assigned designation of Enewetak/Ujelang derives from the thirty-three years that members of the community lived in exile on Ujelang during the period following World War II when the United States appropriated Enewetak Atoll for use as a nuclear test site. The community returned to Enewetak in 1980 after a partial cleanup of the atoll, but the failure of the United States to fully rehabilitate the majority of the atoll and the impossibility of living in the Marshallese manner on an atoll so thoroughly altered by nuclear testing led many members of the community to move elsewhere, including Majuro (the government center of the Marshall Islands) and the Big Island of Hawai'i. During this period of massive social and cultural change, the relationship term jerā- changed in its frequency of use as well as in the array of relationships that might be considered rough equivalents to the American idea of friendship.

During my first field research stay with the Enewetak/Ujelang people, then living on Ujelang, I read about the term jerā- in Byron Bender's *Marshallese-English Dictionary*, but it was many months before I encountered any Ujelang people who used the term. When I asked about the term, some of my close consultants simply said "oh, friend"—that was its meaning in their view, but its lack of use seemed to indicate that Ujelang people simply did not make or have friends. In essence, this was true since all day-to-day relationships were among kinspersons, and it was that array of kin terms that were utilized, along with personal names, and a whole battery of pronouns that people deployed to describe the relationships and interactions that took place every day. Two Peace Corps members lived on the atoll, but one of them had established a marriage

relationship on the island, and the other resided with a local family and was referred to as "the male living with Jemej and wife" or "the white guy[10] living in Yakjo." Less than two months after my own arrival, I was adopted by one of the elder women in the community (Carucci 1997), and therefore none of the outsiders who lived within the community remained outsiders. We were incorporated into the web of kinship relationships in our various different ways and then referred to or discussed using kin terms and residential location terms, not by the term jerā-.

In 1977, as the Ujelang people began planning to their return to Enewetak Atoll, things began to change. A middle-aged respected elder, Benjamin, who had a long-established relationship with one of the regional leaders from the Department of Energy, began to communicate with that man, and with that contextual shift, people referred to the man as *jerān* Benjamin. While the regional leader was also, on occasion, called by his personal name, it was common to refer to him in the abstract as *leo jerān* Benjamin—"that man, Benjamin's friend." Once the program known as *Tempedede* "Temporary" was established that allowed Ujelang elders to return to Jeptan islet on Enewetak Atoll in advance of their planned repatriation, the conditions were set to have the term jerā- used frequently. With those residential shifts and with a plethora of opportunities to interact with others who were not locals but with whom people interacted on an extended basis, people deployed the term to cover opportunistic relationships that, they hoped, would be perpetuated and would result in new resources and gifts being bestowed on members of the community.[11] At the same time, since the future duration of these relationships could not be predicted and since those jerā- were not embedded in the wider web of kinship relationships, they were termed jerān so-and so "the friend of so-and-so." The links were typically through a specific individual or perhaps a small group of local men who had established this seemingly close relationship with a worker on Enewetak. Ironically, with these expanding relational possibilities that brought the jerān so-and-so era into frequent use, the discourses even shifted to some degree back on Ujelang. Once Tempedede had been in operation for a few months and some of the community members who had been on Enewetak returned to Ujelang, I was addressed as jerā for the first time. On that day, a young returnee just back from Enewetak shouted out to me, *Jerā; ewor ke kijem jikka*? "Friend, do you have any food-class cigarettes?" While I was not a smoker, most of those who were, including this young man, knew that I often had cigarettes available for those who came to my house to consult with me on various research topics. But if this young man remembered the cigarettes, it was as if he forgot that, prior to his departure, he had always used a kin term, *rūkora* "my mother's younger brother," to address me. Jerā- had a very impersonal ring in comparison. One of my close research consultants surmised that the young man had on

Enewetak grown accustomed to addressing men he was hoping to *kantāk* "contact" for cigarettes with the English term "friend." Now back on Ujelang, he had forgotten to shift back to a kinship register, instead using the same routine form of address he had deployed with American employees on Enewetak, where the term jerā- had been appropriate. If my close consultant was correct, the young man was just translating back into Marshallese without much forethought, but his use of "friend" on Enewetak was entirely strategic. That is, he used "friend" *not* to identify an extant friend but rather as a strategy to "contact" men he did not really know at all in order to convince them to give him a cigarette. The "friend of-" only referred to a relationship he hoped would further develop, at least in relation to the sharing of cigarettes. Little wonder that as the young man addressed me as jerā-, his tonality and use of the Marshallese gloss for "friend" sounded quite impersonal to me.

Jerā- on Enewetak came to have a meaning that covered other types of "fishing expeditions" as well. As soon as young women began to join the elders and crew of male workers who first traveled to Enewetak under the Tempedede Program, word returned to Ujelang that a few of them had established jerān relationships with workmen on Enewetak. These men were then referred to as "jerān Medietta, jerān Moej," or whatever other young woman at that time had begun to pursue a jerā- relationship with an outsider working on Enewetak. In the case of both Moej and Medietta, the relationships led to marriage, though only that of Moej lasted for the long term. Nevertheless, until the time when each couple was considered married, community members used the term jerān "friend of" plus the name of the future spouse to refer to this newcomer. And gender was not the determining factor in such relationships. A few months later, Hezra began an interpersonal relationship with a *di pālle* "American" woman on Majuro, a woman who was already known by name to Ujelang people. For that reason, she was either referred to by her personal name or called jerān Hezra.

Most critically, these exploratory cross-sex relationship terms are far different than trial marriages within the community. Such trial marriages between cross cousins occurred consistently during the years of research I have spent with Enewetak/Ujelang people, but until quite recently, none of them were categorized as jerān so-and-so. Cross-gender sexual relationships or trial marriages deploy the jerān so-and-so formula only when the person identified via another person's first name is not him- or herself a member of the community. In this sense, jerā- relationships remain exploratory, whereas everything is known about both parties to a trial marriage in a cross-cousin relationship. As cross-cousin pairings become publicly known, other Ujelang/Enewetak people inevitably begin joking with one member of the pair as if they were already married. Once a publicly visible sign demonstrates that a couple is actually *koba* "combined" or "married," the categorization of the relationship simply moves from

a joking register to a reality register by deleting the smiles and other clues that mark that a comment is in jest. Most commonly with cross cousins, the visible sign of this change comes when the man remains until sunup with his partner and consumes morning food with her family. In any case, terms of reference and address are the same for cross-sex partners, modified only by intonation, smiling, and so on. If inquiring about a partner's whereabouts, the statement is simply, *Ewi lio (leo) ippōm* "where is that female (male) who is with you" (understood to mean "your spouse"). As a form of reference, the most frequent statement is, *Ewi lio/leo ippen XX* "where is that male/female with XX" (the name of the "spouse"). Once a couple is truly living together, the smiles and marked intonation are simply deleted. With more established couples, *ippen* comes to alternate with *Ewi XX emen*—harder to translate but something like "where is XX (personal name of one of the spousal pair) and that person who is part of XX." The "friend of XX" formula employs the same grammatical arrangement as "with" and "part of" relational referents, but XX always designates the known community member. If jerā- has, in recent years, come to alternate with the ippen form of address and reference for cross-cousin, not-yet-married pairs, I believe it is because the number of cross-cousin marriages within the Enewetak/Ujelang community has decreased radically. Therefore, the jerān XX relationships are the new reference norm, and cross-cousin relationships now borrow from the relational terms most commonly encountered. Nevertheless, in spite of these shifts in marriage, jerā- remain liminal, another type of linkage that, it is hoped, will transition into a marriage. On this account, they have a different history of use when compared with the taken-for-granted relationships that derived from cross-cousin pairs. An intermediate transitional referent is needed to cover the stage of hope since the relationship between a community member and an outsider is far more tenuous and exploratory than trial marriages between those cross cousins who have been in face-to-face relationships with one another throughout their lives.

For many years, Ujelang people were considered marginal "backwoods" sorts of Marshallese by those in the Marshall Islands, and only a handful of marriages were contracted between Ujelang people and Marshall Islanders during the years that Enewetak people lived in exile on Ujelang. With the money from a trust fund to begin to compensate Enewetak/Ujelang people for the suffering they had endured during the nuclear testing era, the conditions governing such marriages changed. Almost overnight in the mid-1980s, Enewetak/Ujelang people were reclassified as desirable spouses by Marshall Islanders, and many marriages began to integrate Enewetak/Ujelang into the Marshall Islands. This entailed a significant reformulation of identities since at the time people lived on Ujelang, they spoke of Marshallese (*di Majel*) as outsiders in exactly the same way they spoke of Pohnpeians or other groups around the Pacific. Enewetak/

Ujelang people did not consider themselves a subtype of Marshallese. As people intermarried with Marshallese, a move that coincided with the (semi-) independence of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Ujelang/Enewetak people came to speak of themselves as Marshall Islanders. Many of their new spouses had ties to Majuro inasmuch as that was the location where Marshall Islanders were most likely to be encountered. Some of these marriages, as well, deployed the jerān XX formula that had been used to discuss protomarriage relationships with workers on Enewetak. The situation was complicated, however, by linkages of clanship, which, in some cases, supersede atoll boundaries.

Indeed, overtly, people from Enewetak appeared to deploy the term jerā- in exactly the same way for Marshallese cross-gender "friends" as they did for those relationships with Hawaiian and American workers during the Tempedede era. For some people, however, there was a difference, and that distinction focused on clan ties. Di pālle and Hawaiians were considered clanless, though at one point on Ujelang, someone claimed that my clan must be the eagle clan since a representation of an eagle appeared on the presidential insignia of the United States and was also found on quarter-dollar coins. Some Marshallese, at least, were different. Frequently, adult Enewetak/Ujelang community members in the 1970s and 1980s talked about interpersonal relationships among Marshall Islanders that they encountered in Majuro as a way to specify who someone was and what the proper demeanors should be when in that person's presence. Often, younger Marshallese were linked with mature Marshallese men or women who were known to Enewetak/Ujelang people: "Oh, that young unmarried woman is born to that woman who is the younger sister of XX," and, as needed, the social relationship between XX and some other even more widely known person would be specified. These existing links of interpersonal relationship were used, at least on some occasions, to decertify the generic, exploratory nature of a jerā- relationship with a Marshall Islander. On one occasion, for example, Medi ("Mary"), the wife of the Ujelang mayor, interrupted as someone identified the relationship a young Enewetak man had with a young woman from Majuro: "Those two are not just friends for a while (inconsequential friends). She is not solely his friend, because she is the offspring of that female person XX, and XX is an Ejoa." A younger woman interrupts Mary to say that the woman was still a friend of the young Enewetak man, but Mary cut her off, saying "No, can't you see that . . . can't you see they are cross cousins to one another because he is an Ijjidik." This was surprising to me since several very knowledgeable Ujelang people had indicated that the Ijjidik and Ejoa clans in the Marshall Islands were not necessarily the same as those clans on Enewetak, though a few Ijjidik and Ejoa derived from failed early attempts of Marshallese warriors to conquer and settle Enewetak Atoll. Even though the conquests had failed, one or two families were separated from the invaders and were assimilated into Enewetak. With those

families came fragments of Marshallese clans. But those clans were not the same as the original Enewetak Ejoa clan, for example, which was a founding clan of a now long-absent subdivision of Enewetak known as Wurrin (running north and south from Runit islet, the "capital" of Wurrin). In any case, Medi's contention conflated these complications, but it presumed that because the young man and woman were distant cross cousins, inasmuch as Enewetak Ijjidik and Ejoa intermarriages were of the bilateral cross-cousin variety, these two were not jerā-, or, if they were jerā-, they were not solely jerā-, because an already existing cross-cousin relationship predefined the relationship. The preexistence of that pathway contravened the exploratory nature of any jerā- relationship. Hertej, the mayor, and some other male respected elders jumped in to try to clarify exactly how the young woman fit within the array of Marshallese Ejoa clan members, but no one contradicted Medi's contention. There was something in preexisting clan relations that brought the use of the term jerā- into question and that precertification of other relationships outweighed and perhaps even disallowed the use of jerā- to describe this "friendship-like" bond. If jerā- were like relatives-in-waiting, relatives were not intensified friends. Relatives emerged from another source that included already determinant parts of a person's personality and demeanor along with a clanship marking that specified a whole set of prohibitions and allowable types of activities. Jerā-, oozing out of the fringes of otherness (ruwamāejet), did not share these characteristics of precertification.

