

**IS TONGA'S MIRAB ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE?
A VIEW FROM THE VILLAGE AND A VIEW WITHOUT IT**

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The development implications of the now-classic MIRAB economic pattern for South Pacific microstates (with economies dominated by overseas remittances and foreign aid) have attracted considerable attention. Some scholars argue the MIRAB pattern is well entrenched and can be sustained with a minimum of undesirable social and economic outcomes. Others decry the acceptance of the dependency of South Pacific nations and argue for renewed effort toward the development of self-sustaining economies. I argue that the debate must directly address the underlying social relations that facilitate and shape migration and remittances. In Tonga, the movement of people from rural areas has wide-ranging implications. Not only does the underuse of outer-island resources exacerbate levels of dependency, but the inability of outer-island migrants to participate effectively in traditional exchange activity could cause the deterioration of social ties that channel and promote the remittances on which the Tongan economy depends.

IN A DISCUSSION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT from a human-centered perspective, an initial question must be, just who is to be sustained? While questions about ecological sustainability are important ones, from a human-centered perspective, they logically follow the question of “who” is being sustained. This “who” might be conceived in terms of nation-states, or geographically specific populations, or people bound together into particular social institutions, and so on. As Michael Lieber (elsewhere in this volume) demonstrates, what X, what entity, what set of interrelated entities and practices we are talking about when we as scholars launch into a discussion of

sustainability counts for a great deal when we consider the content of the notion of sustainability.

Although this might seem a rather contrived place to start, such questions immediately arise when sustainable development is discussed. The assumption that the nation-state is the natural unit of analysis in discussions of development generally, and sustainable development specifically, is a key and contested one. The analytical framework provided by the MIRAB concept introduced by Bertram and Watters (1985) has been one of the most productive and, for those intent on conceptualizing development from a framework based on nation-states and national economies, one of the more disruptive in recent years. The MIRAB model stresses that the economies of South Pacific microstates are embedded in the regional and global economies in two main ways. The large-scale migration of islanders from the South Pacific to a variety of locations (most notably Australia, New Zealand, and parts of the western United States) has resulted in significant flows of cash and material from overseas migrants to kinspeople remaining in their natal areas (that is, *Migration and Remittances*). Foreign-aid donations have also resulted in the movement of large amounts of resources into South Pacific states and underwritten the development of sizable government bureaucracies (that is, *Aid and Bureaucracy*). Taken together the flow of resources through these two main channels has had profound effects on a number of South Pacific microstates.

The model shifts attention away from the classic focus of development,¹ that is, the growth of production within the nation-state marked and measured by things like balance-of-trade figures, to the stability of various sorts of transnational linkages. Some of these linkages fall under the purview of state institutions, while others are formed by and function through social linkages of islanders themselves. The key policy prescription potentiated by Bertram and Watters's treatment of MIRAB was the call for actions designed to stabilize things like labor markets and the movement of migrants into and out of these markets. Stability in transnational linkages rather than the development of capitalist enterprise in aid of national self-sufficiency was key. In fairly short order, Bertram (1986, 1993) linked issues of stability to those of "sustainability." It is in this vein that this article takes up issues of development in the South Pacific.

Using material derived from fieldwork in the Ha'apai region of the Kingdom of Tonga, I explore the effects of the MIRAB economic pattern on the social relationships in a rural village and the extension of relationships founded in village life to a transnational frame. In the village context, the "who" (the various configurations of emotional and material connections between villagers) is formed within the framework of Tongan culture. The

“who” are in turn directly related to the “how” of development for Tongan villagers. Migration of socially connected, not economically individuated, Tongan persons is one of the ways that a range of activities and social groups centered in the village are extended over vast spaces and significant periods of time.

While the migration/remittance process is not in itself antithetical to the continuity of long-term transnational relationships, other elements typical of the MIRAB pattern may be. In particular the centralizing tendencies inherent in the use of aid funds for the development of national bureaucracies results in both unequal pressure on ecological resources and unequal access to the material conditions necessary for the long-term replication and negotiation of transnational social ties. Such a perspective locates part of the source of the MIRAB pattern in villages (see James 1991) but ironically suggests that villages themselves may dissipate into wider regional systems and thus erode the kin groups and villages on which the current situation is founded.

MIRAB Economies in Polynesia and the Pacific

In 1985 Bertram and Watters put forth the thesis that the processes of economic change in several Pacific nations have operated in a manner that has suppressed agricultural intensification.² Overseas migration and remittances, foreign aid, and the growth of government administration have provided other, more economically attractive alternatives to agricultural growth, although the rationale for aid and administration remains “development” in the classic sense (*ibid.*:514). The postwar flows of resources from remittances and aid have created the conditions for increased consumption levels in spite of a lack of economic “rationalization” in the agricultural sector. Individuals operating in this context make rational decisions that do not entail persistent agricultural innovation (see also O’Meara 1990). Bertram and Watters speculate that the levels of consumption thus achieved could not have been reached through agricultural growth (1985:510); the implication is that these levels cannot be achieved by development geared to national self-reliance either (see also Acquaye and Crocombe 1984). This argument was originally directed at very small states like the Cook Islands and Niue, where the number of island-born people who reside outside of state boundaries is sometimes greater than the actual residents (see Bertram 1986:813), but it has since been applied to other microstates as well (see, for instance, Hooper 1993; James 1991, 1993b; Shankman 1990). Connell writes that this situation “is viewed with concern and dismay by many in [these] countries” because it “has nothing to do with self-reliance” (1986:49). Bertram and Watters (1985)

suggest that the situation is not reversible via agricultural development and that, rather than fitful and frustrating efforts to achieve self-reliance, policy-makers should turn toward ensuring economic stability (*ibid.*:515–516; see also Ogden 1989:371).

The place of kinship and social ties in MIRAB economies is central. It is important to note that the stability of the situation is dependent on remittances and aid. The flow of remittances is ensured in MIRAB economies by the continuity of the stream of migrants and by the long-term strength of ties between migrants and their remaining kin. Transnational kin ties knit migrants to their homelands in a variety of ways (see Marcus 1981). The continuing connections between migrants and their kin located within sending communities, embedded in traditional culture, ensure continuing emotional ties even where the intent to return permanently is lacking (Macpherson 1985). For the most part it seems that migrants from Polynesia do not disappear into receiving societies even when the migration patterns are not circular (Brown 1995, 1996, 1998). Migration is linked to cultural continuity to the extent that the kin groups are (Bertram and Watters 1985:499), because migration helps maintain traditional social life in which kin groups are embedded. Social practices understood in traditional terms are both the motivation and the beneficiary of migration. Given the sheer practical limitations to agricultural intensification that bear on almost all of Polynesia to one degree or another, it is doubtful that current consumption levels could be met by any enforced program of national self-reliance, though such a strategy appears to be the intent of organizations like the World Bank (1991).