On the Big Island, as might be expected given the trajectory outlined above, one hears about jerān all of the time. But the term of address jerā is heard only rarely. This is because virtually all situations where one might say, "Oh, my friend" as a form of address uses precisely those terms since English speakers are the people being addressed. However, among Marshallese, there is frequent talk of jerān so-and-so, "the friend of so-and-so," and typically the "so-and-so" is a Marshallese person who is an integral part of the community while that person's jerān is not. Equally, one hears *lio jerām* or *leo jerām* frequently "that female person, your friend" or "that male person, your friend" speaking to a member of the Marshallese community but referring to someone who is not part of that same community. These referential devices, therefore, are precisely the same as those already discussed, but because Hawai'i is a place where Enewetak/Ujelang people are frequently intermarried with Marshall Islanders and where Marshallese are surrounded by outsiders, utterances of this sort are heard far more frequently than in the Marshall Islands.

In terms of the relationships themselves, for Enewetak/Ujelang people in Hawai'i, jerā- varies from relationships where a community member has many interactions with other Marshall Islanders to others who, at best, seem to be marginal friends. While Americans are renowned among Western Apache for calling

people they barely know "friends" (Basso 1979), Enewetak/Ujelang folks have a polyphonic response to such performative friends. Like Western Apache, some may simply respond to such faux friends with silence, later laughing about the shallow understanding of Americans once they have departed. But others participate in the public deceit, reciprocating by publicly responding with the English word "friend" even if, once the "friend" has departed, a more critical assessment of that person's relationship may be voiced. I have heard Bilimon, a fairly gregarious long-term resident of the Big Island, use the English term "friend" in both ways as well as others. He calls one di pālle "white person" with whom he has long-standing, mutually beneficial exchange relationships "friend" when speaking with him and later, when discussing the same man among fellow Marshall Islanders, refers to him as *leo jerā* "that fellow, my friend." In another case, however (a white man who brings fish to sell by Bilimon's and Neiwan's house on occasion), I have heard other members of Bilimon's household call the man leo jerān Bilimon "that guy, a friend of Bilimon's." Nevertheless, Bilimon himself expresses more ambivalent attitudes about the fish guy. At times, he calls him "friend" (in English) when speaking with him directly but then critiques him among family members once the man has departed. The distinction may be slight, but Bilimon himself never calls the fish-delivery person jerā among Marshallese family and friends. I take this to mean that jerā, for him, requires more sustained interactions, a more developed relationship, and a relationship that performatively moves toward a kinship relationship. In other words, Bilimon reserves jerā- as a category that means "friend with the potential to become a relative." Indeed, when Bilimon critiques the fish "friend," it is most frequently because the price he demands for his fish is too high. That very act negates the generosity that should typify relationships among relatives and jerā- "potential relatives/friends." When others refer to the same man as jerān Bilimon, their intent is different. In essence, those others are saying, "Well, we do not really know this guy, but he is (kind of) a friend of Bilimon's." The referential range of the term, then, varies depending on context, but jerā- still occupies the liminal space between outsiders with whom one has no regular relationship and those to whom one refers (and addresses) as kinspersons. For someone to claim another as jerā- (other than when requesting cigarettes or another small favor) requires a more established relationship than to refer to someone else as jerān so-and-so. For Bilimon, the use of jerā- as opposed to "friend" is more than code switching. It differentiates *leo*/*lio jerā* (that male/female person with whom I have a sustained set of exchanges, more investment of love and caring, and view as a potential relative) from "friend," an English label to publicly encourage someone to respond in a generous, desirable way but with no indication that they are on the way to accomplishing that aim. By contrast, either jerā- or "friend" may be used to refer to someone else's friend when one does not know the relationship thoroughly. On the Big Island, the terms often provide a

strategic shortcut to explain why some person who is not a community member may be interacting with a person who is part of the community.

In addition to all of these friendship relationships there is another use of the term that has become increasingly common among kinspersons. In these instances, one addresses a kinsperson using *Oo, jerā* . . . in situations where a speaker seriously doubts the veracity of the statement that has just been uttered by the person one is calling "friend." This allows a speaker to set aside the specific relational ties of kinship that link the speaker to the person being spoken to and, instead, question them as if they should not be constrained by all of the proprieties that accompany the more complex relationship. Thus, one is able to say, "You are kidding, right" or "I doubt that is true" to kinspersons whose word should never be questioned. Among in-married and recently married young men and women, this usage of jerā occurs all of the time, as if everything that another age-mate says is doubtful. Fully mature adults use the form with greater discrimination, and it is heard only rarely among the most highly respected of aging *alab* "respected elders." Those elders typically speak with great consideration. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that they seldom deploy this "I doubt what you are saying" form. Even if they do doubt that something is true, that perspective will not be publicly revealed to anyone in the conversation. At best, it will be discussed when the respected elder is speaking with a different group at a later point in time.

Jepta Relationships in Hawai'i

In addition to jerā-based utterances that mark the relationships that link people together, on the Big Island, in particular, jerā- has come to be deployed to discuss relationships among groups. The first of these I witnessed was during *Kūrijmōj* in 2002, the three- or four-month-long celebration engaged in by Enewetak/Ujelang people and other Marshall Islanders that has totally reformulated Christmas into a Marshallese festive event. As I have discussed at length elsewhere (Carucci 1997), local communities divide themselves into competing *jepta* "song fest groups" for the celebration, and these groups travel back and forth on visits where the groups share food and challenge one another to singing and dance competitions. These visits are termed *kamolu*, literally "to make song." On Ujelang, there were only two jepta, Jitōken and Jitoen, the "windward and leeward" halves, and they competed as metaphoric warfaring groups, doing battle with their songs, dances, speeches, and foods and as metaphoric marriage partners. As the population expanded and spread out onto multiple islet residence locales after the community's repatriation onto Enewetak, the number of competing jepta also increased from two to three and then, ultimately, to four groups. Equally, on the Big Island in the 2002–2003 Kūrijmōj season, there were four jepta, though one was in Hilo and participated only for major events. During the

season of back-and-forth kamolu on the Big Island, sometime after the Ocean View jepta had held three or four major kamolu encounters with the Captain Cook jepta, Bilimon and his older brother, Tobin—one from Ocean View and one from Captain Cook—told me at a first birthday's party during November, "Ocean View and Captain Cook have become friends with one another (*emoj aer jerāiki doon*)." Since that time, I have heard a number of other group relationships, including the "political" alliances described in the next section, described as jerā- relationships. This usage had never occurred on Ujelang, but, again, the context did not require it. Jepta in that location were already described as opposed partners who engaged in mock battles and a marriage-like alliance. With only two jepta, they were the only "cross-cousins" who could engage in such an alliance.

While the groups on the Big Island had proliferated, the same basic principle of alliance unifying opposed groups held in that setting as well. An analogous logic extended also to the political contexts described in the following section. If jerā- relationships exist in the conceptual space between ruwamāejet and kinspersons, jerā- were like cross-cousin alliances of marriage. These relationships brought members of different clans together, unifying opposites, and if on Ujelang those cross cousins were frequently members of the same extended families, since the population was small, nevertheless, they were members of opposite clans. The marriage alliance re-cemented those who were being made into the first logical types of others, cross cousins, by bringing access to their different lands back together and by birthing offspring that themselves stood, generation after generation, as the visible proof that two clans were ongoing partners allied with one another. As with the jepta in Captain Cook and Ocean View, jerā- described that marriage-like alliance. The relationship held risk since it involved a group of others, even if, in the case of Ujelang marriages, those others were very well known. It did not share features with those linked as siblings, as mother/child, or as grandmother/grandchild. Those relationships also required constant time, nurturance, and investments of labor, but they were among clan mates. Jerā- were alliance-like relations among others, potential partners to a (future) marriage. Since one's internal visceral substance differed from those others, even spouses, one needed to be very diligent in order to nurture and polish those relationships though exchange, but caution was always required since difference represented the potential of alternate agendas that one might not fully understand.

Governmental Friendships

Once Enewetak people came to recognize that they had been constructed as international political animals, as representations of a cause that was continuously and, all too frequently, solely associated with being nuclear survivors, the idea also emerged that they were either supported by others or castigated by them.

Thus, in 2014, Boas said, "It is as if those human entities in Congress now (U.S. Congressmen) are not now friends (*kio rejjab jerān*) of the people of Enewetak," noting the change in tenor since times during the Clinton era or earlier, when Congress was more supportive of the plight of the Enewetak community and other Northern Marshall Islands groups that suffered as a result of U.S. nuclear testing. Equally, seeking to better understand the odd machinations of politics in the United States, Joniten asked (in 2015), "Why is it that the Republicans (*Republican rane*) are not friends with Marshall Islanders?" This was difficult for him to comprehend since, in earlier, more cordial political times, U.S. senators and congressional representatives from both sides of the isle were relatively supportive of issues concerning Marshallese who had made sacrifices to help the United States during World War II and the Cold War era. The friend/not friend distinction deployed by both of these Enewetak/Ujelang elders is a simplifying device that, in these instances, is aimed at understanding support or nonsupport for causes that might benefit their community. In no way do these uses of jerān attempt to capture specific friendships, for indeed, with the dozens of encounters between Enewetak leaders and senators or congressional representatives in Washington, D.C., highly cordial friendship-like relations did exist between those lawmakers and Enewetak elders who frequented their offices on Capitol Hill. The same type of friend/not friend categorization of political relationships was used a few years earlier as Enewetak community members tried to understand the shifting politics between the United States and Russia. In 2002, Jimako asked me quizzically, "Why is it I do not understand? Before, there were years and years when Russia and America hated each other, as if it was prohibited to talk together, and now, it is as if they are friends with one another (*jerān doon*)." In all of these instances, friend/nonfriend condenses complex political relationships into a yes/no formula. Like the use of jerā- to describe jepta relationships at Kūrijmōj, these relations are alliances rather than relations among those who are bilateral extended family or clan relatives. However, nearly the opposite of its uses in interpersonal relationships, no liminal or exploratory components accompany these ideas about jerān. Perhaps jerān of this sort should be translated as "ally," but given the complex array of strategies of alliance among local Marshall Islanders, it seems surprising that they would expect alliances among Americans and other foreigners to be less nuanced and strategic.