If one accepts the evidence marshaled by case studies like that provided by Stevens (this volume), these limitations are not, from the point of view of ecological sustainability, a bad thing. Stevens, dealing with the impact of squash pumpkin production on Tongatapu, discusses how mechanical plowing (a technology linked to economies of scale essential for production for the Japanese market) has potentially destructive effects on soil fertility almost immediately. In the context of discussions about development in Tonga, studies like that by Stevens provide a much-needed counterpoint to those of naive economists forecasting economic “takeoff” (for example, Sturton 1992) on the basis of short-term and apparently ecologically unsustainable export growth. Studies such as Stevens’s (and see also Shankman, this volume) are a reminder that examples of agricultural or fisheries intensification in pursuit of resources at the expense of ecological values are legion.

Together, the ecological limitations experienced by most South Pacific microstates combined with the economies of scale required to produce commodities for the world market, not to mention the sorts of transformations required to ensure surplus expropriation in a capitalist mode, present severe

limitations to economic development not only in the sense of increasing GDP, but in terms of environmental sustainability as well. So it is that scholars like Bertram and Watters have proposed that policy prescriptions drawn from the MIRAB model be used to promote pragmatic solutions to the challenges of development in South Pacific microstates in both the short term (stability) and the long term (sustainability). Bertram's (1993) reconsideration of the MIRAB model uses a practical general definition of sustainable development drawn from Pearce, Barbier, and Markandya (1990):

We take development to be a vector of desirable social objectives; that is a list of attributes which society seeks to achieve or maximize. . . . [We] suggest that sustainability be defined as the general requirement that a vector of development characteristics be non-decreasing over time, where the elements to be included in the vector be open to ethical debate and where the relevant time horizon for practical decision making is similarly indeterminate outside of agreement on intergenerational objectives. (Cited in Bertram 1993:247)

This definition has the advantage of demanding that we as scholars concern ourselves with cross-cultural variation in definitions of the desirable. It also is overtly concerned with time depth and thus shifts our focus from "stability" to "sustainability" (see Lieber, this volume). With this definition in mind, Bertram revisits the earlier conclusions drawn from the MIRAB model. The major thrust of his article is to suggest that the course laid out in earlier articles to ensure stability is also the one necessary to ensure sustainability. The key elements for sustainability in Bertram's framework are again "entitlement of island communities to rent incomes" through (1) access to labor markets overseas (whether legally or sublegally) and (2) continued aid donor willingness to "subsidize consumption levels" (Bertram 1993:257). This formula is fair enough as far as it goes, and Bertram ends on a very optimistic note, suggesting that the situation is not only stable but sustainable.

For the most part I will not deal with Bertram's estimation of the stability or sustainability of these transnational linkages as they are determined by the interaction of nation-states. Rather, I wish to return to a key factor in the movement of resources from overseas labor markets back into a MIRAB economy—and specifically the Tongan economy—that is, the origin and nature of the social ties that knit migrants to those who remain in the home islands. Bertram is also optimistic that these ties are durable. He writes, "As for the sustainability of the market factor linkages between island societies and the metropolitan economies, these seem likely to prove as durable as

the kin, village and island networks which currently mediate them. On their present showing, those networks will be a feature of the South Pacific regional economy for at least the next generation, and probably beyond" (ibid.:257). These "market factor linkages" are associated with social networks, themselves linked in a somewhat amorphous way to "transnational corporations of kin."

Transnational Corporations of Kin

This idea, first suggested by Marcus (1981) and subsequently coined by Bertram and Watters (1985), has come under scrutiny in recent years (James 1991; Munro 1990). Munro has several objections to the use of the term "corporation," but for my purposes here his main point is that the term is misapplied in the Tuvaluan context. Insofar as Tuvaluan corporations of kin exist, their actions are a product of a very different logic, or "diverging underlying rationales" (Munro 1990:64), from those of capitalist corporate enterprise. Multinational corporations, says Munro, are concerned with "economic individualism and capital accumulation," while Tuvaluan extended kin groups "are more concerned with reciprocity within the group" (ibid.). Bertram rejects this criticism and suggests that Munro's attempt to eclipse the phrase "transnational corporations of kin" "suffer[s] the deficiency of focussing rhetorically, on culture rather than economics" (Bertram 1993:255). He then goes on to elaborate a methodology and research agenda that completely marginalizes any consideration of culture in favor of a highly economic accounting of the "net worth" of dispersed kin groups. Such a program might effectively trace the flow of wealth but leaves unexamined questions of why wealth flows as it does. In effect, the description "transnational corporation of kin" is reminiscent of the sort of economics/anthropology so thoroughly disassembled by Sahlins twenty years ago in *Culture and Practical Reason* (1976). Bertram assumes that behavior can be reduced to economic rationality (itself an ideology) in a capitalist mode; this sort of accounting for behavior (pun intended) imposes an explanation that might make little sense to the actors involved.

Another and related issue raised briefly by Munro concerns just how "corporate," in a bounded sense, Polynesian kin groups are. This is a crucial issue; in order to calculate anything about any kin group, this group must first be found and bound analytically. If the analytical binding is too contrived, its heuristic value is in question. This problem is dealt with by Bertram (1993) by supposing such a group in a hypothetical manner, thus ignoring rather than overcoming the problem.

James (1991) discusses the utility of the focus on kin groups as corpora-

tions in reference to the Tongan situation. She suggests that it is unwise to apply the term "corporate" to extended kin groups in Tonga today (ibid.:3). Changes in the postcontact period, especially in terms of the role of corporate kin groups in the distribution of usufruct land rights, eroded the material basis of kin group corporateness (Gailey 1987:196–201; Maude 1965:53). The subsequent shift in land-tenure practices to individually held leaseholds combined with the effects of the introduction of European models of the family associated with the Methodist churches are frequently cited as the initial causes for the individuation or nucleation of Tongan kin groups (see especially Gailey 1987). It is generally held that these historical trends have been exacerbated by the increasing monetization of the Tongan economy since World War II (see, for instance, Bollard 1974; Cowling 1990; Maude 1965).

The wider process of kin group formation (of which the notion of individuation is a part) has been the subject of long debate in the literature on Tonga, especially the kin groups of commoners. From even a cursory glance at the work of people like Aoyagi (1966) or Decktor-Korn (1974, 1975, 1977, 1978) and some of the work of Marcus (1980), one can get some sense of the inability of structural analysis to describe Tongan kin groups adequately. Each one of these authors is forced to develop heuristic groupings of kin that do not directly correspond to conscious Tongan models of kin groups. The reason is simple—Tongan commoner kin group configurations are formed through kindred-based overlapping dyadic ties, that is, processes of individual interrelationship, not structures of interrelated corporate kin groups. These ties are formed and understood through the kinship ideology of *'ofa* (love and generosity), which fuses emotional and material interest. The flexibility of kin group formation that results is problematic for any straightforward investigation of transnational linkages formed through corporations of kin, for in fact the internal linkages are not of a corporate nature. With this clarification in mind, it is useful to return to James's treatment of "the migration/remittance nexus" in the region of Vava'u in Tonga (1991:2).