In many ways, the relatively recent political use of jerā- relationships reappropriates the friendship discourse that was used by European and American powers during the colonial era as if jerā- were a simple translation of American, German, or Japanese ideas about friendship. Taipei, for example, has adopted Majuro as a "sister city," and above the Republic of the Marshall Islands International Conference Center, a sign that displays the flags of both nations alongside one another states (English first, then Marshallese), "Gift from the

people of Taiwan Token of friendship and cooperation between Taiwan and the Marshall Islands October 12th, 2007," and then, in Marshallese, "Menin letok jen armij in Taiwan Kakōllan bujen jimjerā im ibben doon ikotan Taiwan im Marshall Islands October 12th, 2007." *Jimjerā im ippen doon ikotan* is here translated as "friendship and cooperation between," though a more literal translation might be "friends with/of one another and remaining together in between." Of course, inasmuch as the money for the conference center came from Taiwan as a gift, it marks a ranked relationship in which Marshallese friendship/alliance is presumed to extend into the future in exchange for an unreciprocated gift. Each of these recent uses of jerā- incorporates the residues of colonialism even as they extend, without much questioning, into the postcolonial era. Herein, the reification of relationships among imagined entities, "states," are given qualities analogous to actively engendered interpersonal relationships among humans, thereby presupposing that many characteristics about the dynamic qualities of rank and friendship are also applicable to entities like the United States, Taiwan, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Toward a Dynamic Theory of Jerā- Relationships

Returning to the theoretical survey of Pacific friendship with which I began this article, it is my hope that the culturally specific and contextually variable contours of jerā- relationships among Marshall Islanders, a point that aligns with the works of Bettina Beer and of Desai and Killick, has been made evident. Equally, jerā- relationships reinforce the messages Carrier's work, pointing to the way in which the contraindividual Marshallese approach to personhood interfaces with culturally contoured notions of "friendship," a point that aligns with the interrelational stress on interpersonal relationships stressed by Graeber and Sahlins. Furthermore, I hope that the way in which historical forces reveal points of friction (Smith) and lead to changes in local conceptualizations and uses of "friendship" (Obeid) or, more accurately, of jerā- relationships in the Marshall Islands is quite obvious. Finally, I have highlighted the way in which Marshall Islander's ideas of "kinship"-like relations and "friendship"-like relations are contiguous in character, not, as Coleman cautions, a logical formulation in which friendship stands as the logical negative to kinship's positive. With these features in mind, I hope to point readers toward a more dynamic and nuanced understanding of jerā- relationships and practices among Marshall Islanders.

Alterations of Cultural Logic: Reinscribing the Ancient Past

The stories of Etao have long held special interest and humor for Marshall Islanders, and if one hears these stories recited with less frequency than in the

pretelevision era, they are still considered intriguing by youth and adults today. In this article, I have tried to show how jerā-, roughly equivalent to "friend/friendship," has moved from marginal use during an era when nearly all relations were among kin and political interests were largely local to a vastly expanded domain as Marshall Islanders have entered the global era and explored many new settings where repeated and ongoing relations with others are common. But, as Truillot (1995) reminds us, interpretations of the past always incorporate elements of the moments of their construction in the here-and-now and such is the case with the genre of Etao tales exchanged among Marshallese.

Etao, the trickster figure in Marshall Islands belief, offspring of Lijebake, and primordial fashioner of Marshall Islands landmarks, travels a route from Kapiloñ (the islands to the southwest, such as Pohnpei) to Ujelang and Enewetak, then on to Bikini and the Rālik Chain of the Marshall Islands before heading to Ratak (the "sunrise" chain of atolls and coral pinnacles forming the eastern range of seamounts in the Marshall Islands). His final two escapades in the Marshall Islands take place on Majuro and Mili atolls before Etao heads to Kiribati and then, according to some renditions from the 1970s and 1980s, on to the United States, where he revealed to the Americans the secret of the nuclear bomb (see Carucci 1989). As is often the case, in his final Marshall Islands encounter on Mili, his aim is to steal away with local women, and on Mili, the chief's daughters are his cherished prize. In the 1970s and 1980s versions of this story, several different storytellers indicated that Etao's aim was to *koba ippen*, that is, to "combine with" or "marry" the daughters, or to babu ippen "lie down with" or "sleep with" the daughters. When I heard a version of this story more recently, in 2006, among Big Island Marshallese, Etao's aim was now to jerāiki "befriend" the daughters, though, certainly, some intentions of "sleeping with" were discussed later in the story.[12] In many ways, the telling of the story had not shifted much in the decades that separated these versions. Nevertheless, in the 2006 version, befriending had become inscribed as an ancient aim of Etao even though that jerā- tie emerged as a way of discussing cross-gender relationships quite recently among Enewetak/Ujelang people. In this manner, traditional lore is constantly reimagined, with ancients acting in ways enabled by the possibilities of the current day. Etao, always enigmatic, acts in ways that complicate the designs and desires of Marshallese chiefs and ordinary people. But in certain ways, he acts in a fashion complicit with their desires and their abilities. Such is the case when Etao begins befriending chiefly daughters, an act, much like his excursion to America, that brings Etao to life for contemporary Marshallese audiences. Jerā- relationships become highly elaborated as a correlate of the potentialities inherent in new relationships, for if Marshall Islanders are not themselves highly empowered in relation to the large nations of the earth, their expertise in generating power out of interpersonal relationships is, if not unmatched, virtually unlimited.

NOTES

1. Bettina Beer (2001, 5806) also notes the common overlap of friendship and kinship in her overview of friendship.

2. This article began as part of that ASAO session, Friendship and Peer Relationships, held in San Diego, California, 2016. My thanks to session convener Mary K. Good and to my coparticipants for insightful comments and inspiration to continue working on this important topic.

3. Marilyn Strathern (1988) has noted that relational selves are also typical of Melanesians, destabilizing any simplistic equation that would allow for the comparison with the stable, autonomous selves taken for granted by many residents of Europe or the United States.

4. Equally, without bringing any mark of distain on anthropological friendships, this same "reflexive assumption" undoubtedly characterizes all friendships in the field (Flinn et al. 1997), for no matter how "native" an anthropologist may "go," a multiply layered set of contexts always frame his or her motivations for interaction.

5. For example, folks like Kotzebue (1821, 1830), Erdland (1914), and Kramer (1906; see also Kramer and Nevermann n.d.) make little mention of friendship relations. This is not surprising inasmuch as, far in advance of the scholars mentioned in the above paragraph, they had already presupposed that the Marshall Islands was a kinship-based society and that kinship must be biological. The exception in Kramer and Nevermann is a short story recorded under "Oracle, *bubu*," a way of foretelling the future using different arrangements of knots on a string of sennit: "When A. Capelle . . . came in 1859, Chief Djimata on Ebon consulted the oracle. When it turned out favorable three times, he said, 'You are my friend'" (Kramer and Nevermann n.d., 32). In line with the thesis of this paper, it is not surprising that this interaction occurred in the muddled spaces between us and them, insiders and outside foreigners. Equally, Capelle offspring today mark the success of the Marshall Islands' strategy to use a jerā- relationship as a pathway toward becoming an insider, *nūkū-* (roughly "relative").

6. American researchers following World War II helped extend the idea of biological kinship as they attempted to interpret Marshallese kin practices with modified versions of Radcliffe-Brown's African systems of kinship and marriage. Adhering to this model, investigations such as those of Mason (1947, 1954) and Spoehr (1949) inadvertently reinforced the separation between friendship and kinship. Len Mason (1947), for example, clearly attempts to impose Euro-American ideas of "blood" onto Marshallese categories even though they do not fit. He says "*nugin* is the term applied to all relatives by blood" but then notes that some consultants have a special term for people "related to the *alap* (family/land head) through the male line and not the female" (16). Clearly, then, so-called blood ties (biogenetic relationship) have nothing to do with the way Marshallese define relatives since they place relatives with identical amounts of shared blood quanta in opposite categories. In the same way, Mason attempts to remove kajiriri (literally "cared for" relatives and spouses from membership in the *bwij* since they have no blood ties to other members of the group, but then he, necessarily, says they are "generally excluded" [for spouses] or "on the death of the foster parent, [they] generally return to . . . their real mother's *bwij* (15–16)." Entailed in "generally" is the fact that, frequently, these exclusions and dismissals are *not* true. Completing Mason's biological imposition on Marshall Islanders' reckoning of kin is the way in which he defines Marshallese kin terms using a genealogical grid (18–21): therefore, the meaning of *jiman*, for Mason, is

"his mother's father, his father's father, his male relative of the preceding generation [his great uncle], his ancestor" (19). These anthropological conveniences cannot possibly capture what the Marshall Islanders who worked with Mason told him. Rather, they represent Mason's isolating and biologizing of Marshall Islander's ideas about relatedness. Following the precedent set by Spoehr, Mason, and Tobin, Kiste (1974) dedicates a chapter to social organization in *The Bikinians* (1974). He does mention adoption, a popular "alternative kinship" topic of that era (Carroll 1970), but friendship relationships are not discussed.

7. Rynkiewich (1972, 1976) begins to break down the idea of kinship in the biological mode when describing adoption as "part of a cultural domain that might be called kinship sharing or reciprocity" (Rynkiewich 1976, 95), wherein Marshall Islanders stress "the kind of relationship that would be established" (93) with "an emphasis on sharing food, housing, and labor" (95). While friendship was left out of his discussion, it need not have been inasmuch as a similar set of emphases hold in the case of jerā- relationships. In spite of Rynkiewich's attempt to move the discussion of kinship beyond a biological model, he continues to be constrained by earlier anthropological models. In a classic case of ethnocentric double-speak, on subsequent pages (95–98) Rynkiewich returns to privileging classificatory kinship in the biological mode with the contradictory statement that "[t]he Arno . . . reckoning [of] kinsmen includes the possibility of manipulating through *extension* and *denial* both the substantive and behavioral attributes of 'kinship.' Actual genealogical connection is not a necessary condition for classifying and treating another person as a kinsman" (98, emphasis added). Placing kinship in quotation marks may indicate some hesitation on Rynkiewich's part. Nevertheless, kinship is here reestablished as the privileged domain with exceptions (like kokajiriri or jerā- relationships, roughly "adoption" or "friendship") relegated to kinship-by-extension status. Fortunately, Pollock (1970) provides a reasonably detailed example of emergent family relations in her work on Namu. She discusses the case history of Netub and Weni, a story that she elicited in 1968. This case history describes the relationship between an in-marrying affine (Netub) from another Namu islet and his in-laws. While Pollock does not mention jerā- relationships per se, the story of what life was like for an in-marrying affine is highly informative. Even though Netub and Weni did not necessarily begin their premarital relationship as "friends," the "outsider" components of Netub's relationship to Weni's father and other relatives (101–6) parallels the sorts of attractions, obligations, and performance-based privileges and opportunities that may be seen in marriages that transition from jerā- relationships to affinal relationships. William Alexander (1978), another representative of this generation of Marshall Islands researchers, also adds value to the understanding of interactions within Marshallese households and communities, even though he does not directly address jerā- relationships. Rather, he compares the economic grounding of household membership on Lae and Ebeye (Kwajelein). He does not speak of friendship per se. Nevertheless, some of his examples outline the shifting interpersonal relationships encountered on Ebeye and Majuro as opposed to "rural" Lae. In the urban situations, economic providers, as opposed to the most mature household heads, elevate their rank and maintain positions of substantial power within smaller households that include both kin and nonkin. The latter household arrangements, at times, undoubtedly included jerā- relationships (91).