According to James, the movement of remittances into the village she studied in Vava'u was confined largely to remitters' immediate families and did not, for the most part, engage a wider circle of kin, let alone something reasonably called a transnational corporation of kin. James writes that "the most dependable remittances and the largest amounts of money return in the form of 'savings' for oneself and one's immediate family, rather than gifts for an extended family group" (1991:3). Even very close kin beyond the immediate family may not share directly when remittances are received from overseas. Thus James sees the distribution of remittances reflecting the increasing individuation of interest, a position opposed to the notion that kin groups

are maintained or enhanced through the migration/remittance process. Still, James is careful to show the tremendous variation in the patterns of individual relationships affected by the migration process. She suggests that remittances of cash may be declining while other means of mediating transnational relations are increasing. Of particular interest is her observation that far from inhibiting the production of agricultural goods and traditional wealth items, this sort of activity is flourishing both for use in village-based prestige exchanges and for the mediation of relationships with overseas migrants (ibid.:22). James makes no attempt to systematize the linkages between such activity and kin group formation. Rather she prefers to talk of the “immediate family” as the focus of the flow of cash, and social and kinship networks as the wider context in which this flow occurs. James goes on to suggest that besides the individuating tendencies of remittance receipt, “any ‘ethos of wider social contract’ . . . is in Tonga mediated by nationwide organisations, most notably the churches. Through the mechanism of the *misi-nale*, annual public ‘free gifting’, in the Free Wesleyan Church, for instance, some of the money coming from overseas may eventually be used for church building or educational purposes that benefit the wider community, but this is not necessarily part of the rationale for labour migration” (ibid.:5).

Material drawn from Ha’ano, however, suggests that while the direct material benefits experienced by villagers through church spending programs are not part of the rationale for migration, contributions to the church are. Church-based feasting and the material contributions that villagers make to the church are important elements in the process of kin group formation. In Ha’ano at least, these contributions are directly related to the migration and remittance process and, not coincidentally, to the formation of kin groups.³ Contributions made to churches, both in the form of cash donations and in terms of gifts in kind, are systematically linked to the wider ideology and practice of gift exchange. Gift exchange praxis, much of which is framed by church-based activity, is in fact the mediating term in the formation of both the “immediate family” and the wider social and kinship networks in which these families are embedded.

The Construction of Social Groups: *Famili* and *Kāinga*

As I have suggested above, Tongan kin groups (especially among commoners) are notoriously difficult to pin down. A brief discussion of the terms *famili* and *kāinga* will help elucidate this point. *Famili* is arguably the most significant term of reference within the Tongan kinship system today. Cowling lists the several meanings of the term as (1) any nuclear family; (2) the members of an individual’s natal household; (3) cognate kin, more correctly known as

kāinga; (4) the totality of an individual's kin, both cognate and affines; and (5) members of the group of relatives with whom an individual works most closely in producing craft goods or feast tables (*pola*) for special occasions, or who work together on a regular basis in agricultural production for household subsistence needs or for cash sale, or to whom an individual could go to borrow money or for other needs (1990:110).

In Tongan terms, *famili* can include a very large number of people, virtually all those to whom an individual is related by blood or marriage (definition 4 above), although in my experience such usage is uncommon. Generally the term is used for the first two and the last definition given by Cowling. As is indicated in definition 3, the use of the terms *kāinga* and *famili* overlap. Decktor-Korn draws a rather strict distinction between *kāinga* and *famili*:

Membership in the *kāinga*—if it may be called “membership”—is simply a matter of genealogical relationships; membership in the *famili*, although founded on kin ties, is defined by participation in the activities of the *famili*. While *kāinga* is mainly a relationship category, *famili* is an action group which supplies members' households with goods, labour, and personnel when they are needed. . . . While *kāinga* ties transcend local boundaries . . . the *famili* is essentially a localized group, most of whose members live in the same village. (1977:153–155)

This is a useful distinction and one with which many Tongans might agree in the abstract, although in common usage *kāinga* and *famili* are often used interchangeably, especially when referring to more-distant kin.

The preponderance of usage on Ha'ano Island is as Decktor-Korn suggests; a *kāinga* is an ideal ego-centered kindred, while *famili* is generally used to indicate those relatives with whom an individual has more active material and social interests in common (i.e., Cowling's fifth definition above). For individuals the most active material and social ties tend to center on their natal families (including families of adoption) and on their families of procreation. The terms *famili* and *kāinga* merge somewhat at the edges even in Decktor-Korn's formulation, however; *kāinga* relationships can be activated for specific and limited purposes, for example, in acquiring short-term access to garden land, and thus *kāinga* is not simply an ideal “relational category” (Decktor-Korn 1974:9–10; see Aoyagi 1966 for a similar formulation using slightly different terms).

Decktor-Korn, and most Tongans as well, usually use the term *famili* to refer to localized kinship-based social relationships that order and underlie

mutually reciprocal exchange activity on a daily basis. Decktor-Korn's central thesis is that Tongan social structure needs to be understood as a "loose" one, in which the relative freedom of individuals to exercise a range of choices within the kinship system results in the highly variable composition of social units at all levels. Yet she insists that *famili* be understood as a social unit, one based on sibling sets or the descendants of sibling sets (Decktor-Korn 1974:155). Furthermore, in Decktor-Korn's view, *famili* do not overlap (*ibid.*: 161); that is, they are discrete and exclusive at any one point in time, although membership tends to shift over time.

Cowling disputes this; she writes:

In my view no fixed rules should be formulated regarding the membership of a small kin-based group which co-operates on work tasks or which supports each other without question. Such alliances exist but the membership may simply be determined by the history of inter-household relations of kin while children are growing up, or even by how many people can comfortably fit in the room of a house to prepare food or make mats, or are affected by personal preference. (1990:115)

In fact, Decktor-Korn's position is not much different, for she well recognizes the heterogeneity of *famili*. She writes that "it must be understood that the criteria of membership in the *famili* are not at all rigid. A person could be affiliated with any *famili* to which he or she is able to claim a kin tie, even if the genealogical connection is not very close, provided it is accepted by the members of the *famili*" (1977:155–156).

The source of disagreement between Cowling and Decktor-Korn can be seen in this statement from Cowling: "Most individuals had a network of people to whom they would apply for assistance on various matters. Some of these members were kin and others were non-kin. In the case of kin the word *famili* was used as an *explanatory term rather than as a collective noun*" (Cowling 1990:117; emphasis added). Although Decktor-Korn realizes full well that *famili* are not terminologically recognized as collective bounded entities by Tongans themselves, she seems to hold that individuals nonetheless recognize and distinguish *famili* relationships from all other types, including those based on genealogical ties as close or perhaps closer than those within the *famili*. Yet it is clear from Decktor-Korn's comments on her methodology for determining *famili* membership that membership is an empirical question that should be determined by direct observation of exchange patterns rather than by direct questioning (1977:166). The problem here is that, while *famili* is a significant category of Tongan social reckoning,

a *famili* is not a social unit with defined boundaries, either over time or within any one temporal instant. As Cowling points out, the term *famili* is a description or explanation of relationship; *famili* is no more a defined social entity, corporate or otherwise, than is *kāinga*.