8. The topical specificity of recent research reports, while providing more realistically grounded accounts of everyday practices than earlier accounts, lead their authors down pathways that do not further the understanding of jerā- relationships. Walsh's (2003) important work on chiefs, for example, pays scant attention to friendship relations. Her work (1999) on American adoption of Marshall Islands-born children, while exploring the highly contested domain in which local ideas of relatedness were challenged by powerful capitalist-infused

constructions of adoption, led in directions antithetical to the overlap between kokajiriri "Marshall Islands adoption" and jerā- relationships. Allen (1997), looking at members of the Enid, Oklahoma, Marshallese community, describes Enid *haole* youth who consider their Marshall Islands' classmates "friends" (132) and makes brief mention of "created kinship ties" (179) but, otherwise, does not consider the way in which members of the Enid Marshallese community fashion jerā- relationships. Barker (2004), Johnston and Barker (2008), and Alcalay (1998) focus on the Marshall Islands' nuclear testing and the unsettled and abusive aftermath of those tests. With their concentration on the visible effects of American power as it came to be forced on local islanders, the friendship relationships that, not infrequently, mediated across the inequalities are not discussed by these authors. Rudiak-Gould (2013) provides a sophisticated analysis of Marshall Islanders' feelings about and reactions to climate change and global warming, while Ahlgren's works deal with cholera on Ebeye (2007) and with *The Meaning of Mo* "tabu" (2016), particularly in relation to sacred ecologies and principles of conservation. None of these works delve into jerā- relationships. Similarly, Genz's (2018) research on Marshallese navigation does not explore the ways in which jerā- relationships become kinship relationships in the fashioning of *wa* "coteries of proa sailors."

9. Equally, having no reliable written information on the shape of precolonial jerā- relationships, it is possible that the transcultural interpersonal contours of jerā- relationships are a direct product of colonial/local encounters, still contoured to align with kin relationships but expanding beyond them. However, local ethnohistorians contend that the term jerā- is of ancient derivation, even though uses of the term were, initially, regional.

10. *Di pālle*, literally "person of cloth" perhaps, at one time, meaning "clothed person" or "person of the cloth" (i.e., missionary: among the first clothed persons to reside locally) but now equated with white people or Americans (its unmarked sense being those with light skin tone).

11. The overt discussion of opportunism in these relationships should not lead outsiders to think of them as radically distinct from kinship relations or as a new and unique form of friendship. Advantageous social positioning is frequently discussed when referring to other people's kinship and marriage relationships, so it is hardly surprising that the advantages of friendship relations would be evaluated through similar types of talk. Summarizing Aristotle (1976), Doyle and Smith (2002) review Aristotle's three types of friendship: friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure, and friendship based on mutual goodness. For Aristotle (1976), the last form was the perfect form "in which people each alike, wishes good for the other *qua* good" (1156a16–b23). These distinctions seem quite foreign to Marshallese sensibilities, as if utility stood in opposition to goodness. Taking the transactional and exchange characteristics of all social relationships as given, Enewetak/Ujelang people certainly do not see assessments of value as standing apart from goodness. Indeed, as I have noted elsewhere (Carucci 2017), stinging may be negatively judged, and giving generously is certainly positively valued, but a person who might elect to pursue some social relationship based on the relatively advantageous circumstance offered by access to land or resources is considered ordinary, perhaps even wise, not avaricious. In brief, Aristotle's distinctions embed a number of cultural biases and presuppositions pointing to the necessity of looking closely at friendship practices cross-culturally. As Beer (2001, 5806) notes, such practices are highly variable from society to society.

12. McArthur (2000), in his analysis of a version of this same tale, notes the way in which Etao, the classical trickster, is discursively aligned with the ambivalent characteristics of jerā-, a relationship that, for his Marshallese consultant, is surrounded with ambivalence: "it [the friendship

relationship] can be true, it can be false" (92). The same, McArthur notes, holds for the relationship woven into this story between the Marshall Islands and the United States, a highly ambivalent relationship simultaneously beneficial and conflictural for Marshall Islands residents.

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TRANSNATIONAL JOURNEYS: SAMOAN MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES RECONSIDERED

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In her work on Samoan population movement, Sa'iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor criticizes earlier approaches to migration and remittances as "wrongheaded" because they were based on an "economistic" Euro-American model that did not sufficiently include indigenous perspectives. She then offers an approach that focuses on Samoan conceptions of movement, obligation, and connection. This article addresses her critique and examines the role of indigenous concepts in understanding and explaining trends in Samoan migration and remittances over the past several decades. As important as indigenous perspectives are, a number of the trends that Lilomaiava-Doktor derives from her approach are problematic. Furthermore, a review of the literature from the 1970s to the present suggests that Samoan concepts, especially *fa'a-Sāmoa*, or Samoan custom, have been a significant component of research on Samoan migration and remittances, and have often been integrated with external economic and political factors.

Introduction

Continuing research has made Sāmoa one of the best case studies of the long-term effects of migration and remittances. With over half of its population permanently overseas and more abroad temporarily, Sāmoa (formerly Western Sāmoa) has become one of the most remittance-dependent countries in the world. Remittances sent or brought back are partially responsible for a marked increase in family and individual incomes since the 1960s, and they have been a pillar of the Samoan national economy (Shankman 1976; Connell

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1990; Brown 1998). By the mid-1980s remittances had become the major source of foreign exchange for the islands, exceeding revenue from agriculture and foreign aid combined. Commodification of the economy had reached most rural villages, transforming them in the process and making the country as a whole more affluent. As a result, in 2014 the United Nations upgraded Sāmoa's development status from "least developed country" to "developing country."

While the economic dimensions of Samoan migration and remittances have received a good deal of attention, geographer Sa'iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor has criticized a body of this research, including my work (Shankman 1976, 1993) and the work of John Connell (1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1990), challenging what she views as external "economistic" approaches based on a "Euro-American model" and a "dominant development discourse" (2009a). As a corrective to these allegedly "wrongheaded" approaches, Lilomaiava-Doktor offers a cultural approach that she believes will provide a "better" understanding of migration based on indigenous conceptions of movement that give Samoans agency and voice, that reinforce circular mobility, that strengthen social networks, that encourage the sending of remittances, and that maintain the integrity of Samoan culture. She directs attention to the Samoan moral economy of giving, reciprocity, and generosity because in the long term developing "symbolic capital is often more important than economic capital" (2009a, 16).

Lilomaiava-Doktor's critique and her indigenous approach raise questions about the adequacy of previous research. Through her explication of Samoan concepts about movement (*malaga*) and connectedness (*vā*), Lilomaiava-Doktor provides a more thorough understanding of Samoan ways of thinking about mobility.[1] But how well do these traditional concepts actually account for contemporary patterns of Samoan migration and remittances? This article explores the accuracy of her critique, the adequacy of her approach, and the extent to which it is complementary with earlier research. I will argue that there exists a lengthy and detailed literature on Samoan migration and remittances dating from the 1970s, including work by Samoan scholars, that has focused on both indigenous cultural factors *and* broader economic and political factors.[2]

Although Lilomaiava-Doktor's focus on indigenous concepts enhances understanding of Samoan thinking about movement, a number of the trends that Lilomaiava-Doktor derives from her approach are problematic. While her focus on connectedness within Samoan social networks is important, the kinds of connections that Samoans have with the wider world are less well explored. Thus, her emphasis on circular migration minimizes the overall direction and magnitude of international migration. Her assertion that mobility strengthens family ties during migration neglects weakening links, public concerns

over participation in traditional gift exchanges (*faʻalavelave*), and an intergenerational decline in the sending of remittances to the islands. The contours of Samoan migration and remittances are more complex than Lilomaiava-Doktor's approach allows, requiring the study of international, national, local, and cultural factors.[3]

Critique and Counterpoint

Lilomaiava-Doktor initially states that in the study of migration, indigenous knowledge and understanding are compatible with and a necessary complement to an analysis of broader political and economic conditions (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009a, 1). However, she then criticizes such approaches, stating that scholarly treatment of migration in the Pacific has been based on a "Euro-American model" concerned with modernization, globalization, and development. Migration itself is said to be an "academic construction" derived from a hegemonic development discourse (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009a, 2). She finds that:

> The positivist and structuralist nature of much of these works, and their assumptions that 'migration' is the result of rationalizing forces and thus can be statistically modeled, means they contribute little to our understanding of movement as a social or cultural act (2009a, 3)

Lilomaiava-Doktor believes the Euro-American model is too "simplistic" because it is based on bourgeois assumptions (2009a, 20) that neglect local contexts, local epistemology, and local ideology. She favors an ontological approach that is more qualitative, employing indigenous methodologies, and analyzing indigenous concepts because they provide a "deeper" understanding of people's movements (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009a, 2).

According to Lilomaiava-Doktor, the very word "migration" might imply a "severance of ties, uprootedness, and rupture, but in the eyes of those involved, Samoan population movement is quite different" (2009a, 1). It connects families through transnational networks and maintains the integrity of Samoan culture (*faʻa-Sāmoa*). She prefers the terms "population movement," "mobility," and "circulation" that go "beyond migration" and the intellectual baggage that the term suggests. Noting continuities with past Samoan journeying, Lilomaiava-Doktor focuses on the importance of local interpretations of heterogeneous and diverse processes (2009b, 58), favoring the analysis of circular movements. She also believes that it is necessary to understand "the meaning of movement rather than merely describing or explaining it." (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2015, 92).

> Given the enduring population movement going on in many countries in the region, people's interactions with place have confounded conventional wisdom on migration, remittance[s], and development. They collapse the wrongheaded categories and paradigms that have been emphasized in academic studies on Oceania since the 1960s (2009a, 22)

Lilomaiava-Doktor notes that in her research on Samoan population movement, "a primary motivation" is "the need and the desire to enhance the status of the collective *ʻāiga* [extended kin group or family]. Fundamental to that enhancement is the journeying and traveling, *malaga*[,] to attend the *faʻalavelave* [obligatory gift exchanges involving events such as births, weddings, funerals, chiefly title bestowals, and church openings]" (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2015: 81–82). Furthermore, "mobility strengthens rather than weakens the links between family [outside the village] and home." (2009b, 60). "Distance does not separate *ʻāiga* but only provides further interconnecting social pathways" (2009a, 22).

This is an appealing argument, with Lilomaiava-Doktor offering a counternarrative to the alleged inadequacies of earlier work on Samoan migration. Yet it is flawed. Lilomaiava-Doktor begins by suggesting that earlier studies of Pacific migration *might* have interpreted movement as a "severance of ties, uprootedness, and rupture." She then asserts that, in fact, they have done so, and this misrepresentation therefore requires a different approach that focuses on Samoan conceptions of movement. She thus favors mobility over migration, circulation over permanent exodus, continuity over discontinuity, and understanding over explanation.

However, most studies of Samoan migration and remittances have *not* interpreted migration as primarily or exclusively about severance, uprootedness, and rupture (i.e., Pitt and Macpherson 1974; Shankman 1976; Kallen 1982; O'Meara 1990; Janes 1990; Vaʻa 2001; Macpherson and Macpherson 2009a). Remittances, as to well as other kinds of ties that migrants continue to maintain with their relatives in the islands, have been included in these studies because they are vital to understanding the migration process. Such studies also include discussions about attenuating ties and disconnections. In these studies, migration has been viewed as a complex response to broader economic and political factors, as well as to local conditions, negotiated by local kin groups and often interpreted using indigenous cultural beliefs and concepts. Although Lilomaiava-Doktor believes that there has been a blind spot about culture that other observers have missed, most earlier studies of Samoan migration, remittances, and the Samoan economy have incorporated indigenous concepts, particularly faʻa-Sāmoa, precisely because these scholars recognized the importance of Samoan understandings.

Lilomaiava-Doktor's critique of earlier studies is thus misleading. That said, how influential are indigenous concepts in the movement process?

Vā and the Role of Indigenous Concepts

Lilomaiava-Doktor emphasizes the Samoan concept of vā as the underlying basis for understanding migration and remittances. Vā is part of "a group of cultural metaphors that constitute *faʻa-Sāmoa*, or the Samoan way of life" (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009a, 7) and refers to the interconnected communal spaces between families, individuals, villages, and other places. "In short, *vā* is the central idea and crucial context for how movement informs Samoan identity and social legitimacy" (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2015, 69). Vā guides and governs conduct, providing a model for appropriate behavior in terms of reciprocity, responsibility, service, and the maintenance of family status through participation in faʻalavelave. "Their acts of giving and receiving, as manifested in exchanges of letters, care packages, phone calls and remittances, all symbolize *vā*" (2009a, 15). From her fieldwork in the islands and abroad, Lilomaiava-Doktor provides a set of understandings about mobility, ceremonial reasons for mobility, routine or daily reasons for mobility, types of improper movement, and consequences of improper movement (2009a, 2009b, 2015).

Indigenous concepts such as faʻa-Sāmoa, vā, malaga, and faʻalavelave are important in understanding how Samoans think about migration and remittances. They are a Samoan way of organizing experience; the traditional metaphors that Samoans use help them manage their everyday lives. Lilomaiava-Doktor argues that culture matters, that these Samoan concepts are influential in determining behavior, and that beliefs and values require attention (2009a, 22). When she states that such beliefs and values should be included in studies of movement, who could disagree?

While earlier studies of Samoan migration and remittances reflected recognition of and an interest in indigenous understandings, there was also recognition that indigenous concepts, by themselves, may not explain much actual behavior because such concepts are symbolic; they do not necessarily translate into behavior. This difference between understanding publicly articulated belief and accounting for actual conduct has been a recurring theme in the general study of indigenous systems of meaning. During the 1960s and 1970s, cultural anthropologists addressed this issue in the study of ethnoscience, an approach that focused on indigenous concepts, categories, and knowledge. As important as they were, cultural anthropologists found that such concepts and categories were often ambiguous and subject to differing as well as changing interpretations; rules were not always followed; authorities were sometimes challenged; and ideas were imperfectly translated into action (Berreman 1966; Harris 1974).

There was also the possibility of the overinterpretation of indigenous systems of meaning by scholars studying them (Keesing 1985).

Lilomaiava-Doktor correctly observes vā and faʻa-Sāmoa are not stable or static concepts. They are often invoked as a way of interpreting a set of contemporary adaptations that are given meaning by referring to them under traditional rubrics. That is, "Samoans draw on cultural principles to justify changes they are making to their own cultural practices" (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009b, 61). Nonetheless, as important as they are in understanding how Samoans may think about migration, faʻa-Sāmoa and vā are of less explanatory value because they involve a set of expectations and moral imperatives about how Samoans should behave rather than reflecting actual conduct that may be influenced by other expectations, motivations, and external circumstances.

Lilomaiava-Doktor agrees that vā may be articulated in different ways depending on gender, cultural status, age, and marital status (2009a, 14). Thus, vā may have different meanings and salience for those who invoke it when discussing their reasons for migration. The same is true for faʻa-Sāmoa. Lilomaiava-Doktor herself has noted that the "malleability of *faʻa-Sāmoa* ensures its survival" (2004, 179). In his study of Samoan migrants to Australia, Samoan anthropologist Unasa Leulu Felise Vaʻa offers a similar argument, commenting that:

> . . . migrants identify with the *faʻa-Sāmoa* differentially. That is, they all have different commitments to the attitudes, values and practice of *faʻa-Sāmoa* depending on their needs. The *faʻa-Sāmoa*, I maintain, is seen as a means to an end and not an end in itself, hence the different notions of what constitutes Samoan culture (Vaʻa n.d.: 1–2)

Vaʻa also found that although it is customary for Samoans to speak of their culture as homogenous and unchanging, especially among orators, there is much debate about what comprises proper interpretation and practice.

The meanings of vā and faʻa-Sāmoa have been and are being modified even as they continue to be important central metaphors for interpreting the experience of migration. Thus, faʻa-Sāmoa may have both positive and negative connotations for migrants and their families, depending on context. Appeals to faʻa-Sāmoa can mobilize social and economic resources vital for migration and for the distribution of remittances that are sent or brought back by migrants. At the same time, resentment of faʻa-Sāmoa stemming from the restrictive role of *matai* (titleholders) may encourage young men and women to leave their villages for the relative freedom of Apia and overseas (Shore 1982, 161). It may also lead others to be wary of the claims of distant relatives, based on faʻa-Sāmoa, concerning the proper distribution of remittances on their return. As one

middle-aged woman remarked, on visiting the islands from New Zealand and feeling pressure from persistent requests for money by distant relations, "We like Sāmoa, but not *fa'a-Sāmoa*" (Shankman 1993, 168).

International Migration and Circular Mobility

Although vā and malaga are culturally appropriate ways of talking and thinking about migration and the necessity of continuing participation in family matters, there are limits to the applicability of these concepts in the broader context of Samoan migration and remittances. Vā and malaga do not require migration abroad; these concepts were part of local movement within the islands prior to the era of international migration. As Lilomaiava-Doktor states, "The basis for *malaga* [journeying or traveling back and forth] was originally to fulfill life cycle *fa'alavelave* (obligations) . . . However, contemporary movements for the purposes of education, health, and economic opportunities have broadened its scope" (2015, 83). Malaga now include international migration because, in Lilomaiava-Doktor's words, "the uncertainty of economic times and conditions" in the islands promotes movement abroad (2015, 83).

Vā and malaga by themselves do not explain the destinations that Samoans choose when migrating. Nor do they explain rates of migration to New Zealand, American Sāmoa, the United States, Australia, and elsewhere. Nor do they fully account for rates of return, patterns of remittance sending, the currencies involved, and the transmission channels used. They also may not incorporate changes in Samoan beliefs and institutions that have taken place over the course of decades of international migration.

External political and economic conditions set major parameters, although not the only parameters, on the direction, destinations, duration, and other related trends in migration. International borders and agreements, laws, citizenship requirements, political considerations in the host country, labor markets, and visas of different types constrain the ability of Samoans to migrate. Although Samoans are quite adept at working within and outside these broad parameters, they nevertheless strongly influence movement possibilities. Thus, while New Zealand has been a major destination for Samoan migrants, in 1982 New Zealand began to sharply restrict permanent immigration from Sāmoa (Shankman 1993, 166). Today there are 1,100 permanent visas annually allotted to Samoans; in 2015, there were 9,000 applicants for these visas, clearly constraining Samoan choices.

Lilomaiava-Doktor objects, stating that, "Focusing simply on the international labor market and other economic macro-processes renders migrants and their communities mute, and the beliefs, values, and attitudes they hold irrelevant" (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009a, 3). This view presumes that approaches

that include external factors somehow exclude local agency. However, a focus on international restrictions is relevant precisely because so many Samoans, for a variety of reasons, actively seek to permanently migrate but are unable to do so. The sheer number of Samoans applying for permanent residence in New Zealand is evidence of their desire to leave the islands. However, without including New Zealand's political and economic decisions with regard to Sāmoa and Samoans, it would be difficult to explain rates of migration to New Zealand over time. The different patterns of international migration from Sāmoa to American Sāmoa, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States underscore this point. Movement is social and not simply spatial, as Lilomaiava-Doktor notes, but it is also strongly influenced by external constraints over which Samoans have little control.

This point may seem obvious, but Lilomaiava-Doktor dissents. She views circular mobility as a "better" way to understand Samoan migration, basing her argument on the Melanesian studies of circulation by Chapman and others (Chapman and Prothero 1985, 4). She states that there is a "dialectic between the centrifugal attractions of wage employment, commercial and administrative forces and the centripetal power of village obligations, social relations and kin ties" (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009b, 65) that modulates these opposing forces and promotes continuing circular flows. Thus, movement is not merely unidirectional but "back and forth" (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009a, 9). However, the Melanesian model she refers to may no longer be relevant because, while circulation may have been the predominant pattern for Melanesian population movements in earlier decades, the current trend in Melanesia is toward permanent migration to urban areas (Petrou and Connell 2017). In Sāmoa, the centripetal and centrifugal forces that Lilomaiava-Doktor cites have been in an asymmetrical relationship since the 1960s; the overall direction of movement has been overseas since that time. Had the movement of Samoans been primarily or mostly circular, the population of Sāmoa today would be closer to 400,000 rather than the current figure of roughly 200,000. Permanent overseas migration has had a major demographic effect on the islands.

Nevertheless, Lilomaiava-Doktor states that, "Shankman failed to comprehend circular mobility . . ." (2009a, 17). This is inaccurate. Circular mobility has been included in my work as one type of movement, but permanent international migration is significant because, among other things, permanent migrants often enable their relatives to engage in temporary circular movement as well as providing vital connections—travel fares, housing, jobs, and language assistance—for new generations of circular and permanent migrants. They are an anchor and a magnet for both kinds of migrants. Indeed, the relative shortage of permanent visas may encourage circular mobility (Macpherson 1985). While Lilomaiava-Doktor is correct in noting that there is a good deal

of circular movement involving faʻalavelave, the overall direction of movement is not circular.

Motivations for Migration

Lilomaiava-Doktor recognizes vā as the central idea and context for understanding movement; she also mentions other publicly shared motivations for movement, including health, education, and economic opportunities. Since vā embodies culturally appropriate motivations, it may act as an umbrella for other, less publicly acceptable motivations for migration. In her work on Samoan migration, Kallen (1982) distinguished between "overt" and "covert" motivations. As a legitimizing and publicly shared motivation, vā would be considered an "overt" motivation. Yet "covert" motivations may coexist alongside vā. For example, young migrants may publicly concur that they move abroad to serve their families; privately, as individuals, they may also desire to escape the hard work and low prestige of village agriculture and/or wish to enhance their own individual prospects beyond the constraints of the local economic and political order. There may be multiple motives, both privately held by individuals who are migrating and publicly shared by family members who sponsor migration in both sending and receiving countries.

Indeed, there may be a variety of less public, privately held motivations that have little relationship to vā. Examples from my field experience include: the union official accused of embezzling money who makes a quick exit abroad; the young man leaving Sāmoa to pursue an overseas affair; the young woman converting to another faith in order to facilitate departure from the islands; the young rape victim encouraged by her family to leave Sāmoa to reduce familial shame; the young man involved in the accidental death of a child seeking to distance himself from local repercussions; the young women visiting an aunt in Hawaiʻi while quietly seeking to terminate a pregnancy; the young family member sent abroad to reduce family dysfunction at home; and the aspiring titleholder leaving after years of family infighting over succession to a high title.

What about the "economic" motivations found in the "Euro-American model"? Lilomaiava-Doktor states that many previous studies have placed too much emphasis on "inequality and economic opportunity" (2009a, 2l) and not enough appreciation of the moral economy of vā. She believes that "symbolic capital is often more important than economic capital" (2009a, 16), commenting that Samoans think about migration in terms of communal vā rather than in terms of "individual profit maximization." She also criticizes the alleged Western ahistorical, individualistic, and "economistic" view of migration while emphasizing that Samoan mobility is constantly negotiated around family, village politics, and social exigencies (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2015, 91).