Cowling quite correctly points out that the last twenty years have brought considerable change (1990:117–118). Ha'apai especially has been severely depopulated by out-migration. For instance, the village of Ha'ano's population dropped from 380 in 1956 (Tupoumiua 1956) to 148 in 1992 (Evans 1996: appendix 1). This depopulation has resulted in gender and age imbalances, and the fractionation of sibling sets. In the village of Ha'ano, if there were intact and exclusive *famili* units in the past as Decktor-Korn describes, they are largely absent now. Instead most households rely on an array of relationships rooted in kinship, neighborliness (called *kaunga'api*), and common church membership (*kāinga lotu*). Any or all of these connections may constitute the basis for the generalized daily exchange relationships that Decktor-Korn singles out as the defining characteristic of *famili* organization. Where genealogical and affinal ties may have once been the primary path through which particularly intense ties were formed, a considerably wider array of relationships perform the same function today.

The large-scale dispersal of conjugal pairs is especially problematic for understanding *famili*, for it involves transregional and transnational kinship linkages that disrupt the most restricted sense of the term (i.e., Cowling's definition 2; see above). Internal and external migration patterns have dispersed a large percentage of husband-wife dyads both within Tonga and beyond (Gailey 1992; James 1991). Temporary migration for the purpose of education often results in the separation of husbands (who often remain in the rural area to provide subsistence goods) and wives (who move with their children to be closer to educational institutions located in regional or national capitals). Overseas migration frequently separates nuclear family members as well.

Given that the conjugal bonds between wives and husbands are used to frame most (but not all) of the overt church-based focus on the household/*famili*,⁴ and given that significant remittances are reported to flow between conjugal pairs (see Gailey 1992; James 1991), there is a tendency to attribute a sort of corporateness, or at least unified purpose, to kin groups formed at this level. But, while individuals within a household/*famili* share *most* resources, they do not share all resources, and they do not have coterminous material and social interests.

Wives do not have the same social responsibilities, kinship connections, or kinship obligations as their husbands; marriage does not merge the *kāinga* of husband and wife. Contrary to Gailey (1987, but see also Gailey 1992 for a revised statement of her position), women have not been transformed into

wives and mothers alone but maintain roles, responsibilities, and privileges as sisters and daughters within their natal families throughout their lives; in a similar vein, men generally maintain linkages to their natal families regardless of postmarital residence choices. For instance, at the death of a parent or close kinsperson of the first ascending generation, a woman is responsible for the provision of women's wealth items for the funeral that follows. Her husband, however, is not expected to provide either livestock or garden produce. Rather, it is the woman's brothers who must take the lead in mobilizing the men's wealth required for the funeral. Husband and wife are never fully integrated socially, and the key to what common interests they do possess is not their marriage but their children. Given that a conjugal pair have separate responsibilities in relation to their own natal families, children are the clearest common focus within a marriage.

This entire discussion is germane in terms of the processes engaged within the "migration/remittance nexus" because there is no particularly good way to bound the individuals involved in transnational relationships through the identification of kin groups as such. This is as true of the use of household/*famili* or "immediate family" or "nuclear family" as it is of any other device. Kinship and kinship relationships are a vehicle or idiom through which resources may flow. Kinship is not determinate, but clearly it is significant. Rather than looking to the structure of kinship, however, one must look to its practice, or more correctly its praxis; in the intersection of interest, emotion, and the ideology of kinship are the patterns of village life and, not coincidentally, the patterns of transnational relationships.

Tongan Gift Exchange

The three core concepts that organize gift exchange are *'ofa* (love and generosity), *faka'apa'apa* (respect), and *fetokoni'aki* (mutual assistance). All kin, quasi-kin, and political relationships are expressed in some combination of these terms (see also Cowling 1990). For instance, the brother-sister relationship was and is of central importance in kinship ranking and interaction. Brothers have *faka'apa'apa* toward their sisters; the concept is expressed in an avoidance relationship and social deference of the brother to the sister. It is also expressed on ceremonial occasions materially in the giving of gifts from brother to sister. Sisters are *'eiki*, or of higher rank in relation to their brothers, and are treated as such. Similarly nobles (*nopole*) are *'eiki* to their political constituencies and are treated with *faka'apa'apa*. This relationship too takes the form of social deference and the material provision of gifts from the commoners to their noble. Conversely, the nobles should have *'ofa* (love and generosity) toward their people. A "good" noble treats his people

generously and demands things only occasionally and only for specific types of events for which nobles are customarily entitled to support from their people.

Fetokoni'aki is often singled out by Tongans as the defining characteristic of good *angafakatonga*, or the Tongan way of behaving. It is the quintessential form of generalized reciprocity and is often opposed to *angafakapalangi* (the European way) or *angafakapa'anga* (the way of money). Any and all social ties should be expressed through *fetokoni'aki*. Neighbors, fellow church members, friends, and all kinspeople should practice *fetokoni'aki*. To practice *fetokoni'aki* is to show mutual 'ofa; to fail to do so in appropriate situations or with appropriate people is to be without 'ofa and at best elicits pity, at worst contempt.

These three principles, 'ofa, *faka'apa'apa*, and *fetokoni'aki*, operate within the household/*famili* as well as beyond. At all levels of social organization, however, there is a degree of freedom in terms of what people actually do. The concepts and associated practice and attitudes, while patterned by the social and political system, are not determined by it. The realization, legitimation, and expression of social relationships occur through actions commensurate with the three principles, primarily through gift exchange. Gift exchanges occur as part of everyday practice and most intensely in the ceremonial feasting activity that punctuates village life. Like the kinship system, gift exchange practices are optative; indeed in any particular instance the two are inextricably linked. Potential social relationships are actualized and maintained by mutual exchange. Even in asymmetrical relationships, like those of commoners to royalty or the nobility, some degree of reciprocity is expected. Any relationship that is perceived to lack appropriate levels of reciprocity, either material or emotional, is said to make one *ngatūe popula*, or work like a slave.

Church Ceremony and Gift Exchange

No treatment of Tongan society can ignore the significance of the various churches at all levels of Tongan culture. The integration of the Christian God into Tongan values and social practices is profound and ubiquitous (see Decktor-Korn 1974, 1977; Olson 1993; and see Gordon 1988 on the Mormon church). Notions of reciprocity are present in the context of people's participation in church. Of particular interest here is the importance of the household/*famili* as a ceremonial unit in reference to patterns of feasting and gift exchange organized within the churches.⁵

On Ha'ano Island, most ceremonial activity is organized through the churches. No ceremony or public event, even if it is not directly undertaken

by a church, is without some overtly religious elements and the participation of a cleric of some type; all marriages, funerals, birthdays, and civil ceremonies involve God and church through some earthly representative.

Most adult Methodist men are *malanga* (lay ministers); a man's acceptance of a *malanga* role is in fact the last step to social adulthood. For women adulthood occurs when she is married and has a child (either physically or socially); the latter usually coincides with her husband's ordination as a lay minister. Church ministers, called *faifekau*, are professional clerics appointed by the church conference to serve in a particular area. These ministers, both lay and conference-appointed, act as representatives of the church and God in the myriad social events that take place in the villages every year.

Directly church-based events are most intense at the very start of the year. On New Year's Eve each church holds a long, multisermoned service that ends at midnight. This begins 'Uike Lotu, or the week of prayer/worship. Beginning the following Sunday and continuing for the next week, church services, followed by either a feast or a "tea," are held morning and afternoon. During this week little occurs but worship, the preparation of food, and the consumption of food. At each service one *malanga* gives the sermon, and one of the families "answers" (*tali*) with a feast. Because of the sheer numbers of sermons given on New Year's Eve, almost all the families in the church are somehow involved in either giving a feast, receiving one, or in many cases both. Throughout the rest of the week feasts are given, but these feasts are for the entire congregation, and they tend to be much larger. During the rest of the year a number of church ceremonies and events are marked with feasts. Easter, Christmas, and Mother's or Women's Day, for instance, are all marked with feasts (sometimes more than one), which are provided by a particular family.

Feasting and the *Famili*: Gifts to God

All church feasting is part of a reciprocal relationship between God and human beings. Particular feasts are overt manifestations of individuated relationships in which a household/*famili* faces God and community, offers a sacrifice and, with the help of their guests, asks God to deliver blessings in return.⁶ In this process, the *malanga*, as the chief representative of God, acts as the focus for the ceremony and as the chief mediator between the household/*famili* and God.

On those occasions when a feast follows a church event, there is a common and consistent pattern of activity in all three Methodist churches represented on Ha'ano Island. In the days before a feast the household/*famili* prepares by harvesting root crops, rounding up pigs, and purchasing the

store-bought goods that usually accompany traditional prestige foods. As a general rule, the larger and more elaborate a feast, the better, although an overly ostentatious display might result in negative comments like "*fia lahi*" (wants to be big) or "*fia 'eiki*" (wants to be a chief). In order to gather the necessary goods and mobilize the required labor, the vast majority must recruit assistance from other households. Usually people who help with a feast are related to someone in the feast-giving household, but a kin tie is not sufficient in and of itself. Assisting households and individuals are drawn primarily from those people who normally (that is, on an everyday basis) practice *feitokoni'aki* (mutual assistance) with the feast givers.

The night before, those people helping with the feast will spend many hours butchering animals, preparing root vegetables, cooking other prestige foods (like octopus, fried chicken legs, taro greens and corned beef, lamb flaps, and so forth), and building a large underground oven to bake meat, fish, and root vegetables. The work goes on far into the night and usually requires a number of cooperating adults to accomplish.

After the church service, people are seated according to rank along the feast table. At the head of the table sit the *'eiki* of the congregation,⁷ the congregation minister, any high-ranking guests, and the *malanga* who gave the sermon, regardless of his or her relative rank according to other ranking criteria. Below these people sit the other *malanga* and adult men, followed by adult women, and then younger men, women, and children. Although food is relatively evenly distributed along the table, the very best foods are concentrated at the head. Beyond the very bottom of the table is the ranking man of the feast-giving family, who sits beside a large basket of food that will be given to the *malanga* at the end of the feast. The rest of the feast givers are arranged outside of the lower end of the table and will not eat until after the feast is formally concluded.

The feast begins with a prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing of the food. People then eat while they listen to the speeches that follow. The first speech is given by the ranking person (or a spokesperson) among the feast givers, who welcomes people, apologizes for the poor food, and then explains the reason for the feast. At this level the reason is not directly linked to the particular church event, but rather to the person or persons within the feast-giving group for whom the feast is offered. This person is usually, but not always, a child. The speaker asks that the congregation recognize the humble feast offered by asking God to bless the child and the family, and to bring them good things (e.g., success in school examinations, good health, and so on).

Subsequent speakers take up this request by speaking of the feast givers' laudable actions and devotion to family and community as evidenced by the

feast. They then ask God to help the family in the future. The speakers are generally (but not always) other *malanga* or respected adult men. The highest-ranking persons speak last. Usually it is the *malanga* who offers the final prayer. Where earlier speeches may have an oblique element to them, the final prayer includes a direct request to God for assistance to the feast-giving household/*famili*. The feast is then over, the guests leave, and the feast givers eat and divide up the remaining food for distribution.

For parents and children, feasting is one of the formal contexts in which their interrelationship is outlined. Most church feasts are given for the benefit of children. In one church the minister kept a list of the sermons and feasts given at New Year's. The list consisted of matched trios of names: first, the name of the *malanga*; second, the name of the head of the family answering the sermon; and finally, the name of the child for whom the feast was given. The child as beneficiary is an integral part of what the feast is about. The feast, then, is partly about a family's devotion to God and partially concerned with the relationship between a family and their child. By giving the feast, the participants show respect (*faka'apa'apa*) for God and love (*'ofa*) for the child. Their expectation is that both parties (that is, God and the child) will thus remain within a reciprocal relationship with the feast givers and each other in the future. Indeed, people have good empirical evidence for this expectation.

Education and the *Famili*: Gifts to Children

One of the blessings most sought from God for a child is educational success. There are material reasons why parents seek to ensure that their children succeed at school. Feasting is one avenue to this end. The other important gift that parents give their children, and another manifestation of their love for their children, is access to education. Households/*famili* devote significant resources to their children's education in both direct and indirect ways. Among the most significant recurring expenditures of cash that households/*famili* make are church donations and school fees. The provision of educational opportunities for children is an important aspect of adult responsibility, but it is not simply a duty (*fatongia*). School fees are one part of a long-term relationship of mutual caring, assistance, and responsibility that extends to the death of the parents and beyond.

The only overlap in kinship ties between husband and wife is located in the children they have together. Other kinship responsibilities have the potential to create conflict in the allocation of household resources, while resources directed toward children need not. Indeed, because children may

be a common focus for not only a conjugal pair but their separate kindreds (i.e., *kāinga*) as well, a couple's children can and do bring the two kindreds together in common cause.

As with large feasts, it is a rare household/*famili* that can manage the education of a child, especially a bright one, without the assistance of others. Again, even if access to cash is not a problem, access to all the other things necessary for a child's success are very infrequently available within a single nuclear family or even an extended family household. There are thus important linkages that extend beyond the household/*famili* and come into play in the education of a child.