The contrast that Lilomaiava-Doktor draws between Western and Samoan motivations is a familiar one, yet she seems to essentialize both, suggesting that there is a singular way of viewing Samoan motivations. Addressing this issue in his ethnographic study of Vaega, a village in rural Savaiʻi, O'Meara (1990) acknowledged that, compared with most Westerners, Samoans emphasize the importance of sharing. Conversely, most Westerners emphasize the importance of individual property. Yet O'Meara cautions that, "the desire for personal wealth is common among Samoans in spite of their emphasis on sharing and gift giving," just as "sharing and gift giving are common among Westerners despite our emphasis on accumulating private wealth" (1990, 201).

O'Meara's ethnographic study is one of a number of studies, including those by Samoan scholars, reporting that Samoans themselves often cite "economic" reasons as primary motivations for migration. Are such motivations superficial manifestations of an underlying vā as some of Lilomaiava-Doktor's interviews suggest? Are they artificial byproducts of incorporation into a capitalist world system that has imposed a Western vocabulary on indigenous movement? Or should these reasons offered by Samoans be accepted at face value? In today's world, the boundary between what is authentically Samoan and what is truly Western may not be clear cut. Lilomaiava-Doktor argues that the cultural realm is "distinct from the economic or political domains of movement" (2009, 21), but the Samoan moral economy and the broader political economy may be more tightly intertwined than she allows. Thus, O'Meara found that although faʻalavelave were conceived of as "social" gift exchanges rather than "economic" transactions, Samoans were "very aware of and concerned with the economic results of their gift exchanges" (1993, 148).

Lilomaiava-Doktor stresses the cultural significance of Samoan custom in the movement process, noting that in her interviews,

> Time and time again, the essential dynamics of *faʻa-Sāmoa* were revealed and the role of the *ʻāiga* and *faʻalavelave* shown to be paramount. For these Samoans, there was clearly a primary motivation for population movement: the need and the desire to enhance the status of the collective *ʻāiga* (2015: 81–82)

Yet she also reports on economic motivations in her analysis of the decision to migrate, including "the strategic search for better economic opportunities . . ." (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2015, 83). She explains that these opportunities were only realized by moving to Apia or overseas because planning for "financial success and security in old age" is "nearly impossible" in the islands. Although parents would prefer to have all of their children living in the village, "reality dictates one or two must have a regular job in Apia or overseas" (2015, 83). "This is a

risk-minimising strategy given the uncertainty of economic times and conditions" (2015, 83). While more data about this risk-minimizing strategy and the uncertainty of economic times and conditions would be helpful, it is clear from Lilomaiava-Doktor's argument that Samoans strategically evaluate economic conditions in the islands in relation to potential opportunities in Apia and overseas, and they base their decisions about migration accordingly.

Samoan sons and daughters, as well as their parents, have prioritized moving to Apia and abroad for decades (Shankman 1976, 56). In the early 1980s, Pamela Thomas (1984) interviewed 100 fifth-form students in three Samoan district high schools about their interest in working family land after they left school. Not a single student wished to do so. All of the students wanted a job in town or in New Zealand (Thomas 1984, 147), and most of the best students left their villages permanently. In a similar study by Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop (1984), Samoan students in the sixth form at the country's two top colleges were asked to select an occupation that they themselves, rather than their parents, would like to pursue. Both girls and boys overwhelmingly selected "white collar" occupations rather than village agriculture.

These changing aspirations are mirrored by changes in the Samoan economy itself. At independence in l962, agriculture, including village agriculture, produced 99 percent of Sāmoa's export income (Department of Economic Development 1969, 10); today that figure is about 10 percent (IndexMundi 2018), with only 20 percent of households earning the majority of their income from agriculture (Sāmoa Bureau of Statistics 2015, 35). Almost two-thirds of employed Samoans work for wages (Samoan Labour Force Survey 2017). A much greater percentage of all Samoans receive remittances. Over the past six decades, the economic landscape of Sāmoa has changed how people think about their livelihoods and village life. Even the most remote villages are now connected to commercial centers by paved roads, electricity, and the Internet. Cell phones are ubiquitous, directly linking Samoans in the islands with their relatives abroad and thereby facilitating the sending and receiving of remittances (Connell 2015; Macpherson 2016). The distinction between rural and urban is blurring. According to the most recent census, the majority of Samoans now live in Apia or the periurban area in northwest Upolu, rather than in the mostly rural villages that were Samoans' primary residence just decades ago.

Such changes are reflected in the site of much of Lilomaiava-Doktor's fieldwork. Between 1998 and 2002, Lilomaiava-Doktor spent many months conducting fieldwork on the island of Savaiʻi in Salelologa, which she refers to as a "Samoan village." In keeping with her interest, she focused her attention on the importance of the village in conceptual terms, referring to the key metaphors of "home" and "land" that link families in the diaspora. Decades ago, Salelologa was a cluster of more traditional subvillages. Yet today Salelologa offers an example

of how much economic transformation there has been in the islands. For some time, the government of Sāmoa has sought to develop Salelologa as an "urban" alternative to Apia. In the Samoan census, Salelologa is identified as a "village district" composed of several subvillages or *pitonuʻu*, including the subvillage of Foua in which Lilomaiava-Doktor resided. The larger Salelologa area has a current population of over 12,000 and is the commercial center of and gateway to the island of Savaiʻi. It is the hub for the large, modern interisland ferry between Upolu and Savaiʻi as well as aid-funded wharf facilities. Salelologa has four hotels (reviewed on TripAdvisor) as well as restaurants, bakeries, rental car agencies, taxis, buses, tours, gas stations, and a hospital nearby. There is a large, permanent two-story market open six days a week, as well as small convenience stores. Salelologa also has a large Catholic secondary school and the only public library outside Apia. Employment typically involves wage labor. Lilomaiava-Doktor's analysis of metaphors such as "land" and "home" may assist in understanding ways of thinking about Samoan life that have remained relatively stable, but they may not reflect the extent of changes that have occurred in the economic life of Salelologa and Sāmoa more generally.

Economic Motivations in Earlier Studies

While "economic" motivations may seem "simplistic," materialistic, and Eurocentric to Lilomaiava-Doktor, she herself refers to them as major factors in migration—a new Samoan "reality" (2015, 83). Indeed, such factors have been apparent in many studies of Samoan migrants to New Zealand, Australia, American Sāmoa, and the United States. And this has been true from early studies to the present. These studies, often quantitative, explore multiple motivations, even within the broader "economic" category. Thus, Kallen's study of Samoan migrants to New Zealand (1982), which emphasized the importance of families and faʻa-Sāmoa in stimulating, organizing, and facilitating migration, surveyed a random sample of 257 applicants for permanent residence in New Zealand about their reasons for migration. She found that a substantial majority (77 percent) cited "jobs and money" as primary motivations, with 44 percent citing "jobs and money" as their sole motivation; 25 percent listed "a better future life" (1982, 72). Kallen also found that 22 percent cited family-related reasons for migration, while 19 percent hoped to find a lucrative job in order to help their families (Kallen 1982, 72).

In their multidecade study of globalization in Sāmoa, Macpherson and Macpherson (2009a) reported that villagers used vā in terms of thinking about traditional obligations, but they were no longer wholly committed to custom and tradition. In the villages that they studied, people were "constantly thinking and talking about change" (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009a, 188). Everyday

conversations often revolved around migration, with villagers calculating the advantages and disadvantages of migration in terms of opportunity and income, risks and rewards, as well as consideration of family and traditional commitments. They were acutely aware of migration quotas in New Zealand and the kinds of unskilled and semiskilled positions that the New Zealand economy could provide at any given moment. People in rural villages and Apia witnessed the new clothing, appliances, and cars sent or brought back or paid for from abroad, and they understood what was needed to acquire them by talking with relatives who had been abroad or through their own experiences overseas. For young people especially, the contrast between their lives in Sāmoa and their dreams of bettering themselves and their families catalyzed their desire to go abroad.

Lona Lanesolota Siauane also reported that economic motivations, compatible with vā, were very much on the minds of Samoan migrants in Christchurch, New Zealand. As she noted:

> For the Samoan immigrant, New Zealand was the place of 'milk and honey' and a better life, access to material goods, and an opportunity to provide their own children with better educational opportunities. These desires became universal motives that lay behind the decision for many of the Samoan immigrants to come to New Zealand. Samoans viewed education as a vehicle for socio-economic well-being and social mobility. For many young Samoans, migration to New Zealand provided this. . . . . Furthermore, wage employment became the best way for many young Samoans to contribute to the *fa'alavelave* of their *'āiga* and church through the regular remittances sent back to their families in Sāmoa (2004, 42)

In his work on Samoan migrants in Australia, Va'a (2001) found that, for most Samoans interviewed in his study, the main reasons for migration to Australia were economic in nature encompassing a combination of "push" and "pull" factors. In terms of "pull" factors for those initially migrating to New Zealand from Sāmoa (prior to leaving for Australia), 74 percent of the ninety-three Samoans interviewed cited employment or education and training as their main reason for movement (Va'a 2001, 84). Of the push factors leading to movement from New Zealand to Australia, 83 percent of the forty-three males interviewed cited specific economic reasons for moving to Australia (Va'a 2001: 84–85). In rank order, these reasons included: scarcity of jobs, worsening economy, high cost of living, unemployment, too much fa'a-Sāmoa, low wages, restrictions on housing loans, and a cut in children's benefits. Va'a also cites other, less often mentioned factors as well, including joining a spouse, family reunion, religion, etc.

He concludes that decisions to migrate were often based on multiple factors, quoting migrants themselves.

Using a New Zealand–based sample of sixty Samoan migrants, Samoan scholar Tolu Muliaina, who has written about the meaning of movement and the importance of family and social obligations in the movement process, also confirmed the significance of economic factors in the migration process, commenting that:

> Over 95 per cent of respondents reported that the primary reason for migration was economic, a product of Sāmoa's inability to provide paid employment that matched the aspirations of its fast-growing population, together with the interaction of customary obligations and modern material wants. (2009, 28)

Writing about migration from American Sāmoa to the United States, Fepulea'i Micah Van der Ryn, while fully supporting the incorporation of indigenous concepts into the study of migration and specifically acknowledging Lilomaiava-Doktor's work, reports that changing external economic and political circumstances opened the doors to movement abroad, commenting that:

> Major migration from American Sāmoa to the United States began in the early 1950s when the U.S. Naval Administration removed its naval operations from Pago Pago. Samoan naval employees and their families were offered free passage, jobs, and resettlement in naval communities in Hawai'i and on the West coast of the United States, notably in Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego (2012, 254; see also Lewthwaite, Mainzer, and Holland 1973)

Also writing about migration from American Sāmoa, Craig Janes highlighted the relevant cultural background of the migrants, but found that a constellation of motivations, "primarily" but not exclusively economic, led to the large-scale exodus from American Sāmoa in the 1950s:

> By 1960 [American] Sāmoa was seized by migration fever. It was not just military experience, education, or employment that the migrants sought, but something far less tangible. Many people left with nothing else in mind save for the idea that migration was necessary to secure a future for themselves and their families. Gifted young people were encouraged to migrate for further education in Hawai'i or on the mainland, and others were propelled by the belief that all things in

> [American] Sāmoa were inferior to what was to be had on the mainland (2002, 121)

In different ways, each of these studies integrated Samoan conceptions about the purposes of movement with economic motivations. All of them cited economic motivations as a primary motivation in migration. And all of them viewed faʻa-Sāmoa and/or vā as compatible with economic and political explanations of international migration. So, "Without questioning the importance of *faʻa-Sāmoa* rewards and constraints, it is possible to view other forces as having an equally important bearing on Samoan economic behavior" (Shankman 1976, 100).

Obligations in Conflict[4]

Over the past few decades, Samoans have altered their economy, family structure, land tenure practices, and the matai or chiefly system of leadership itself (O'Meara 1993; Meleisea and Schoeffel 2015). Is this also true of their commitment to the Samoan moral economy? In keeping with her emphasis on the integrity of Samoan culture and continuity within the movement process, Lilomaiava-Doktor affirms that, "mobility strengthens rather than weakens the links between family [outside the village] and home" (2009b, 60). While it is true that Samoan families have often remained remarkably close in the diaspora, with levels of remittances that are a testament to their involvement with and respect for their families, research since the 1970s has shown that in the process of migration there have also been weakened links, reduced commitments, and increased tension (Graves et al. 1982).

Again, this is not a black-and-white issue. Lilomaiava-Doktor herself recognizes that there have been major changes in faʻa-Sāmoa and fundamental changes in the islands as a result of migration and remittances, acknowledging that individualism, jealousy, ambivalence, and dissatisfaction are part of the process of change (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009b, 66). Thus, as migration continued, Samoans have not simply attempted to replicate a given cultural script; they have modified and challenged it. This can be seen in how current participation in faʻalavelave has led to conflicting obligations and increasing public criticism of these exchanges (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009a; Shankman 2018).

While faʻalavelave today are symbolically modeled on a pre-European system of exchange, today's faʻalavelave no longer involve the kinds of the reciprocity and gift exchange characteristic of pre-European or even pre-1960s Sāmoa (O'Meara 1990, 212). As more Samoans moved abroad over the decades, the kinds of ties they had to each other and to their kin in the islands have become

more complex. At least half of the funding for faʻalavelave in the islands comes from overseas relatives (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009a, 16). New kinds of remittances and larger contributions to faʻalavelave have increased costs. In the early decades of migration, migrants sent or brought back money or commodities, including tinned beef and fish, biscuits, radios, and clothing, as well as cash for school fees, housing materials such as tin roofs and cement, fares for travel, church contributions, and title installations. In more recent decades, these expenses have escalated with the addition of more expensive items, including televisions, refrigerators, microwave ovens and other appliances, cell phones, laptops, motorcycles, cars and pickups, European housing materials, water storage tanks, larger numbers of fine mats, and capital for investing in local businesses.

As a result of the widening network of potential remitters abroad, continuing demand in the islands and abroad, the increased cost of living in the islands, and the increasing cost of remittances and faʻalavelave, often paid for in currency rather than in kind, there is now widespread concern among migrants that they may not be able to meet their obligations to give generously and without complaint. In the 1980s, one Samoan church in Auckland was already using a social worker to help families struggling to balance their limited household resources and increasingly costly faʻalavelave. Debt and financial hardship were becoming problems for Samoan families abroad as well as in the islands.

Janes (1990) found considerable ambivalence about faʻalavelave in his study of Samoan migrants in the San Francisco Bay area. Only a small minority of the Samoans interviewed approved of faʻalavelave without question, and most had "serious reservations" when continual demands impinged on limited household resources (Janes 1990, 101). Yet very few Samoans refused to contribute something when requested, and many were proud of their support. Lower-income Samoans felt more "trapped" between ceremonial obligations and household necessities than others. As one vulnerable Samoan put it, "When they bring all this *faʻa-Sāmoa* the families suffer. Many people learn to hate their culture because it makes them poor" (Janes 1990, 106).

Ilana Gershon (2012) also described the gap between the ideal of generosity inherent in faʻalavelave and the reality of limited household incomes among the Samoans she spoke with in New Zealand and the United States in 1996–1997. She noted that they were "frequently telling me how frustrated and trapped they felt, how *faʻalavelave* had gotten out of control since migration . . . Because *faʻalavelave* are financially draining, my interlocutors have mixed feelings about participating in them" (Gershon 2012, 39). While they felt strongly that faʻalavelave obligations must be met, they "experience these demands as one set among many—none of which can ever be satisfactorily met without serious consequences in other neglected areas" (Gershon 2012, 41). That is, they are "torn

between using limited resources for their own household and supporting their extended family" (Gershon 2012, 41).

As a result, Samoans have tried to find ways of avoiding the financial burdens of faʻalavelave. For example,

> Those receiving requests will often practice strategic ignorance, such as ignoring early morning phone calls so that they don't have to send money home to build the village church. They use small moments of private communicative failures to mitigate family financial pressures . . . They must be quite judicious about using various techniques to funnel resources haltingly and gradually into the maw of Samoan exchanges. After all, every failure risks family or community disapproval of not being truly Samoan (Gershon 2012, 45)

Nevertheless, Gershon found that in private conversation, "Everyone spoke to me about the burdens of the Samoan exchange system—from chiefs and ministers to elders and teenagers" (2012, 46). It was not just the amount of money involved, but the possible misappropriation of funds by family members and church officials, a not uncommon occurrence. Personal temptation sometimes undermined the strong sense of family obligation (O'Meara 1990: 168–169).

The cost of lavish faʻalavelave could run into the many tens of thousands of dollars and more, with events costing thousands of dollars being quite common. Conversations about the escalating costs of faʻalavelave, once private, were becoming public. The situation in Sāmoa was so problematic that it became a topic of concern in official Samoan circles, newspapers, and social media. The Prime Minister of Sāmoa spoke out about how faʻalavelave had become prohibitively expensive and suggested ways that costs could be reduced. Some villages banned imported tinned beef and fish from ceremonial events (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009a, 95). Some chiefs and churches tried to implement broad reforms to reduce the amounts exchanged. The problem, however, was that families reducing contributions or withdrawing from faʻalavelave could lose status and reputation within the village political system. Participation remains vital for access to titles, land, and other resources. Migrant sons and daughters withholding support from their parents in the islands would not only be betraying them in a most personal way, there could be potential political, social, and economic consequences as well. For these reasons, they could not afford to not participate (O'Meara 1990, 215).

A very public discussion about the costs of faʻalavelave occurred in 2009 when a delegation of more than thirty Samoan chiefs and orators from the islands visited Auckland to participate in two unprecedented public meetings about the financial burdens of faʻalavelave that were causing severe hardship at

home and abroad. In public, people talked about taking out high interest loans from marginal financial institutions to cover their extensive obligations to kin in New Zealand and the islands; there were also suggestions that these obligations were leading some Samoans to engage in fraud and crime. About 1,500 people attended the two meetings, and the discussion continued on talk radio, on-line, in Samoan newspapers, and on the street. One T-shirt read; I LOVE MY ʻĀIGA, BUT I HATE FAʻALAVELAVE (Gough 2009, 139).

Samoans abroad and in the islands increasingly view faʻalavelave in a selective and contingent manner; they are often conflicted about participation based on monetary considerations. Support for and participation in faʻalavelave are not uniform and depend on a number of factors: the permanent or temporary status of the migrants, whether they plan to return home, the number of faʻalavelave they are expected to participate in and at what levels, and their available resources, among other considerations. Thus, the moral economy of giving is being compromised by new economic and political arrangements at home and abroad, and in the process important aspects of Samoan culture are being reworked.

Are Faʻalavelave Wasteful?

In recent decades Samoans themselves have become vocal in their public questioning and criticism of faʻalavelave. Yet Lilomaiava-Doktor faults "[s]cholars and development experts such as Connell (1990) or Shankman (1976) [who] have often described *faʻalavelave* as a customary practice that squanders economic gains and resources. Blaming *faʻalavelave* for the lack of economic development reflects a failure to understand different values and multiple purposes set within this particular cultural milieu" (2009a, 19). This statement is inaccurate. Based on fieldwork in 1969–1970 in the islands, I offered a discussion of the view that Samoan wealth redistribution is counterproductive followed by a description of the actual economic and social context in which this kind of redistribution then occurred (Shankman 1976: 44–48). Contrary to Lilomaiava-Doktor, I concluded that such redistribution is "not necessarily wasteful given the context in which it occurs" (Shankman 1976, 48; see also O'Meara 1990: 210–211). Migration has provided a new context for faʻalavelave, and this may be why Samoans themselves are increasingly concerned about what faʻalavelave have become.

Lilomaiava-Doktor stresses the ideological significance of vā, noting that generosity fulfills social and political objectives and that the expectation of participation is paramount (2009b, 80). However, she minimizes the dilemmas posed by the competing responsibilities that Samoans face. Expectations about generosity and participation do not necessarily reflect how and when participation in faʻalavelave will actually occur. In the 1970s, Karla Rolff conducted research among a small community of Samoans in southern California, asking,

"What causes some [Samoans] to drop out of these mutual aid and prestige networks that are set up through participation in *faʻalavelave*?" (Rolff 1978, 25). She reported that,

> Out of fifty-seven Samoan and part-Samoan households, I obtained income data on twenty-eight and found a strong correlation between income and participation in *faʻalavelave*. Those with the lowest income were invariably involved in *faʻalavelave* activities, and the higher the income, the greater was the likelihood that people had moved away from *faʻa-Sāmoa* activities . . . Those who are economically secure don't have to depend on the services informally provided by kinsmen (car repairing, plumbing, etc.); they can pay for these services . . . Summing up, I would say that some Samoans participate in the *faʻa-Sāmoa* for the traditional prestige it offers, but, aside from that, many participate in the *faʻa-Sāmoa* because their economic situation leaves them no alternative [(1978: 25–27); see also O'Meara (1990, 215)]

Does Permanent Migration Abroad Reduce Remittances to Sāmoa?

Samoan migrants weigh their commitments to tradition with the resources they have at hand. They also weigh commitments in their new homelands with their commitments to relatives in the islands. Given these multiple commitments, can migrants sustain high levels of remittances sent to the islands over time? Lilomaiava-Doktor believes they can and do, criticizing my research and alleging that,

> . . . in the 1970s economic anthropologist Paul Shankman predicted that sending remittances back to Sāmoa would taper off the longer migrants stayed away (1976). In the 1990s, he observed that they had not done so . . . (2009a, 17)

This criticism is misleading because Lilomaiava-Doktor does not distinguish, as I did, between permanent migrants who may send fewer remittances on a regular basis the longer they have been abroad and temporary migrants who are more reliable over the short term (Shankman 1976: 59–60). The relevant passage noted that:

> Apart from major events such as funerals, weddings, and church openings, migrants permanently overseas were under less pressure to remit or otherwise participate in village activities than temporary migrants and

> migrants residing in other parts of Sāmoa. The fact of secure employment in New Zealand, or at worst adequate welfare, has led permanent migrants to become less oriented to village life and less committed to returning to it. They are prepared to fulfill their *ʻāiga* obligations, but distance and relative wealth in New Zealand have made village commitments less intense. This may help explain why the longer a permanent migrant is in New Zealand, the less likely he or she is to send remittances on a regular basis, although most permanent migrants do send small money orders on an infrequent basis (Shankman 1976, 60)

Temporary migrants, whose stays overseas were short term, were more reliable remitters precisely because they were certain to return to the islands. Permanent migrants, on the other hand, may remit less and less regularly over a period of years, although they would contribute to a major family or church event or the rebuilding of homes in the case of a tsunami or hurricane. (Brown et al. 2014; Le De et al. 2015). While permanent migrants often rhapsodized about the ease of village life and spoke of the desirability of return to Sāmoa (Pitt and Macpherson 1974, 19), they rarely planned to move back to the islands on a permanent basis (Macpherson 1985; Shankman 1993). In a study of New Zealand–based migrants, Muliaina (2009) noted that of sixty Samoans interviewed, only one was planning a permanent return. In their study of 390 Samoan migrants in Australia, Ahlburg and Brown (1998) found that only 10 percent of their sample planned to return to Sāmoa on a permanent basis; far fewer would actually return. However, those who did plan to return remitted significantly more than those who did not.