To access educational opportunities beyond the primary level, children must leave the island of Ha'ano. Although some schools have boarding facilities, boarding a child is both expensive and for many people unsatisfactory, because the child will be lonely and have no one to look after her or his needs directly. For these reasons, many families are split between Ha'ano Island and the regional center of Ha'apai, Pangai. When children gain entry into a college (high school) on Tongatapu, even this option is eliminated. In some cases an entire household/*famili* may relocate to Tongatapu in spite of difficulty because of shortages in housing, land, and other economic resources. Others choose not to migrate. Instead they seek someone on Tongatapu who can care for the child while he or she is at school. Generally, this person will be a kinsperson.

The movement of a child to Tongatapu mitigates what tendency there might be toward nucleation of extended kin into nuclear families, because it provides a rationale for interdependence. Material flows from the island in support of the child and to the benefit of the people caring for the child. Pigs, fish, mangoes, and garden produce are periodically sent down to Tongatapu. While one of the reasons this flow occurs is that the child is there, nonetheless kinship ties channel and contextualize the exchange and serve to invigorate the relationships between extended kin. The pace and scope of gift exchange is not limited by the material ramifications of the child's board. What at one level may be considered a simple exchange of board for produce is considerably complicated by ties of affection and relationships of mutual aid that extend both backward and forward in time. Such ties certainly exist for the child, but also for the other people involved as well.

For the people of Ha'ano Island, kinship connections are one means to ensure opportunities for their children. The process through which the educational opportunities of children are insured plays into a whole complex of other relationships. These relationships do have material components, and one can see a certain practical logic at work, but this logic is no more deter-

mined by economic calculation than it is by kinship or kinship ideology; rather, the two intersect. The result of this interplay is not the elimination of wider social ties, but their maintenance.

Education and the *Famili*: Gifts from the Children

Education is one of the primary routes through which people from the outer islands can gain access to the resources of the state or wider regional economy. Employment in the state bureaucracy, standing in the church hierarchy, and some opportunities to migrate overseas are dependent on educational success. All three of these economic options necessitate migration from the village.

In the section above I discussed how educational success was linked to a chain of gift relationships drawing together children, their parents, their wider kinship networks, the churches, and God. Empirical evidence is available to all villagers that demonstrates the effectiveness of this chain of exchange. To a limited degree the differences among households/*famili* in material well-being can be attributed to remittances from children. The most striking demonstrations of wealth differentiation occur at the time of the large annual donations to the church (called *misinale*).

Misinale is organized nationally by each of the Methodist churches. Target donation levels and specific dates are set by the church headquarters. As the date draws near, people within the church begin to plan the feast that will accompany the *misinale* ceremony and actively search out the resources they will use for their donations. Individual households/*famili* usually make individual contributions. All the donations are made publicly, and the size of the contributions are called out to all present. The contributions are then added up and announced. The total *misinale* is considered to reflect on the local church itself, just as individual donations indicate something about individuals and households/*famili* within the church. Greater prestige is associated with large donations.

Misinale contributions are gifts to God. As such they are part of a continuing relationship between God and the givers. Elements of both thanksgiving and expectations of future blessings are present in the discourse in and around the *misinale* ceremony. The size of a particular household/*famili* contribution can be seen to reflect the vitality and viability of its relationships to God; that is, a large contribution indicates a more expansive relationship from both sides. A larger contribution implies more blessings, and more blessings imply a larger contribution.⁸

In the most general terms, the size of *misinale* contributions is related to the position of the household/*famili* in its life cycle in a fairly straight-

TABLE 1. **Comparison of Remittances and *Misinale* Contributions, 1992**

Type of Unit	Mean <i>Misinale</i> (in Pa'anga)	Mean remittances (in Pa'anga)	Number of Cases
All	488	728	29
With grown children	615	1,027	16
With school-age children	375	458	10
No children	188	33	3

forward Chayanovian way. The dependency ratio is generally highest while children are in school; this is true in terms of both cash and subsistence requirements. Children of school age require not only school fees, but also a healthy gift relationship with God, church, and community in order to ensure their success. Once children have finished school, they are available to help the family with subsistence production, market-oriented production of crops or fish, the production of women's wealth, or wage labor.

Cash can be acquired from a number of activities, but remittances are generally the largest source. There is in fact a rather striking relationship between remittances from migrants and *misinale* contributions. Given that a large proportion of remittances flow from children to their parents (55 percent in Ha'ano village), it is not surprising but it is nonetheless important that the levels of both remittances and *misinale* contributions are higher among those with children who have migrated out. Table 1 compares the mean remittances received and mean *misinale* contributions made among three categories of households/*famili* in Ha'ano village: those with grown children, those with school-age children only, and those without children. The ability to give large amounts at the *misinale* ceremony is related to access to remittances; indeed, requests for cash made to children or other relatives who have migrated out are quite often made specifically for the purpose of church donations.⁹

People also "help" others. This practice occurs within the ceremony, after the initial donation is made. The steward calls for *tokoni* (help), at which time people may come up and make additional contributions in the name of the initial donating unit. Usually these additional contributions come from friends and relatives from different churches. When a *misinale* follows a death, the *famili* of the deceased makes their donation in the name of the deceased as a *fakamanatu*, or memorial. On these occasions such *tokoni* can be very large and reflect the great importance of wider kinship networks mobilized at funerals.

The Sustainability of Transnational Kin Ties

The flow of remittances from children and others to villagers is, like the flow of material at feasts, a tangible marker of the love and respect between remitters and recipients. From within the household/*famili*, the relationship that starts with the social and economic activity focused on children is reversed (that is, reciprocated) as children in turn focus their social and economic goals to the benefit of their parents. Remittances are one of several ways in which children can show their love. Many of the younger adults who remain in the village show love by caring for the other material needs of the parental generation. Fishing, farming, domestic care, and the production of women's wealth are all ways of showing love to those who benefit from one's work. Remittances are remarkable in so far as they primarily take the form of cash, while these other activities tend to result in the production of subsistence and traditional wealth. All these forms of wealth, including cash, can be and are turned toward the reproduction of social relationships through the gift exchange process. At one level these relationships have undergone a historical shift and now center on smaller social groupings organized around the Christian ideology of the family and the now individuated land-tenure system. But this shift is embedded within a much wider ideology of mutual assistance among kin and a gift exchange system that continues to implicate wider networks of individuals and groups in the well-being of individuals, households/*famili*, and larger cooperating groups.

Migration is one way in which Tongans seek to help those who remain behind. Those remaining in the village have good empirical evidence to suggest this strategy is an effective way to gain access to resources beyond village boundaries. The processes of development in Tonga, of which migration and remittances are one aspect, must be understood in terms of the intentions and objectives of Tongans themselves. The relationship among *misinale*, church feasts, and remittances is one example of how gift exchange practice in the village affects the actions of Tongans both within and beyond the rural area. Although the household/*famili* is the focus of this sort of church-based activity, it should also be clear that the household/*famili* is not isolated by these processes. The ideology of the family embedded in church practice, while significant, does not negate wider social ties.