Over time, permanent migrants abroad, mostly single young men and women, eventually married (often to non-Samoans), formed their own families, and participated in their own overseas communities and churches that required their own systems of support. As regular remittances to the islands from permanent migrants diminished, families in the islands sent more sons and daughters to supplement and/or replace declining remittances (O'Meara 1990, 113). Second and third generation sons and daughters of earlier migrants also tended to send fewer remittances to Sāmoa while spending resources on faʻalavelave in their new homelands (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009b, 87). Both trends, in addition to the increasing cost of living in the islands, reinforced the need in the islands for more migration and remittances.

Recent studies have provided a more sophisticated understanding of remittance-sending patterns. Macpherson (1992) discussed the structural and demographic factors that could lead to declining remittances, and his careful study of several Samoan families in New Zealand (Macpherson 1994) demonstrated a decline in the proportion of household income sent as remittances over time;

Macpherson also reviewed a number of possible factors that led to this decline. Brown's large-scale, quantitative study of Samoan remitters in Australia found that in a twelve-month sampling period, the proportion of the Samoan migrant population remitting was 75.3 percent among Samoan-born households in contrast to 55.6 percent of New Zealand–born Samoan households, with Samoan-born remitters remitting at much higher levels (Brown 1998, 125). Brown also found that over time, the percentage of Samoan households that did remit declined over five-year intervals for the first twenty-five years of absence; however, after twenty-five years, remittance participation markedly increased as did remittances (Brown 1998, 126). Furthermore, controlling for a number of variables among remitters, Brown found no evidence of overall remittance decay (Brown 1998, 135).

The Macphersons have done additional work on intergenerational remittance sending as part of a longitudinal study of over 2,000 Pacific women who gave birth in Auckland hospitals during a twelve-month period in the late 1990s. They found a decline in remittances to the islands as new generations of Samoans abroad recalibrated their obligations (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009b; see also Muliaina 2009). New Zealand–born Samoan women and their partners continued to support their families in the islands, but at much reduced levels because their immediate families and most significant relatives were in New Zealand in many cases.

These young Samoan couples were in the early phases of family formation and had very limited discretionary incomes. Support for their families was often in kind and took the form of providing childcare, nursing sick parents, housing relatives, and arranging travel for kin. Many young married women stated that connections with their parents' villages were attenuated and a low priority when it came to allocating resources. Furthermore, while children of migrants might contribute to their parents' gifts to their natal villages while their parents were alive, after their parents' deaths they often had neither the motivation nor the knowledge of the mechanics of giving to remain involved in remitting to Sāmoa (see also Muliaina 2009).

A further possible reason for declining intergenerational participation in island-based fa'alavelave is that fluency in the Samoan language is declining. In 2013 only 56 percent of Samoans in New Zealand spoke Samoan fluently (Fuimaono 2017, 96), making the second and third generation Samoans abroad less likely to fully understand the linguistic protocols involved in some kinds of fa'alavelave and therefore less likely to be able to fully participate in these events.

Were Remittances "Pointless"?

In recent decades, larger remittances and the changing Samoan economy have altered the way remittances are spent, allowing more funds for capital

investment as well as for traditional obligations such as fa'alavelave. Lilomaiava-Doktor may not have appreciated this change, arguing that:

> . . . with his [Shankman's] emphasis on capital investment, the remittances seemed pointless: The sums remitted were usually not large enough for investment in large-scale capital development or capital equipment, nor was there much incentive to invest (Shankman 1993, 163) (2009a, 17)

Here Lilomaiava-Doktor neglects the historical context of remittance-sending patterns and economic conditions in Sāmoa.[5] In the 1960s and 1970s, relatively small sums of remittances made a major difference in household cash incomes where incomes were very low (Pirie 1976; Shankman 1976). These small sums were not sufficient for large-scale capital development or capital equipment even if such opportunities were available. Because remittances were sent in mostly small sums in the 1960s and 1970s and because Europeans and part-Samoans dominated the commercial sectors of the Samoan economy, it would have been difficult for most Samoans to use them for capital investment even if they had wished to do so (Pitt 1970; Shankman 1976: 44–48; Kallen 1982).

Nevertheless, remittances were quickly becoming the largest source of personal cash income for Samoans and a major share of national income. By 1992, remittances were two-thirds of Sāmoa's gross domestic product (Brown 1998, 124), not including nonmonetary remittances. So remittances were hardly "pointless" either then or now. As Lilomaiava-Doktor herself observed, remittances had a "profound effect on the nation" (2004, 245). Indeed, they were a major reason that parents sent and continue to send their sons and daughters abroad. And they were the reason that Samoan officials of the period used the phrase, "People are our most valuable export." In more recent decades, a new political and economic environment and larger remittances have allowed larger scale capital investments by Samoans as well as traditional expenditures on fa'alavelave, and these new investments have significant implications for local development (Brown and Ahlburg 1999, 341; Connell 2015).

Migration, Remittances, and the "Dominant Development Discourse"

In her writing about Samoan migration and remittances, Lilomaiava-Doktor found that a fundamental problem with earlier studies was that they reflected a "dominant development discourse" involving a Euro-American economic model that minimized Samoans' own ideas about development. Yet a brief history of development discourses used in the islands demonstrates that the study

of Samoan migration and remittances emerged in *response* to and as an *alternative* to conventional development approaches (Shankman 1976: 23–29).

In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the most significant development discourse was associated with agricultural development in the context of the movement for political independence that spread throughout the South Pacific. On the eve of Samoan independence in 1962, there was a great deal of practical concern about the economic future of this newly independent state, the first of its kind in the South Pacific. While Sāmoa was politically advanced, observers were concerned that the Samoan economy, then based largely on village agriculture, would not be able to support its rapidly growing population. Agricultural exports were the islands' top income earner at the time, and they became its most important development priority. A development discourse emerged with policies and programs to promote village agricultural development that, theoretically, would stimulate autonomous growth in the national economy.

Yet it soon became apparent that village agricultural development was far less successful in improving local incomes than migration and remittances. Samoans themselves, migrating overseas in large numbers, became the source of a changing narrative about development. Studies of migration and remittances challenged standard theories that had focused on agricultural development by examining how Samoans were actually increasing their household incomes and, in turn, the national income of Sāmoa. This approach provided a *critique* of the dominant development discourse, mainstream development theory, and programs that were out of touch with the realities of the small, newly independent island states. In Sāmoa, the kinds of ties that the islands and its people were developing with the wider world, especially migration and remittances, worked against formal agricultural development programs while unintentionally reinforcing international migration.

At the family and individual level, migration and remittances were a solution to the lack of opportunities in the islands; Samoan families and individuals recognized new opportunities and took advantage of them. Migration and remittances were also part of the islands' increasingly dependent relationship with the wider world. Newer forms of dependency such as tourism, off-shore banking, foreign aid, and external loans have complicated the islands' economic profile (Shankman 1990, 2018). Today these forms of dependency, especially large loans from China that cannot easily be repaid, have placed Sāmoa and several other Pacific nations in a vulnerable position.

Conclusion

In the study of migration and remittances, both indigenous and external perspectives are important. This point is hardly new or original (Abu-Lughod

1975; Jones and Richter 1981) and may seem unworthy of extended discussion except for Lilomaiava-Doktor's critique of earlier research. In 1976, I made this point in a discussion of research methods for a study of Samoan migration and remittances. In economic anthropology during the 1960s and early 1970s, microanalytic approaches similar to Lilomaiava-Doktor's approach were common, focusing on local social and cultural factors. As I commented,

> While this approach has helped to correct some misconceptions, it can lead to a selective avoidance of the *sources* of change at the national and international levels. The anthropological emphasis on 'tradition' and village studies has sometimes obscured the importance of colonial practice, government policy, and world finance in the shaping of economic trends. . . . Neither micro-analytic or macro-analytic approaches are sufficient in themselves; both should be employed (1976, 3)

To encourage more synthetic scholarship, I suggested an approach to the study of migration (1) that recognized the different kinds of ties between local, national, and international levels; (2) that gave economic factors that same explicit treatment as social, cultural, and noneconomic factors; and (3) that employed historical and comparative perspectives (Shankman 1976, 3). It is not clear why Lilomaiava-Doktor finds such an approach "wrongheaded" and "simplistic" or why, in this context, her approach seems "better." Many of the studies cited in this article have found both indigenous and external approaches useful, contributing to a set of findings about migration and remittances that continues to be explored in more contemporary research.

Current researchers should be able to account for trends in Samoan migration and remittances as well as understanding their meanings. A number of the trends that Lilomaiava-Doktor has identified concerning the nature and direction of Samoan movement require qualification. She states that Samoan conceptions about mobility promote a pattern of circular movement that, in turn, strengthens connectedness between families at home and abroad through participation in fa'alavelave. Yet her focus on vā minimizes the economic motivations that Samoans themselves offer as reasons for migration. Her emphasis on circular movement neglects the direction and magnitude of permanent overseas migration that is strongly influenced by economic and political factors as well as cultural and social motivations. The attention that she gives to strengthening ties among Samoan families in the diaspora neglects ties between family members that may be attenuated and weakened as well. There have also been conflicting perceptions about and commitments to participation in fa'alavelave as the Samoan moral economy is being reworked; participation itself is now being openly questioned. And there has been an intergenerational decline in remittances to the islands.

To her credit, in a brief comment Lilomaiava-Doktor has recently proposed that, "A concerted effort at longitudinal studies of island communities at home and abroad, along with a deliberate mix of inside and outside perspectives, would produce more nuanced conceptual approaches" (2015, 92). This statement aligns her thinking more closely with work that she previously criticized. And such longitudinal studies already exist in the literature on Pacific migration. Wessen et al.'s long-term study of Tokelauan migration to New Zealand (Wessen et al. 1992) and Small's long-term study of Tongan migration to the United States (Small 2011) are two such studies that support trends documented in this article.

Among the best of these long-term studies is the Macphersons' examination of Samoan migration to New Zealand (2009a), addressing the relationship between local and global processes, as well as the nature and direction of change in the islands. Their findings are also relevant to Lilomaiava-Doktor's interest in cultural continuity and change. The Macphersons readily acknowledge the dynamism of Samoan tradition that has enabled Samoan culture to absorb a considerable degree of change. Nevertheless, they caution that,

> [t]he danger of focusing on these comparatively resilient elements of tradition . . . is that it distracts attention from others that are nowhere near as secure: tradition itself may look unassailable when certain contemporary expressions of it are discussed, but it is clear that much has changed and much has gone forever (2009a, 182, see also 2009a: 185–189)

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ENDNOTES

1. I have used Lilomaiava-Doktor's orthography for Samoan vocabulary throughout this article.

2. This article is specifically concerned with Lilomaiava-Doktor's approach to Samoan migration and remittances rather than indigenous scholarship more broadly.

3. Studies using transnational perspectives make this point in different ways (Cohen 2001; Spoonley, Bedford, and Macpherson 2003; Lee 2009; Barcham, Scheyvens, and Overton 2009).

4. A version of this section previously appeared in Shankman (2018).

5. Lilomaiava-Doktor states that Shankman "missed the importance Samoans give to meeting the everyday needs of families and to maintaining *vā*" (2009a, 17). A chapter on 'A Village and Its Remittances' (Shankman 1976: 51–84) may serve as a reply to this allegation.

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