As James (1991) suggests, remittances are not generally, or at least obviously, dispersed among a large group of kinspeople. They are received and used by individuals. But in Ha'ano, unlike the situation described by James in Vava'u, remittances are not easily seen as serving an individuated savings function. Most remittances flow from children to their parents, but most remittances in fact go into either church donations or school fees.

Clearly, gift exchange praxis is significant in the motivation for remittances

and in their subsequent use. The question remains whether this praxis is either stable or sustainable. On a year-to-year basis, social and cultural factors being equal, the levels of remittances will almost certainly vary given changes in exchange rates, overseas labor markets, and the flow of new migrants (James 1991, 1993b). I leave it to others to discuss the likely trends in these areas and will concentrate instead on the sustainability of the social practices I have outlined above.¹⁰

The View from the Village

When viewed from the village, the migration-remittance nexus is embedded in a complex of gift exchange relationships. Relationships shaped in ceremonial contexts combined with everyday exchanges of food and mutual assistance are the very stuff of social ties. These relationships have grown to encompass the use of cash, but they also mobilize large quantities of traditional wealth items and subsistence goods (Brown 1995; James 1991). In Ha'ano, where there has been depopulation in combination with extensive informal landholding arrangements, access to land is well diffused, and thus so too is access to traditional wealth and the ability to feast. This factor in combination with the limited cash-earning opportunities people have is sufficient to allow almost all to participate more or less effectively in the intense gift exchange activity that typifies village life. Prestige, both individual and collective, is an outcome of this feasting (Marcus 1980), but so too are the multiple overlapping social ties demanded, facilitated, and enacted through gift exchanges.

These gift exchanges are not simply the manifestations of material interest or kinship ideology. In practice they are events that form emotional ties capable of spanning the globe. Remittance behavior is indeed individuated, but it is not necessarily individuating. Remittances find their way into circuits of exchange that, while sometimes focused through households/*famili*, engage wider social ties at a number of levels. The example of *misinale* donations I have given above is one particular gift exchange nexus that tends, because of the church-based ideologies it articulates with, to emphasize the household/*famili*. Other formalized gift exchange activities, for instance, funerals and celebrations around first and twenty-first birthdays, engage and outline a much wider network of kin and also use resources drawn from remittances (see, for instance, James 1991:18). In addition, a wide range of other informal exchanges ranging from the everyday movement of fish between households to the long-term transfer of usufruct land rights, like formal exchanges, link people together economically, socially, and emotionally (see Evans 1996).

It is not unreasonable to talk of an efflorescence of gift exchange activity

in Tonga (Marcus 1980; Maude and Sevele 1987; James 1991; see also Gregory 1982 for a general theoretical discussion). Remittances are crucial, but they are not the lone element in this efflorescence. Within the village of Ha'ano, the movement of cash into local exchanges is matched by the use of locally produced wealth. The exchanges of resources that create and mark social ties use all of these things in different and varied measures. Cash has not replaced the use of locally accessible goods in gift exchange but has been incorporated into and alongside of these goods. The mediation of social relationships continues to be dominated by gift exchanges and has not been subsumed into commodity exchange.

In terms of the sustainability of the transnational relationships identified by MIRAB theorists, a focus on the movement of resources transnationally bereft of consideration of the local praxis that codes meanings into these flows is hopelessly hobbled. The experiences of *'ofa* that inform and shape the behavior of migrants is tied not simply to their experiences of cash but to their experiences of a whole range of gifts. While it is possible that the dual role of cash as a gift and cash as the mediating instrument of alienating commodity exchanges produces some ambiguity in people's experience, this overlap is considerably less of a factor in the movement of other sorts of goods.

For the maintenance of transnational social ties between groups of people (not corporate but effectively collective at some junctures), the movement and experience of movement (that is, giving and receiving) of gifts between people is essential. Two questions arise: (1) are these emotional and material ties effective transgenerationally? That is, how long will these ties remain sufficient to motivate the movement of resources into Tonga and its villages? And (2), are conditions in the villages likely to continue to be dominated by the sorts of gift exchanges that give rise to the emotional and material commitments of contemporary migrants?

My own research and experiences are insufficient to marshal an answer to the first question. James suggests that even given the fairly widespread practice of the fosterage into rural villages of children whose natural parents resided overseas, these relations were too ambiguous to ensure sufficient connections between "second-generation remitters" (1991:16–17) and their kin resident in Tonga. Of the practice of transnational fosterage she writes: "I doubt in many cases that the Tongan notion of *'ofa* ('love, generosity') will be successfully instilled into the younger generation born of migrant parents. Instead they are likely to get more clearly the message of economic individualism, which seemingly dominates the actions of their parents and other relatives, which may mean that they will cut themselves off from wider kinship ties" (ibid.:17). Given the discussion above, it should be clear that I

have reservations about predictions based on "the message of economic individualism," for this does not coincide with my own observations based on work in Ha'ano. While the whole issue of transgenerational transnational linkages is a crucial one, the sustainability of remittance flows is also influenced by the continuing movement of first-generation migrants. This movement, in turn, is a process influenced by both state-managed transnational ties and individual social ties between Tongan overseas communities and their natal communities. However, I must leave these issues for other analysts and future times.

The View Without It

Rather, I will turn to the second crucial question (which is also a logically prior one). That is, are the social practices through which the social ties are forged in the village sustainable? Let me first reiterate my position that current village practice is neither individuated nor inevitably individuating. This position is based on my observations of the nature and vitality of gift exchange praxis. At root my argument is also based on the diffusion of the vital resources within the village; in particular, the noncommodification of land is crucial. Access to the stuff of gift exchange is not equal, but it is widespread enough that, in Ha'ano at least, the vast majority of people can participate in gift exchanges and thus form the interrelationships central to subsequent transnational flows of wealth. But the MIRAB pattern also includes a distinct tendency toward the centralization of populations. Considerable population shifts are associated with the centralization of educational and employment opportunities in Tonga (Ahlburg 1991; Evans 1996; Maude 1965:87; Walsh 1970; see Sevele 1973 on the concentration of foreign-aid expenditures on Tongatapu). This fact is well documented for Tonga and presents some fairly obvious problems in terms of unbalanced population distribution resulting in ecological pressures on the main island of Tongatapu and the underutilization of land and ecological resources in outlying areas.¹¹

The structure of Tongan land tenure is such that both formal and informal tenure is today effectively dependent on kinship ties that internal migrants, who generally move to the main island of Tongatapu, may not possess (see James 1993a). Access to land, and thus crucial and otherwise largely noncommodified resources, is constrained by the seemingly voluntary movement of people off their lands, rather than the more typical colonial and neocolonial patterns of land alienation and commodification. It is this aspect of the MIRAB pattern that may, in the end, be the most destabilizing and the greatest challenge to the sustainability of transnational connections forged

through village-level praxis. It is not the incorporation of cash into villages and relationships based in villages that poses the problem, it is the potential erosion of access to other forms of wealth for mediating social relationships that threatens the connectedness of Tongans. The irony of the situation in Ha'ano is that the migration patterns from the 1960s onward that alleviated stresses arising from ecological problems associated with population pressure have grown and transformed to the point where subsistence activities are threatened by radical depopulation. Potential losses in the subsistence sector not only aggravate problems brought on by dependency on overseas labor markets and imported goods but could well be disastrous for the social ties that facilitate transnational resource flows from overseas Tongans. Under such conditions both the stability and the sustainability of the MIRAB pattern are very much in doubt.

Conclusion

It remains, by way of conclusion, to put the preceding discussion more concretely into the wider consideration of the notion of sustainability as it is elaborated and contested by this and the other articles in this volume. Lieber's discussion of the advantages of an ethnographic approach to what and how any one X is sustained (or not) argues for the systematic explication of linkages between activities, institutions, ecologies, and the humans embedded within. This article is necessarily partial in that it holds steady some ecological factors in favor of a detailed consideration of social ones. With this limitation admitted, the article attempts to outline how Tongan social relationships, social groups, and social activities are systematically reproduced through Tongan exchange praxis.

The notion that exchange activities lie at the heart of social reproduction is an old one (Mauss [1925] 1990). While it is difficult and perhaps unwise to assign boundaries to the social groups reproduced by the exchange practices outlined, it is nonetheless vital to recognize that the sustainability of the MIRAB economic pattern is dependent on the reproduction of social relationships. The social activity of exchange is both a cause and an effect of Tongan theories of sociality; in other words, Tongan exchange lies at the center of Tongan praxis, a self-sustaining unity of theory and practice.

It is through the extension of this praxis beyond the political and ecological boundaries of Tonga that the limited ecological and economic potential of this small island nation has been overcome. The foregoing discussion thus resonates with the articles of the Micronesians in this collection insofar as it thus becomes clear that "sustainability" in the late twentieth century need not be bound to one arbitrary spatial unit. People and economies, and thus

ecologies, are bound together in a global system. Politically motivated demands that development be contained within the nation-state are neither practicable nor, for that matter, sustainable. The key difference between the Tonga example I have outlined and those described by the Micronesians is that the particular trajectory of Tongan history has allowed the development of a praxis relatively independent of the ideologies of other polities. Clearly, many of the polities of Micronesia face severe challenges because of their dependency on the United States. More specifically, Micronesian dependency on direct aid limits the ability to define what a sustainable interdependence might look like against U.S. claims that interdependence is "unsustainable." The current situation in Tonga is founded on the extension of Tongan identity beyond the boundaries of the nation-state rather than on policies designed to enhance a spatially contained nation through development policies based in self-reliance or self-sufficiency. Tongan villagers can act on an interdependence founded on social ties in juxtaposition to demands that the only interdependence that qualifies as "development" is that of market-based economic ties.

Social relationships founded in Tonga, between Tongans, and through the experience of reciprocity both mundane and marked, invigorate and shape the migration-remittance nexus. The sustainability of this nexus may well be affected by the interventions of migrant-receiving nations, and thus the cautions of people like Bertram and Watters need attention, but the desires and strategies of villagers need attention too. It is in the sustainability of their interrelationships, born and nurtured on Tongan ground, that ecological limitations and boundaries are dissolved. This nexus is viable only as long as Tongans at home and overseas can create, recognize, act, and react to their interdependence, their sociality, and their debts to one another.

NOTES

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1. I understand the term "development" in the classic, or perhaps better the neoclassic, sense (and its usage in this literature) to refer to processes that result in an increase in levels of market participation, capital investment, and productive activity in the pursuit of national economic growth.

2. In this they are in agreement with dependency theorists working through a model of development structured by the use of the nation-state as the central unit of analysis (Connell 1986; Shankman 1976; see Hayes 1991 for an excellent discussion of the construction and interrelationship between these two competing models).

3. James mobilizes data drawn from a village in the Vava'u region. I am about to dispute some of her conclusions on the basis of work I did in the Ha'apai region. I do so in full recognition that it is entirely likely that interregional variation underlies some of our differences. The recognition that variation within Polynesian polities has been elided in a great deal of work in the past (Huntsman 1995; Thomas 1989) is germane here. However, I can only recognize that regional variation is a potential intervening factor in my discussion and make no systematic attempt to account for it.

4. The term "household/*famili*" from here on will refer to this smaller, conjugally focused set of kin. This unit, which tends to be recognized overtly within church practice, consists of a senior married couple, their unmarried (or married and not yet reproducing) children, and occasionally other attached kin. I have constructed this compound term for a number of reasons: first, to distinguish the term from the multiple meanings of the term *famili*, and, second, to provide a term that incorporates transregional and transnational linkages within the household; I am thus including closely cooperating dispersed kin within this unit. Finally, I mean to draw attention to the term as a heuristic one.

5. My discussion focuses on the ceremonial calendar of the three main Methodist churches, known in Tongan as Siasi Uesiliana, Siasi Tonga Hou'eiki, and Siasi Tonga Tau'aitaina. There is variation among these three churches, but generally their practices and theological beliefs are quite similar. Although there were two Mormon chapels on Ha'ano Island and I did attend some services, I am less familiar with their annual cycle. Several other faiths are present in Tonga as a whole, and both the Catholic and the Mormon churches have practitioners in comparable numbers to the Methodist churches, but the state church (Siasi Uesiliana) and the other closely related Methodist churches taken as a whole are predominant.

6. I am indebted to Heather Young Leslie for pointing out that feasts are indeed referred to as sacrifice (*felaulau*).

7. This is the highest-ranking member of the congregation reckoned through the traditional political ranking system (that is, through blood rank) and its postconstitutional reformulation (that is, noble status—which sometimes, in fact, conflicts with blood rank). This person may be male or female: in Ha'ano village two of the three church *'eiki* are female.

8. For *'eiki* people, large contributions are also related to social rank. That is, the ability to give wealth in certain situations is linked to the legitimation of rank (see Morgan 1989; van der Grijp 1993:206).

9. Some migrants are reluctant to give money to their parents for church donations but would rather provide food and other store-bought items. This type of remittance has given rise to the practice of arranging a line of credit with merchants in the regional center of Pangai. A migrant will send cash directly to the merchant, who will in turn provide the receiving family with an equivalent amount in goods. In the one case this practice was followed in Ha'ano village, the old couple turned their children's intention on its head by taking food from the merchant and then using it primarily for church feasting.

10. But note that what data are available suggest that remittance levels are both stable and long-term (see Brown 1996, 1998).

11. In fact, in areas like Ha'ano growth in agricultural production is limited by shortfalls in labor, not land (Evans 1992, 1996).

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